Katherine Buchholz

Quran Journal #4

All of the ideas portrayed in these Surahs seem to have something to do with the revelations that came from Allah to the Muslims. Surah 2, verses 242-283 were what I read first. The first thing I understand is that Allah gives life back to mankind, so fight the cause you are fighting for him (S.2:243-244). This is the concept of Jihad that we have talked about in class. The Ark of the Covenant was used as a sign of assurance for those with faith that they would be fine (S.2:248). Allah tests his people to see who is faithful and determined to persevere though the enemy is greater. Those who were faithful and could go on to help win this battle were the ones who did not drink of the river they crossed to get to Goliath and his forces (S.2:249-250). The verses then go into the David and Goliath story in little detail by saying how it was because Allah gave David power, that he defeated Goliath. Allah plans for everyone (S.2:251). Allah carries out his plan as he wants. Allah is described as “the living, the self-subsisting, eternal” (S.2:255). He is the one with absolute life and “the protector of those who have faith” (S.2:257). Then the Surah goes to Abraham declaring that Allah has all the power and can decide on life or death for any being (S.2:258-260). There is talk of charity in the ways Allah does deeds. There is no reward. The charity can be big or small, it just has to be sincere and good (S.2:261-266). Allah gives wisdom only to those who truly understand. It is better not to be public about the charity you have done. He helps all in need whether they are good, bad, or on right path or not (S.2:267-273). Those who commit usury should never stop. They will be sent to the fire after repeated offences. If it is only done once and never again, it is up to Allah to decide what to do in the end. You have to give up usury if you are a believer. You are advised to write down transactions through a scribe because Allah gave him this gift, but it is not necessary. Keep in mind Allah in these everyday transactions. If it is something to trust a person with, let the trustee fear Allah and fully trust faith until the thing is needed. Don’t conceal evidence because one who does so is sinful and Allah will know (S.2:281-283).

The first idea in Surah 3 is to worship nobody but Allah. There are sects of Christians and Jews fighting over their own and Allah’s religion when they shouldn’t be. These People of the Book are harming themselves by trying to hide the greatness of Allah (S.3:64-71). The People of the Book are annoyed at the Muslims telling them to receive Allah’s revelations through their own text to their Lord. When they lie about Allah they are deceiving without conscience. This lying about Allah gets them no good afterlife, while active rebellion against sin and Allah gets them no mercy. Allah’s messenger preaches for and not against him. His angels and prophets are not to be taken as lords or patrons either (S.3:72-80). These people of the book are bound by their own oaths in presence of their prophets, which all relate back to Allah in some way. Allah is asking us to be one with his nature and will as seen universally. Any other religion besides Islam gets no guidance from Allah and neither do those people who have gone astray in defiance of faith (S.3:81-91). Then there is the test from Allah that is for you to do charity. This charity can be the greatest gift of talent you have, giving your earnings, or something else. Allah demands for unselfishness (#419). The faith of Abraham is good because it is not pagan.

We are told to not listen to the people of the book because they deny faith. We instead must go on the straight path laid out for us towards Allah (S.3:95-101). Allah joins people together and guides them to not be in Hell through the signs he sends out. The ideal Muslim community is good, does right, and forbids wrong. We also have to remember that everything comes back to Allah (S.3:102-109). The people of the book would be Muslims if they had faith, which means they are already ready for Islam. There are still some who do not believe though (#434). These people get the shame and wrath of Allah because they rejected his signs and killed prophets who were telling the truth. For those who wrong themselves by resisting Allah, they harm themselves through resisting or having false charity (#439). We are also advised not to take in outsiders because “they will not fail to corrupt you” (S.3:118).

Surah 3 starts to go into interesting territory because the verses seem to be directed at what happened at the Battle of Uhud. Particularly, they are directed at Medina being saved even after archers left their posts when they were not supposed to. This was a lesson about faith, firmness, constancy, and steadfastness for Muslims (#442). The victory at Badr should have made the Muslims grateful to Allah because he is their only help (S.3:126). He is the one who decides whether to punish or give mercy to beings (S.3:128). The subject then switches to how one prospers through giving and not greed. If you just ask Allah for forgiveness of sins, it is guaranteed to the ones with faith and hope (S.3:135). I don’t really get verse 140 or footnote 457 that goes with it. Not exactly sure how it pertains to everyone or if it is just meant to pertain to the case of Uhud. Allah has a test to see if a person is worthy of heaven (S.3:141-143). He still watches over us and loves those who are firm and steadfast. Allah gave forgiveness as a reward in this world and for when the afterlife comes around after Uhud (S.3:144-148).

Surah 3:149-155 tell us about how unbelievers will try to turn you back from faith, but Allah will help steer you away from them. It does so through the events at Uhud. Discipline was not always maintained but Allah still had grace for the Muslims. He was testing us to mold our will and not have any bad motives in us. Verses 156-171 remind us that forgiveness and mercy from Allah is good and he should be trusted. No prophet should ever have false trust toward Allah. Allah tests believers and hypocrites to see whether they are nearer to faith or unbelief (S.3:166-167). Verses 172-180 go back to faith in Allah and how to get rid of the unbelievers who have invaded your thoughts. After Uhud, the Muslims were issued a challenge that they went to the next year, but their opponents were not there. The Muslims got treasures and grace from Allah without any harm because they followed his good pleasure. We are told to not be afraid of the evil one and his followers, just fear Allah if you have faith. Good has to be separated from evil with faith being a good reward for you.

Surah 19 talks about the others who were considered prophets before Muhammad. Verses 1-15 talk about Zakariya. He was someone who had lots of faith in Allah and wanted a son for public need. He wanted his son to represent him and try to renew Allah’s message. Yahya was the son that Allah granted him. Yahya was born with wisdom even at a young age, pity for all, and purity. All this showed how devout Yahya was to Allah. Verses 16-40 briefly state the story of Mary and why her birth of Jesus Christ was important. Mary was told that she would be the mother of a prophet of Allah and that he would be a sign to men as well as mercy from above with repentance. Mary was told not to speak to anyone based on a vow to Allah while she was trying to give birth to Jesus. When she came back with Jesus, people were amazed and ashamed that she would unexpectedly do this to her family, the family of Aaron. The child then spoke to say that he was servant of Allah and revelation made him a prophet. It then goes into how Allah should not have a son because that is just superstition. Verses 41-50 go on to Abraham trying to point his dad in the right direction. Abraham knows that Satan is rebellious and fears that Allah will make his dad friends with Satan. The father replies harshly, but Abraham still prays for his forgiveness to Allah. Abraham left his home and his greater hope was that he got blessings from Allah. The verses then talk about Abraham’s descendants Isaac and Jacob who were bestowed with honor based on the truth from Allah.

Verses 51-65 go into the story of Moses as a messenger and prophet. I find it interesting how the right side can mean so many different things (#2504). Anyways, Moses also makes Aaron a prophet by request to Allah. Ismail was another who was a messenger and prophet who was true to his self through charity, prayer, and sacrifice that helped him be close to Allah. Idris was a man of truth and prophet too. These prophets had the posterity of Adam, Noah, and Abraham. Then, the angels talk and say that they only follow Allah. There is nobody like Allah the more we see the truth of life (#2515). Verses 66-82 tell us that we should not have disbelief in a future state because then we are among those who are evil (#2516). Every soul must pass through Hell, but those who guard against evil will not go there, they will go to a better place. Unbelievers refuse to acknowledge the clear signs sent down to them by Allah. Everything evil is punished, while the righteous and good are guided by Allah to somewhere better. Verses 83-98 tell us that you should just keep worshipping Allah and not worry about the unbelievers. In the end, the Surah goes back to how Allah having a son is crazy and against order. Allah gives his love more to the righteous when it is the day of judgement.

Surah 20:1-8 state that the Quran is a revelation from Allah. He is the firm authority and knows all thoughts and secrets. Verses 9-24 talk about Moses seeing a fire that is actually a sign from Allah. Allah tells Moses to worship only him and then realize the afterlife. He then warns Moses about the opposition of the Egyptians and rebellion of his own people (#2547). Then, Allah asks about the rod Moses has and shows him how it can something else. Moses can see high spiritual items through Allah’s gift. The other sign Allah gives Moses is of a white hand surrounded by light. Verses 25-36 tell us how Moses wanted help on this task, his speech impediment removed, and his brother Aaron to help him as a prophet. He wanted these things to glorify Allah and they were granted to him. Verses 37-54 go into Moses backstory a bit. It starts with his mom deciding to put him a chest where he ends up taken in by the pharaoh’s wife though the pharaoh was an enemy to Allah and him. Moses grew up fine until he accidentally killed someone, so he was forced to find somewhere new. In the present part of the story, Moses and Aaron had received signs to go to pharaoh and Egypt for what they promised Allah they would do. They went and when they got there, they introduced themselves as children of Israel and offered peace while warning sinners.

Verses 55-76 talk about the pharaoh thinking Moses was trying to deprive the Egyptians of their land and was using magic. Moses picked a public day called the Day of the Festival to show they were telling the truth, but the pharaoh still believed Moses and Aaron were tricksters. The pharaoh goes first and is in disbelief by what thought magic. His sorcerers even say Moses telling the truth, but he does not believe. He is blinded by evil. The Egyptian people realized how their pagan system was bad and got Allah to forgive these faults. They realized there is only one true god and that god is Allah. Verses 77-89 show us that Moses and his followers will be fine even with the pursuit of the pharaoh because water was in the way and the pharaoh is led astray. They were also instructed to eat well because Allah provided good to them. Who is the Samiri? I don’t get who this person is exactly. We then get into Moses asking his followers if they broke the promises they made to Allah and the people of Israel. They told him that they did not break the promises but carried ornaments and threw into fire. I think they did this because the Samiri told them to. The Samiri then brought out a golden calf that was said to be the god of Moses. The people of Moses believed this, so they were blinded and led astray. Verses 90-104 goes to Aaron telling the people to follow his command because he is with Allah. Moses was mad at Aaron when he got back because he possibly disobeyed Moses’ order. The focus then turned to the Samiri who said that the calf was what his soul told him to do. Moses ordered the calf destroyed and made the Samiri untouchable. He was certainly going to get the wrath of Allah.

Verses 105-115 go into how when judgement comes, intercession will be granted to those who Allah gives it to “and whose word is acceptable to him” (S.20:109). All should be humbled by Allah. On the day of judgement, the unjust get despair and the ones with faith get joy. This Arabic Quran is here for all to use who want to fear Allah. You can advance in knowledge of Allah even without a complete Quran. Verses 116-128 talk about the story of Adam in regard to the evil in it. All of Adam’s needs were met in the garden, but Satan tried to tempt him to go to the Tree of Eternity. Adam was swayed toward the tree and he ate from it, showing how he was not innocent. He allowed himself to be seduced. Allah chose Adam to guide on the right path by sending Adam from the garden and seeing that he was the one following guidance. For those like Satan who turn away from the message of Allah, their life is narrowed and he will be blinded because he did not follow the signs from Allah. Verses 129-135 tell us to be patient and praise Allah. This gives us strength against evil and spiritual joy. The good things in life are good, but the afterlife with Allah is even better.