Surah 21 Surah Ambiya

THE AMBIYAA

THE LINK BETWEEN SURAH AMBIYAA AND SURAH TAAHAA

Surah Taahaa mentions how Allaah emphasised to Moosa ﷺ that only Allaah should be regarded as the true deity and Helper. Allaah told him, “Verily I am Allaah. There is no Ilaah but Me, so worship Me and establish salaah for My remembrance” [verse 14]. Now Surah Ambiya emphasises that fact that it was not only Moosa ﷺ who received this revelation, but all the other Ambiya as well. Allaah says in verse 25 of Surah Ambiya, “We sent revelation to every Rasool before you (µuhammad ﷺ, telling them) that. Without doubt there is no Ilaah but Me, so worship Me only.”

A SUMMARY OF THE SURAH

The central message of Surah Ambiya is that Allaah is the Only One Who has knowledge of all things in the heavens and the earth. Therefore, only He should be worshipped and regarded as one’s Helper to be summoned when in need. This is mentioned in verse 4 where Allaah says, “He (Rasulullah ﷺ) said (to the Mushrikeen), “My Rabb knows the speech in the heavens and the earth, and He is All Hearing, All Knowing.” To prove this point, the Surah contains more than a dozen proofs.

In rejecting the preaching of Rasulullah ﷺ, the Mushrikeen claimed that a messenger of Allaah needs to be an angel and not a human. Allaah replies to this in the following verses:

1. “Before you (O Rasulullah ﷺ) We have sent (as Ambiya) only men (not angels) to whom We have sent revelation, so ask those who have knowledge (of the previous scriptures) if you do not possess any knowledge (of the subject).” [verse 7]

2. “We have not made them (the Ambiya) mere bodies who do not eat food and they did not live forever. (Like all human beings, the Ambiya also needed to eat and drink and they also had to die)” [verse 8]

The many stories of the Ambiya mentioned in this Surah also make it clear that it is only Allaah Who can assist a person in need and that even the illustrious Ambiya had to call to Him for assistance.
In the name of Allaah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

1. Peoples’ reckoning (the Day of Qiyaamah) has drawn near, yet (failing to take heed) they are turning away (from Imaan) in negligence.

2. They listen in jest (playfully) to any new advice that comes to them from their Rabb (they mockingly pretend to be listening intently)...

3. …while their hearts are heedless (they have no intention of heeding the advice). The oppressors (the Kuffaar) secretly convene saying, “He (Rasulullaah ﷺ) is but a (an ordinary) human like yourselves. (If He is not a Prophet but a man who has learnt magic. Therefore, the effect that the Qur’an has on people is not because It is from Allaah but because of the magic that He practises) Will you come to (listen to) magic while you see it (with your own eyes? Will you believe in it knowing that it is magic)?”

4. He (Rasulullaah ﷺ) said (to the Mushrikeen), “My Rabb knows the speech in the heavens and the earth, and He is All Hearing, All Knowing”. (If He therefore knows what you discuss in secret and will punish you for it.)

5. However, (failing to take heed,) they (even) say, “These (verses of the Qur’an) are (the result of) confused (absurd) dreams. No, (it is worse than this) he (Rasulullaah ﷺ) has forged it (and attributed it to Allaah)! No, (in fact we must conclude that) he is a poet (whose words have appeal but lack truth)! (If he wishes to prove to us that he is a Rasool,) He should bring us an Aayah (a miracle) like the ones sent with the (Ambiyaas ﷺ of the) previous people.”
6. None of the towns that We destroyed before them had Imaan (despite seeing the miracle). Will these people now have Imaan (when they see the same miracles)? (Just as previous nations were destroyed when they refused to believe in the miracles they requested, all Mushrikeen also stand to suffer the same fate).

7. Before you (O Rasulullaah ﷺ) We have sent (as Ambiyaa ﷺ) only men (not angels) to whom We have sent revelation, so ask those who have knowledge (of the precious scriptures) if you do not possess any knowledge (of the subject).

8. We have not made them (the Ambiyaa ﷺ) mere bodies who do not eat food and they did not live forever. (Like all human beings, the Ambiyaa ﷺ also needed to eat and drink and they also had to die)

9. Then We made true the promise to them (that they will be rescued from the Kuffaar and saved from the punishment that will destroy the Kuffaar), rescued them (those whom We desired) and destroyed those who transgressed the limits (the Kuffaar).

10. We have certainly revealed to you people a Book (the Qur’aan) which contains advice (reminders) for you. Will you still not understand?

11. How many were the oppressive towns (towns of sinful people) that We annihilated (because of their kufr and sin) and We then created another nation after them. (Therefore, no nation should think that they are indispensable because We can destroy them in the same manner and create others to replace them.)

12. When they (the people of previous nations) sensed Our punishment (calamity coming to them), they suddenly began to flee (headlong) from the town (in an effort to escape the punishment).
13. (The angels bringing the punishment then told them,) “Do not flee, but return to the things that gave you pleasure (the luxuries that kept you from accepting Imaan) and to your homes. Perhaps you may be asked (by later generations about what happened to you. Of course, you and whatever you treasured will not be there to answer their questions).”

14. (When the punishment came to them,) They said, “Woe be to us! We were oppressors (sinners) indeed (we oppressed ourselves by inviting this punishment))!

15. This (remorseful cry) remained their call until We (destroyed them and) made them like reaped corn (scattered bodies littering the area), totally extinguished (like a doused fire without the pride they once possessed).

16. We have not created the heavens and the earth for idle amusement (without a purpose). (Every creation of Allâah has a purpose, one of these purposes being that each creation is an example of Allâah’s might and great power.)

17. If We intended to create a toy (something merely to pass Our time), We would have done so from Our side (We would have created something simple instead of the magnificent heavens and earth) if We were to really do so (it would have been unnecessary to create anything so elaborate. It therefore follows that the heavens and earth are not mere toys and that there are great lessons to be learnt from them).

18. (By pondering about the marvellous creation of Allâah, people are able to realise the truth of Tawheed, which leads them to accept Imaan. By doing this, they are able to stay away from all types of falsehood. Referring to this, Allâah says,) Rather (than creating the whole of creation in vain, it is by means of the creation that) We hurl the truth (Tawheed and Imaan) at falsehood (Shirk and kufr), shattering its head, after which it (falsehood) suddenly disappears (from a person’s life because as a Mu’min, he shuns falsehood). May you (Mushrikeen) be destroyed because of what you concoct (by saying that Allâah has partners).

19. To Him (Allâah) belongs whoever is in the heavens and (on) the earth. Those (the angels) who are with Him are not ashamed (idle) to worship Him, nor do they tire (of worshipping Him).
20. They glorify Him night and day without being lax (without growing weary).

21. Or have they (the Mushrikeen) chosen (to worship) Aaliha from the earth who can resurrect (who can give life to the dead)? It is obvious that their gods cannot do this. They are therefore not fit to be worshipped.

22. If there were other Aaliha but Allaah in the heavens and the earth, the two would be in chaos (because no two or more persons can think in the same way. Had there been many gods, each would have different opinions about running the system of the universe. It would therefore be impossible to see the system of the universe functioning as perfectly and flawlessly as it does. The finely tuned manner in which everything occurs makes it apparent that there is only One Allaah in control of everything). Allaah, the Rabb of the Arsh, is Pure from (not in need of) what (gods) they ascribe (as His equals).

23. He (Allaah) will not be questioned about what He does (because He is above all and everything He does is perfect, most appropriate and above questioning), but they (the people) will be questioned (about the actions they carry out in this world).

24. Or have they (the Mushrikeen) chosen other Aaliha (to worship) besides Him? Say, “Produce your evidence (to prove that these gods deserve to be worshipped)! This Qur’aan is a reminder to those with me (reminding them that none but Allaah deserves to be worshipped), and a reminder to those before me (reminding them that the same reminder was given to them in the previous scriptures). But most of them do not know the truth (of Tawheed), because of which they turn away (from it).”

25. We sent revelation to every Rasool before you (O Muhammad ﷺ, telling them) that, “Without doubt there is no Ilhaah but Me, so worship Me only.”
26. They (the Mushrikeen) say, “Ar Rahmaan has taken children (for Himself).” He is Pure (from needing children) ! They (the angels whom they say are Allaah’s children) are but honourable slaves (of Allaah and one’s children can obviously not be one’s slaves).

27. They (the angels) do not speak before Him and duly carry out His orders (in complete submission).

28. He knows what is before them and what is behind them (He knows everything they do) and only the one with whom He is pleased will be able to intercede (on behalf of anyone on the Day of Qiyaamah). (In fact) They tremble with fear for Him.

29. Whoever of them has to say, “I am an Ilaah besides Him (so worship me),” then We shall punish him in Jahannam. Thus do We punish the wrongdoers (sinful ones).

30. Do the Kuffaar not see that the skies and the earth were once closed (no rain fell from the sky and no plants grew on earth), then (when man was placed on earth) We opened them (so that man could survive) ? And We created every living thing from water. Will they still not accept Imaan?

31. We have placed mountains (counterweights) on the earth so that it does not shake with them (people), and We have made wide roads on earth so that they be guided (in their travels from place to place).

32. And We have made the sky a protected roof (which Allaah safeguards to protect man from deadly rays and meteors), yet they (the Kuffaar) turn away from Our Aayaat (refusing to accept them).

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33. It is Allaah Who created the night, the day, the sun and the moon, each swimming in its own orbit (never straying from its orbit and never crossing the orbit of the other).

34. (O Muhammad ﷺ) We have not prescribed eternal life for any human before you (regardless of whether the others were Ambiyaa or not. You will therefore pass away like all others). If you pass away (as the Kuffaar wish), will they (the Kuffaar) live forever? (They will have to die as well. They therefore have nothing to be happy about when you pass away because whereas you will enjoy happiness in the next life, they will suffer only misery.)

35. Every soul shall taste death. (However, before your death,) We test you well (thoroughly) with good and bad conditions (to see whether you continue obeying Allaah in all conditions) and you will return to Us (after death when We shall evaluate how you performed in your tests).

36. When the Kuffaar see you (O Rasulullaah ﷺ), they merely wish to ridicule you. (They say,) “Is this the person who makes mention of who criticises your gods?” (Far from believing in Allaah), They totally reject the mention of Ar Rahmaan.

37. Man has been created from haste (with a hasty nature, because of which he is always in a hurry to do things and expect to see quick results). I shall shortly show you My Aayaat (the punishment I have promised you for committing kufr), so do not hurry Me (have patience).

38. They (the Kuffaar) say, “When will the promise (of punishment) come to pass if you (O Rasulullaah ﷺ) are truthful (in your claim that we will be punished for committing kufr)?”

39. If only the Kuffaar knew the time (in the Aakhirah) when (while suffering in Jahannam), they will neither be able to ward off the Fire from their faces, nor from their backs (because fire will surround them). They will also not be helped (there). (If they had knowledge of this, they would not behave as they do.)
40. However, it (punishment) will come to them suddenly, totally dumbfounding them. Then they will neither be able to repel it, nor will they be granted any respite (time to repent).

41. (O Rasuulllah) Undoubtedly, the Rusul before you were also ridiculed (mocked), but those who ridiculed (jeered) them were engulfed by (the consequences of) their own ridicule (they were destroyed by Allaah’s punishment). (The same will be the plight of those who ridicule you).

42. Say (to the Kuffaar), “Who can protect you from (the punishment of) Ar Rahmaan each day and night?” However, (despite knowing that none can protect them from Allaah’s punishment) they turn away from the Reminder of their Rabb (the Qur’aan).

43. Or do they have Aaliha that will protect (defend) them from Us? They (their Aaliha are so helpless that they) cannot even help themselves, nor will anyone align with them (to offer protection) against Us.

44. Nonetheless, We granted prosperity (enjoyment) to them (the Kuffaar) and their forefathers (without punishing them) until a long period passed by them (in which they revelled in their prosperity and failed to accept Imaan). Do they not see that We gradually diminish the lands (in their control) from its ends (by giving more and more land to the Muslims through successive victories) ? Will they (the Kuffaar ever) be victorious? (No, because the Muslims will have ultimate victory.)

45. Say, “I warn you only with revelation (from Allaah and not with my own words). (However, although the warnings are from Allaah) The deaf (those who do not want to accept what they hear) cannot hear the call when they are warned.”
46. Undoubtedly if (only) a puff (a slight amount) of your Rabb's punishment has to afflict them, they will certainly say, “May destruction overtake us! We were oppressors (sinners) indeed!”

47. On the Day of Qiyaamah, We will erect the scales of justice (to weigh the good and bad actions of people) and no soul will be oppressed (wronged). In the least. Even if a deed (good or bad) is equal to the weight of a mustard seed, We shall bring it (to be weighed on the scales). We suffice as Reckoners (and need no one else for the task).

48. Without doubt, We had granted Moosa and Haaroon the Decider (between right and wrong, namely the Torah, which was also), a (guiding) light, and a reminder (advice) to those with Taqwa.

49. Those (with Taqwa are they) who fear their Rabb without seeing Him, and are fearful of Qiyaamah (concerned about their condition then).

50. This (Qur'aan) is a blessed advice that We have revealed. Will you then reject it (despite all its great attributes)?

51. Before this (period of Moosa), We had granted Ibraheem his correct course (keen understanding and guidance) and We were always aware of him (We knew that he was worthy of being Our Rasool).

52. (Worthy of mention is the time) When he told his father and his people, “What are these statues (idols) that you are devoted to?”

53. They replied, “We (worship them because we) found our forefathers worshipping (serving) them.”

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54. He (Ibraheem) said, “Verily you people and your forefathers are certainly in manifest error (clearly misguided).”

55. They said, “Do you bring us the truth or are you from the jesters (are you serious about what you are saying or are you merely amusing us)?”

56. He said, “Rather (than worshipping these idols, you should understand that) your Rabb is the Rabb of the heavens and the earth, Who has created (originated) you. (It is He Whom you should worship,) I am of those who bear (confirms) witness to this.”

57. “By Allaah! I shall certainly devise a scheme against your idols (to destroy them) after you have turned your backs (and have left the town).”

58. So (when the people one day left town to celebrate a festival,) he (used an axe to break all the idols and) reduced them to fragments (pieces), but for the largest of them (which he left intact with the axe hung around its neck) so that they may turn towards him. (Seeing it intact with the axe, they may think that it could be responsible for the damage. However, they would then immediately dispel this thought because they knew that the idols could do nothing. In this manner, Ibraheem wished to bring to their attention that they are wrong to worship such useless things.)

59. (After returning to the town and seeing their idols destroyed,) They (the people) exclaimed, “Who has done this to our gods? He is certainly from the wrong-doers!”

60. They (some of them) said, “We have heard a youth speak of (about) them (saying that he intends to devise a scheme against them). He is called Ibraheem.”
61. They said, “Bring him before the people so that (if he admits to the act,) they may be witnesses (to his admission).”

62. They asked, “Is it you who did this to our gods, O Ibraheem?”

63. He replied, “But (it seems as if) this large one has done it. Ask them (who it was) if they (idols) have the ability to talk.”

64. They all searched (ponder in) their souls (when they realised their foolishness in worshipping idols who cannot even talk) and said (to themselves), “You are oppressors (unjust) indeed.”

65. They then lowered (bent) their heads (in shame) saying, “You know very well that these (idols) cannot speak.”

66. He said, “Do you then (still) worship besides Allaah such things that can neither profit you nor harm you?”

67. “Shame (disgrace and humiliation be) on you and those that you worship besides Allaah! Do you not understand (the error of your ways)?”

68. (Embarrassed and not knowing what to do,) They said (to save face), “Burn him and (thereby) assist (avenge) your gods if you will do so (if you want to do something).” (So they made a large fire which was so hot that none could approach it. They were then forced to catapult Ibraheem into it.)
69. (However, when Ibraheem entered the fire) We said, “O fire! Be cool and peaceful for Ibraheem.” (As a result of this command, not even a hair of Ibraheem was burnt and he lived peacefully in the fire for some time.)

70. While they (the Kuffaar) intended to plot (evil) against (to harm) Ibraheem, We made them the worst losers (because he remained unharmed, while they did not achieve their objective and will suffer the consequences in the Akhirah).

71. We rescued him (Ibraheem) and (his nephew) Loot (and took them) to a land that We had blessed for all (externally and internally) in the universe (the land of Shaam).

72. We gifted (rewarded) Ibraheem with (a son) Is’haaq and a grandson, Ya’qoob. We made all of them righteous (having excellent character and piety).

73. We made them guides (Ambiyaa) who guided (people) by Our orders, and We commanded them to perform good deeds, to establish salaah, and to pay zakaah. They were all Our (devoted) worshipers.

74. We granted Loot wisdom (insight) and knowledge (comprehension), and We rescued (delivered) him from a town (Sodom) that (the people of which) used to perpetrate (engage in) despicable (impure) acts (such as homosexuality). They were certainly evil and sinful (disobedient) people.
75. And We admitted him (Lot) into Our mercy (by saving him from those people). He was indeed from among the righteous (fortunate).

76. And (remember) Nooh from before (Ibrahim) when he called (to Allaah to destroy his people) and We responded to him (accepted his du’aa by sending the flood to them). So We rescued him and his family from tremendous distress (from the flood).

77. And We granted him salvation from a nation who rejected Our Aayaat. They were indeed an evil nation, so We drowned all of them.

78. (Remember) Dawood and Sulaymaan when they arbitrated about a crop that was trampled by the goats of some people. We were Witnesses to their decision. (A farmer brought a person to the court of Dawood, claiming that the person’s goats had escaped from their enclosure at night and ravaged his (the farmer’s) crops. Dawood ruled that all the goats should be given to the farmer as compensation. When the two left Dawood’s court, they met Sulaymaan. When he asked them what was his father’s judgment, they informed him about it. Sulaymaan told them, “If I had passed judgement, it would have been beneficial to both parties.” He then went to his father and repeated the same statement. Dawood asked him what he had in mind. Sulaymaan said that the goats should be put in the custody of the farmer so that he may use the milk and wool. In the meantime, the other person should be given the farm and work the land until the crops grow to the condition that they were when the goats destroyed them. Thereafter, the goats were to be returned to the original owner. Dawood was pleased with this decision and called the two back, instructing them accordingly.)

79. We explained the decision (as mentioned above) to Sulaymaan and granted wisdom (keen sense of judgement) and knowledge (understanding) to both of them. We placed the mountains and birds at Dawood’s service and they all engaged in Allaah’s glorification (with him). We are the ones Who can do (Who can make such things possible).

80. We taught Dawood the skill of making armour (with links to allow easy movement, unlike the armour of bygone times which consisted of uncomfortable solid steel plates which restricted movement), so that it protects you in your wars. Will you be grateful (show some gratitude)?
81. And We placed the swift wind at the service of Sulaymaan ﷺ. By his command, it carried him within a short span of time to the land that We had blessed (Shaam, normally a month's journey away). We have knowledge of all things (We always knew that these tremendous bounties would not cause pride to creep into his heart).

82. There were some Shayateen (Jinn) who used to dive for him (to retrieve pearls) and do other work for him (such as constructing large buildings and making large pots). It was We Who kept them under control.

83. And (remember) when Ayyoob ﷺ prayed to his Rabb (when he lost his wealth and children and was afflicted with a disease) saying, “Difficulty has certainly afflicted me and You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy (so remove my difficulty by Your mercy).”

84. So We answered his prayer and removed the difficulty that beset him. We then gave him (back) his family (and his wealth) and much more in addition as a special mercy from Us and as a remembrance for the worshippers (so that by his story people can always remember that patience brings immense rewards).

85. And (remember also) Ismaa’eel ﷺ, Idrees ﷺ and Dhul Kifl ﷺ. They were all from the patient ones.

86. We admitted them all into Our mercy. They were indeed from the righteous (pious and good).

87. And (do not forget) the person of the fish (Yunus ﷺ) when he left (the town) in anger (without requesting permission from Us) and thought that We would not straiten (correct) things for him. (However, when a large fish swallowed him), He prayed in the darkness (of its belly) saying.
“There is no Ilah but You (O Allah), You are Pure. I have certainly been from among the wrongdoers (so please forgive me and remove me from this fish).”

88. So We responded to his du’aa (heard his cry) and rescued him from distress (suffocation, by causing the fish to spit him out). Thus (as We rescued him) do We rescue the Mu’mineen (from difficulties).

89. And (remember) when Zakariyya $\overset{583539}{\text{prayed}}$ (to Allah saying), “O my Rabb! Do not leave me childless when You are the Best (and only One) of those who provide Successors (progeny).”

90. So We responded to his du’aa, gifted him with (a son) Yahya $\overset{\text{dMIWc}}{\text{and cured his wife}}$ (allowed her to bear children in her old age). Verily, they (the Ambiyaa mentioned above) would (used to) hasten to perform good deeds and prayed to Us in anticipation (in hope of Our mercy) and in fear (of Our punishment). They were humble before Us.

91. And (remember) the woman Maryam $\overset{\text{and}}{\text{who guarded her chastity. We blew Our spirit}}$ (a spirit that We created) within her (allowing her to conceive Isa $\overset{\text{and made her and her son an Aayah}}{\text{for the universe}}$ (to prove to people that We can indeed create in ways that are not the usual).

92. This (system of beliefs that all the above Ambiyaa $\overset{\text{adopted}}{\text{is indeed your religion, which is}}$ the one and only way and I am your Rabb, so worship (serve and obey) Me.

93. (However, instead of subscribing to these beliefs founded on Tawheed) They (the people) caused (numerous) divisions in their affairs (in the matters of their Deen, causing them to be divided into many denominations). Each of them shall return to Us (on the Day of Qiyaamah when We shall judge between them).

94. Whoever does a good act as a Mu’min, his effort will not be unappreciated in the
least (he will be rewarded for every good act regardless of how insignificant it may seem). We are indeed the scribes of it (We meticulously record their every action).

95. It is an established fact that the town which We have destroyed shall never return (to this world)...

96. ...until the time arrives (just before the Day of Qiyaamah) when Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj will be released (from behind the wall that Dhul Qarnayn built) and they will scurry down every hill.

97. The true promise (Qiyaamah) will be near and the eyes of the Kuffaar will be fixed above (out of fear and worry). They will say, “May we be destroyed! We were negligent of this (day). Nay! We were (not merely negligent but we were) indeed oppressors (sinners)!”

98. You (Mushrikeen) and whatever (idols) you worshipped besides Allaah will be the fuel of Jahannam which you shall surely enter.

99. If these (idols) really were Aaliha, they would not have entered it (Jahannam). (However, because they were never worthy of being worshipped, they will enter Jahannam and) They will all remain there forever.

100. They (the idols and idol-worshippers) will scream and shout in Jahannam and will be unable to hear (anything because of their intense suffering).

101. Indeed those for whom We have ordained the best (Jannah), these (righteous people) shall be kept far from Jahannam.
102. They will not even hear its whisper. They will live forever in Jannah where they will have whatever they desire.

103. The greatest fright (Qiyaamah) shall not distress them and angels will meet them (as they emerge from their graves, saying), “This is your day that you had been promised.”

104. (Do not forget the Day of Qiyaamah, which is) The day when We will fold the skies like the folds of written scrolls. As We originated the first creation, We shall repeat it (making all appear as they had appeared when they were first created). This is a binding (definite) promise upon Us. We are undoubtedly the Ones Who can do (Who have the power to fulfil this promise).

105. Without doubt, We have already written in the Zaboor after the reminder (the Torah) that My pious bondsmen shall inherit the land (of Jannah).

106. There is certainly sufficient material in this Qur’aan for the worshipping people (to take them to Jannah).

107. We have sent you (O Muhammad) as a mercy to the universe (to show mercy towards mankind, Jinn and creation at large by guiding them to the path of salvation).

108. Say, “It has been revealed to me that your Ilaah is but One Ilaah. So will you submit (be obedient) to this?”

109. If they turn away, then say, “I have informed you in a clearly distinct manner
110. Without doubt, Allaah knows what is spoken loudly (publicly) and He knows what you keep secret (and can therefore hold you accountable for everything you say and do).

111. I have no idea whether it (the delay in punishment) is a test for you (to see whether you repent) or an enjoyment until a stipulated time (during which time you will increase in sin and stand to deserve even greater punishment).

112. (When his people refused to accept this despite his greatest efforts), He (the Rasool of Allaah) said, “O my Rabb! Judge (between my people and myself) in truth (by granting me victory over them to show that I am on the truth)! (Then addressing his people, he said,) Our Rabb is the Most Merciful, and the One from Whom assistance is sought against what you people fabricate (He will assist us Muslims against our enemies).”