Surah 29 Surah Ankaboot

THE SPIDER

THE LINK BETWEEN SURAH ANKABOOT AND SURAH QASAS

By Name: It has been established from the Qasas (stories) of Moosa ﷺ that he endured great difficulties in propagating the belief that prayers should be directed only to Allaah because he is the Only Helper and source of blessings.

Surah Ankaboot explains that the belief in others being able to assist and that they are sources of good is as weak and fragile as the web of a spider (Ankaboot). Just as the spider’s web cannot provide safety from heat, cold and the other elements, calling to anyone besides Allaah in times of adversity is equally futile.

By Content: Surah Furqaan proves that Allaah is the Only source of blessings. To substantiate this belief, Surah Furqaan and Surah Shu’araa cite numerous proofs. Surah Naml also cites reasons for Allaah being man’s only true Benefactor. Thereafter, Surah Qasas tells about the hardships that Moosa ﷺ endured in propagating the same beliefs, thereby encouraging Rasulullah ﷺ also to prepare for hardships. Now Surah Ankaboot encourages people to accept these beliefs and prepares them for the same endurance.

A SUMMARY OF THE SURAH

Surah Ankaboot includes the central message of the Qur’aan (Towheed) together with two specific messages. The two specific messages are:

1. Hardships and difficulties will afflict the Mu’mineen.
2. Those who reject Towheed will not be able to escape Allaah’s punishment.

The first message of the Surah is expressed in the narrations about Nooh ﷺ (verses 14, 15), Ibraheem ﷺ (verses 16-27) and Loot ﷺ (verses 28-35). All these narrations demonstrate the fortitude exercised by these Ambiyaan ﷺ when they suffered tremendous pain and hardship as they propagated the message of Towheed. Allaah prepares the Mu’mineen for the same by relating these narrations.

The second message of the Surah is expressed in the incidents of the people of Madyan (verse 36, 37), the Aad (verse 38), the Thamud (verse 38) and those who opposed Moosa ﷺ, viz. Fir’oun, Haamaan and Qaaroon (verses 39). The punishment that each of these nations received is mentioned in verse 40.

The general message of Towheed, which is central to the Qur’aan, is mentioned midway in the Surah. It is followed by four logical proofs, the most outstanding of which is contained in the verse that bears the title of the Surah. Allaah says in the verse, “The example of those who adopt defenders (gods) besides Allaah is like the example of a spider who spun a web. Without doubt, the weakest of homes is the home (web) of the spider, if only they would understand.” (Just as the spider thinks that his web is the strongest home in the world, the Mushrikeen think that their gods are the most powerful. However, just as the spider’s web can offer the spider no protection from even a gust of wind, the gods of the Mushrikeen can also not give them any protection.) [verse 41].
In the name of Allaah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

1. Alif Laam Meem. (Only Allaah knows the correct meaning of these letters.)

2. Do people (the Mu'mineen) think that they will be left to say, “We have Imaan!” without being tested? (In fact, the stronger the Imaan, the harder the test.)

3. We certainly tested those (Mu'mineen) before them, and (by putting people through tests) Allaah will definitely (make people) know those who are true (in their Imaan) and He will definitely (make people) know who the liars are (whose Imaan in not sincere).

4. Do those who do evil (who commit kufr and Shirk) think that they can escape Us (escape Our punishment)? Evil (wrong) indeed is the decision (judgement) they take (because none can ever escape Our punishment).

5. Whoever yearns to meet Allaah (should know that) the term of Allaah (the time stipulated by Allaah when He will meet people) will certainly arrive. And He is the All Hearing, the All Knowing.

6. Whoever strives (fights the Kuffaar or his own passions) strives only for himself (for his own benefit because he will attain the benefits and rewards). Allaah is Independent of the entire universe (and is not dependent on their worship or obedience). (He created us to confer blessing on us).
7. Those who have Imaan and do good deeds, We shall definitely cancel (forgive) their sins from them and reward them (with blessings that are) better than what (actions) they did (because the rewards of the Aakhirah are everlasting).

8. We (emphatically) commanded (directed) man to treat his parents kindly. (However), If they (your parents) force you to ascribe partners to Me about which you have no knowledge (about whom you have no proof that they deserve to be worshipped), then do not obey them (your parents). Your return (after death) shall be to Me, when I shall inform you of what you used to do. (Therefore, when anyone wants you to do something that displeases Me, do not obey them because you will ultimately have to answer to Me.)

9. We shall definitely include (admit) those who have Imaan and who do good deeds among the righteous (among the Ambiya and other pious people with whom they will be raised on the Day of Qiyaamah).

10. Among people are those (Munaafiqeen) who say, “We believe in Allaah!” Then, when they suffer any adversity (difficulty) for (the cause of) Allaah, they (are unable to bear it and) treat the difficulty (which) people give like (as if it is as severe as) Allaah’s punishment. If help (victory) comes (to you Muslims) from your Rabb, they (the Munaafiqeen) will certainly say, “We were always with you (and therefore also deserve a share of the booty).” Does Allaah not know best what is in the hearts of all in the universe? (Allaah knows well what is in the hearts of the Munaafiqeen and will punish them for their hypocrisy.)

11. (By putting people through tests), Allaah will certainly (make people) know who are those with (true) Imaan and will definitely (make people) know who are the hypocrites (deceivers).
12. The Kuffaar say to the Mu’mineen, “Follow our way and we will bear the burden of your sins (we are prepared to suffer the punishment for your sins without you suffering any punishment).” They (the Kuffaar) will not carry any part of their sins (the sins of the Mu’mineen because each person will suffer the punishment of his/her own sins). They are certainly liars (and will never keep their word even if it were possible to bear the burden of other people’s sins).

13. (What will happen is that) They will certainly carry their own burdens (of sin) in addition to those of others (whom they caused to sin, without the actual sinners being absolved of punishment). And on the Day of Qiyaamaah they will definitely be questioned about what they fabricated (about the partners they attributed to Allaah).

14. Without doubt, we sent Nooh (as a Rasool) to his nation, where he remained (preaching to them) for a thousand years less fifty years (950 years). Then (when they refused to accept his message and continued to harass him, he prayed to Allaah to destroy them. Consequently) a storm (flood) struck them (and they were all drowned) while they were oppressive (to themselves by refusing to accept Imaan).

15. We rescued (saved) Nooh and the people (with him) on the ark, making it (the incident) a lesson (sign) for the (people of the) universe (to remind them about the consequences of rejecting the Ambiyaa).

16. (And We also sent) Ibraheem (as a Nabi to his community), (so remember the time) when he said to his people, “Worship Allaah and fear (disobeying) him. This is best for you if only you knew (if you have understanding).”

17. “Instead of Allaah, you merely worship idols and fabricate lies (about Allaah by saying
that your idols are His partners). Those (idols) that you worship instead of Allaah do not have control of your sustenance, so seek your sustenance from Allaah, worship Him and show gratitude (thanks) to Him. To Him shall you be returned.”

18. “If you deny (me and my message), then (this is nothing new because) many nations have denied before you. (However, the choice is yours because) The duty of the Rasool is merely clear propagation (he cannot force you to accept).”

19. Do they (the Kuffaar) not see how Allaah originates creation (creates them the first time) and then repeats (the feat of creating them after their deaths)? This is certainly (very) easy for Allaah (so how can anyone deny that they will be resurrected?).

20. Say, “Travel in the lands and see how He (Allaah) creates (nations) the first time and then (after their deaths) produces (raises up) another creation (raises other nations to replace them). Indeed Allaah has power over all things (and nothing is difficult for Him).”

21. Allaah punishes whoever He wills and has mercy on whoever He wills. To Him shall you be returned (after death).

22. You can never escape (Allaah’s punishment) on earth, nor in the sky. Besides Allaah You have no Protecting Friend nor any Helper (who can save you from punishment).

23. Those who reject (deny Allaah’s Aayaat (lessons) and meeting with Him will lose hope in My mercy (on the Day of Qiyaamah when they will see the punishment for themselves) and they shall have a torturous (grievous) punishment.
24. (When Ibraheem شاهد convincingly proved to his people that their idols were helpless, as mentioned in verses 58-67 of Surah 21), The only reply (answer) that his people could give was to say, “Kill him or burn him!” Then Allaah saved him from the fire (by commanding the fire to be cool and peaceful for him). Undoubtedly, there are certainly (clear) signs in this for people who have Imaan.

25. He (Ibraheem شاهد) said, “You have merely taken to worship idols because of your mutual love in this worldly life (because of your love for certain good people, initially you made idols in their forms as a form of respect, but thereafter Shaytaan fooled you into worshipping them). (However, despite this love) Soon, on the Day of Qiyaamah, you will oppose (deny) each other and curse each other (worshippers will curse their idols and vice versa). Your abode shall be the Fire and you will have no helpers.” (As Allaah saved Ibraheem شاهد from the fire, so will He save you from the eternal fire so believe in Him.)

26. (From among Ibraheem شاهد’s people, his nephew) Loot شاهد believed him. (After trying in vain to convince his people after many years,) Ibraheem شاهد (eventually) said, “I shall migrate to (a place called Shaam where) my Rabb (has commanded me to go, to Shaam). He is certainly the Mighty, the Wise (and knows what is best for me).”

27. We gifted (blessed) him (Ibrahim) with (a son) Is’haaq شاهد and (a grandson) Ya’qoob شاهد, kept Prophethood and scriptures in his progeny (by making his descendants Ambiyaa شاهد) and granted him his reward in this world. (In addition to this, he will also be rewarded tremendously in the Aakhirah because) He shall certainly be among the righteous ones in the Aakhirah.

28. (And we also sent) Loot شاهد (as a Nabi, Remember the time) when he said to his people, “Indeed you people engage in an obscene act (homosexuality), which none in the universe has indulged in before you.”
29. “Do you approach men (for sexual pleasure instead of women), waylay the highways (to rob travellers) and (without shame, you even) perpetrate evil in your gatherings (in public)?” (Admitting that they were guilty of these evils), The only reply (answer) that his people could give was to say, “Bring Allaah's punishment to us if you are from among the truthful (if your threat of punishment is true).”

30. He (Loot $\text{£}\text{¥}$ said, “O my Rabb! Assist me against those who cause corruption (by punishing them).” (Allaah accepted his du`aa and sent angels to punish them. Before proceeding to punish them, Allaah instructed them to first meet Ibraheem $\text{£}\text{¥}$ and to inform him that a son will be born to him).

31. When Our messenger angels came to Ibraheem $\text{£}\text{¥}$ with the good news (that he was to father a son by the name of Is'haaq $\text{£}\text{¥}$), they (also) said, “We are to destroy the inhabitants of this town (of Loot $\text{£}\text{¥}$). Its inhabitants are certainly oppressors (terrible sinners).”

32. He (Ibraheem $\text{£}\text{¥}$ said, “(How can you destroy these people when) Loot is among them.” They (the angels) replied, “We know better (well) who is present in the town. We shall definitely rescue (save) him and his family (from the punishment), except his wife. She will be among those left behind (to suffer the punishment because she is one of the kuffaar).”

33. When Our messenger angels came to Loot $\text{£}\text{¥}$ (to inform him about what was to take place), he was grieved (troubled) by their presence and his heart was distressed (troubled because he feared that his people would attempt to sodomise them). They (the angels) said, “Do not fear, nor grieve (because we are angels and the people cannot harm us in the least). (We shall shortly destroy your people but) We will
34. “We will send down on the people of this town a punishment from the sky (a shower of stones) on account of their disobedience.”

35. Indeed We left behind in them (in those towns) an Aayah (a sign) which is clear to those who have understanding (making it clear to them that this is the plight of those who fail to believe in their Ambiyaa (This was seen by the Makkans who went to Shaam.)

36. To (the people of) Madyan (We sent) their brother Shu’ayb (as a Nabi to them). He said, “O my people! Worship Allaah, hope for (expect) the Last Day and do not spread corruption on earth (by promoting dishonesty, gambling, Interest and robbery).”

37. They rejected him (called him a liar), so an earthquake seized them and (afterwards) they lay kneeling (prostrate) down in their homes (dead).

38. And (We also destroyed) the Aad and the Thamud, whose condition (destruction) is apparent (has become clear) to you by (the ruins that are left off) their dwellings. Shaytaan (secretly) beautified their (evil) actions for them and prevented them from the straight path even though they were people of deep insight. (However, his trickery fooled even them.)

39. And (We also destroyed) Qaaroon, Fir’oun and Haamaan. Without doubt, Moosa came to them with clear signs (miracles and proofs of Towheed), but they were arrogant (proud).
40. We seized (punished) each of them on account of his sin. Against one of them (the Aad) We sent a violent wind (pebble storm to destroy them). One of them (the Thamud) was seized (destroyed) by a shout (loud screech). One of them (Qaaroon) was swallowed by the ground and we drowned another (Fir’oun and his army). Allaah was never One to oppress them (by punishing them without first sending guidance to them), but they used to oppress (wrong) themselves (by refusing to accept the guidance that came to them).

41. The example of those who adopt (take) defenders (gods) besides Allaah is like the example of a spider who spins a web. Without doubt, the weakest of homes is the home (web) of the spider, if only they would understand. (Just as the spider thinks that its web is the strongest home in the world, the Mushrikeen think that their gods are the most powerful. However, just as the spider’s web can offer the spider no protection from even a gust of wind, the gods of the Mushrikeen also cannot give them any protection.)

42. Verily Allaah has knowledge of whatever they call to (worship) besides Him. He is the Mighty, the Wise.

43. These are the examples that We coin (set) for people (to make them understand the truth). (However not, every person will not take heed because) Only those with knowledge (those who think deeply) will understand them (and learn the lesson being taught).

44. Allaah has created the heavens and the earth in truth (in perfect proportions and with perfect functions). There is certainly an Aayah (a clear sign reflecting Allaah’s great power) in them for the Mu’mineen.
45. Recite the Book (the Qur’aan) which has been revealed to you and establish salaah. Verily salaah (performed with all its conditions and etiquette) prevents (the person performing the salaah from) immoral (indecent) behaviour and evil. Without doubt, the Dhikr of Allaah is greatest (greater than other forms of worship that are devoid of Allaah’s remembrance). Allaah knows (the details of) what you do (and will reward you for every action carried out sincerely).

46. Debate with the People of the Book only with in that (manner) which is best (which proves your standpoint without offending them); except those of them who are unjust (those who are obstinate, for it is best to leave them alone). And say (to them), “We believe in what was revealed to us (through Rasulullah ﷺ) and what was revealed to you (through your Ambiyaa ﷺ). (The essence of what was revealed to all the Ambiyaa ﷺ is that) Our Ilaaah and your Ilaaah is One and (therefore) we surrender (Only) to Him (to His commands).”

47. In a like manner (as We have revealed the Torah to Moosa ﷺ and the Injeel to Isa ﷺ), We have revealed the Book (the Qur’aan) to you (O Muhammad ﷺ). So those to whom We have given the Book (the Ahlul Kitab) believe in it (in the Qur’aan because they are acquainted with divine scriptures), and there are some of these people (the people of Makkah) who also believe in it. It is only the (die-hard disobedient) Kaafiroon who reject Our Aayaat (because of their stubbornness).

48. Before this (Qur’aan), you (O Muhammad ﷺ) were unable to recite any book, neither could you write with your right hand (because you had not learnt to read or write from any person). Otherwise (had you been a person proficient in reading and writing), the people of falsehood (the Kuffaar) would be cast into doubt (they would think that you yourself had written the Qur’aan).

49. But this Qur’aan is (In itself a compilation of) clear Aayaat (that prove that they are from Allaah) in
the hearts of those given knowledge (those who commit the Qur’an to memory and who understand it). It is only the oppressors (those who oppress themselves by refusing to accept the truth) who reject Our Aayaat.

50. They (the Kuffaar) say, “Why does an Aayah (a miracles of our choice) not come to him (Muhammad ﷺ) from his Rabb?” Say, “Aayaat (miracles) are all in Allaah’s control (He will decide whether or not to allow me to demonstrate such miracles). I am but one who clearly warns (people about the consequences of rejecting Imaan and it is not my duty to force them to believe).”

51. Is it (the miracle) not sufficient for them (the Kuffaar) that we have revealed a Book (the Qur’an) to you, which is recited to them? (In addition to the Qur’an being a timeless miracle on its own which proves the Prophethood of Rasulullah ﷺ) There is certainly mercy and a reminder in it for those who have Imaan.

52. Say, “Allaah suffices as a Witness between myself and yourselves. (He is enough as Witness to my Prophethood even if you Kuffaar refuse to believe me.) (Allaah’s testimony is beyond doubt because) He knows what is in the heavens and the earth. Those who believe in falsehood and disbelieve in Allaah are (in reality) the true losers (who will suffer losses in both worlds).”

53. (O Rasulullah ﷺ) By the Kuffaar constantly asking when punishment will overtake them, it seems as if They seek to rush you with (demand their own) punishment. If it were not for a prescribed term (after which punishment will come to them), the punishment would have certainly come to them (already because they deserve it). It (the punishment) will definitely come to them suddenly when they do not perceive it (taking them totally by surprise).

54. They (the Kaafiroon) seek to rush you with the punishment (demand it from you by repeatedly asking you when it will come) whereas (their punishment will certainly come to them in the Aakhirah when) Jahannam will certainly surround the Kaafiroon.
55. (This will take place) On the day (of Qiyaamah) when the punishment will envelope them from above and from beneath their feet (and they will be unable to escape). It will then be said to them, “Taste (the punishment for) what you used to do (in the world).”

56. O My bondsmen (servants) who have Imaan! Indeed My earth is vast (and you do not have to remain in a place where you are prohibited from worshipping Me), so (if you are in such a place, make Hijrah to a place where you can) worship Me only.

57. (Do not forget that life is short because) Every soul shall taste death, after which you will all be returned to Us. (Then it will be too late to say that you were unable to worship Me where you lived. Therefore, make Hijrah from evil to good before you leave this world.)

58. As for those who have Imaan and who perform good deeds, We will certainly settle them in balconies of Jannah, beneath which rivers flow. There they shall live forever. What a grand (excellent) reward for those who act (do good deeds)...

59. …those who exercise Sabr and who trust only in their Rabb.

60. How many are the animals that do not carry their own provision (as man does)? (Despite this), Allaah (still) sustains them and you (people) as well. (You should therefore have no fear of sustenance when you make Hijrah, leaving your possessions behind.) He is the All Hearing (hears all your du’aa), the All Knowing (knows your needs and will fulfill them).

61. If you ask them (the Mushrikeen) who created the heavens and the earth and who made the sun and the moon subservient (submitting to His command and at the service of mankind), they will definitely reply, “Allaah!” So (despite possessing this knowledge) to where are they wandering astray (by continuously practising Shirk)?
62. Allaah increases (enlarges) sustenance for whoever He wills of His bondsmen (servants) and reduces (it for whoever He wills). Verily Allaah has knowledge of all things, (He knows exactly why some deserve more and others less.)

63. If you ask them (the Mushrikeen) who sends rain from the sky, thereby reviving the earth (by producing vegetation) after its death (after it had been unable to bear anything), they will certainly reply, “Allaah!” Say, “All praise belongs to Allaah” (because it is He Who enables others to do something praiseworthy). However, most of them have no understanding (they fail to realise the contradiction in their beliefs).

64. The life of this world is (but a) mere futility and play (temporary and without true benefit). Without doubt, the life of the Aakhirah is true (real) life (an existence of true happiness). If only they knew (If people understood this, they would not give preference to this world over the Aakhirah).

65. When they (the Mushrikeen) board a ship (which is struck by bad weather and then threatens to sink), they pray to Allaah (to save them) with sincere belief in (only) Him (knowing that only He can save them). But when He (completely) rescues them (and safely delivers them) to land, they again begin to ascribe partners to Him...

66. …(this they do) to show ingratitude for what (favours) We gave them and (they do it so that they may continue) to enjoy (their lives in this world without having to regulate their lives with Allaah’s commands). Soon (when punishment afflicts them in this world or in the Aakhirah) they will come to know (that their behaviour had been wrong).

67. Do they (the Mushrikeen of Makkah) not see that We have (favoured them because We) made the...
Haram a place of safety (a place where the Arabs regarded killing for any reason to be forbidden), while people are being ravaged (attacked all) around them (in this manner, the people of Makkah were always safe from attack). Do they believe in falsehood (their idols) and (thereby) show ingratitude (disbelief) for Allaah’s bounties (to them)? (Instead of worshipping Allaah Who secured this safety for them, they worship their idols instead.)

68. Who can be more unjust than he who invents (forges) lies against Allaah (by ascribing partners to Him) or rejects (completely) the truth when it comes to him? Is there not an abode for the Kaafiroon in Jahannam? (Jahannam shall certainly be their final destination.)

69. We shall definitely show Our avenues (of guidance and insight leading to Jannah) to those who exert themselves (strive) in Our cause (for Our Deen). Verily Allaah is certainly with those who do good (and will always assist them).