Summary of Juz 11

Surat al-Tawba continued

The goodness of the faithful

Whilst Surat al-Tawba exposes the wicked nature of the hypocrites, it honoured the true believers as Allah's property, "Repentant, worshippers, praise Allah, fast, bow, prostrate, enjoin good, forbid evil, and keep to the boundaries of Allah" (112). The loyal and dedicated companions are praised, "Allah is well pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him and He has prepared for them gardens with running streams where they will live forever; that is the greatest victory" (100).

The story of the three sincere Muslims who remained behind during the campaign of Tabuk. When the Prophet returned from Tabuk, he reprimanded them and no one was to speak to them for forty days. But eventually, they were forgiven. The surah takes its name, Al-Tawba, from Allah's acceptance of their repentance.

After congratulating the true Muslims on what they have achieved, the surah urges them to take the education of religion seriously: "A group from each community should stay behind to thoroughly understand the religion and warn their people when they return to them, so they shall be mindful (122)."

One cannot fail to notice a striking contrast between the opening passage of the surah and its ending. The beginning shows Allah's anger towards the disbelievers who breached treaties and the wretched hypocrites, while the ending shows kindness and the loving nature of the beloved Messenger ﷺ. In some ways explaining the paradox of war and peace, the harshness of the battlefield is a reality of life if its purpose is to establish justice and remove human suffering.

Surat Yunus – The Prophet Yunus

This is a late Makkan surah, revealed a year or so before the Hijrah in 622 CE. This is the first of the six Surahs named after a prophet. The others are Hud, Yusuf, Ibrahim, Muhammad and Nuh. The surah opens by asking why people are surprised that Allah sent the revelation to a human being. It continues, with the praise of Allah as the Creator of the universe and explains that the sun, the moon, and the established daily cycles of night and day on earth have been created with a purpose.

The central theme is the truthfulness of the glorious Quran. The Makkans demanded that the Quran be changed because it criticised their false beliefs and bogus religious practices, the reply was, "Who is more evil than the one who fabricates lies about Allah or denies His verses? Surely, the evil doers will not be successful" (17).

The human habit of turning to Allah in times of hardship is proof of "the inbuilt faith in Allah." This deep-rooted faith comes to the surface when we face hardships, we naturally turn to Allah but, as soon as the hardship is over, we return to the old ways. "He lets you travel by land and sea, when you are on board a ship, sailing joyfully along with a favourable wind, suddenly stormy winds blow, waves from every direction, they realise they are engulfed; now they pray to Allah, sincerely and faithfully, "If You save us from this, we will be forever grateful." However, no sooner does He rescue them then, without any right, they start to act disrespectfully (22 -23).

The temporary and fleeting nature of life is represented in the parable of the withered crops. "This worldly life is like the water We send down from the sky, it soaks the soil and grows the plants, that are eaten by people and livestock. They grow until the land takes on beautiful colours looking attractive, and its owner thinks he's got it! then Our command comes in a moment, and We leave it looking like stubble, as though it never existed yesterday" (23-24).

What is the reality of idols? They are "their imagined gods," (30) helpless and powerless. "Say, 'Can any of your idols begin the Creation and then recreate it?'" (34). If they can't then why don't they turn to Allah?

When they accused the Messenger ﷺ of making up the revelation and writing the Quran himself, the Prophet ﷺ was told to ask them, "Why don't you bring a chapter like it and call whoever you can to help you besides Allah if you are truthful" (38). When they persist in their accusations, the answer is, "You are being deaf, dumb and blind" (42). The Quran warns that past generations of disbelievers were severely punished, so be aware that you could be next.

The guidance of the Quran is in its life-changing teachings. It provides elegant solutions to human misery. "People, teachings from your Lord have come to you, healing for the diseases of the heart, a guidance and a kindness for the believers" (57).

The short passage from 61 to 63 vividly describes the qualities of Allah's friends. These are people with unshakeable faith, righteous deeds, and mindful of their duties towards Allah. Beware, Allah's friends have no fear, nor do they grieve. They believe and are mindful of Allah, for them are glad tidings in this worldly life and in the hereafter. There is no change to Allah's rulings; that's a great victory.

The stories of the prophets Nuh, Musa and Yunus are given as examples of past nations who refused to listen to their prophets. Each of them perished, so "listen or else you'll be sorted." Even the most arrogant and stubborn disbeliever, like the Pharaoh, eventually submitted when drowning. However, his repentance was not accepted as it was too late. "Today We shall preserve your body, as a warning sign for whoever comes after you. Unfortunately, many people are unaware of Our signs" (92). The remains of Pharaoh's body still lie in Cairo in the National Museum, a testimony to the truth of Quranic prediction.

The people of Yunus are marked out as people who repented on-mass: "There wasn't a single community who believed and benefited from its faith, except the people of Yunus.

When they believed, We took away humiliating punishment from them in this life and gave them the opportunity to enjoy till a set time" (98).

The surah ends with a persuasive instruction: religion is a serious commitment to Allah. "I have been ordered to be a believer and told, 'Keep your face directed towards the true religion, in tune with your nature, and don't be an idolater'" (104–105).