Summary of Juz 24

Surat Az-Zumar continued

Juz 24 continues with Surat Zumar. The unthankful person is selfish, follows whims and desires therefore, "The evil of what they did will distress them. The sinners will suffer the distress as a result of their deeds, and they won't escape" (51).

The final section of the Surah describes the way crowds of wicked people will be hurled into hell. The angels will ask, "Didn't messengers from among you come to recite your Lord's verses and warn you of the meeting on this Day?" (71). They will regretful. This is the purpose of presenting the Hereafter in the present: to jolt and awaken us. At the end, we read about the dignified entry of the believers into Paradise, with angels singing the praises of the Lord.

Surat al-Mumin – The believer

The next Surah is Surat al-Mumin, it opens with the claim, "This is a revelation from Allah the Almighty, the Knower" (2). The disbelievers denied this, so arguments from human history, experience and the natural world are presented. Their denial is based on false pride of knowledge and wealth, which deludes them. They mistakenly think material things will save them and that they have no need of the Almighty. Materialism is a strong attachment to worldly things to the extent that the people don't believe in anything other than the practical problems of their lives. "So, when Our Messengers came to them with clear signs, they smugly continued to enjoy their knowledge and eventually were engulfed by the punishment they mocked" (83).

The angels pray for the spiritually inclined: "Our Lord, everything is under the shade of Your Kindness and Knowledge, therefore forgive those who repent and follow your way and protect them from the punishment of Hell (7).

Scenes of Judgement Day describe Divine Justice in full swing. People's limbs testifying against them, people hurled into hellfire, angels scolding the people of hell and the graphic depictions of hellish torment – all combine to strike fear into the hearts of human beings.

Allah is Al-Mujeeb, the answerer, the responder; a lovely way of encouraging us to seek His Goodwill, Care and Friendliness. "Your Lord said, 'Call me, and I shall answer you'" (60). There are various stories, scenes and topics in the Surah with a common thread running through them all: Allah is the Almighty able to resurrect the dead.

Surat Ha Meem Sajdah

Juz 24 continues with Surat Ha Meem Sajdah, which was revealed in the middle Makkan period, after Hamza, the uncle of the Messenger ﷺ accepted Islam. Persecution against Muslims was at its worst. The acceptance of Islam by this prominent Quraysh leader strengthened the Muslims. The Quraysh held a meeting about the growing threat from Islam. Utbah ibn Rabiah, a leader, took the responsibility of 'striking a deal' with the Messenger ﷺ, so he went and said to him: My nephew…you have brought to your people something of grave concern whereby you have created a rift between the community… here is a proposal, see if you can accept it; if it is wealth that you seek then we will put together a fortune for you… if it is honour you seek we will make

you our overlord…and if it is that you cannot rid yourself of the spirit that appears to you, we will find the best physician until you are cured (Martin Lings).

The Prophet ﷺ said to him, "Father of Walid, now listen to me" and began reciting Surat Ha meem. Utbah was captivated as he listened attentively. When the Prophet ﷺ came to these words, "If they turn away say, 'I warned you of a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt of Ad and Thamud'" (13), Utbah put his finger on his mouth and requested him to stop reciting. On his return, Utbah told the Quraysh, "I've heard some words the like of which I've never heard before. It is not poetry, by God, neither is it sorcery nor a soothsaying…come not between this man and what he is about but let him be."

The Surah invites people to believe in Tawhid, Risalah and Akhirah. "This is a revelation from the Kind, the Caring; a book whose verses are clearly explained, an Arabic Quran for a people who have knowledge; it gives good news and warnings" (2–4). Why don't the disbelievers listen? Because they have locked minds and are intolerant. They should look at the wonderful signs of Allah's Majesty in nature. The power, wisdom, kindness, providence, organisation and management evident in the vast universe is a testimony that this is no drama or play of an imagined god, but the handiwork of the Almighty and the Knower.

The Quraysh are warned for their rudeness and rejection of the truth. Their arguments are refuted; Allah will raise dead bones to life, and a man can be Allah's messenger. They are warned: your behaviour is dangerous will have dreadful consequences. On that day even your ears, eyes and skin will bear witness against you.

The early Makkan Surahs are conversational and speak directly to the listeners, each listener is asked to think, reflect and interrogate himself, for example, it poses a question like, "Say, "Consider this:" or "Haven't you seen" or "Haven't you heard". This teaching style isn't about facts and figures but teaches critical thinking to raise awareness of the Reality.

The Quraysh were prompted by the Jews to ask, "What is the need for a new revelation when the Quran already accepts the Psalms and the Gospels as divine revelations?" The reply was, "We gave Musa the Book, but disagreement arose about that too" (45). The Messenger ﷺ is reassured, he has a lofty, pure, beneficial, life-changing message, and if ignorant people fail to listen, then his response should be dignified, gentle and forgiving.