

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful*

20th Taraweeh, Ramadan 1447 Hijri

Summary of Verses 41:1 to 43:89

Sura Fussilat – also known as Sura Ha-Mim Sajda - is a Makki Sura)

Sura Fussilat (Clearly Spelled Out) (Verses 41:1-54)

The Quran *"is a revelation from the Compassionate, the Merciful. It is a Book in which the verses are explained in detail, a Quran in Arabic for people of understanding. It proclaims good news and gives warnings ..."* (41:2-4)

Allah's Book is incorruptible. *"... It is a book of exalted power. No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it. It is sent down by One full of Wisdom, worthy of all Praise."* (41:42)

Those who reject Allah's universal Truth will meet the fate of their ancestors. Why were the people of 'Ad destroyed? *"They were arrogant in the land and would say, 'Who is mightier than us? ...'"* (41:15) Why were the people of Thamud destroyed? *"As for Thamud, We offered them guidance but they preferred to remain blind rather than be guided!"* (41:17)

Nations that follow in the footsteps of the 'Ad and the Thamud will encounter a similar fate. (Before pointing fingers at Western countries, Muslims should review the state of the world's approximately fifty+ Muslim-majority nations. These nations do not perform well by any standard of ethics, morality, governance, education, rule of law, or other criteria. Muslims need to address their own issues before blaming others.)

The limbs of those who disobey Allah will testify against them. *"The Day that the enemies of Allah will be gathered together to the fire, they will be*

*marched in ranks. At length, when they reach the fire, their hearing, their sight and their skins will bear witness against them as to all their deeds. They will say to their skins, 'Why do you bear witness against us?' They will say, 'We have been made to speak by Allah, Who causes all things to speak. He is the One Who created you in the first place and to Him will you return. When you used to conceal yourselves (while committing sins), you never thought your ears or your eyes or your skins would bear witness against you. You assumed that Allah did not know what you did. It was that false assumption you entertained about your Lord that has brought about your doom, so you have become losers.'* (41:19-23)

These verses tell us that the Hereafter will be both a spiritual and physical realm where humans will be resurrected with the same body and soul they had on earth. After all, the limbs of humans can only testify in the Hereafter if they match the limbs during their earthly lives.

Note the similarity of these verses with a verse in Sura Noor: "*On the Day their tongues, hands, and feet will testify against them for what they used to do*" (24:24) and this verse from Sura Ya-Sin: "*That Day We shall seal their mouths. But their hands will speak to Us and their feet bear witness to all that they did.*" (36:65). Other verses that indicate the unification of body and soul include Sura Isra 17:49-51, 98, Sura Muminun 23:35-38, 82-83, Sura Sajdah 32:10, Sura Ya-Sin 36:78-79, Sura Saffat 37:16-18, Sura Waqiah 56:47-50 and Sura Naziat 79:10-14.

From a holistic perspective, these verses tell us that the bodies, senses, and faculties of the mind will bear witness against those who misuse these gifts from Allah. Conversely, the sensory organs and their intellectual and emotional counterparts will elevate those in the Sight of Allah who prove themselves worthy of these gifts.

Good and evil cannot be equal. Believers are exhorted to *"repel evil with what is better."* (41:34) When they do, love and friendship can replace hatred and animosity. *"And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint, none but persons of the highest good fortune."* (41:35)

Fighting evil with better actions can be difficult for people who think about or turn to revenge when they are wronged. However, this is what the Quran teaches us to do. Revenge might bring short-term satisfaction, but it leads to corruption and is ultimately self-defeating. *"And if at any time an incitement to discord is made to you by the Evil one, seek refuge in Allah. He is the One Who hears and knows all things."* (41:36)

The motif of rain is used throughout the Quran to illustrate Allah's creativity in resurrecting the dead. *"And among His Signs in this: You see the earth barren and desolate, but when We send down rain to it, it is stirred to life and yields increase. Truly, He Who gives life to the dead earth can surely give life to men who are dead. He has power over all things."* (41:39)

Our fickle nature, pride, arrogance and solipsism stand in the way of our spiritual growth: *"Man does not tire of asking for good things, but if any ill touches him, he gives up all hope and is lost in despair. When We give him a taste of some mercy from Us after some adversity has touched him, he is sure to say, 'This is due to my merit' ... When We bestow some favors on man, he turns away and becomes remote, and when evil seizes him, he is full of prolonged prayer!"* (41:50-52)

Each of us should ask: Do these verses apply to me? If so, we need to change our ways and habits to deserve Allah's blessings. And what better month than Ramadan for self-renewal?

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(Sura Shura is a Makki Sura)

Sura Ash-Shura (Consultation) (Verses 42:1-53)

Islam endorsed and revived earlier religions: *"The same religion has He established for you that which He enjoined on Nuh. And what We have revealed to you was what we enjoined on Ibrahim, Musa, and Isa. You should remain steadfast in religion and make no divisions therein. The polytheists will find it harder to respond to your call. Allah brings closer to Him whomever He wills and He guides those who turn to Him in repentance."* (42:13)

The Quran provides us with the criteria to judge all questions of right and wrong. We should regularly use our faculties to apply these criteria, because judgment may arrive unexpectedly: *"It is Allah Who has sent down the Book in truth, and the balance, and what will make you realize that perhaps the Hour is close at hand?"* (42:17)

In His infinite wisdom and as a sign of His mercy, Allah knows that fulfilling every want and need in our hearts during different phases of our lives, even for the righteous and conscientious, can be harmful. So He provides enough to meet our needs as He sees fit, but not so much that it could lead to pride and downfall. *"If Allah were to enlarge the provision of His Servants, they would indeed transgress beyond all bounds throughout the earth. He sends it down in due measure as He pleases, as He is well-acquainted with His servants and is watchful."* (42:27)

As a prerequisite for fostering personal and social development and preventing social decline, the Sura lists nine qualities that the community of believers must fulfill: *"Whatever has been bestowed upon you is but the enjoyment of this fleeting life. Better and more enduring is Allah's reward for*

*those who ... (42:36-39):*

- 1) believe
- 2) put trust in Allah
- 3) avoid major sins and indecencies
- 4) when angry, willing to forgive
- 5) respond to the call of the Lord
- 6) observe prayers
- 7) conduct affairs by mutual consultation
- 8) spend out of what We have given them for sustenance
- 9) when oppressed, resist and where possible, fight back

Notice the importance of conducting affairs through mutual consultation - *amruhum shura baynahum* - in verse 42:38. It clearly states that those in power and authority must make decisions by consulting with those they govern. This forms the fundamental basis for Islamic governance. However, the idea of conducting affairs through mutual consultation is equally crucial within families. A tyrant in the family, often the husband or father, damages society just as much in the long run as a dictator who rules by fiat or force.

Patience and forgiveness are extolled as exemplary virtues: *"The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto in degree: but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah, for Allah loves not those who do wrong"* (42:40) And again, *"But indeed if any show patience and forgive, that would truly be an exercise of courageous will and resolution in the conduct of affairs."* (42:43)

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) received the first revelation of the Quran through angel Jibreel gradually over twenty-three years. This began during Ramadan in 610, when he was forty, and continued until his death in 632. The Quran is the Light by which Allah guides His servants: *"And thus have We, by Our command, sent inspiration to you. You did not know before what*

*was revelation and what was faith. But We have made the Quran a Light by which We guide such of Our servants as We will. And surely you do guide people to the Straight Path."* (42:52)

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(Sura Zukhruf is a Makki Sura)

Sura Zukhruf (Gold Ornaments) (Verses 43:1-89)

The Sura opens with the eternal nature of the Quran: *"By the Book that makes things clear, We have made it a Quran in Arabic, that you may be able to understand, and surely, it is the Mother of the Book, with Us, high in dignity, full of wisdom."* (43:1-4)

The Sura exposes the contradiction that characterizes unbelievers: *"If you were to question them 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' they would be sure to reply, 'They were created by Him, the Exalted in Power, Full of Knowledge.'" (43:9)* The same contradiction is expressed in verse (43:87): *"If you ask them Who created them, they will certainly say, 'Allah!' How then can they turn away from Him?"*

Assigning divinity to anyone or anything, such as wealth, power, intellect, etc., other than Allah, is not only spiritually harmful but also logically foolish. During the Prophet's (s.a.w) time, the Arabs acknowledged that the heavens and the earth were created by "The Almighty, the Omniscient," yet they still worshipped idols. Why? Because *"... The wealthy ones among them said, 'we found our forefathers following a certain religion and we guide ourselves by their footsteps!'" (43:23)*

Blindly following the past in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary implies sealed hearts and minds that only humility and a sincere quest for true knowledge can unseal.

Allah provides us sustenance according to His wisdom, but His mercy exceeds any worldly wealth: *"It is We Who portion out between them their livelihood in the life of this world. And we raise some of them above others in ranks, so that some may command work from others. But the mercy of your Lord is better than the wealth they amass."* (43:32)

The corrosive effect of wealth and power is illustrated in the encounter between Musa and the Pharaoh. Musa (AS) urged the Pharaoh to believe in One God and desist from oppressing the people. In his arrogant refusal, the Pharaoh declared, *"O my people! Is the kingdom of Egypt not mine, and are these rivers not flowing at my feet? Can you not see this? Am I not better than this insignificant, powerless man who can scarcely express himself clearly? Where are his golden bracelets and why are no angels sent down to accompany and support him?"* (43:51-53)

All his gold could not save Pharaoh, whose pride and arrogance sank with him to the bottom of the sea. One is reminded of the poem by 18th-century English poet Thomas Gray: *"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,/And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,/Awaits alike th' inevitable hour./The paths of glory lead but to the grave."*

What did Prophet Isa (RA) proclaim? *"... Allah, He is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is the Straight Path."* (43:64)

We demonstrate our devotion and service to Allah by believing in His Signs, which involves understanding and accepting His Will, and by aligning our will completely with His Universal Will. If we attain this goal, we will experience the ultimate success - eternal bliss - because of the good lives we lead on earth. *"My devotees! No fear shall be upon you today, nor shall you grieve, those who have believed in our Signs and submitted to Us. Enter the*

*Garden, you and your spouses, rejoicing ..." (43:68-70) "Such will be the Garden, of which you are made heirs for your good deeds in life." (43:72)*

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