

SPREAD KNOWLEDGE

THE
HOLY QURAN

ENGLISH TAFSEER
CHAPTER 61
SURAH AS-SAF

COMMENTARY & EXPLANATORY

By
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HOLY QURAN

CHAPTER

061

SURAH AS-SAF

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Introduction and Summary

This is the fifth Surah of the of series of short Madinah Surahs beginning with Surah 57. Its subject matter is the need of discipline, practical work, and self-sacrifice in the cause of Ummah. Its date is uncertain, but it was probably shortly after the battle of Uhud, which was fought in Shawal, A.H. 3.

Summary- Allah's Glory shines through all Creation: but that discipline can you show to back your words with action? What lessons can you learn from the stories of Moses and Jesus? Help the Cause, and Allah's help will come with glorious results (61:1-14, and C. 240).

C.240 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

*Allah's glory shines through all the universe
What deeds of unity and discipline,
Of love and righteousness, have you
To show in conduct? Or do you
Only mock and insult the messengers
As they did of old? Nay, trust in Allah
And strive your utmost in His Cause.
Little have you to give, but glorious
Is the reward that Allah will give you---
Now and in the Eternal Life to come!*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

سَبِّحْ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ...

1. Whatever is in the heavens and on earth, let it declare the Praises and Glory of Allah:

C5431. This verse is identical with 59:1.

The latter illustrated the theme of the wonderful working of Allah's providence in defeating the wives of His enemies. Here the same theme is illustrated by showing the need for unshaken discipline if we are to receive the help of Allah.

... وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (١)

for He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لِمَ تَقُوْلُوْنَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ (٢)

2. O ye who believe! why say ye that which ye do not?

C5432. At **Uhud** there was some disobedience and therefore breach of discipline. People had talked much, but had failed to back up their resolution in words with firmness in action. See n. 442 و 3:121. But on all

occasions when men's deeds are not commensurate with their words, their conduct is odious in the sight of Allah, and it is only due to Allah's Mercy if they are saved from disaster.

كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ (٣)

3. Grievously odious is it in the sight of Allah that ye say that which ye do not.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا كَأَنَّهُمْ بُنْيَانٌ مَرْصُومٌ (٤)

4. Truly Allah loves those who fight in His Cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure.

C5433. A battle array, in which a large number of men stand, march, or hold together against assault as if they were a solid wall, is a striking example of order, discipline, cohesion, and courage.

"A solid cemented structure" is even a better simile than the usual "solid wall" as the "structure" or building implies a more diversified organisation held together in unity and strength, each part contributing strength in its own way, and the whole held together not like a mass but like a living organism. Cf. also 37:I and n. 4031.

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ ...

5. And remember, Moses said to his people:

C5434. The people of Moses often rebelled against him, vexed his spirit, and insulted him. See 33:69, n. 3774, and (in the Old Testament) Num 12:1-13.

They did it not through ignorance, but from a selfish, perverse, and rebellious spirit, for which they received punishment. The Ummah of Islam should remember and take note of it, and should avoid any deviation from the Law and Will of Allah.

... يَا قَوْمِ لِمَ تُؤْذُونَنِي وَقَدْ تَعْلَمُونَ أَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ ...

"O my people!

why do ye vex and insult me, though ye know that I am the messenger of Allah (sent) to you?"

فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا أَزَاغَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ ...

Then when they went wrong, Allah let their hearts go wrong:

C5435. The sinner's own will deviates, i.e., goes off from the right way, and he does wrong. That means that he shuts off Allah's grace. Allah then, after his repeated rebellion, withdraws the protecting Grace from him, and the sinner's heart is tainted: there is "a disease in his heart", which is the centre of his being: his spiritual state is ruined. Allah's guidance is withdrawn from him.

... وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ (٥)

for Allah guides not those who are rebellious transgressors.

وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ ...

6. And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "O Children of Israel! I am the messenger of Allah (sent) to you

C5436. The mission of Jesus was to his own people, the Jews.

Cf. Matt. 10:5-6.

See also Matt. 15:24: "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of Israel;"

also Matt. 15:26: "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs."

... مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ ...

confirming the Law (which came) before me,

C5437. Cf. Matt. 5:17.

... وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ ...

and giving glad Tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be **Ahmad**."

C5438. "**Ahmad**", or "**Muhammad**", the Praised One, is almost a translation of the Greek word Periclytos.

In the present Gospel of John. 14:16, 15:26, and 16:7, the word "**Comforter**" in the English version is for the Greek word "Paracletos", which means "Advocate", "one

called to the help of another, a kind friend", rather than "Comforter".

Our doctors contend that Paracleots is a corrupt reading for Periclytos, and that in their original saying of Jesus there was a prophecy of our holy Prophet Ahmad by name. Even if we read Paraclete, it would apply to the holy Prophet, who is "a Mercy for all creatures" (21:107) and "most kind and merciful to the Believers" (9:128).

See also n. 416 to 3:81.

... فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ...

But when he came to them with Clear Signs,

C5439. Our holy Prophet was foretold in many ways; and when he came, he showed forth many Clear Signs, for his whole life from beginning to end was one vast miracle. He fought and won against odds. Without learning from men he taught the highest wisdom. He melted hearts that were hard, and he strengthened hearts that were tender and required support. In all his sayings and doings men of discernment could see the working of Allah's hand; yet the ignorant Unbelievers called it all Sorcery!-called that unreal which became the most solid fact of human history!

... قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ (٦)

they said, "This is evident sorcery!"

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذِبَ وَهُوَ يُدْعَىٰ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ ...

7. Who doth greater wrong than one who invents falsehood against Allah, even as he is being invited to Islam?

C5440. It is wrong in any case to uphold falsehoods and debasing superstitions, but it is doubly wrong when these are put forward in rivalry or opposition to the light of eternal Unity and Harmony which is Islam. Allah sends His guidance freely, but withdraws His Grace from those who willfully do wrong.

... وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ (٧)

And Allah guides not those who do wrong.

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ ...

8. Their intention is to extinguish Allah's Light (by blowing) with their mouths:

C5441. Allah's Light is unquenchable. A foolish, ignorant person who thinks of extinguishing it is like a rustic who wants to blow out electric light as he might blow out a rush candle! "With their mouths" also implies the babble and cackle of Ignorance against Allah's Truth. The more the foolish ones try to quench Allah's Light, the clearer it shines, to shame them!

... وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ (٨)

but Allah will complete (the revelation of) His Light, even though the Unbelievers may detest (it).

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ ...

9. It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth,

... لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَىٰ الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ (٩)

that he may proclaim it **over all religion**, even though the Pagans may detest (it).

C5442. "Over all religion": in the singular: not over all other religions, in the plural. There is really only one true Religion, the Message of Allah submission to the Will of Allah: this is called Islam.

It was the religion preached by Moses and Jesus; it was the religion of Abraham, Noah, and all the prophets, by whatever name it may be called.

If people corrupt that pure light, and call their religions by different names, we must bear with them, and we may allow the names for convenience. But Truth must prevail over all.

See also 9:33, (n. 1290), and 48:28, n. 4912.

Section 2

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ (١٠)

10. O ye who believe! shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous Penalty? --

C5443. Tijarat: bargain, trade, traffic, transaction: something given or done, in return for something which we desire to get.

What we give or do on our part is described in verse 11 below, and what we get is described in verse 12.

It is truly a wonderful bargain: what we are asked to give is so little; what we are promised in return is so much. There comes Allah's unbounded Bounty and Munificence.

Cf. also 9:111, where the bargain is stated in another way.

تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ ...

11. - That ye believe in Allah and His Messenger,
- and that ye strive (your utmost) in the Cause of Allah, with your property and your persons:

... ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (١١)

that will be best for you, if ye but knew!

C5444. It would indeed be a great and wonderful bargain to give so little and get so much, if we only knew and understood the comparative value of things-,the sacrifice of our fleeting advantages for forgiveness, the love of Allah, and eternal bliss.

يَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلُكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ...

12. He will forgive you your sins, and admit you to Gardens beneath which rivers flow,

... وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ (١٢)

and to beautiful mansions in Gardens of Eternity:

that is indeed the supreme Achievement.

وَأُخْرَىٰ تُحِبُّونَهَا نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (١٣)

13. And another (favor will He bestow), which ye do love -- help from Allah and a speedy victory: so give the Glad Tidings to the Believers.

C5445. The supreme Achievement has already been mentioned viz.; the Gardens of Eternity with Allah. But lest that seem too remote or abstract for the understanding of men not strong in faith, another good news is mentioned which the men who first heard this Message could at once understand and appreciate-"which ye do love":

viz.: **Help and Victory.** For all striving in a righteous Cause we get Allah's help: and however much the odds against us may be, we are sure of victory with Allah's help. But all life is a striving or struggle,-the spiritual life even more than any other; and the final victory there is the same as the Garden of Eternity.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا أَنْصَارَ اللَّهِ ...

14. O ye who believe! be ye helpers of Allah:

C5446. If we seek Allah's help, we must first help Allah's Cause, i.e., dedicate ourselves to Him entirely and without reserve. This was also the teaching of Jesus, as mentioned in this verse.

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matt. 16:24).

... كَمَا قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ لِلْحَوَارِيِّينَ ...

as said Jesus, the son of Mary, to the Disciples,

C5447. See 3:52, and n. 392; and for the Biblical reference, see the last note.

... مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ ...

"Who will be my helpers to (the work of) Allah?"

The names of the twelve Disciples will be found in Matt. 10:2-4.

... قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ ...

Said the Disciples, "We are Allah's helpers!"

... فَأَمَّنَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَكَفَرَتِ طَائِفَةٌ ...

Then a portion of the Children of Israel believed, and a portion disbelieved:

... فَأَيَّدْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَىٰ عَدُوِّهِمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا ظَاهِرِينَ (١٤)

but We gave power to those who believed against their enemies, and they became the ones that prevailed.

C5448. A portion of the Children of Israel-the one that really cared for Truth-believed in Jesus and followed his guidance. But the greater portion of them were hard hearted, and remained in their beaten track of formalism and false racial pride.

The majority seemed at first to have the upper hand when they thought they had crucified Jesus and killed his Message. But they were soon brought to their senses.

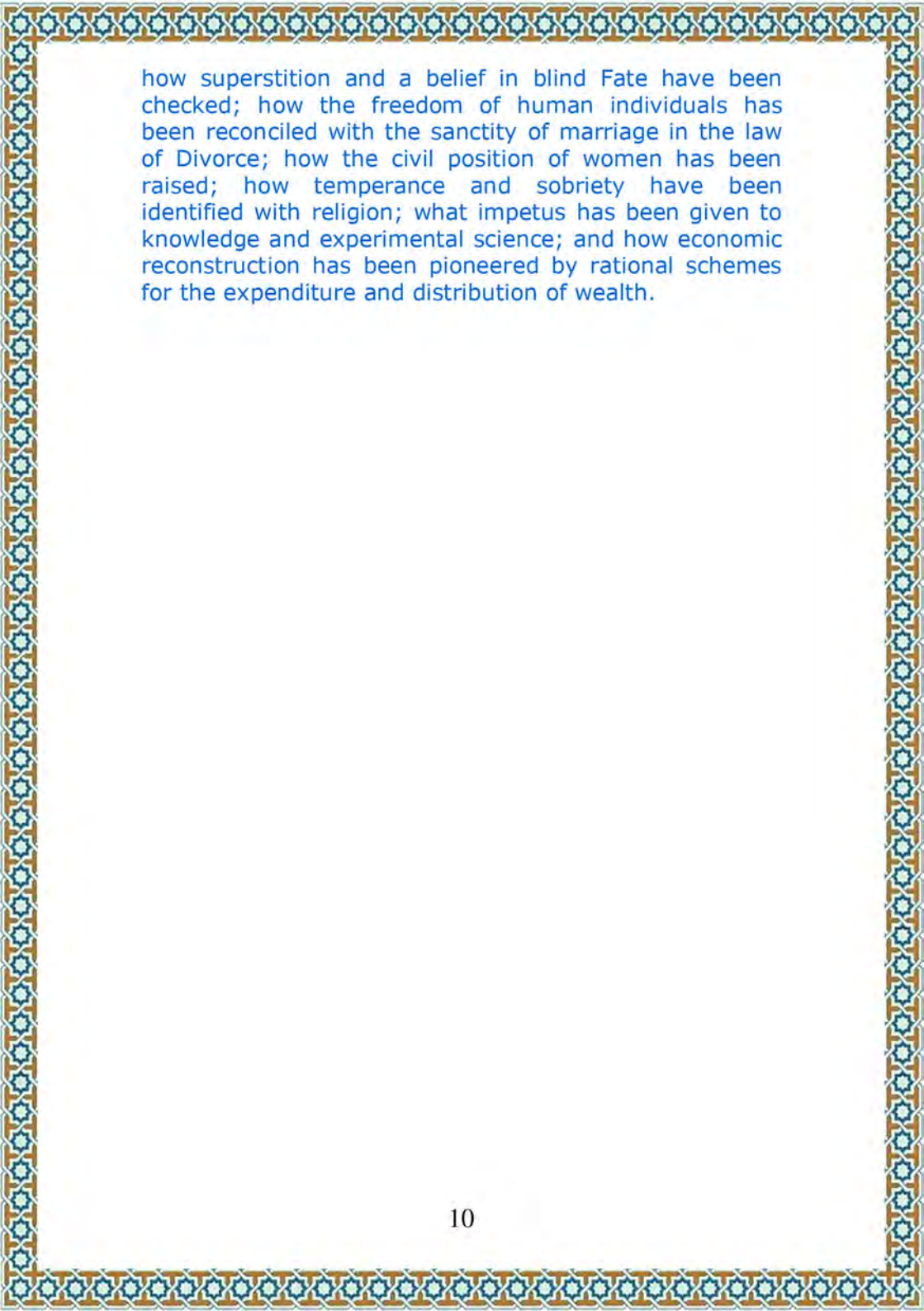
Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus in A.D. 70 and the Jews have been scattered ever since. "The Wandering Jew" has become a bye-word in many literatures.

On the other hand, those who followed Jesus permeated the Roman Empire, brought many new races within their circle, and through the Roman Empire, Christianity became the predominant religion of the world until the advent of Islam.

So is it promised to the people of Islam: they must prevail if they adhere to the Truth. Badr (A.H. 2) was a landmark against Pagan Arabia; Qadisiya (A.H. 14) and Madain (A.H. 16) against the might of Persia: Yarmuk (A.H. 15) against the might of the Byzantine Empire in Christian Syria; and Heliopolis (A.H. 19) against the same Empire in Christian Egypt and Africa.

These were symbols in external events.

The moral and spiritual landmarks are less tangible, and more gradual, but none the less real. Mark how the arrogance and power of Priesthood have been quelled;



how superstition and a belief in blind Fate have been checked; how the freedom of human individuals has been reconciled with the sanctity of marriage in the law of Divorce; how the civil position of women has been raised; how temperance and sobriety have been identified with religion; what impetus has been given to knowledge and experimental science; and how economic reconstruction has been pioneered by rational schemes for the expenditure and distribution of wealth.