

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*All Praises to Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful*

23rd Taraweeh, Ramadan 1446 Hijri

Summary of Verses 57:1-60:13

(Sura Hadid is a Madani Sura)

Sura Al-Hadid (Iron) (Verses 57:1-29)

Allah is Omniscient: *"He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden, and He has full knowledge of all things."* (57:3)

Sura Hadid connects our faith to the fundamental importance of charity.

*"Believe in Allah and His messenger and spend in charity out of what He has put in your trust; for those of you who believe and give in charity will have a great reward."* (57:7) Again, *"Who is it that will loan to Allah a beautiful loan? Allah will increase it manifold to his credit, and he will have besides a noble reward."* (57:11) And again, *"For those who give to charity, men, and women, and loan to Allah a beautiful loan, it shall be increased manifold to their credit, and they shall also have a noble reward."* (57:18)

These verses suggest that charity and loan to Allah can be considered synonymous. (Note the similarity with verse 2:245: *Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will return.*)

The Quran is a non-linear Book in which similar themes occur with subtle variations in different Suras, a manifestation of its linguistic miracle.

The contrast between the fates of believers and hypocrites is starkly drawn in verses (57:12-15) when the Day of Judgment arrives: *"The day shall you*



*see the believing men and the believing women, how their Light runs before them ..."* while the hypocrites will be separated from believers by a wall into a space where there will be no mercy, only punishment. Their "false desires" and the top deceiver (Shaitan) "deceived you in respect of Allah" to place them in an "evil refuge."

The obsessive pursuit of worldly gains can lead us astray: *"Know that the life of this world is but a play and a passing delight and the cause of your boastful competition with one another, and your greed for more and more riches and children ... the life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of self-delusion ... so compete with one another in seeking to attain your Sustainer's forgiveness and thus to a paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth ..."* (57:20-21)

However, we are also told to *"not despair over matters that pass you by, nor exult over favors bestowed upon you, for Allah does not love boasters."* (57:23) The righteous person devoted to doing good neither covets nor boasts, neither despairs nor exults. (Any exultation over gains in the material world - a promotion, a win, an award - can be particularly insidious in that it can tempt believers into thinking that they are the authors of their success and not Allah, which inevitably leads to deception, dissatisfaction, and delusion.)

The purpose of revelation is clear: *"We sent Our messengers with clear signs and sent down with them the Book and the balance of right and wrong, so that people may stand for justice, and We sent down iron, in which there is material for war as well as many benefits for mankind ..."* (57:25)



The reference to iron is instructive. The power inherent in natural elements, whether iron or uranium or silicon can, if harnessed for destructive rather than beneficial ends, destroy man's sensitivity toward other creatures. It is to warn man of this danger that the Quran symbolically stresses the potential "evil" of iron if put to wrong use. At one extreme, technology, with its attendant mechanization, can reduce man to a cipher; at the other extreme, it breeds hubris. In Islam, knowledge that gives man a false sense of sovereignty over Allah's creation is morally indefensible. Rational inquiry must be shaped by moral and ethical considerations; knowledge is to be sought for glorifying Allah and for fulfilling man's responsibility toward His creation.

Note also that the reference to iron is placed *after* references to Allah's messengers, the Quran, and the virtues of balance and justice. It suggests that whatever we do to benefit ourselves, the community, and society at large, must be done in the light of Islam. If we do not use Allah's gift in the light of the Quran and the quest for balance and justice, the benefits may turn into harm. The more we think we are the authors of our gifts and not Allah, the more we will end up damaging and diminishing ourselves. If we think of doing anything beneficial, we must think of how Islam instructs us to proceed. What we do must reflect the values that Islam teaches, even if there is no associated material gain.

We are reminded of the purpose of life, the only purpose that can elevate everything we do: "... *the seeking of the good pleasure of Allah ...*" (57:27), a continuation of what we read in verse (9:72).

(Sura Mujadilah is a Madani Sura)

Sura Al-Mujadilah (The Pleading Woman) (Verses 58:1-22)

The Sura deals with various aspects of family life, especially the question of



divorce and its rules and regulations. Severe warnings are issued against all false claims and accusations, especially those that damage a woman's reputation.

Allah is Omniscient. He knows what is in our hearts, what motivates us and why we do what we do. On the Day of Judgment, He will tell us everything that we have done: "... *In the end, He will tell them what they did on the Day of Judgment, for Allah has full knowledge of all things.*" (58:7)

(This theme, that on the Day of Judgment Allah will tell us the truth of everything we did in our earthly lives, occurs in several verses of the Quran: (5:48), (5:105), (6:60), (6:108), (6:159), (6:164), (9:94), (9:105), (10:23), (31:15), (31:23), (58:7), (62:8), (64:7) and (75:13). In our earthly lives, we may hide our real motives and pretend to virtues we do not have. Others may attribute virtues to us that we do not possess, yet come to believe them. We may be biased in our evaluation of others. We may forget what we ought to remember and remember what we ought to forget. False hopes and desires may lead us to unfair practices. The results of our plots and plans will be visible to us. We will clearly see our interior lives then, which we rarely glimpsed or had insights into in our earthly lives. Those who oppress others or engage in fraud, exploitation and other sins may remain unpunished in this world – and many do remain unpunished in this world – but they will pay for their wickedness on the Day of Judgment. By the same token, those who were good and noble and yet suffered pain and losses in this world will find their redemption on the Day of Judgment. On that Day, all the worldly flaws will be corrected and proper values restored.)

Allah commands us to shun secret counsels that promote injustice and oppression. These are inspired by Shaitan. However, secret counsels that promote righteousness and self-restraint are approved. (58:9-10) "O you



*who believe, when you converse privately, do not converse about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger but converse about righteousness and piety. And be mindful Allah, unto whom you will be gathered."* (58:9) Note that in this verse, the word "Taqwa" (mindfulness of Allah at all times accompanied by good deeds) is invoked twice for emphasis. ("Taqwa" is also invoked twice in verse (59:18))

The party of Shaitan, comprising those submitting to the seductive call of the Shaitan and thus forgetting to remember Allah, will be the ultimate losers. *"Shaitan has got better of them, so he has made them forget the remembrance of Allah. They are the party of Shaitan. Truly, it is the party of Shaitan that will lose."* (58:19)

In contrast, the Party of Allah is the party that will achieve the ultimate success: *"You shall not find those who believe in Allah and the Last Day loving those who antagonize Allah and His messenger, even though they are their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their nearest kindred. Allah has inscribed faith in their hearts and strengthened them with a spirit of His own, and He will admit them to gardens in which rivers flow, where they will dwell forever. Allah is well pleased with them, and they are well pleased with Him. They are the Party of Allah, and Allah's Party shall surely triumph."* (58:22)

Note the sublime symmetry of the Quran. In (58:19), the losing "party of Shaitan" is invoked twice to emphasize its ultimate loser status while in (58:22), the winning "Party of Allah" is also invoked twice to emphasize its ultimate winner status.

(Sura Hashr is a Madani Sura)

Sura Al-Hashr (The Gathering) (Verses 59:1-24)

The Sura refers to the conflict between the young Muslim community and a



Jewish tribe in Madinah, and the subsequent banishment of the latter. Historical references in the Quran always illustrate eternal spiritual truths: Believers, even if they are fewer in number, wealth or weapons, will triumph over their adversaries, so long as they remain conscious of Allah, act on His command, and are not motivated by personal glory or power.

The Sura begins with the declaration of Allah's Omnipotence and Omniscience: *"Whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares the praises and glory of Allah, for He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise."* (59:1)

The importance of fair distribution of wealth among people through charity is emphasized: *"... the needy and the wayfarer, so that it (wealth) may not make a circuit between the wealthy among you ..."* (59:7) Using capital to build more capital at the expense of the working class and the poor is the bane of modern capitalism. In that sense, Islam is anti-capitalist in that believers are commanded not to hoard wealth but to keep wealth flowing between all members of society through year-round charity or *sadaqah*. It is important to remember that the biggest beneficiary of our charity is our own soul.

The Sura tells believers how to conduct their lives on earth in the context of the Hereafter: *"O you who believe! Remain conscious of Allah and let every soul look to what provision he has sent forth for the morrow. Yes, remain conscious of Allah, for Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do. Do not be like those who have forgotten Allah, so that He has caused them to forget themselves. They are rebellious transgressors."* (59:18-19)

(Sending provision for the morrow (Hereafter) can come from simple, daily acts. Halal earnings to support one's family is one. Smiling at others, which is charity, is another. Removing a harmful object from someone's path is yet another. We can engage in many simple acts of kindness and generosity



daily to increase our provisions for the Hereafter. On the other hand, forgetting Allah leads to forgetting oneself, which in turn leads to drifting away from life's ultimate purpose, which is to please Allah. As in (58:9), the word "*Taqwa*" – a constant awareness of Allah that reflects not only in feelings and emotions but also in action - is invoked twice in verse 59:18 to emphasize its importance).

As in the opening verse (59:1) of Sura Hashr, verses (59:22-24) list Allah's sublime attributes conveyed through some of His Ninety-Nine Names: "*Allah is He, other than Whom there is no God, Who knows all things secret and open. He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Allah is He, other than Whom there is no God, the Sovereign, the Holy, the Source of Peace, the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Justly Proud. Glory to Allah, high above the partners they attribute to Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Originator, the Fashioner. To Him belongs the Most Beautiful Names. Whatever is in the heavens and on earth declare His Praises and Glory. And He is the Exalted, in Might, the Wise.*"

(Sura Mumtahana is a Madani Sura)

Sura Al-Mumtahanah (The Examined One) (Verses 60:1-13)

The Sura addresses the challenges posed by believers interacting with unbelievers, particularly regarding questions of trust and loyalty. Although the injunctions were set in a historical context, they have a bearing on the behavior of believers at all times.

The example of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) is held up as a model: "*You have an admirable example in Ibrahim and his followers who said to their people, 'We are clear of you and of all that you worship besides Allah ... Our Lord! In You we put our trust and to You we turn in repentance. To you is our final*



*return.” (60:4) (Compare this with (9:114)) They further prayed, ‘Our Lord! Make us not a test and trial for the unbelievers but forgive us, our Lord, for You are truly the Exalted in Might, the Wise.’ (60:5)*

(Verses (60:4) and (60:5) contain Duas that we should frequently recite.)

A believer’s “... *hope is in Allah and the Last Day, but if any turn away, truly Allah is free of all wants, worthy of all praise.*” (60:6) Notice how hope in Allah and belief in the Hereafter go together. We also learned in (18:46) that good deeds are the foundation of hope in Allah. We should strive for a holistic understanding of Quranic verses, verses that connect across the Suras, for a deeper understanding of Allah’s Words and Commands.

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