

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(All Praises to Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful)

24th Taraweeh, Ramadan 1446 Hijri

Summary of Verses 61:1-72:29

(Sura Saff is a Madani Sura)

Sura As-Saff (The Ranks) (Verses 61:1-14)

Unless faith is backed by action, it is a flimsy faith. Merely uttering words without doing the deeds they demand is hypocrisy. *"O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? Grievously odious it is in the sight of Allah that you say that which you do not do."* (61:2-3)

How should believers conduct their lives to achieve ultimate success? *"O you who believe! Shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a severe penalty? That you believe in Allah and His Messenger, and that you strive your utmost in the cause of Allah with your property and your persons. That would be best for you if you but knew! He will forgive you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow and to beautiful mansions in gardens of eternity. That is indeed the supreme achievement."* (61:10-12)

It is the nearness to Allah and His pleasure that are the highest aspirations of believers, not the accumulation of wealth or power or other forms of worldly success.

(Sura Jumuah is a Madani Sura)

Sura al-Jumuah (The Congregation) (Verses 62:1-11)

Normally we find two Names of Allah mentioned in any given verse of the Quran: For example, *Bismillaah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim* (the Beneficent, the Merciful) or *Allahu la illaha illa huwal hayyul qayyum* (There is no God but He, the Living, the Eternal, as in 2:255).

But this Sura begins with four Names of Allah: 1) *al-Malik* (the Sovereign), 2) *al-Quddus* (the Pure), 3) *al-Azeez* (the Exalted in Might), 4) *al-Hakeem* (the Wise).

*"Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is exalting Allah, the Sovereign, the Pure, the Exalted in Might, the Wise." (62:1)*

It is immediately followed by a verse that names four attributes of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w): 1) a messenger who recites His verses 2) Purifies them 3) Teaches them the Book 4) Teaches them wisdom.

*"It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom." (62:2)*

The two verses reflect the sublime symmetry of the Quran, evoking its linguistic miracle.

Friday is the most important day of the week for Muslims. It is the day when the universality of Islam is most evident. Believers bathe, put on their best clothes and proceed to their local mosques, hope rising in their hearts as they pray and seek Allah's blessings together as a community. *"O you who believe! When the call is proclaimed to prayer on Friday, hasten earnestly to the remembrance of Allah, and leave off business and traffic. That is best for you if you but knew! And when the prayer is finished, you may disperse through the land and seek the bounty of Allah and celebrate the praises of Allah often so that you may prosper." (62:9-10)*

Among the early Muslims, some hastily left the mosque on learning of the arrival of trade caravans in Madinah so they could engage in trading and commerce for worldly gains and pleasures. The Quran censures their action:

*"But when they see some bargain or some amusement, they disperse headlong to it, and leave you standing. Say: 'The blessing from the presence of Allah is better than any amusement or bargain! And Allah is the Best to provide for all needs.'"* (62:11)

(The censure and the lessons are timeless. How often have we hurriedly left the Jumuah prayers - seeking a bargain here or a diversion there, hurrying to order sale items online that someone just talked about - forgetting that Allah is the best provider of our needs? A more serious problem is the indifference we sometimes show toward the Jumuah prayer itself. Without giving it a second thought, we 'cancel' it because it conflicts with our schedule, such as meeting with a client or seeing a doctor. In most cases, these appointments can be rescheduled or delayed by a few hours to enable us to attend the Jumuah prayers. A Jumuah missed is a Jumuah lost forever.)

(Sura Munafiqun is a Madani Sura)

Sura Al-Munafiqun (The Hypocrites) (Verses 63:1-11)

Believers must guard themselves against the wiles and mischief of hypocrites who seek to distract them from the straight path. What are some of the characteristics of hypocrites? *"When you look at them, their exteriors please you; and when they speak, you listen to their words. They are as worthless as hollow pieces of timber propped up, unable to stand on their own. They think that every cry is against them ..."* (63:4)

For believers, acting reflexively is not sufficient. We must be proactive and strive to make the best use of our time on earth, for there is no going back to correct our mistakes once life on earth ends. *"O you who believe! Let not your riches nor your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. Those who do so will indeed be the losers. And spend something in charity out of the substance which We have bestowed on you, before death should*

*come to any of you and he should say, 'O my Lord! If only you grant me a delay for a short while, I could give in charity and be among the righteous. But to no soul will Allah grant respite when the time appointed for it has come. And Allah is well acquainted with all that you do.'"* (63:9-11)

(Sura Taghabun is a Madani Sura)

Sura At-Taghabun (Loss and Gain) (Verses 64:1-18)

Although everything in the heavens and on earth praises Allah, it is a different story for humans: *"It was He who created you. Some of you disbelieve and some believe, and Allah is aware of all that you do."* (64:2)

Two traits of unbelievers through the ages have been their arrogance in rejecting faith and their denial of life after death. *"The unbelievers claim they shall not be raised to life. Say, 'By my Lord, you shall certainly be raised to life and you shall be told of all that you have done. That is easy for Allah to do.'"* (64:7)

In materialistic societies, worldly life is cherished and revered above all else. The arrogant even consider death a 'disease' that can somehow be cured like any other disease. They dismiss any notion of the Hereafter as delusion. But on the Day of Judgment, *"the Day that He assembles you for a day of assembly, that will be a day of mutual loss and gain among you, and those who believe in Allah and work righteousness, He will remove from them their sin, and He will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein forever. That will be the supreme achievement."* (64:9)

Believers must be on guard that life's comforts and vanities do not tempt them away from the supreme achievement: *"Your riches and your children may be a trial but with Allah is the highest reward. So, remain conscious of Allah as best as you can, listen and obey and spend in charity for the benefit*

*of your own soul. Those saved from the covetousness of their own souls will be prosperous.” (64:15-16)*

(Sura Talaq is a Madani Sura)

Sura At-Talaq (Divorce) (Verses 65:1-12)

This Sura deals with one specific aspect of divorce, namely, the ruling related to the period that divorced women must wait before the marriage is finally dissolved and they are free to remarry. Some scholars suggest that this Sura clarifies verses 2:228-233 of Sura Baqara.

While the details are important, more significant is the idea of kindness and generosity that must permeate even the most painful but often inevitable events of life. Such kindness and generosity can flow only when a believer’s heart is in awe of Allah at all times: “... *and for those who fear Allah, He ever prepares a way out (from every difficulty).*” (65:2)

Fear of Allah – Taqwa - originates from love, the kind of love that prevents us from incurring Allah’s displeasure.

Anyone who heeds Allah’s call, “... *He provides for him from sources he can never imagine. And if anyone puts his trust in Allah, sufficient is Allah for him. For Allah will surely accomplish his purpose. Surely, for all things has Allah appointed a due proportion.*” (65:3) We see the theme repeated: “... *if anyone obeys Allah, He will remove his evil deeds from him, and will enlarge his reward.*” (65:5)

Life’s difficulties and challenges can sometimes overwhelm us. We can discern no exit from our predicaments and are tempted to give in to despair and hopelessness, to the extent that we may even lose our faith. But Allah tells us that if we abide by His commands and fulfill our obligations to Him, particularly during difficult times, He will not only show us a way out but also

bless us with more than we can imagine. We will see doors opening and provisions coming from sources beyond our wildest dreams. Think of the mother of prophet Musa (RA). She obeyed Allah's commands and was not only reunited with her son but was even paid to take care of him instead of living in fear for his life.

Living within one's means may appear difficult, but it is a virtue to be cultivated, for excess always leads to loss, humiliation, and even tragedy. *"Let the man of means spend according to his means, and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. After a difficulty, Allah will soon grant relief."* (65:7)

(Notice the phrase in (65:7): "After a difficulty, Allah will soon grant relief." If we act with honesty and integrity, Allah will ease our difficulties and provide a solution. This is His promise to us. The relationship between difficulty (hardship) and relief (ease) is made even deeper in (94:5-6): *"So, with every difficulty, there is relief. Surely, with every difficulty there is relief."* The repetition is perhaps a sublime reminder that a problem contains within itself the seeds of its own solution. Allah knows best.)

The ultimate success for believers is promised in numerous verses of the Quran. One such is the penultimate verse of this Sura: *"... those who believe in Allah and perform honest and beneficial deeds, He will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein forever. Allah has indeed reserved for them a most excellent provision."* (65:11)

Although the masculine gender is used in these verses, scholars cite numerous verses from the Quran to show that such verses refer to both genders. To a believer, man or woman, the fact that Allah provides from

sources he or she cannot even imagine is a testimony to His limitless mercy and generosity.

(Sura Tahrīm is a Madani Sura)

Sura At-Tahrīm (The Prohibition) (Verses 66:1-12)

Through a specific event in the Prophet's (s.a.w) life, the Sura brings out a moral lesson applicable to all situations, namely, that no one has the authority to declare as forbidden what Allah has declared lawful and permissible, even if such an attitude is driven by the desire to please others.

Even the Prophet (s.a.w) was not exempt from this rule. *"O Prophet, why do you prohibit what Allah has made lawful to you, seeking to please your wives? Allah is forgiving and merciful ..."* (66:1)

(In verse (5:87), Allah warns all believers against forbidding what Allah has decreed lawful. In verse (66:1), Allah directly addresses Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w), alerting him not to make the same mistake.)

The Sura makes clear, stressed also in Suras such as *Kahf* (18:110) and *Abasa* (80:1), that the Prophet (s.a.w) was but a human being, and therefore subject to normal human emotions. He too could make the occasional mistake, pointed out to him during his lifetime and corrected through divine revelation.

Allah does not expect infallibility from human beings. He, however, expects us to learn from our mistakes and change our behavior and seek redemption through repentance. *"Believers! Turn to Allah in repentance, so that your Lord may forgive you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow ..."* (66:8)

The Sura offers a striking contrast between two women: *"For those bent on denying the truth, Allah has given an example in the wife of Nuh and the wife of Lut. They were wedded to two of Our righteous servants, and each one betrayed her husband, and neither of the two husbands will be of any avail to these two women when they are told on the Day of Judgment: '... Enter the fire with all other sinners who enter it.'"* (66:10) (This reinforces the Quranic principle that 'No bearer of burden can bear the burden of another.')

In contrast, two other women (again, note the sublime symmetry of the Quran!) are extolled for their unflinching faith: *"Allah sets forth, as an example to those who believe, the wife of Pharaoh. Behold, she said: 'O my Lord! Build for me in nearness to You a mansion in the Garden, and save me from Pharaoh and his doings, and save me from those who do wrong.' And Maryam, daughter of Imran, who guarded her chastity, and We breathed into her Our spirit, and she testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and of His revelations and was one of the truly devout."* (66:11-12)

(Sura Mulk is a Makki Sura)

Sura Al-Mulk (Dominion) (Verses 67:1-30)

Life does not end with death. The Sura says of the Omnipotent Creator: *"He Who created death and life, that He may try which of you is best in deeds, and He alone is almighty, truly forgiving."* (67:2)

Why did Allah create us? So that He may test as to who among us is the best in deeds. The mere claim of faith is no substitute for purposeful and beneficial actions.

Notice also that the word 'death' comes before the word 'life' in this verse. Death, like life, is created, and so is not merely a negative state. (See also 2:28, 23:100, 40:11, and 53:44) We were 'dead' - non-existence or



existence in some other form - before we were born, and we will be resurrected to life in the Hereafter after we die a physical death in this life. It is the renewal of life by death. The idea of resurrection is repeated numerous times in the Quran. It follows that one cannot be a believer unless one believes wholeheartedly in life after death. *"It is He Who has made the earth manageable for you, so go about it in all its regions and enjoy the Sustenance which He furnishes, but always bear in mind that unto Him you will be resurrected."* (67:15)

The Sura promises: *"Those who stand in awe of their Lord though they cannot see Him shall be forgiven and generously rewarded."* (67:12) *(Innal Lazina Yakhshauna Rabbahum Bil Ghaibi Lahum Maghfiraturun Wa Ajrun Kabir)* Worshipping our Lord, even though we cannot see Him, testifies to the strength of our faith.

(In this regard, remember the hadith of the Prophet (s.a.w): Worship Allah (SWT) as if you see Him (*Ihsaan*), and if you cannot do that, that He sees you.)

No matter what our motives, desires, or goals may be, hidden or manifest, Allah is Omniscient. *"And whether you hide your word or make it known, He certainly has full knowledge of the secrets of all hearts."* (67:12)

(Read this with: *"In the end, you will be told the truth of all that you did ..."* (5:48), (6:60), (6:164), (9:94), (9:105) (10:23), and we realize that on the Day of Judgment, everything will be made manifest.)

The Sura points to the wonder of the flight of birds as evidence of Allah's infinite mercy in providing every creature with physical attributes best adapted to thrive. *"Do they not observe the birds above them, spreading*

*their wings and folding them in? None can uphold them except the Most Gracious. Truly it is He who watches over all things.*" (67:19) Implicit in this verse is the idea that we should be attuned to the natural world to deepen our faith.

Without the faculties of hearing, seeing, and understanding, we would flounder at the most basic level of our existence, yet we fail to show gratitude to Allah for these bounties! Allah instructs the Prophet (s.a.w) to *"Say: 'It is He Who has created you, and made for you the faculties of hearing, seeing, and understanding. Little thanks it is you give.'"* (67:23)

What are other bounties Allah has blessed us with? *"Say: 'It is He Who has multiplied you through the earth, and to Him shall you be gathered together.'"* (67:24)

The doubters, skeptics and disbelievers persist in their obstinacy and challenge the Prophet (s.a.w): *"They ask: When will the promise be fulfilled if you are telling the truth?"* (67:25)

Judgment Day is inevitable. When is known to Allah alone. Allah tells the Prophet (s.a.w) to respond to the disbelievers: *"Say: 'As to the knowledge of the time, it is with Allah alone. I am a simple warner.'"* (67:26)

The Sura ends by asking the materialists who deny the existence of Allah a most pertinent and practical question: *"If your stream be some morning lost in the underground, who can then supply you with clear-flowing water?"* (67:30)

(Sura Mulk comprises only 30 verses. For those of us who have not memorized this powerful and eloquent Sura, a worthy goal is to memorize it, even if it takes months or years. If the intention is there, starting with this

Ramadan, *Insha Allah*, we can commit the Sura to memory sooner than we may think.)

(Sura Qalam is a Makki Sura)

Sura Al-Qalam (The Pen) (Verses 68:1-52)

This is one of the earliest Makki Suras to be revealed. Those blessed with wealth and affluence in this earthly life should acknowledge Allah, the source of their lives of ease and plenty. If not, their fortune can disappear when they least expect it, as happened to the People of the Garden, whose gardens and orchards lay in ruin from a terrible storm when they were sleeping. *"But when they saw the garden, they said, 'We have surely lost our way!'"* (68:26)

A question that haunts us is: "Why do the wicked flourish in this earthly life?" The answer is complex and involves a) choices arising from our limited free will, b) our moral responsibility, c) the need for subjugating our will to Allah's Will, d) Allah's patience with us, e) His mercy, and finally, f) the nature of Divine punishment. Allah tries us when we are mired in greed, selfishness, cruelty, and blaming others. Since the mercy of Allah is limitless, there is still hope for us if we sincerely repent and surrender completely to Allah's Will. But if there is no repentance and surrender after being given repeated chances, then the punishment in the Hereafter will more than account for the apparent flourishing of the wicked on this earth. So, when we ask, "Why do the wicked flourish?", we must look beyond our limited understanding and put faith in Allah's Judgment and Justice, knowing that there will always be a final reckoning and ultimate accountability.

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) was commanded to convey Allah's message to his people and persevere in the task, no matter how difficult and demanding: *"And so wait with patience the judgment of your Lord and do not be like him (prophet Yunus) who was swallowed by the whale, and who*

*cried out in agony after having given in to anger. And remember, had not the Grace of Allah reached him, he would indeed have been cast forth upon that barren shore in a state of disgrace."* (68:48-49)

That the word patience (*sabr*) appears so often in the Quran (103 times) only underscores its importance in achieving noble goals. The Prophet (s.a.w) exemplified the patience of beautiful contentment (*sabrun Jamilun*), even though he felt the tug of strong human emotions at times.

The parable of the owners of the orchard (like the rich man in Sura *Kahf*) describes the refusal of the affluent to share their bounty with the poor, and so Allah destroyed their crops and fruits, causing them to regret their actions and exclaim: *"Woe to us! We have indeed transgressed. It may be that our Lord will give us a better one in its place, for we do turn to Him in hope and humility."* (68:31-32)

Several Quranic verses emphasize the universality of Islam, one of them in this Sura: *"And the unbelievers would all but kill you with their eyes when they hear Our revelations, and they say, 'He is surely possessed.' Yet it (the Quran) is nothing less than a message to all mankind."* (68:51-52)

(Sura Haqqah is a Makki Sura)

Sura Al-Haqqah (The Reality) (Verses 69:1-52)

The ultimate reality of life on earth is that it will come to an end one day.

*"When the trumpet is sounded once, and when the earth and the mountains are raised and then crushed with one stroke, that is the day when the great event will come to pass."* (69:13-15)

On the Day of Resurrection, everyone will be fully aware of their past lives and, freed from self-deception, will see themselves as they really were, with the inner implications of their past acts revealed.

Judgment Day will be the day of accountability. *"He who is given his record in his right hand will say, 'Here it is, read my Book! I knew I would face my judgment.' He will be in a garden of bliss, in a garden high."* (69:19-22) But *"He who is given his record in his left hand will say, 'I wish I had never been given my record or known my judgment! Would that death had made an end of me? Of no profit has been my wealth and my power has perished from me!'"* (69:25-29)

(Which category do we belong to? The answer is as simple as it is profound: If we obey Allah and His messenger, we can expect to receive the record in our right hand. If not, it may be in the left hand, unless we are saved by the Grace of Allah. Sincere repentance, pleading for Allah's mercy and doing good deeds can change our status. For those who accept Allah's message and follow His command, however belatedly, there is always hope.)

(Sura Maarij is a Makki Sura)

Sura Al-Maarij (The Ways of Ascent) (Verses 70:1-52)

Allah tests us through hardship and temptations for immoral and self-indulgent acts. We should be grateful for the hardship we experience because they can take us closer to Allah if we have the right perspective. Likewise, those who can tame and overcome temptations will be successful in the Sight of Allah. Patience is paramount, which is why Allah repeatedly exhorted the Prophet (s.a.w) to endure the denial of disbelievers with *"patience of beautiful contentment."* (70:5)

(There is a difference between enforced 'patience' accompanied often by complaints and resentments expressed or suppressed, and patience that arises from faith and trust in Allah's Commands. We can understand the difference even when confronted by the daily challenges of life. If we are caught in a traffic jam, for instance, we are forced to be 'patient' even while

seething inside! That's resentful patience, not the patience of beautiful contentment. However, if we learn to accept traffic jams as inevitable inconveniences of life and reflect on Allah's innumerable blessings in our lives in such situations, we engage in the patience of beautiful contentment.)

What differentiates the successful from the unsuccessful? *"Man was created with a restless disposition. When evil touches him, he is despondent, and when blessed with good fortune, he becomes selfish and cruel. Not so those who turn toward Allah in prayers, who are steadfast in their prayers, and who recognize in their wealth a right for the needy and the deprived, and those who truly believe in the Day of Judgment, and who fear their Creator's chastisement, for their Lord's punishment is not a thing to feel secure from, and who are mindful of their chastity ... and who are faithful to their trusts and pledges, and who stand firm whenever they bear witness, and who guard their prayers against worldly concerns, such will be the honored ones in the garden of bliss!"* (70:19-35)

(Note that (41:49-51) and (70:20-21) emphasize characteristics of people who complain and fall into despair in adversity but in prosperity become arrogant, forgetful of their shortcomings and indifferent to the rights and plights of others. Also note the emphasis on prayers as a source of salvation, particularly the importance of protecting the sanctity of prayers from the intrusions of worldly thoughts. *Khushu* in prayers is difficult to achieve but when the goal is nothing less than to please Allah, the supreme achievement for believers, the difficulties disappear and *khushu* is attained. Salat is when we connect with Allah, the Source of All Wisdom, Love, Mercy and Energy. It is the gift the Prophet (s.a.w) brought from Allah for believers during *Miraj* when he ascended to heaven. Of the five pillars of Islam, only Salat originated directly in heaven, the other four on earth by Allah's command. Salat is our personal *Miraj* when we ascend to meet Allah spiritually five

times a day. That is why the prophet (s.a.w) said: *'As-Salatu Mirajun Mu'Mineen'* - Salat is the *Miraj* of believers.)

(Sura Nuh is a Makki Sura)

Sura Nuh (Verses 71:1-28)

While dealing exclusively with Prophet Nuh's (AS) preaching to his erring and obstinate people, the Sura symbolically depicts every believer's struggle against materialism and spiritual emptiness. The only solution is to turn to Allah for help, as Nuh (AS) did: *"My Lord, I have pleaded with my people night and day, but my pleas have only added to their aversion. And every time I call on them to seek your forgiveness, they thrust their fingers into their ears and draw their clothes over their heads and become obstinate and grow ever more arrogant."* (71:5-7)

The Sura concludes with another heartfelt dua by Prophet Nuh: *"O My Lord! Forgive me, my parents, all who enter my house in faith, and all believing men and women ..."* (71:28)

(We need to recognize that we can be obstinate and arrogant like the people of Nuh. Our bad side – when we succumb to the whispering of Shaitan - can overpower our good side. Praying, reading the Quran, taking its message to heart and acting on it, and sincerely seeking Allah's help and forgiveness can defeat the bad side and keep Shaitan at bay.)

(Sura Jinn is a Makki Sura)

Sura Al-Jinn (The Unseen Beings) (Verses 72:1-28)

The Quran can melt even the hearts of jinns, such are its spiritual and mystical powers: *"Say, it is revealed to me that a group of jinn listened and said: 'We have heard a most wonderful Quran which gives guidance to the right path and we have believed in it and will never henceforth worship anything besides our Lord.'"* (72:1-2) The jinns condemned those who

continued to cling to old beliefs: *"Exalted be our Lord who has taken neither a wife nor a son, and the foolish among us have uttered falsehood against Allah."* (72:3-4) (This event is also narrated in Sura *al-Ahqaf* (46:29-32) but in lesser detail than in this Sura.)

(The Quran does not tell us what the Prophet was reciting. He was not aware that the jinns were listening. It was revealed to him later by Allah. People have invented fantastic stories about jinns based on myths and superstitions. Believers should ignore such stories; instead, they should rely on the Quran for the truth about jinns.)

There are good jinns and bad jinns. *"There are some among us who are righteous and some the contrary. We follow divergent paths. We can never escape Allah while we live on earth, and we can never escape Him by flight. When we heard the guidance, we believed in it; and whoever believes in His Lord shall fear no loss or injustice. Among us are some who submit their will to Allah, just as some have abandoned themselves to wrongdoing. Those who submit their will have found the path of right conduct, but those who swerve are fuel for hellfire."* (72:11-15)

Jinns, in other words, are like human beings: Some submit to Allah and remain on the right path while others go astray because of their evil deeds.

A verse in this Sura, as in other verses in the Quran, testifies to Prophet Muhammad's (s.a.w) integrity as a messenger: *"Say, 'it is not in my power to cause you any harm or bring you to right conduct.' Say, 'No one can deliver me for Allah (if I were to disobey Him), nor should I find refuge except in Him.'"* (72:21-22) The Prophet's message was always clear: Whatever happens, happens by the Will of Allah alone.



The coming of the Judgment Day and punishment for the wrongdoers are certain but no one, including prophet Muhammad (s.a.w), can tell when it will happen. The prophet is instructed by Allah: "*Say: 'I know not whether the punishment which you are promised is near, or whether my Lord will palace it far into time.'*" (72:25-26)

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