

The Tafsir of Sūrat Aṣ-Ṣaff

(Chapter - 61)

Which was revealed in Al-Madīnah

The Virtues of Sūrat Aṣ-Ṣaff

Imām Aḥmad recorded that ‘Abdullāh bin Salām said, “We asked, ‘Who among us should go to the Messenger ﷺ and ask him about the dearest actions to Allāh?’ None among us volunteered. The Messenger ﷺ sent a man to us and that man gathered us and recited this Sūrah, Sūrat Aṣ-Ṣaff, in its entirety.’”^[1]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

﴿سَبِّحْ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾ ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ﴾ ﴿كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ﴾ ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ صُلْحًا كَانَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرْصُومٌ﴾

﴿1. Whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth glorifies Allāh. And He is the Almighty, the All-Wise.﴾

﴿2. O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do?﴾

﴿3. Most hateful it is with Allāh that you say that which you do not do.﴾

﴿4. Verily, Allāh loves those who fight in His cause in rows as if they were a solid structure.﴾

Chastising Those Who say what They do not do

We mentioned in many a places before the meaning of Allāh's statement,

^[1] Aḥmad 5:452.

﴿سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

﴿Whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth glorifies Allāh. And He is the Almighty, the All-Wise.﴾

Therefore, we do not need to repeat its meaning here.^[1]

Allāh's statement,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ﴾

﴿O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do?﴾

This refutes those who neglect to fulfill their promises. This honorable *Āyah* supports the view that several scholars of the Salaf held, that it is necessary to fulfill the promise, regardless of whether the promise includes some type of wealth for the person receiving the promise or otherwise. They also argue from the Sunnah, with the *Ḥadīth* recorded in the Two *Ṣaḥīḥs* in which Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said,

«آيَةُ الْمُنَافِقِ ثَلَاثٌ: إِذَا وَعَدَ أَخْلَفَ، وَإِذَا حَدَّثَ كَذَبَ، وَإِذَا أُؤْتِمِنَ خَانَ»

«There are three signs for a hypocrite: when he promises, he breaks his promise; when speaks, he lies; and when he is entrusted, he betrays.»^[2] And in another *Ḥadīth* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*,

«أَرْبَعٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ كَانَ مُنَافِقًا خَالِصًا، وَمَنْ كَانَتْ فِيهِ وَاحِدَةٌ مِّنْهُنَّ كَانَتْ فِيهِ خُصْلَةٌ مِّنْ يَّفَاقٍ حَتَّى يَدْعَاهَا»

«There are four characteristics which if one has all of them, he is the pure hypocrite, and if anyone has any of them, he has a characteristic of hypocrisy, until he abandons it.»^[3]

So he mentioned breaking the promise among these four characteristics. We mentioned the meaning of these two *Ḥadīths* in the beginning of the explanation of *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, and to Allāh is the praise and the thanks. Therefore Allāh implied this meaning, when He continued His

[1] See volume nine, the *Tafsīr* of *Sūrat Al-Ḥadid* (57:1).

[2] *Fath Al-Bārī* 1:111 and *Muslim* 1:78.

[3] *Fath Al-Bārī* 1:111.

admonishment by saying,

﴿كَبُرَ مِنَّا عِندَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ﴾

«Most hateful it is with Allāh that you say that which you do not do.»

Imām Aḥmad and Abu Dāwud recorded that ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Āmir bin Rabī‘ah said, “Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ came to us while I was a young boy, and I went out to play. My mother said, ‘O ‘Abdullāh! Come, I want to give you something.’ Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said to her,

«وَمَا أَرَدْتُ أَنْ تُعْطِيَهُ؟»

«What did you want to give him?» She said, ‘Dates.’ He said,

«أَمَا إِنَّكَ لَوْ لَمْ تَفْعَلِي كُيِّتَ عَلَيْكَ كَذِبَةٌ»

«If you had not given them to him, it would have been written as a lie in your record.»^[1]

Muqātil bin Ḥayyān said, “The faithful believers said, ‘If we only knew the dearest good actions to Allāh, we would perform them.’ Thus, Allāh told them about the dearest actions to Him, saying,

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا﴾

«Verily, Allāh loves those who fight in His cause in rows»

Allāh stated what He likes, and they were tested on the day of Uhud. However, they retreated and fled, leaving the Prophet ﷺ behind. It was about their case that Allāh revealed this Āyah:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ﴾

«O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do?»

Allāh says here, The dearest of you to Me, is he who fights in My cause.»^[2]

Some said that it was revealed about the gravity of fighting in battle, when one says that he fought and endured the

[1] Aḥmad 3:447 and Abu Dāwud 5:265.

[2] Ad-Durr Al-Manthūr 8:146.

battle, even though he did not do so. Qatādah and Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk said that this Āyah was sent down to admonish some people who used to say that they killed, fought, stabbed, and did such and such during battle, even though they did not do any of it.

Sa'īd bin Jubayr said about Allāh's statement,

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا﴾

﴿Verily, Allāh loves those who fight in His cause in rows (ranks)﴾

"Before Allāh's Messenger ﷺ began the battle against the enemy, he liked to line up his forces in rows; in this Sūrah, Allāh teaches the believers to do the same."^[1]

He also said that Allāh's statement,

﴿كَأَنَّهُمْ بُنْيَانٌ مَّرْصُومٌ﴾

﴿as if they were a solid structure.﴾ means, its parts are firmly connected to each other; in rows for battle. Muqātil bin Ḥayyān said, "Firmly connected to each other." Ibn 'Abbās commented on the meaning of the Āyah,

﴿كَأَنَّهُمْ بُنْيَانٌ مَّرْصُومٌ﴾

﴿as if they were a solid structure.﴾ by saying, "They are like a firm structure that does not move, because its parts are cemented to each other."^[2]

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ. يَتَّبِعُونَ لِمَ تُوذُونَنِي وَقَدْ تَعْلَمُونَ أَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا أَزَاغَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ﴾ (٥) وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدٌ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ (٦)﴾

﴿5. And when Mūsā said to his people: "O my people! Why do you annoy me while you know certainly that I am the Messenger of Allāh to you? So, when they turned away (from the path of Allāh), Allāh turned their hearts away (from the right path). And Allāh guides not the people who are

[1] Al-Qurṭubī 18:81.

[2] Ad-Durr Al-Manthūr 8:147.

means, when the Jews turned away from following the guidance, even though they knew it, Allāh turned their hearts away from the guidance. Instead, Allāh placed doubts, suspicion and failure in their hearts, just as He said,

﴿وَنَقَلْنَا آفَئِدَتَهُمْ وَأَبْصَرَهُمْ كَمَا لَوْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَنَذَرَهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ﴾

﴿And We shall turn their hearts and vision away, as they refused to believe therein for the first time, and we shall leave them in their trespass to wander blindly.﴾

And His saying;

﴿وَمَنْ يُضَاقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بُيِّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَتَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ تُولِهِ مَا نَوَىٰ وَتُصْلِيهِ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا﴾

﴿And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger after the right path has been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the believers' way, We shall keep him in the path he has chosen, and enter him in Hell, what an evil destination it is!﴾ (4:115), and,

Similarly Allāh said;

﴿وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ﴾

﴿And Allāh guides not the people who are rebellious.﴾ (9:24)

The Good News of 'Īsā about Our Prophet ﷺ and that His Name is Aḥmad

Allāh said;

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَتَّبِعِ إِسْرَءِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ﴾

﴿And when 'Īsā, son of Maryam, said: "O Children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allāh unto you, confirming the Tawrah before me, and giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Aḥmad."﴾

'Īsā said, "The Tawrah conveyed the glad tidings of my coming, and my coming confirms the truth of the Tawrah. I convey the glad tidings of the Prophet who will come after me. He is the unlettered, Makkan, Arab Prophet and Messenger, Aḥmad."

ʿĪsā, peace be upon him, is the last and final Messenger from among the Children of Israel. He remained among the Children of Israel for a while, conveying the good news of the coming of Muḥammad, whose name is also Aḥmad, the Last and Final Prophet and Messenger. After Muḥammad, there will be no prophethood or Messengers. How admirable the Ḥadīth is that Al-Bukhārī collected in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Jubayr bin Muṭʿim, who said, "I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ say,

«إِنِّي لِي أَسْمَاءُ: أَنَا مُحَمَّدٌ، وَأَنَا أَحْمَدُ، وَأَنَا الْمَاجِي الَّذِي يَمْحُو اللَّهُ بِهِ الْكُفْرَ،
وَأَنَا الْحَاشِرُ الَّذِي يُخْرِصُ النَّاسُ عَلَى قَدَمَيَّ، وَأَنَا الْعَاقِبُ»

"I have names. I am Muḥammad and Aḥmad. I am Al-Māḥi through whom Allāh will eliminate disbelief. I am Al-Ḥāshir who will be the first to be resurrected, with the people being resurrected Hereafter. I am also Al-ʿĀqib (i.e., there will be no Prophet after me)."^[1]

Also Muslim collected this Ḥadīth from Az-Zuhrī from Jubayr.^[2]

Muḥammad bin Ishāq recorded that Khālid bin Maʿdān said that some Companions of Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said,

"O Allāh's Messenger! Tell us about yourself." He said,

«دَعَا أَبِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ، وَبُشِّرَى عِيسَى، وَرَأَتْ أُمِّي جِئْنَ حَمَلْتُ بِي كَأَنَّهُ خَرَجَ مِنْهَا
نُورٌ أَضَاءَتْ لَهُ قُصُورُ بَصْرَى مِنْ أَرْضِ الشَّامِ»

"I am the (result of the) invocation made to Allāh from my father Ibrāhīm and the good news 'Īsā delivered. When my mother was pregnant with me, she had a dream in which she saw a light emanating from her that radiated the palaces of Buṣrā in Ash-Shām."^[3]

This Ḥadīth has a good chain of narration that is supported by other similar narrations. Imām Aḥmad recorded that Al-ʿIrbād bin Sāriyah said, "The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«إِنِّي عِنْدَ اللَّهِ لَخَاتِمُ النَّبِيِّينَ، وَإِنَّ آدَمَ لَمُنْجِدِلٌ فِي طَيْبَتِهِ، وَسَأَتَبَيَّنْكُمْ بِأَوَّلِ ذَلِكَ:

[1] *Fath Al-Bārī* 8:509.

[2] Muslim 4:1828.

[3] Ibn Hishām 1:175.

دَعْوَةُ أَبِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ، وَبَشَارَةُ عِيسَى يِي، وَرُؤْيَا أُمِّي الَّتِي رَأَتْ، وَكَذَلِكَ أُمَمَاتُ
النَّبِيِّينَ يَرَيْنَ

‘I was written with Allāh as the Last and Final of the Prophet, even when Ādam was still clay. I will tell of the first good news announcing my advent, the (result of the) invocation to Allāh made from my father Ibrāhīm, the good news ‘Īsā conveyed, and the dream that my mother saw. The mothers of all Prophets see similar dreams.’»^[1]

Imām Aḥmad recorded that Abu Umāmah said, “I said, ‘O Allāh’s Messenger! What was the first good news of your coming?’ He said,

«دَعْوَةُ أَبِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ، وَبُشْرَى عِيسَى، وَرَأَتْ أُمِّي أَنَّهُ يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا نُورٌ أَضَاءَتْ لَهُ
قُصُورُ الشَّامِ»

‘The (result of the) invocation to Allāh made from my father Ibrāhīm and the good news ‘Īsā conveyed. My mother saw a light emanating from her that filled the palaces of Ash- Shām in a dream.’»^[2]

Imām Aḥmad recorded that ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ sent eighty men, including ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd, Ja‘far bin Abi Ṭālib, ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Urfuṭah, ‘Uthmān bin Maḏ‘ūn, Abu Mūsā, and others, to An-Najāshi. The Quraysh sent ‘Amr bin Al-‘Āṣ and ‘Umārah bin Al-Walīd with a gift for An-Najāshi. When they, ‘Amr and ‘Umārah, came to An-Najāshi, they prostrated before him and stood to his right and left. ‘Amr and ‘Umārah said,

“Some of our cousins migrated to your land; they have abandoned us and our religion.” An-Najāshi said, “Where are they?” They said, “They are in your land, so send for them,” so An-Najāshi summoned the Muslims. Ja‘far said to the Muslims, “I will be your speaker today.” So, the Muslims followed Ja‘far and when he entered on the king he did not

^[1] Aḥmad 4:127.

^[2] Aḥmad 5:262. There are some deficiencies in some of these narrations. Many scholars consider them to support each other as does the author.

prostrate after greeting him. They said to Ja'far, "Why do you not prostrate before the king?" Ja'far said, "We only prostrate for Allāh, the Exalted and Most Honored." They said, "Why?" He said, "Allāh has sent a Messenger to us from Him, who ordered us not to prostrate to anyone except Allāh, the Exalted and Most Honored. He also ordered to perform prayer and give charity."

'Amr bin Al-Āṣ said, "They contradict your creed about Īsā, son of Maryam." The king asked, "What do you say about Īsā and his mother Maryam?" Ja'far said, "We only say what Allāh said about him, that he is Allāh's Word^[1], a soul created by Allāh and sent down to the honorable virgin who was not touched by a man nor bearing children before." An-Najāshi lifted a straw of wood and said, "O Ethiopians, monks and priests! By Allāh, what they say about Īsā is no more than what we say about him, not even a difference that equals this straw. You are welcomed among us, and greetings to him who sent you. I bear witness that he is Allāh's Messenger whom we read about in the Injīl. He is the Prophet who Īsā, son of Maryam, foretold the good news about his advent. Live wherever you wish. By Allāh, had I not been entrusted with the responsibilities of kingship, I would have gone to him, so that I could be honored by carrying his slippers and his water for ablution."

The king ordered that the gifts of the idolators be returned to them. 'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd soon returned and later on participated in the battle of Badr. He said that when the Prophet ﷺ received the news that An-Najāshi died, he invoked Allāh to forgive him.^[2] Allāh said,

﴿لَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ﴾

﴿But when he came to them with clear proofs, they said: "This is plain magic."﴾

this refers to Aḥmad, who was anticipated, in accordance with the early Scriptures and early generations, according to Ibn Jurayj and Ibn Jarīr. When the Prophet appeared bringing clear signs, the disbelievers and rejecters said,

[1] Meaning, that Allāh said, "Be" and he was.

[2] Aḥmad 1:461.

﴿هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّشِينٌ﴾

﴿This is plain magic﴾

﴿وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُوَ يُدْعَىٰ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ۖ
يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٧﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ
بِالْحَقِّ وَلَفِيَ لُغْلُفٌ يُظْهِرُ عَلَى الْبَيْنِ كُلِّهِ ۚ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٨﴾﴾

﴿7. And who does more wrong than the one who invents a lie against Allāh, while he is being invited to Islām? And Allāh guides not the people who are wrongdoers.﴾

﴿8. They intend to put out the Light of Allāh with their mouths. But Allāh will bring His Light to perfection even though the disbelievers hate (it).﴾

﴿9. He it is Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to make it victorious over all religions even though idolators hate (it).﴾

The Most Unjust among all People

Allāh said,

﴿وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُوَ يُدْعَىٰ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ﴾

﴿And who does more wrong than the one who invents a lie against Allāh, while he is being invited to Islām?﴾

meaning, none is more unjust than he who lies about Allāh and calls upon rivals and associates partners with Him, even while he is being invited to *Tawḥīd* and sincerely worshipping Him. This is why Allāh said,

﴿وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

﴿And Allāh guides not the people who are wrongdoers.﴾

Allāh said,

﴿يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ﴾

﴿They intend to put out the Light of Allāh with their mouths.﴾

indicating that the disbelievers will try to contradict the truth with falsehood. Their attempts are similar to one's attempt to extinguish the sun with his mouth, which is impossible.

وَاِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ بَنِي اِسْرٰٓءِيْلَ اِنِّي رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ اِلَيْكُمْ مُّصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيِّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَاُبَشِّرُ اَرْسُوْلًا يَّاقِيْنَ مِنْ بَعْدِي اَسْمُهُ اَحَدُ فَاثَمَا جَاءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوْا هٰذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِنْ اَقْدَرٍ عَلٰى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُوَ يُدْعٰى اِلَى الْاِسْلٰمِ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِيْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ يُرِيْدُوْنَ لِيُطْفِئُوْا نُوْرَ اللّٰهِ بِاَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللّٰهُ مُتِمِّمٌ نُّوْرِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي اَرْسَلَ رَسُوْلَهٗ بِالْهُدٰى وَدِيْنٍ لِّقٰى لِيُطَهِّرَهُ الْعَلَمٰتِ ﴿٥٨﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي اَرْسَلَ رَسُوْلَهٗ بِالْهُدٰى وَدِيْنٍ لِّقٰى لِيُطَهِّرَهُ الْعَلَمٰتِ ﴿٥٩﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اَهْلُ اٰذْكُرْ عَلٰى عَهْدِ رَبِّكُمْ شَيْءًا مِنْ اَعْلَابِ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٦٠﴾ تَوَسَّلُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُوْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ بِاَمْوَالِكُمْ وَاَنْفُسِكُمْ ذٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوْبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرٰى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ وَمَسٰكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِيْ جَنَّٰتٍ عَدْنٍ ذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَاٰخَرٰى يُحِبُّوْنَهَا اَنْصُرْ مِنْ اللّٰهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيْبٌ وَّبَشٰرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُوْنُوْا اَنْصَارَ اللّٰهِ كَمَا قَالَ عِيسٰى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ لِلْحَوَارِيْنَ مَنْ اَنْصَارِيْ اِلَى اللّٰهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّوْنَ مَنْ اَنْصَارُ اللّٰهِ فَاَمَنْتَ طَآئِفَةٌ مِنْ نُّبُوْتِ اِسْرٰٓءِيْلَ وَكَفَرَتْ طَآئِفَةٌ فَاَيَّدُوْا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا عَلٰى عَدُوِّهِمْ فَاصْبِحُوْا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾

Likewise is the case of their attempt to extinguish truth. So Allāh said,

﴿وَاللّٰهُ مُتِمِّمٌ نُّوْرِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُوْنَ﴾ ﴿٥٧﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي اَرْسَلَ رَسُوْلَهٗ بِالْهُدٰى وَدِيْنٍ لِّقٰى لِيُطَهِّرَهُ الْعَلَمٰتِ ﴿٥٨﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي اَرْسَلَ رَسُوْلَهٗ بِالْهُدٰى وَدِيْنٍ لِّقٰى لِيُطَهِّرَهُ الْعَلَمٰتِ ﴿٥٩﴾

﴿But Allāh will bring His Light to perfection even though the disbelievers hate (it). He it is Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to make it victorious over all (other) religions even though the idolators hate (it).﴾

We explained the meanings of similar Āyāt before, in the Tafsīr of Sūrah

Barā'ah.^[1] All praise and thanks are due to Allāh.

﴿يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اَهْلُ اٰذْكُرْ عَلٰى عَهْدِ رَبِّكُمْ شَيْءًا مِنْ اَعْلَابِ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٦٠﴾ تَوَسَّلُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُوْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ بِاَمْوَالِكُمْ وَاَنْفُسِكُمْ ذٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوْبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرٰى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ وَمَسٰكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِيْ جَنَّٰتٍ عَدْنٍ ذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَاٰخَرٰى يُحِبُّوْنَهَا اَنْصُرْ مِنْ اللّٰهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيْبٌ وَّبَشٰرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾﴾

﴿10. O you who believe! Shall I guide you to a trade that will save you from a painful torment?﴾

﴿11. That you believe in Allāh and His Messenger, and that you strive hard and fight in the cause of Allāh with your wealth

^[1] That is briefly discussed in volume nine, the Tafsīr of Sūrat At-Tawbah (9:32)

and your lives, that will be better for you, if you but know!﴿

﴿12. (If you do so) He will forgive you your sins, and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow, and pleasant dwellings in 'Adn (Eternal) Paradise; that is indeed the great success.﴾

﴿13. And also (He will give you) another (blessing) which you love, help from Allāh and a near victory. And give glad tidings to the believers.﴾

The Trade that saves One from the Painful Torment

We mentioned a *Ḥadīth* from 'Abdullāh bin Salām in that the Companions wanted to ask the Prophet of Allāh ﷺ about the best actions with Allāh the Exalted and Most Honored, so they could practice them. Allāh the Exalted sent down this Sūrah, including this *Āyah*,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ مِثْرٍ خَيْرٍ مِّنْ عَذَابِ آلِمٍ ۖ﴾

﴿O you who believe! Shall I guide you to a trade that will save you from a painful torment?﴾

Allāh then explained this great trade that will never fail, the trade that will earn one what he wishes and saves him from what he dislikes. Allāh the Exalted said,

﴿تَوَصَّلُوا بِاللهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ۖ﴾

﴿That you believe in Allāh and His Messenger, and that you strive hard and fight in the cause of Allāh with your wealth and your lives, that will be better for you, if you but know!﴾

this is better than the trade of this life and striving hard for it and amassing it. Allāh the Exalted said,

﴿يَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ﴾

﴿He will forgive you your sins,﴾ meaning, 'if you fulfill what I commanded you and guided you to, then I will forgive your sins and admit you into the Gardens of Paradise. In them, you will have exalted residences and high positions.' This is why Allāh the Exalted said,

﴿وَيُدْخِلُكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرَىٰ مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَسَيُكَفَّرُ عَنْكُمْ ذَلِكُ الْفَوْرِ الْعَظِيمِ﴾

﴿and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow, and

pleasant dwellings in 'Adn (Eternal) Paradise; that is indeed the great success.﴾

Allāh said,

﴿وَأُخْرَىٰ تُحِبُّنَهَا﴾

﴿And also another (blessing) which you love,﴾
meaning, 'I will grant you more favors that you like,'

﴿نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ﴾

﴿help from Allāh and a near victory.﴾

meaning, if you fight in Allāh's cause and support His religion, He will grant you victory. Allāh the Exalted said,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَنصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنصُرْكُمْ وَيُخْلِفَ أَقْدَامَكُمْ ۝٧﴾

﴿O you who believe! If you help (in the cause of) Allāh, He will help you, and make your foothold firm.﴾ (47:7), and,

﴿وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَن يَنصُرُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ۝٤٠﴾

﴿Verily, Allāh will help those who help His (cause). Truly, Allāh is All Strong, All-Wise.﴾ (22:40)

Allāh's statement,

﴿وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ﴾

﴿and a near victory.﴾ means, it will come sooner, and this is the increased favor that is earned in this life and continues, becoming the delight of the Hereafter. It is for those who obey Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ and support Allāh and His religion. Allāh said;

﴿وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

﴿And give glad tidings to the believers.﴾

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا أَصْوَارَ اللَّهِ كَمَا قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ لِلْحَوَارِيِّينَ مَن أَعَارَىٰ إِلَّاهُ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَصْوَارُ اللَّهِ فَآمَنَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ وَكَفَرَتْ طَائِفَةٌ فَأَيَّدْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَىٰ عُدُوِّهِمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا ظَاهِرِينَ ۝١٤﴾

﴿14. O you who believe! Be you helpers (in the cause) of Allāh as said 'Isā, son of Maryam, to the Hawārīyyīn (the disciples): "Who are my helpers (in the cause) of Allāh?" The Hawārīyyūn

said: "We are Allāh's helpers" (i.e., we will strive in His cause!). Then a group of the Children of Israel believed and a group disbelieved. So, We gave power to those who believed against their enemies, and they became the victorious (uppermost).﴾

Muslims are always the Natural Supporters of Islām

Allāh the Exalted orders His faithful servants to be Allāh's supporters at all times, in all their statements and actions, sacrificing their selves and wealth. Allāh orders them to accept His and His Messenger's call, just as the disciples said to Prophet ʿĪsā when he said,

﴿مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ؟﴾

﴿Who are my helpers (in the cause) of Allāh?﴾ meaning, 'who will support me in conveying the Message of Allāh, the Exalted and Most Honored?'

﴿قَالَ الْمَوَارِثُونَ﴾

﴿The Hawārīyyūn said:﴾ in reference to the followers of ʿĪsā, peace be upon him,

﴿نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ﴾

﴿We are Allāh's helpers﴾ meaning, 'we will support you with regards to the Message you have been sent with and will help you convey it.' Whereby, ʿĪsā sent the disciples to the various areas of Ash-Shām to call the Greeks and the Israelites to Islām.

Similarly, during the days of Ḥajj, Allāh's Messenger ﷺ used to ask,

﴿مَنْ رَجُلٌ يُؤَيِّنِي حَتَّى أَبْلُغَ رِسَالَةَ رَبِّي؟ فَإِنْ قُرَيْشًا قَدْ مَنَعُونِي أَنْ أَبْلُغَ رِسَالَةَ رَبِّي﴾

﴿Who will support me in conveying the Message of my Lord? Verily, the Quraysh have prevented me from conveying the Message of my Lord.﴾^[1]

Allāh the Exalted and Most Honored raised Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj to support the Prophet ﷺ. They were the residents of

[1] Aḥmad 3:322, Al-Ḥākim 2:624 and Al-Bayhaqi 8:146.

Al-Madīnah who gave the pledge to him and supported him, vowing to protect him from mankind and the *Jinns* if he migrated to them. When he migrated to them with his Companions, they fulfilled their vow to Allāh. This is the reason why Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ called them, Al-Anṣār, the Supporters. The name became synonymous with them. May Allāh be pleased with them and please them, as well.

A Group of the Children of Israel believed in 'Īsā and a Group of Them disbelieved

Allāh said,

﴿فَأَمَّا نَاصِبَةٌ مِّنْ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ وَكَفَرَتْ طَائِفَةٌ﴾

﴿Then a group of the Children of Israel believed and a group disbelieved.﴾

When 'Īsā, peace be on him, conveyed the Message of his Lord to his people and the disciples supported him, a group from the Children of Israel believed. They accepted the guidance that 'Īsā brought to them, while another group, was led astray. This group rejected what 'Īsā brought them, denied his prophethood and invented terrible lies about him and his mother. They are the Jews, may Allāh curse them until the Day of Judgement.

Another group exaggerated over 'Īsā, until they elevated him to more than the level of prophethood that Allāh gave him. They divided into sects and factions, some saying that 'Īsā was the son of Allāh, while others said that he was one in a trinity, and this is why they invoke the father, the son and the holy ghost! Some of them said that 'Īsā was Allāh, as we mentioned in the *Tafsīr* of *Sūrat An-Nisā'*.^[1]

Allāh gives Victory to the Believing Group

Allāh said,

﴿فَأَيَّدْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَىٰ عَدُوِّهِمْ﴾

﴿So, We gave power to those who believed against their enemies,﴾

^[1] See volume three, the *Tafsīr* of *Sūrat An-Nisā'* (4:171).

that is, 'We gave them victory over the group of Christians which defied them,'

﴿فَأَصْبَحُوا ظَاهِرِينَ﴾

﴿and they became the victorious (uppermost).﴾ 'over the disbelieving group, when We sent Muḥammad.'

Imām Abu Ja'far bin Jarīr Aṭ-Ṭabari reported that Ibn 'Abbās said, "When Allāh decided to raise 'Īsā to heaven, 'Īsā went to his companions while drops of water were dripping from his head. At that time, there were twelve men at the house. 'Īsā said to them, 'Some of you will disbelieve in me twelve times after having believed in me.' He then asked, 'Who among you volunteers that he be made to resemble me and be killed instead of me; he will be with me in my place (in Paradise).'

One of the youngest men present volunteered, but 'Īsā commanded him to sit down. 'Īsā repeated his statement and the young man again stood up and volunteered, and 'Īsā again told him to sit down. 'Īsā repeated the same statement and the young man volunteered. This time, 'Īsā said, 'Then it will be you.' The appearance of 'Īsā was cast upon that young man, while 'Īsā, peace be on him, was raised to heaven through an opening in the roof of the house. The Jews came looking for 'Īsā and arrested the one that appeared as him, killing him by crucifixion. Some of them disbelieved in 'Īsā twelve times, after they had believed in him. They divided into three groups. One group, Al-Ya'qūbiyyah (the Jacobites), said, 'Allāh remained with us as much as He willed and then ascended to heaven.' Another group, An-Nastūriyyah (the Nestorians), said, 'Allāh's son remained with us as much as Allāh willed and He then raised him up to heaven.' A third group said, 'Allāh's servant and Messenger remained with us as much as Allāh willed and then Allāh raised him up to Him.' The last group was the Muslim group. The two disbelieving groups collaborated against the Muslim group and annihilated it. Islām remained unjustly concealed until Allāh sent Muḥammad ﷺ,

﴿فَكَانَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ كَفَرَتْ طَائِفَةٌ﴾

﴿Then a group of the Children of Israel believed and a group disbelieved.﴾

This Āyah refers to the group among the Children of Israel

that disbelieved and the group that believed, during the time of ʿĪsā,

﴿فَأَيَّدْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَىٰ عَدُوِّهِمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا ظَاهِرِينَ﴾

﴿So, We gave power to those who believed against their enemies, and they became the victorious (uppermost).﴾

through the victory that Muḥammad ﷺ gained over the religion of the disbelievers, which brought the dominance of their religion."^[1]

This is the wording in his book for the *Tafsīr* of this honorable *Āyah*. Similarly, An-Nasāʾī collected this statement of Ibn ʿAbbās in his *Sunan*.^[2]

Therefore, the *Ummah* of Muḥammad ﷺ will always be prevalent on the truth until Allāh's command (the Final Hour) commences, while they are on this path. The last group of them will fight against Ad-Dajjāl along with ʿĪsā, peace be on him, according to *Ḥadīths* in the authentic collections.^[3]

This is the end of the *Tafsīr* of *Sūrat Aṣ-Ṣaff*. All praise and thanks are due to Allāh.

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 23:366.

[2] An-Nasāʾī in *Al-Kubrā* 6:489. This version of the story of the ascension mentioned is considered among the *Isrāʾīliyyāt* narrations which the Muslim is neither to believe in nor negate.

[3] *Faḥ Al-Bārī* 13:306, Muslim 3:1524 and Abu Dāwud 3:11.