

Overview of the Book “*Tafsīr-i Sūra-yi Šaff*” by Martyr Imam Sayyid Ali Khamenei

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Article Info

Article type:
Book Review

Article history:

Received:
23 January 2026

Received in revised form:

10 February 2026

Accepted:
10 March 2026

Available online:
16 March 2026

Keywords:

The Quran,
Sūrat al-Šaff,
Imam Khamenei,
Jihad,
Quranic thought,
Tafsīr.

ABSTRACT

This article presents a review of *Tafsīr-i Sūrah-yi Šaff*, a Quranic exegetical work by Martyr Imam Sayyid Ali Khamenei, comprising an edited transcript of four *tafsīr* sessions conducted between December 1982 and January 1983. The work systematically examines all fourteen verses of *Sūrat al-Šaff*, with particular emphasis on the theological imperatives of jihād, moral integrity, and divine governance. The exegesis draws upon classical Islamic scholarship while addressing contemporary socio-political realities, situating the sūra’s Medinan revelatory context in direct correspondence with post-revolutionary Iran. Central themes include the condemnation of empty profession of faith, the spiritual consequences of moral deviation, the inextinguishability of divine truth in the face of adversarial forces, and the eschatological promise of Islam’s universal prevalence. Through intertextual engagement with Quranic verses, prophetic traditions, and the commentaries of scholars such as ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, the work offers a cohesive hermeneutical framework that integrates spiritual, ethical, and political dimensions of Islamic thought, culminating in an exhortation to believers to remain steadfast as helpers of God.

Cite this article: Mashhadi, B. (2026). Overview of the Book “*Tafsīr i Sūra-yi Šaff*” by Martyr Imam Sayyid Ali Khamenei. *The Quran: Contemporary Studies*, 4 (14), 161-173. <https://doi.org/10.22034/qns.2026.23641.1167>



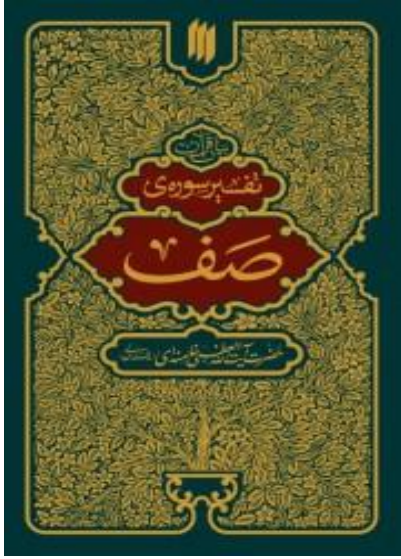
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Publisher: Al-Mustafa International University.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22034/qns.2026.23641.1167>

Introduction

Martyr Imam Sayyed Ali Khamenei, the second Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was born on 19 April 1939 in the holy city of Mashhad in the province of Khorasan. He was the second son of Sayyid Javad Khamenei, a modest and financially humble Islamic scholar who raised



his family in a simple and austere environment and instilled in them the values of humility and piety. At the age of four, Sayyid Ali and his elder brother, Muhammad, were sent to a maktab—the traditional primary school of the period—where they began learning the alphabet and studying the Holy Qur'an. He later continued his education at a newly established Islamic school before entering the theological seminary in Mashhad to pursue formal religious studies. At the Soleiman Khan and Nawwab religious schools, and under the supervision of his father as well as

the guidance of prominent scholars, he completed the intermediate seminary curriculum, including studies in logic, philosophy, and Islamic jurisprudence, within the remarkably short period of five years. Following this stage, he proceeded to the advanced level of seminary education known as *dars-i khārij*, studying under distinguished scholars such as Grand Ayatullah Mīlānī.

The young Sayyed Ali was only eighteen years old when he started his studies at the highest level. He decided to make a pilgrimage to the holy shrines in Iraq, and so he left Iran for Najaf in 1957. He was fascinated by the theological and academic instructions of such eminent scholars such as Ayatullah Ḥakīm and Ayatullah Shāhrūdī. He attended their lessons and was willing to stay there and continue his studies in order to profit from these excellent teachers. However, his father made it known that he preferred his son continue his advanced studies in the

holy city of Qum. Thus, respecting his father's wish, he returned to Iran in 1958. Diligently and enthusiastically, he followed his advanced studies in Qum from 1958 to 1964 and benefited from the teachings of great scholars and grand Ayatullahs such as Ayatullah Burūjirdī, Imam Khomeini, Ayatullah Ḥā'irī Yazdī and 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī.

He received the bad news that his father had lost his sight in one eye and was not able to read properly. This prompted him to return to Mashhad and while being at the service of his father, seek further knowledge from him, from Ayatollah Milani and other important scholars residing in Mashhad. The young Sayyid Ali, who had now become a mujtahid by having completed his advanced level studies, began to teach various religious subjects to younger seminary and university students.

Martyr Imam Khamenei has produced a substantial body of scholarly work encompassing theological, historical, cultural, and political themes within Islamic studies. Among the works authored are *Islamic Thought in the Qur'an (An Outline)*, *The Profundity of Prayer*, *A Discourse on Patience*, and *The Essence of God's Unity*, which explore key doctrinal and spiritual dimensions of Islam. Several works focus on the lives and roles of prominent Shi'i figures, including *Imam Al-Saadiq (a)*, *Imam Al-Sajjad (a)*, and *Imam Reza (a) and His Appointment as Crown Prince*, as well as the broader historical analysis presented in *Struggles of the Shia Imams (a)*. Other writings address institutional, intellectual, and socio-political issues, such as *A General Report of the Islamic Seminary of Mashhad*, *Unity and Political Parties*, *Understanding Religion Properly*, *The Necessity of Returning to the Qur'an*, *Guardianship (Wilayah)*, and *Personal Views on the Arts*. His intellectual contributions also include *On the Four Principal Books of Traditions Concerning the Biography of Narrators*, *The Cultural Invasion* (a collection of speeches), and *Collections of Speeches and Messages* published in nine volumes. In addition to his original writings, Imam Khamenei translated several influential works from Arabic into Persian, including *The Peace Treaty of Imam Hassan (a)* by Raazi Aal-Yasseen, *The Future in Islamic Lands* and *An Indictment against Western Civilization* by Sayyid Qutb, and *Muslims in the*

Liberation Movement of India by Abdulmunaim Nassri (Biography of Ayatullah Khamenei the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, <https://en.khamenei.ir/news/131431>).

On Saturday, 9 Esfand 1404 in the Iranian calendar (10 Ramadan 1447AH / 28 February 2026), the noble Leader of the Islamic Revolution was martyred in a treacherous American–Zionist attack while he was fasting. Thus, not only did his life and words shine like a light in the darkness of ignorance and oppression across the world, but his martyrdom also became a guiding light for hearts, directing them toward the path of faith, sincerity, dignity, steadfastness, and the refusal to submit to injustice. Like his forefather, Imam Husayn (a), he was martyred at the hands of the most wretched and despised of beings so that truth and falsehood might once again be clearly distinguished and the final proof be established.

These statements were expressed in the last public speech of Martyr Imam Khamenei on 17 February 2026, indicating the path of dignity and prosperity that the Iranian nation has chosen: “The Iranian nation knows its Islamic and Shi‘i teachings well; it knows what it must do. Imam Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) said: ‘one like me will never pledge allegiance to one like Yazīd’¹ (Ibn Ṭāwūs 1969, *Al-Luhūf*, 23). In reality, the Iranian nation is saying: a nation such as ours, with this culture, with this background, with these lofty teachings, will not pledge allegiance to leaders like the corrupt individuals who are in power in the United States today” (Khamenei, Remarks delivered in a meeting with the people of East Azerbaijan, 17 February 2026).

The present book entitled *Tafsīr-i Sūra-yi Šaff* is an edited text of a series of *tafsīr* sessions held during the presidency of Martyr Imam Khamenei. These sessions were conducted in four meetings with members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and staff of the Presidential Office, from 10 December 1982 to 14 January 1983. In these sessions, all fourteen verses of this sūra were discussed and examined. Regarding the reason for selecting this sūra and the other sūras examined in these sessions, Martyr Imam Khamenei states: “The

¹. «مثلی لا یبایع مثل یزید». (لهوف، ص ۲۳ با اندکی تفاوت)

reason we selected this section is that the sūras of the 27th and 28th *juz* and those around them are mostly Medinan sūras—sūras that were revealed to the Noble Prophet (s) in Medina—and they relate to the period after the establishment of the Islamic government, that is, a situation similar to our present condition” (Khamenei 2024, pp. 6-7).

Discourse One

﴿سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ 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 يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا كَأَنَّهُمْ بُنْيَانٌ مَرْصُوعٌ * وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ لِمَ تَأْتُونَنِي وَقَدْ تَعْلَمُونَ أَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا أَزَاغَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ﴾ (الصف/١-٥)

“Whatever there is in the heavens glorifies Allah and whatever there is in the earth, and He is the All-mighty, the All-wise. O you who have faith! Why do you say what you do not do? It is greatly outrageous to Allah that you should say what you do not do. Indeed Allah loves those who fight in His way in ranks, as if they were a compact structure. When Moses said to his people, ‘O my people! Why do you torment me, when you certainly know that I am Allah’s apostle to you?’ So when they swerved [from the right path] Allah made their hearts swerve, and Allah does not guide the transgressing lot” (Quran 61:1-5)

Sūrat al-Şaff revolves around encouraging striving (*jihād*) in the path of God and reproaching those who abandon *jihād* because of hardships, dangers, or attachment to worldly life. One moral disease is speaking without acting; that is, a person may believe in something such as *jihād* and speak about it, yet retreat in practice because of the dangers involved. This disease is not limited to *jihād*; it also appears in other areas of life. Mentioning the faults and weaknesses of believers is intended for their moral training.

The glorification (*tasbīḥ*) of all beings indicates their humility and servitude before the Lord. Divine purposes cannot be thwarted and are worthy of investment, such as striving in the path of God. Truth is a natural and constant law in the world (see *Sūrat al-Şaff*, verses 8, 9, and 13). “*Al-‘Azīz al-Ḥakīm*” (*the All-mighty, the All-wise*): “*al-‘Azīz*” means the dominant one who cannot be overcome; absolute victory

belongs to God, His Messenger, and the believers. A wise person (*ḥakīm*) is one whose actions are founded upon a correct standard and sound order that cannot be ruined or destroyed.

“*Why do you say what you do not do?*” (*Quran 61:2*) indicates a suspicion of hypocrisy. There is a misjudgment in one’s evaluation of oneself that draws divine wrath. Sometimes people are unaware of their own spiritual illnesses—for example, they may engage in backbiting or encourage others to engage in jihād while themselves excusing their absence by claiming they have other affairs. This moral illness is the making of empty claims. God praises those who strive like a “compact structure” (*bunyānan marṣūṣ*), standing shoulder to shoulder against the enemy. According to the occasion of revelation of the verse (see Qummī 1984, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, 1:112), in the Battle of Uḥud the Muslims were defeated because of their desire for spoils, whereas in the Battle of Badr the bravery of individuals such as Imam ‘Alī (a), Ḥamzah Sayyid al-Shuhadā’, and ‘Ubayda ibn Ḥārith was praised.

God repeatedly reminds Muslims in the Quran of the story of the Children of Israel to warn them that they are not God’s favored or chosen sons like the Israelites imagined themselves to be. God granted them great blessings such as the formation of a religious society, righteous prophets, and an environment for religious upbringing, yet they were ungrateful. If you too are ungrateful for these blessings, you will fall into humiliation and loss in the same way. Because Muslims failed to implement divine commands, they fell into a deep and widespread misery and came to resemble the condition of the Israelites. Consequently, a state such as Israel—despite Islam’s mercy toward them—acts with hostility toward Muslims through division, sedition, separating Islamic countries, implementing American colonial policies, exerting severe political and military pressure on neighboring states, and drawing them into the orbit of American arrogance. This is a great crime that Israel is committing.

A group of Muslims—Iranians—because they acted upon divine commands such as jihād, enjoining good and forbidding evil, trust in God, and preventing the domination of unbelievers over Muslims—*“...and Allah will never provide the faithless any way [to prevail] over*

the faithful”² (Quran 4:141)—have attained honor today. Muslims in Iran have never before possessed such dignity. If all Muslims act upon these commands and the divine laws, they will reach power, dignity, and unity such that no global power will dare to covet domination over them. However, if we ourselves—who possess this honor and taste the fruits of Islam—forget piety, commit injustice, and fall into extravagance, we will return to the same condition to which the Children of Israel once returned.

Discourse Two

﴿وَ إِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُونَ لِي مَا تَخْلَعُونَ بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَبِّكَ أَنتَ بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُ نَارِ كَيْفَ تَتَّقُونَ لَئِنْ لَمْ يَنْزِلْ بِسُورَةٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَعَهُ فَذُكِّرْتُمْ بَلْ أَنتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّشْرِكُونَ﴾ (النساء/١٤١)

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“When Moses said to his people, O my people! Why do you torment me, when you certainly know that I am Allah’s apostle to you? ‘So when they swerved [from the right path] Allah made their hearts swerve, and Allah does not guide the transgressing lot. And when Jesus son of Mary said, ‘O Children of Israel! Indeed I am the apostle of Allah to you, to confirm what is before me of the Torah, and to give the good news of an apostle who will come after me, whose name is Ahmad.’ Yet when he brought them manifest proofs, they said, ‘This is plain magic.’ And who is a greater wrongdoer than him who fabricates falsehoods against Allah, while he is being summoned to Islam? And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing lot. They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah shall perfect His light though the faithless should be averse. It is He who has sent His Apostle with the guidance and the religion of truth that He may make it prevail over all religions though the polytheists should be averse” (Quran 61:5-9)

². ﴿... وَ لَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا﴾ (النساء/١٤١)

The reference to the story of the people of Moses (a) serves as a reminder for Muslims to be careful not to fall into similar circumstances. When the people of Moses deviated from the straight path that Moses had set before them, their punishment was that God caused their hearts to deviate even further: "...So when they swerved [from the right path] Allah made their hearts swerve..."³ (Quran 61:5). Referring to the verse, "...Whoever has faith in Allah, He guides his heart..."⁴ (Quran 64:11), he explains that divine guidance, which is obtained through righteous action, consists in God inspiring people toward straight paths and lofty goals. However, when a person falls into sin and deviation, a black spot appears on the heart; if it is not removed through repentance, the heart becomes increasingly darkened⁵ (see Daylamī 1991, *Irshād al-Qulūb*, 1:46), and it loses its sensitivity to divine inspiration.

Acting upon divine commands—one of whose highest manifestations is jihād—leads to spiritual elevation and inclusion among the elect, preparing a person to receive divine messages. Truth affects some people but not others. As the Quran states, the Quran itself guides some while it leads others astray. Failure to act upon divine instructions produces a constriction within the human soul. The Quran's leading astray means that such individuals do not understand its subtleties, mock it, and deny its teachings. God does not initially turn anyone's heart away; rather, through stubborn adherence to personal or group interests and through making excuses instead of carefully considering the truth, people themselves harden their hearts so that the truth can no longer reach them.

Just as during the early period of Islam the leaders of Quraysh prevented people from listening to the words of the Prophet (s), today some groups opposed to the Islamic Republic of Iran prevent their followers from listening to Quranic exegesis, Friday prayer sermons,

³. ﴿... فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا أَزَاغَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ...﴾ (الصف/٥)

⁴. ﴿... وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ...﴾ (التعابن/١١)

⁵. ﴿إِذَا أَذْنَبَ الْعَبْدُ كَانَ نُقْطَةً سَوْدَاءَ عَلَى قَلْبِهِ فَإِنْ هُوَ تَابَ وَأَقْلَعَ وَاسْتَعْفَرَ صَفَا قَلْبُهُ مِنْهَا وَإِنْ هُوَ لَمْ يَتُبْ وَلَمْ يَسْتَغْفِرْ كَانَ الذَّنْبُ عَلَى الذَّنْبِ وَالسَّوَادُ عَلَى السَّوَادِ حَتَّى يَغْمُرَ الْقَلْبَ فَيَمُوتَ بِكَثْرَةِ غَطَاءِ الذُّنُوبِ عَلَيْهِ...﴾.

and similar teachings lest the truth affect hearts that have not yet died. If a person leaves religion, fails to act upon divine commands, becomes deviant and corrupt, he is deprived of divine guidance; this is not limited to any particular people.

The Jews and Christians had heard the glad tidings of the Prophet's mission and knew his signs with certainty from their scriptures, and they had come to Medina expecting him. Yet when the signs of his prophethood became manifest, they denied him and called him a sorcerer out of personal and collective interests, thereby committing injustice and becoming deprived of divine guidance.

Although some prophets such as Solomon (a) and Joseph (a) established divine rule and justice for a time, these governments did not endure because some people did not remain committed to divine commands. Eventually, the promised government awaited in many religions will be established, which in Islam will be realized through the global rule of Imam Mahdi (a), and the divine objectives of the prophets will reach fruition in such a government. This also encourages believers to strive in the path of God, for their striving will not be fruitless. Just as the striving of the believers in the early period of Islam brought us into existence, our striving will bring about the Islamic society that must continue and the Islam that must be realized in the reality of society.

Surely the enemies cannot extinguish the light of God, for "...but Allah shall perfect His light though the faithless should be averse"⁶ (*Quran 61:8*) and likewise God has promised the universal spread of Islam: "It is He who has sent His Apostle with the guidance and the religion of truth that He may make it prevail over all religions..."⁷ (*Quran 61:9*). The true religion is the system capable of administering human life in accordance with the order of the universe and divine laws. Islam did not come merely to guide a small group in isolation; rather, it came to administer the whole of humanity and to prevail over all schools, religions, and ways of life. Therefore, the message of *Sūrat*

⁶. «...وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَ لَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ» (الصف/٨)

⁷. «هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَى وَ دِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ...» (الصف/٩)

al-Ṣaff is this: O fighters on the path of truth, O warriors of God, and O those who have taken up your lives and wealth and gone to the battlefields of truth and falsehood—both then and now—know that this religion in your possession, Islam, is for the guidance and administration of the life of all humanity, and it must prevail over all other systems of life. This is the ultimate destiny of humanity, and we hope that God, through the appearance of Imam Mahdi (a), will bring that day ever closer to us.

Discourse Three

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ • تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ • يَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسَاكِينٌ طَيِّبَةٌ فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ • وَأُخْرَىٰ تُحِبُّونَهَا نَصْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾ (الصف/١٠-١٣)

“O you who have faith! Shall I show you a deal that will deliver you from a painful punishment? Have faith in Allah and His Messenger, and wage jihad in the way of Allah with your possessions and your persons. That is better for you, should you know. He shall forgive you your sins and admit you into gardens with streams running in them, and into good dwellings in the Gardens of Eden. That is the great success. And other [blessings] you love: help from Allah and a victory near at hand. And give good news to the faithful” (Quran 61:10-13)

In the interpretation of verses 10 and 11, Martyr Imam Khamenei states that the “painful punishment” mentioned in verse 10 is the loss of the capital of one’s lifetime, as expressed in *Sūrat al-‘Aṣr*.⁸ Concerning the second reference to belief in verse 11—“Have faith in Allah...”⁹ (Quran 61:11)—two possibilities exist. One possibility is that it serves to emphasize faith and the higher degrees of belief, meaning

⁸ ﴿ وَالْعَصْرِ • إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ • إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴾ (العصر/١-٣)

“By Time! Indeed man is in loss, except those who have faith and do righteous deeds, and enjoin one another to [follow] the truth, and enjoin one another to patience” (Quran 103:1-3)

⁹ ﴿ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ... ﴾ (الصف/١١)

that believers should strengthen and deepen their faith in God and the Prophet (s). This is similar to the verse, "*O you who have faith! Have faith in Allah and His Messenger ...*"¹⁰ (Quran 4:136), which means that believers should make their faith firmer, deeper, purer, and supported by stronger reasoning. The second possibility is that the second reference to belief means believing in God and His Messenger in relation to the command of jihād—not merely believing in times of comfort. For example, some Islamic governments, although they know that a country such as the United States acts contrary to the command of God and His Messenger (s), still accommodate it and accept God only insofar as doing so does not create difficulties for them. This resembles the companions of Moses (a) who, when commanded to enter the Holy Land and prevail, refused and did not support Moses (see Quran 5:21-26).

In verse 11, believers are encouraged to strive with their wealth and their lives—forms of capital that remain everlasting if spent in the path of God; otherwise, they will be lost. In exchange for these, eternal paradise is granted. What is given in return for wealth and life is the forgiveness of sins—"He shall forgive you your sins..."—and entrance into gardens beneath which rivers flow: "*gardens with streams running in them,*" and "*good dwellings in the Gardens of Eden...*" (Quran 61:12). 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī states that this indicates that God is granting the reward of the eternal paradise (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1996, *al-Mizān*, 19:259). The worldly reward of striving is "...*help from Allah and a victory near at hand...*"; The verse concludes: "...*And give good news to the faithful*" (Quran 61:13). Such a profitable and beneficial transaction is indeed glad tidings for believers, both in this world and the next.

Discourse Four

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا أَنْصَارَ اللَّهِ كَمَا قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ لَلْحَوَارِيِّينَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ فَأَمَّتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَكَفَرَتْ طَائِفَةٌ فَأَيَّدْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَى عَدُوِّهِمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا ظَاهِرِينَ ﴾ (الصف/١٤)

¹⁰. ﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ... ﴾ (النساء/١٣٦)

“O you who have faith! Be Allah’s helpers, just as Jesus son of Mary said to the disciples, ‘Who will be my helpers for Allah’s sake?’ The Disciples said, ‘We will be Allah’s helpers!’ So a group of the Children of Israel believed, and a group disbelieved. Then We strengthened the faithful against their enemies, and they became the dominant ones” (Quran 61:14)

The duty of supporting and striving in the path of God applies to all followers of the prophets and all believers. The divine messengers conveyed a single message: following the truth and striving to make the truth prevail over falsehood. Supporting God means supporting the religion of God. If someone claims to support God yet does not observe any of the commands and essentials of Islam, this cannot be considered obedience to God. Supporting the religion of God involves many hardships because all anti-divine powers mobilize against a person. For this reason, even in the time of Jesus (a), only the group of disciples—twelve believers—were willing to support him.

The term “*ḥawāriyyūn*” (disciples), according to one possibility mentioned by Martyr Imam Khamenei, may derive from the root “*ḥiwār*,” meaning “dialogue,” referring to the conversations between them and Jesus. The phrase “*Who will be my helpers for Allah’s sake?*”, according to Martyr Imam Khamenei, means: who are those who will help me toward God and in the path of God? After Jesus was raised to heaven, the disciples continued this support and assistance and spread the religion. Under extremely difficult circumstances, for about two or three hundred years, pressure upon Christians was very severe, to the extent that they conveyed divine truths and teachings secretly—in darkness and underground—transmitting the words of Jesus (a) from tongue to tongue and from mouth to mouth.

Regarding the victory of the believers in the religion of Jesus (a) over the unbelievers, two possibilities are presented. One possibility is that through perseverance, God eventually granted them victory over their enemies when the Roman emperor Constantine became Christian. Others believe that this victory does not refer to that time but rather to the emergence of Islam, because when Islam appeared and the Prophet (s) raised the banner of monotheism, the religion of Jesus (a) was, in

fact, revived. The polytheists and unbelievers were eliminated, and even those within the religion of Jesus who had fallen into forms of polytheism—such as dualism or trinitarianism—were removed from the path of pure monotheism. In this sense, the religion of Jesus truly prevailed. Therefore, the real success of Jesus and of all the prophets and believers throughout history occurred when the Noble Prophet (s) was able to raise the banner of monotheism, present pure monotheism to humanity, and acquaint the East and the West of the world with this religion.

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