

The gist of these injunctions is that people who fall under Islamic legal authority are, in the first instance, of two kinds: (1) Muslim (2) Kāfir (disbeliever). Then, in terms of that period of time, Muslims were of two kinds: (1) Muhājir, those who after *hijrah* becoming obligatory, had left Makkah and had settled in Madīnah. (2) Non-Muhājir, those who had, for a valid reason or for some other reason, stayed behind in Makkah itself.

Mutual relationship was a common factor among individuals from all these kinds because, during the early period of Islām, it was quite common that a son would be Muslim while the father would be a Kāfir, or a father would be Muslim while his son would be a Kāfir. The same was true about other relationships, such as, brothers, nephews, maternal grandfathers and maternal uncles etc. And that there were mutual relationships among Muhājir and non-Muhājir Muslims is fairly obvious.

Allah Ta'ālā has, in His perfect mercy and profound wisdom, declared that the wealth and property left by the deceased person belongs to his or her own relatives as its deserving recipients. Although, the initial reality was that whoever received anything during this mortal life was entirely owned and possessed by Allah Ta'ālā in the real sense. It was a simple arrangement from Him that everyone was made, on His behalf, a temporary owner of what was given to man to use for a life-time and derive benefit from it. Therefore, by all canons of logic, reason and justice the inheritance of every deceased person should have ricocheted back into His ownership - the practical implementation of which was to have it placed in the Public Treasury of the Islāmic State which serves the great masses of people created by Allah by fulfilling their multi-faceted developmental needs. But, in doing so, first of all everyone would have been naturally hurt to find out that, after death, one's wealth and property will not reach one's own children, nor to parents, nor to wife or husband. Then, its logical consequence was also somewhat equally natural - that no one would have cared to work for more and take steps to keep it preserved. In other words, no one would have been burning his feet to work for more than what was needed to collect just about enough to take care of the basic needs of his or her life. And it is obvious that this attitude to life would have meant disaster for all human beings and their cities.

Therefore, Allah *Jalla thana'uh*, made inheritance the right of relatives among human beings, specially relatives for whose benefit one has been working hard and putting financial assets together during the course of one's life.

Alongwith it, while instituting the distribution of inheritance, Islām has also kept in sight the important objective for which human beings were created, that is, the obedience to and worship of Allah Ta'ālā - and it was in terms of this objective that the entire human species was declared to be two separate peoples or nations: Believers and Disbelievers. The verse of the Qur'an: *خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَ مِنْكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ* (It is He who created you, then, among you there is a disbeliever and among you there is a believer - Al-Taghābun, 64:2) means exactly this.

This two-nation theory severed relationships based on lineage and kinship as far as it concerned inheritance stipulating that neither shall a Muslim receive a share from the inheritance of a related disbeliever, nor shall a Kāfir have any right in the inheritance of a Muslim relative. This is the subject stated in the first two verses (72, 73) and the injunction given therein is for ever, was never abrogated and has continued to be Islām's basic principle of inheritance since its very beginning and shall remain operative right through the day of Qiyāmah.

Allied with it, there is another injunction which concerns mutual inheritance between Muhājir and non-Muhājir Muslims about which it has been stated in the first verse that the relationship of a Muslim - until he emigrates from Makkah - shall also remain severed with Muslims who have emigrated, as far as inheritance is concerned. In this case, no Muhājir Muslim shall inherit his or her non-Muhājir relative, nor shall a non-Muhājir receive any share from the inheritance of a Muhājir Muslim. As obvious, this injunction was valid upto the time Makkah al-Mukarramah was still unconquered. After the Conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had himself declared: *لا هجرة بعد الفتح* (*lā hijrata ba'd al-fath* : There is no *hijrah* after the Conquest). It means that after the Conquest of Makkah the obligation of Hijrah does not remain operative any more, and when the obligation of Hijrah itself ceases to be operative any more, the question of severance of relationships with those who did not migrate stands automatically terminated.

Therefore, most commentators have said that this injunction

stands abrogated by virtue of the Conquest of Makkah while, according to investigative scholars of the field, this injunction too is everlasting and unabrogated - but that it has changed under specific conditions. If conditions in which this injunction was sent at the time of the revelation of the Qur'an were to reappear at some period of time or in some country, then, the same injunction will come into force once again.

To explain it further, it can be said that, before the Conquest of Makkah, every Muslim man and woman was obligated to migrate from Makkah as an absolute duty. In obedience to this injunction, most Muslims - with the exception of only a few - had migrated from Makkah to Madīnah. At that time, not migrating from Makkah had become a sign of not being a Muslim. Therefore, at that time, Islām as professed by a non-Muhājir was also taken to be doubtful and it was for this reason that mutual inheritance between Muhājir and non-Muhājir was severed.

Now, if the same conditions were to re-emerge in some country once again - that it becomes totally impossible to fulfill Islāmic obligations while living there - then, emigrating from that country will become obligatory once again, so much so that not emigrating under such conditions without a strong excuse, becomes a doubtless sign of disbelief, then, the same injunction shall still apply, that is, mutual inheritance between Muhājir and non-Muhājir shall not remain operative any more. This presentation, it is hoped, makes it clear that the injunction relating to the severance of mutual inheritance between Muhājir and non-Muhājir is really no separate injunction. In fact, it is the very same first injunction which describes the severance of inheritance between Muslim and non-Muslim. The only difference is that a non-muhājir in such a case was though deprived from the inheritance because of this sign of disbelief, yet he was not classed as a disbeliever just on the basis of this much sign of disbelief - unless, of course, one was to betray open, clear and decisive proof of one's Kufr or disbelief.

And perhaps, it is in view of this expedient consideration that yet another injunction relating to non-Muhājir Muslims has been mentioned at this place. This injunction specifies that, should they ask for help from Muhājir Muslims, then, it is necessary for Muhājir Muslims to help them - so that it becomes clear that they have not placed non-

Muhājir Muslims in the category of outright disbelievers, in fact, retained was their Islāmic right that they be helped when in need.

And since the background of the revelation of this verse is a particular Hijrah - that from Makkah to Madinah - while non-Muhājir Muslims were only those who had stayed back in Makkah threateningly surrounded by the disbelievers of Makkah, it is obvious that the help they sought could only be against the same disbelievers of Makkah. However, when the Holy Qur'an ordered Muhājir Muslims to help them out, then, given a surface view of things, it could be deduced from here that helping them has been made necessary for Muslims against all peoples and under all conditions - even if, the people against whom help is sought already have a no-war pact with Muslims - although, doing justice and upholding pledges is a serious duty in Islām. Therefore, in this verse, an exempting rule was mentioned according to which, should non-Muhājir Muslims seek help from Muhājir Muslims against a people with whom Muslims already have a no-war pact, then, helping even brother Muslims against treaty-covered disbelievers is not permissible.

This was the essential meaning of the first two sentences. Now let us look at it in synchronization with the words. It is being said:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ
 آوُوا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَئِكَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ، وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُمْ
 مِنْ وَلَا بِيَتِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ يَهَاجِرُوا،

that is: "Those who believed and those who emigrated (for the sake of Allah, leaving their homeland and relatives behind) and carried out Jihād in the way of Allah with their wealth and lives (by buying weapons and other war materials with their wealth and by staking their lives in the line of duty on the battlefield - which refers to the original Emigrants, the first among Muhājirs) and those who gave refuge and help (which refers to the Anṣār of Madīnah, the supporting residents of Madīnah, whereafter it was said about the two parties) --- those are friends to each other. (Then, it was said:) And those who did believe but did not emigrate, with them you have no friendship at all unless they emigrate.

At this place, the Holy Qur'an has used the words: *Waliyy* and *Wilyah* which mean friendship and close relations in the real sense. Ear-

ly Tafsīr authorities, Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās, Ḥasan, Qatadah, Mujāhid and others have said that *Wilāyah* at this place means *Wirathah* or inheritance while *Waliyy* means *Wārith* or inheritor. Nevertheless, some others have taken *Wilāyah* in the usual lexical sense, that is, friendship, help and support.

According to the first Tafsīr, the verse would mean that Muslim Muhājir and Anṣār shall be inheritors to each other. Their bond of inheritance shall not remain operative either with non-Muslims or with particular Muslims who did not emigrate. The first injunction, that is, severance of inheritance on the basis of difference in religion, was forever and remained as such. But, as for the second injunction, the position was that after the Conquest of Makkah, when Hijrah was no more needed, the injunction of severance of inheritance between the categories of Muhājir and non-Muhājir also did not remain operative any more. From here, some Muslim jurists have deduced that the way difference in religion is a cause of severance of inheritance, similarly, the difference in homelands is also the cause of severance of inheritance. A detailed discussion on this subject appears in books of Islāmī Fiqh.

After that, it was said: *وَإِنْ اسْتَنْصَرُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ فَعَلَيْكُمْ النَّصْرُ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُم مِّيثَاقٌ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ* (And if they seek your help in the matter of faith, then, you are bound to help except against a people who have a treaty between you and them. And Allah is watchful over what you do - 72). The sense of the statement is that people who have not migrated, relationship with them has though been terminated as far as inheritance is concerned, yet they are Muslims after all. If they seek help from Muhājir Muslims to safeguard their faith, then, to help them is obligatory on them. But, when doing so, Muhājir Muslims should not surrender rules of justice and their own fidelity to an existing treaty when a situation comes in which non-emigrating Muslims were to seek the help of Muhājir Muslims against a people with whom they already have a no-war pact. If so, even helping these Muslims against the peace pact party is not permissible.

A similar incident came to pass at the time of the Peace Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah. When the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم arrived at a peace arrangement with the disbelievers of Makkah and included in the terms of peace was the condition that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would repatriate anyone who went to Madīnah thereafter. Just at the

time the peace treaty was being concluded, somehow there appeared Sayyidnā Abū Jandal رضى الله عنه whom the disbelievers of Makkah had put in detention where he was being tortured in all sorts of ways. He presented himself in person before the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, told him how oppressed he had been and sought his help. Imagine this plaint was being made before none but him who had come to this world as the universal mercy. What this plaint from an oppressed Muslim would have done to his blessed heart is something everyone cannot realize easily. But, despite this empathy, he excused himself from helping him as bound by the injunction in the said verse, and let him go back.

His return in this manner was heart-rending for all Muslims present on the occasion. But, the blessed Prophet of Islām, guided by Divine words, was as if witnessing the welcome spectacle that the years of oppression were not going to last any longer and the reward of a few more days of patience was to be added to the destiny of Sayyidnā Abū Jandal رضى الله عنه. Then Makkah will soon be conquered. Then all these problems were going to be all over. Still, at that time, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم acted in accordance with the command of the Qur'ān and preferred treaty obligations over the personal misfortune of Sayyidnā Abū Jandal رضى الله عنه. This is the distinctive feature of the Shari'ah of Islām which has made its adherents deserving recipients of victory, honour, and success which awaits them in the Hereafter. Otherwise, as observed commonly, world powers play games with treaties and pacts. They use them as weights and levers to make the weak cringe and the strong walk in trap. The game plan always stays in their hands. With the slightest expediency in sight, they would unleash a hundred interpretations and kill the treaty and begin looking for scapegoats to put the blame on.

Said in the second verse (73) was: **وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ** (And those who disbelieve are friends to each other). The word: **ولى** (*waliyy*) used here, as stated earlier, carries a general sense included wherein is inheritance as well as the guardianship and patronage of affairs. Therefore, from this verse, we learn that disbelievers shall be considered inheritors to each other and the very law of the distribution of inheritance which is in force in their own religion shall be implemented as far as matters of their inheritance are concerned. In addition to

that, the guardian (*waliyy*) responsible for the upbringing of their orphaned children and for the marriage of their girls shall be from among them. In a nutshell, it means that, in family matters, the religious law of non-Muslims themselves shall stand duly protected in an Islāmic state.

At the end of the verse, it was said: *إِلَّا تَعْلَمُوهُ تَكُنْ فِتْنَةٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ كَبِيرٌ* (And if you will not do so, there shall be disorder on the earth, and a great corruption - 73).

This sentence is connected with all those injunctions mentioned a little earlier, for instance, (1) the Muhājir and the Anṣār should be friends to each other, which includes mutual help and support, as well as inheritance; (2) the Muhājir and non-Muhājir Muslims of that period of time should not consider themselves related to each other in terms of inheritance, but the doors of help and support should remain open subject to relevant conditions; (3) the disbelievers were caretakers (*waliyy*) of each other, therefore, Muslims should not interfere with their law of guardianship and inheritance in any way.

Thereafter the text says if things were not done according to these injunctions, there shall be disorder and corruption on the earth. Perhaps, this warning has been given in view of the importance of the injunctions described here for they were based on major principles of equity, justice and public peace. The related verses make it amply clear that the way mutual help, support and inheritance depend on lineal bond - in the same manner, religious bond has its own importance in this matter. In fact, religious bond has precedence over lineal bond. This is the reason why a Kāfir (disbeliever) cannot inherit from a Muslim and a Muslim cannot inherit from a Kāfir - even though, they be fathers or sons or brothers by lineage. Along with it, in order to block religious prejudice and pagan partisanship, instructions were given that, no doubt, the religious bond is so formidable, yet standing by the terms of a treaty comes first and is more preferable. Contravention of the terms of a treaty is not permissible under the heat of religious partisanship. Similarly, also given was the instruction that the disbelievers are responsible for each other as guardians and inheritors, therefore, no interference should be made in their personal law of guardianship and inheritance. On the surface, these look like a few subsidiary injunctions, but they are, in reality, comprehensive basic

principles of equity and justice for all which guarantee world peace. This is the reason why, at this place, following the description of these injunctions, warning has been given in words which have not been generally used in the case of other injunctions: 'If you will not do so, there shall be disorder and corruption on the earth.' Also given within these words is a hint that these injunctions have an effectiveness of their own in checking disorder and corruption.

Mentioned in the third verse (74) are words of praise for the Ṣaḥābah who emigrated from Makkah and for the Anṣār of Madīnah who helped them, as well as the attestation to their being true Muslims and the promise of forgiveness and respectable provision made to them. When it was said: **أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا** (those are the believers in truth), the hint given was in the direction that those who did not migrate were though Muslims, but their Islām was neither perfect, nor certain - because there existed the probability that they may really be hypocrites professing Islām only outwardly. After that, it was said: **لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ** (For them there is forgiveness) - as it has been explained in sound (*Ṣaḥīḥ*) Aḥādīth: **الإسلام يهدم ما كان قبلة .** (Islām demolishes what was before it) and: **والهجرة تهدم ما كان قبلها** (Hijrah razes what was before it). In short, this means that the act of becoming a Muslim goes on to demolish the entire edifice of past sins. Similarly, the making of Hijrah razes all past sins.

Described in the fourth verse (75) is the injunction concerning different categories of Muhājirīn (Muhājirs, emigrants). It says: Though, some of them are the very first among Muhājirīn - those who migrated earlier than the Peace Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah. Then, there is a second category of Muhājirīn - those who migrated after the Peace Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah and, because of this, there will be difference in the ranks they are to have in the Hereafter, but regarding injunctions of this mortal world, they too shall be covered by the injunction governing the first category of Muhājirīn in that they are inheritors to each other. Therefore, addressing the first among the Muhājirīn, it was said: **فَأُولَئِكَ مِنْكُمْ** (then, they are one of you - 75). It means that these Muhājirīn of the second category are also a part of your group. Hence, under injunctions governing inheritance, they are governed by rules which apply to Muhājirīn in general.

This is the very last verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl. Given at the end of it

is a comprehensive regulation of the law of inheritance through which stood abrogated what was an interim injunction promulgated during the early period of Hijrah mentioned in the preceding verses about having the Muhājirin and Anṣār become inheritors to each other through an arrangement of brotherhood between them. The words of the last verse which abrogated this temporary law of inheritance are: **وَأُولُوا الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ مِّنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ** (As for the womb-relatives, some of them are closer to some as in the Book of Allah -75). Let us study them in a greater detail

In Arabic, the word: **اولو** (*ulu*) is used to carry the sense of being the possessor, owner, person or people of certain entitlement. In absence of an exact counterpart in English, it is usually translated as 'men of' or 'people of', as in: 'people of wisdom' for: **اولو العقل** (*ulu 'l-'aql*) and 'people of authority' for: **اولو الامر** (*ulu 'l-amr*). Therefore, the word: **اولو الارحام** (*ulu 'l-arḥām*) means the people of *arḥām* or wombs. *Arḥām* is the plural of *raḥim* which is basically the name of the part of the body where the creative process of the human child takes place and since the bond of relationship is established via the association of *raḥim* (رحم), therefore, **اولو الارحام** (*ulu 'l-arḥām* : translated literally as womb-relatives) is used in the sense of relatives.

The meaning of the verse is that, though a universal bond of brotherhood binds all Muslims to each other, because of which, if needed, helping and supporting each other becomes obligatory, and that they also inherit from each other. But, Muslims who are bound by mutual relationship have precedence over other Muslims. The phrase: **مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ** (*fī Kitābillah*: translated literally 'as in the Book of Allah - 75') at this place has been used in the sense of: **مِنْ حُكْمِ اللَّهِ** (*fī ḥukmi 'l-lāh*) which means that Allah Ta'ālā has made this law through His special command.

The rule of procedure given by this verse is that the distribution of inheritance should be on the criterion of relationship and the word: **اولو الارحام** (*ulu 'l-arḥām*) is applied to relatives in an absolute sense. Out of these, the shares of particular relatives have already been determined by the Holy Qur'an in Sūrah al-Nisā'. These are called *Aṣḥāb al-Furūd* or *Dhawi al-Furūd* in the terminology of the Law of Inheritance. Popularly referred to as "Qur'anic heirs," they mean those who are entitled to a statutory share in the inheritance of a deceased person. Any prop-

erty which remains, after the determined shares have been given, should be distributed over other relatives as provided in this verse. Then, it is also evident that it is not possible for anyone to distribute any property over all relatives because some kind of a distant relationship definitely exists among human beings of the whole world - for all of them owe their fact of birth to but one father and mother, Sayyidnā Ādam and Sayyidah Ḥawwā عليهم السلام (Ādam and Eve). Therefore, the only practical way of distributing inheritance over relatives can be that, by giving close relatives precedence over those distant, the benchmark of the near should be used to exclude the distant. A detailed description of this is present in the Aḥādīth of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم which stipulate that, after having given the shares of *Dhawi al-Furūd* (Qur'anic heirs), whatever remains should be given to the 'Aṣḡāt (agnates or paternal relatives) of the deceased person, degree-wise, that is, by giving precedence to the near agnate ('aṣḡah) over the distant one, the benchmark of the near should be used to exclude the distant.

And in case, there is no one alive from among the agnates ('aṣḡāt), then, distribution has to be made over rest of the relatives.

In addition to 'aṣḡāt or agnates, there are a host of other relatives. It is for them that the word: *Dhawi al-Arḡām* has been particularized in the technical terminology of the science of inheritance and distribution. But, this terminology has found currency in a later period. In the Holy Qur'an, the word: أُوْلُو الْأَرْحَامِ (*ulu 'l-arḡām* : womb-relatives), according to its lexical connotation, covers all relatives included wherein are *Dhawi al-Furūd* (Qur'anic heirs), 'Aṣḡāt (agnates) and *Dhawi al-Arḡām* (womb-relatives) in a general sense.

Then, some details about the subject have been covered in Sūrah al-Nisā' where Allah Ta'ālā has Himself determined the shares of particular relatives and which are known as *Dhawi al-Furūd* in the terminology of Inheritance. As for the rest, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said:

الْحَقُّوْا الْفَرَائِضَ بِأَهْلِهَا فَمَا بَقِيَ فَهُوَ لِأَوْلَى رَجُلٍ ذَكَرَ . (البخارى)

It means: After giving shares to those identified in the Qur'an, that which remains is to be given to males nearer to the deceased. (al-Bukhārī)

They are known as 'Aṣḃāt (agnates) in the terminology of inheritance. If there be no one from among the 'aṣḃāt (agnates) of the deceased person, then, according to the saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, other relatives get it. These relatives are technically known as *Dhawi 'l-Arḥām* (womb-relatives) such as, maternal uncle or maternal aunt and others.

The last sentence of this last verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl has abrogated the law of Islāmic inheritance mentioned in verses earlier to this. According to that law, mutual inheritance used to be in force among the Muhājirīn and Anṣār, even though there be no lenial kinship between them. It was abrogated because it was an emergency-oriented injunction given during the initial period of Hijrah.

Sūrah Al-Anfāl ends here. May Allāh Ta'ālā give us all the *Taufīq* of understanding it and acting in accordance with it.



Praised is Allah with whose help Sūrah al-'Anfāl comes to its conclusion the night of Thursday, 22nd of Jumada II, Hijrah Year 1381. I seek from Allah Ta'ālā His *Taufīq* and help in the *Tafsīr* of Sūrah al-Taubah and for Allah is all praise from its beginning to its end --- Muḥammad Shafī, may he be forgiven.

A review of it was completed on the day of Jumu'ah, 19th of Jumada I, Hijrah Year 1390 and praised be Allah for that.

Sūrah Al-Taubah

(Repentance)

Sūrah al-Taubah is Madanī and it has one hundred and twenty nine verses and sixteen sections

Verses 1 – 5

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بَرَاءَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١﴾ فَسِيحُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْزِي الْكٰفِرِينَ ﴿٢﴾ وَأَذَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى النَّاسِ يَوْمَ الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ بَرِيءٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ وَرَسُولُهُ فَإِنْ تُبْتُمْ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِعَذَابِ آلِيمٍ ﴿٣﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْقُصُوكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَمْ يُظَاهِرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَحَدًا فَأَتِمُوا إِلَيْهِمْ عَهْدَهُمْ إِلَىٰ مُدَّتِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤﴾ فَإِذَا انسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرْمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخَذُوهُمْ وَاحْصُرُوهُمْ وَاقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصِدٍ فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٥﴾

Here is a withdrawal (proclaimed) by Allah and His Messenger against the Mushriks* with whom you have a treaty. [1]

So, move in the land freely for four months, and be sure

* Mushriks, anglicized plural of *mushrik*, stands for *al-mushrikīn* – those who associate partners with Allah.

that you can never defeat Allah and that Allah is about to disgrace the disbelievers. [2]

And here is an announcement, from Allah and His Messenger to the people on the day of the greater Ḥajj, that Allah is free from (any commitment to) the Mushriks, and so is His Messenger. Now, if you repent, it is good for you. And if you turn away, then be sure that you can never defeat Allah. And give those who disbelieve the 'good' news of a painful punishment. [3] Except those of the Mushriks with whom you have a treaty, and they abated nothing of your rights and backed no one against you, so then, fulfill the treaty with them up to their term. Surely, Allah loves the God-fearing. [4]

So, when the sacred months expire, kill the Mushriks wherever you find them. And catch them and besiege them and sit in ambush for them everywhere. Then, if they repent and establish Ṣalāh and pay Zakāh, leave their way. Surely, Allah is most Forgiving, Very Merciful. [5]

Commentary

Now begins Sūrah Al-Barā'ah which is also called Sūrah Al-Taubah (as written; also Sūrah At-Taubah as pronounced). It is called Barā'ah for the reason that it mentions *barā'ah* or disengagement with the consequences of what the *kuffār* (disbelievers) do. Then, it is also called Taubah because it announces that the repentance of Muslims has been accepted. (Mazharī). It is a feature of this Sūrah that '*bismillāh*' (بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ: *Bismillāhir-Raḥmānir-Raḥīm*: With the name of Allah, the [All-] Merciful, the Very Merciful) is not written in the copies of the Qur'an when the Sūrah begins. However, Bismillāh is written at the head of all Sūrahs of the Qur'an – the sole exception being that of Sūrah Al-Taubah. Before we find out the relevant reason, let us bear in mind that the Holy Qur'an was revealed bit by bit during the period of twenty three years. The verses of a Sūrah were revealed at different times. When Sayyidnā Jibrā'īl would come with a revelation, he would also point out to the Divinely intended arrangement of each revealed verse, explaining that it should be placed in such and such Sūrah after such and such 'Āyah (verse). It was in accordance with this Divinely intended arrangement that the Holy Prophet ﷺ would have scribes of the revelation write them up.

And when, at the end of a Sūrah, the next was to begin, 'Bismillāh-Raḥmānir-Raḥīm' would be revealed before the next actually did – which made it easy to understand that the previous Sūrah had concluded and another Sūrah was beginning. All Sūrahs of the Holy Qur'an were revealed in that manner. Sūrah Al-Taubah is, in terms of the order of revelation, among one of the very last Sūrahs. When it began, neither was Bismillāh revealed as customary, nor did the Holy Prophet ﷺ instruct the scribe of the revelation to do that. So, this was how things stood when the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم passed away.

When Sayyidnā 'Uthmān al-Ghanī رضى الله عنه arranged the Holy Qur'an in the form of a book during the period of his Caliphate, Bismillāh was not there at the beginning of Sūrah Al-Taubah, an arrangement contrary to that of the rest of Sūrahs. Therefore, a doubt rose – perhaps, this is not an independent Sūrah, or may as well be a part of some other Sūrah. Now, they thought, if this happens to be a part of some other Sūrah, which Sūrah is that? In terms of its subjects, Sūrah Al-Anfāl seemed to fit the slot.

Also, as narrated by Sayyidnā 'Uthman رضى الله عنه elsewhere, 'during the blessed period of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, both these Sūrahs were called: قرينتين (*qarīnatayn*: the two connected ones)'. (Maḏharī). Therefore, it was placed after Sūrah Al-Anfāl. This precaution was taken for the reason that, should it be a part of another Sūrah, it must stay with it. But, it was also probable that it may be a separate and independent Sūrah. Therefore, when writing, a particular format was adopted whereby some space was left open at the end of Sūrah Al-Anfāl and before the beginning of Sūrah Al-Taubah – similar to the spot meant for writing Bismillāh at the head of other Sūrahs.

The precise reason why Bismillāh was not written at the beginning of Sūrah Al-Barā'ah or Al-Taubah has been reported from the great compiler of the revealed text of the Qur'an, Saiyyidnā 'Uthmān رضى الله عنه himself. At that time, he was answering a question posed by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, the Saḥābī and Mufassīr (exegete) of the Qur'an, which appears in Abū Dāwūd, An-Nasā'i, the Musnād of Aḥmad and Tirmidhī. In that question, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās had also asked Sayyidnā 'Uthmān about the order in which the Sūrahs of the Qur'an have been arranged. Giving an example, he pointed out that placed

first were the larger Sūrahs that have more than hundred verses. Technically, they are called مئتين (*mi'īn*: hundreds). After that, there are the large Sūrahs that have less than hundred verses. They are called مئاني (*mathānī*: the oft-repeated ones). Placed thereafter were smaller Sūrahs that are called منصات (*mufaṣṣalāt*: the Surahs starting from "Qāf" [50] to the end of the Qur'ān [114]). The order of this very arrangement necessitated that Sūrah Al-Taubah should be placed before Sūrah Al-Anfāl – because the verses carried by Sūrah Al-Taubah are more than one hundred while those of Sūrah Al-Anfāl are less than one hundred. The first seven long Sūrahs called سبع طوال (*sab' tiwal*: the seven long ones) also show that the placement of Sūrah Al-Taubah before Sūrah Al-Anfāl is naturally more appropriate there too. After having stated the existing position, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه asked about the consideration that had led to a contrary arrangement. Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضى الله عنه said: 'Correct. But, the Qur'ān was serious matter. Precaution demanded that we do what we did – because, in case Sūrah Al-Taubah is not taken as an independent Sūrah, instead, is taken as a part of Sūrah Al-Anfāl, it will be obvious that the verses of Sūrah Al-Anfāl have been revealed earlier and those of Sūrah Al-Taubah after that. Given this situation, it is not permissible to give precedence to the verses of the latter over the verses of Sūrah Al-Anfāl without the sanction of *Waḥy* (revelation). And since we did not find any such instruction in the *Waḥy*, therefore, Sūrah Al-Anfāl was made to precede and Sūrah Al-Taubah, to succeed.'

From these precise details we learn that the reason for not writing Bismillāh at the beginning of Sūrah Al-Taubah lies in the probability that Sūrah Al-Taubah may not be an independent Sūrah, instead, be a part of Sūrah Al-Anfāl. Given this probability, writing Bismillāh at this place shall be as incorrect as someone were to write Bismillāh in the middle of any Sūrah of the Qur'ān.

On this basis, Muslim jurists have said that a person who has already been reciting Sūrah Al-Anfāl from above and is going to begin Sūrah Al-Taubah, then, he or she should not recite *Bismillāh*. But, a person who is starting his or her *tilāwah* (recitation of the Qur'ān) from the beginning, or from somewhere in the middle, of this very Sūrah should say: بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ (*Bismillāhir-Raḥmānir-Raḥīm*) and then begin his or her recitation. Some people who do not know rules think

that the recitation of Bismillāh while reciting Sūrah Al-Taubah is not permissible under any condition. This is a mistaken notion. Then, they would make another mistake on top of that. Instead of reciting Bismillāh, they would recite: *أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ النَّارِ* (I seek the protection of Allah from the Fire) when initiating or beginning from it. For this, there is no proof from the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his Companions.

Then, there is the statement of Sayyidnā ‘Alī رضي الله عنه reported in a narrative from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه. It says, ‘the reason for not writing Bismillāh at the beginning of Sūrah Barā’ah (Al-Taubah) is that بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ (*Bismillāhir-Raḥmānir-Raḥīm*) is an assurance of protection, but in Sūrah Al-Barā’ah, this assurance of protection and the pledge of peace given to disbelievers has been terminated.’ This statement should be taken as a refinement of approach that does not go against the real cause. And the real cause is nothing but that Bismillāh was not written on the basis of the probability that Sūrah Al-Anfāl and Sūrah Al-Taubah may be one. Then, there could be yet another subtle point about why it was not written. This Sūrah proclaims freedom from any responsibility for the disbelievers and announces the withdrawal of peace and protection from those people – which is not fit for Bismillāh. Therefore, in terms of the design of creation, particular causes were generated here so that Bismillāh was not to be written at this place.

To understand the present verses of Sūrah Al-Taubah fully, it is necessary to know some events that became the cause of the revelation of these verses. Therefore, given here first are consolidated details of the relevant events:

1. As a whole, Sūrah Al-Taubah carries the description of some battles, events related to them, and many injunctions and rulings emerging therefrom – for example, the termination of pacts with all tribes of Arabia, the Conquest of Makkah, the battles of Ḥunain and Tabūk. Out of these events, first came the Conquest of Makkah in Hijrah year 8, then came the battle of Ḥunain in the same year, then the battle of Tabūk in Rajab of Hijrah year 9. Finally came the announcement terminating pacts with all tribes of Arabia in the month of Dhu al-Ḥijjah, Hijrah year 9.

2. A summary of subjects concerning the repudiation of treaties mentioned in these verses shows that it was in the Hijrah year 6 that

the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم started with the intention of 'Umrah but the Quraysh blocked their entry into Makkah. Then came the peace treaty between them at Hudaibiyah. The time frame of this treaty, as reported in Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī, was ten years. In Makkah, there were other tribes too, other than the Quraysh. An article was included in the peace treaty to cover them. It allowed a tribe, from out of the tribes other than the Quraysh, to become allies to the Quraysh and be with them, if they chose to do so; and whoever chose to become the ally of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and be with him was allowed to do that. So, the tribe of Khuzā'ah chose to become an ally of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and went with him, while the tribe of Banū Bakr chose to go with the Quraysh. According to the treaty, it was necessary that within ten years there shall be no internecine war, nor shall any aggressor be helped from any side. And the tribe that was an ally of a party to the treaty shall be considered as governed by the same rule that governed the party. In other words, launching an attack on it or helping the aggressor was to be taken as a contravention of the treaty.

This treaty was signed in the Hijrah year 6. In Hijrah year 7, according to this treaty, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his Companions left for Makkah to perform the 'Umrah they had missed earlier ('*Umrah al-qaḍā'*). After staying there for three days, he returned as stipulated in the treaty. Until then, no party had acted against the peace treaty in any way.

After that, it was within a period of five or six months when the tribe of Banū Bakr mounted a nightly ambush against the tribe of Banū Khuzā'ah. Thinking that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was far away and things were happening during the night which would make it difficult for the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to find out details of what had actually happened, the Quraysh too came to the assistance of Banū Bakr by providing weapons and men to them.

Events as they transpired and conditions as they prevailed made the Quraysh too accept that the treaty of peace entered into at Hudaibiyah – requiring a ten-year moratorium on internecine wars – was broken.

The tribe of Banū Khuzā'ah, being an ally of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, informed him about this event. When he learnt about this breach of trust committed by the Quraysh, he started making secret

preparations for war against them.

During their encounters at Badr, 'Uḥud and Aḥzāb, the Quraysh had realized that some unseen Divine power was at work in favor of Muslims. They were no more intoxicated with their muscle and might. Now that they had broken their solemn pledge, the danger of a war likely to be initiated by Muslims had become all too obvious to them. The likelihood became much stronger after the report of their breach of trust reached the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and he chose to observe a total silence about the matter. Left with no choice, they asked Abū Sufyān to go to Madīnah personally, assess the situation there and should he sense a war action being initiated by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, he should offer his apologies on what had happened in the past and have the treaty renewed for the future.

When Abū Sufyān reached Madīnah, he did notice some indicators of war preparations being made by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. This increased his concerns. He went out to see prominent Ṣaḥābah of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم one by one so that they would recommend his case and help him have the treaty renewed. But, all of them refused to do so in view of their unpleasant past and present dealings. Consequently, Abū Sufyān returned empty-handed. The Quraysh of Makkah were hit by panic.

At the other end, as reported in Bidāyah and Ibn Kathīr, it was on Ramaḍān 10, Hijrah year 8 when the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم marched out from Madīnah with a large force of his noble Companions in order to attack Makkah. Ultimately, Makkah was conquered.

Conquest of Makkah: Vanquished enemies were treated nobly

At the time of the Conquest, there were many Quraysh chiefs who believed in the veracity of Islām earlier too, but they could not express themselves freely due to peer pressure in the society. Now that they had their opportunity, they embraced Islām. As for those who chose to stick to their time-worn creed of disbelief even at that hour, they too – with the exception of some individuals – were granted amnesty by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This was an unusual demonstration of morals, prophetic and miraculous, something others could not even dream of. He ignored all their hostilities and injustices in the past and simply said: 'Today, I say to you exactly what was said by Yusuf عليه السلام to his brothers at the time when they had reached him in Egypt with their

parents: لَا تَتْرُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ الْيَوْمَ (This day, there is no blame on you).’ It means that, for him, taking a revenge for the past injustices inflicted by them or seeking to punish them in some way was unimaginable, in fact, he did not consider it appropriate even to blame them for anything that happened in the past.

Rules for four kinds of Mushriks at the time of the Conquest of Makkah

So then, Makkah came under the control of Muslims. Non-Muslims living in and around Makkah were given full protection of their lives and properties. But, that was a time when the existing status of these non-Muslims was different. One kind of people among them was of those who were a party to the peace treaty of Ḥudaibiyah which they themselves broke and which by itself became the cause of the Conquest of Makkah. Then, there was another set of people with whom a peace treaty was signed for a specified period of time and they continued abiding by this treaty, such as the two tribes of Banū Kinānah called Banū Ḍamurah and Banū Mudlaj. The peace treaty with them was for a specified period of time and, at the time of the revelation of Sūrah Al-Barā’ah (Al-Taubah) as stated by Khāzin, they had another nine months left for their period of treaty to expire.

Thirdly, there were people with whom a peace treaty was concluded without any set time limit. Fourthly, there were those with whom no treaty existed.

The unsavory experience of all treaties entered into by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم with disbelievers or the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) was that they flouted these openly and secretly always conspiring with enemies to hurt him and his Muslim adherents as much as they could. Therefore, led by his own long experience and Divinely inspired indicators, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had made up his mind not to enter into any peace treaty with any of these people and that the Arabian Peninsula was to be particularized with Muslims only as a bastion of Islām. This required a proclamation soon after the takeover of Makkah and the Arabian Peninsula ordering non-Muslims to leave and go somewhere else. But, in view of Islām’s principle of justice, equity and humane dealing as well as under the universal mercy of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم himself, doing something like that without allowing a suitable time limit was not considered appropriate.

Therefore, at the beginning of Sūrah Al-Barā'ah (Al-Taubah), separate injunctions were revealed that covered the four kinds of non-Muslim groups.

The first such group was that of the Quraysh of Makkah who had themselves broken the treaty of Hudaibiyah. Now, they deserved no extra respite. But, since this was the period of 'sacred months' during which fighting and killing was forbidden by Allah, therefore, the injunction which covers them appears in the fifth verse of Sūrah Al-Taubah, that is, *فَإِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرُمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ* (So, when the sacred months expire, kill the Mushriks wherever you find them. And catch them and besiege them and sit in ambush for them everywhere. Then, if they repent and establish *ṣalah* and pay *zakāh*, leave their way. Surely, Allah is most Forgiving, Very Merciful – 9:5). It means that they had, though, forfeited all their rights by breaking the treaty obligations, but observing the sanctity of the 'sacred months' was after all necessary, therefore, they should either leave the Arabian Peninsula soon after the 'sacred months' expire, or embrace Islām, or be prepared to face war.

Then, there was the second group with whom a peace treaty was made for a specified period of time and they had abided by it. The injunction about them was given in the fourth verse of Sūrah Al-Taubah:

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْقُصُوكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا مَبْطَأُهُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ
أَحَدًا فَآمَنُوا إِلَيْهِمْ عَهْدُهُمْ إِلَىٰ مَدَّتِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

Except those of the Mushriks with whom you have a treaty, and they have abated nothing of your rights and backed no one against you, so then, fulfill the treaty with them up to their term. Surely, Allah loves the God-fearing – (9:4).

This injunction pertained to Banū Ḍamurah and Banū Mudlaj as a result of which they were allowed a respite of nine months.

As for the third and the fourth group, only one injunction was revealed to cover both. It has been mentioned in the first and the second verse of Sūrah Al-Taubah as follows:

بَرَاءَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ه فَسَبِّحُوا فِي
الْأَرْضِ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْزِي الْكٰفِرِينَ

Here is a withdrawal [proclaimed] by Allah and His Messen-

ger against those of the Mushriks with whom you have a treaty. So, move in the land freely for four months, and be sure that you can never defeat Allah and that Allah is about to disgrace the disbelievers – (9: 1,2).

Thus, according to the first two verses, all those who were covered by some treaty without a fixed time limit, or those with whom there was no treaty, were allowed a respite of four months.

And according to the fourth verse, those who had a treaty for a specified period of time received a respite until it expired and, according to the fifth verse, the Mushriks of Makkah got their respite until the 'sacred months' expired.

The generosity of giving respite to disbelievers even after treaties with them had expired

It was stipulated that these injunctions shall come into force and the period of respite shall start from the time the relevant information has been promulgated throughout the Arabian Peninsula. According to the arrangement made for this purpose, the public proclamation was to be made in the great gathering of the Ḥajj of the Hijrah year 9 at Minā and 'Arafāt. This finds mention in the third and fourth verses of Sūrah Al-Taubah as follows:

وَأَذَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى النَّاسِ يَوْمَ الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ بَرِيءٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ
وَرَسُولُهُ فَإِنْ تُبْتُمْ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ،
وَنَبِّئِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِعَذَابِ آلِيمٍ .

And here is an announcement, from Allah and His Messenger to the people on the day of the greater Ḥajj, that Allah is free from [any commitment to] the Mushriks, and so is His Messenger. Now, if you repent, it is good for you. And if you turn away, then be sure that you can never defeat Allah. And give those who disbelieve the 'good' news of a painful punishment – (9:3,4).

When abrogating a treaty with disbelievers, taking any action against them without prior public announcement is not correct

So, in order to implement this Divine injunction, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم sent Sayyidnā Abū Bakr and Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنهما to the Ḥajj of the Hijrah year 9 at Makkah al-Mukarramah and had

them make this proclamation before a gathering of all tribes of Arabia on the plains of 'Arafāt and Minā. It was all too obvious that this injunction would become widely known through the medium of that great gathering all over Arabia. However, as a matter of added precaution, he had this proclamation particularly made in distant Yemen through Sayyidnā 'Alī رضى الله عنه.

After this public proclamation, the situation was that the first group, that is, the disbelievers of Makkah had to leave the limits of the state by the end of the 'sacred months,' that is, the end of the month of Muḥarram of the Hijrah year 10. Similarly, the deadline for the second group was Ramaḍān of the Hijrah year 10; and that of the third and fourth groups was the tenth of Rabī' ath-Thānī of the Hijrah year 10. Any contravention of this executive order would have rendered the offender liable to face an armed confrontation. Under this arrangement, by the time of Ḥajj next year, no disbeliever was to remain within state limits. This will appear in verse 28 of Sūrah Al-Taubah where it has been said: *فَلَا يَفْرُقُوا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ بَعْدَ عَامِهِمْ هَذَا* (so, let them not come near *Al-masjid-al-ḥaram* after this year of theirs). And the saying of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in Ḥadīth: لا يحجّن بعد العام مشرك (The disbelievers shall not perform Ḥajj after this year) means precisely this.

Up to this point, given here was an explanation of the first verses of Sūrah Al-Taubah in the light of corresponding events. Now, some relevant point that emerge from these verses are being discussed below.

What do these five verses teach?

1. First of all, soon after the Conquest of Makkah, the general amnesty granted by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to the Quraysh of Makkah, and to other enemy tribes, taught Muslims a practical lesson in high morals. The lesson was: if they overpower an enemy who stands helpless before them, they should not seek revenge from that enemy for his past hostilities. Rather than do something like that, they should actually demonstrate the best of Islāmic morals by being generous and forgiving to their enemies. Though, acting in this manner may require a certain trampling over their natural feelings, still such a conduct is full of great advantages.

(A) To begin with, it can be said that revenge does help one take out anger, at least temporarily – which may even give one a sense of

personal relief – yet, this sense of relief or comfort is transitory. Then, as compared with it, the pleasure of Allah Ta‘ālā and the high ranks of Paradise one is going to get are far more and are for ever in all respects. Consequently, reason demands that one should prefer what is everlasting to what is temporary.

(B) Then, there is this act of suppressing one’s angry emotions after having overpowered the enemy. This clearly proves that the battle fought by these people had no selfish motive behind it. The only motive they had was fighting in the way of Allah – and this great objective is what draws the decisive line between the Jihād of Islām and the wars of common kings and rulers of the world, and what also lays bare the difference in Jihād and rotten aggression. Thus, the truth is that a war waged for Allah to implement His injunctions shall be what Jihād is, otherwise it shall remain a high-handed exercise in disorder.

(C) The third benefit yielded by this conduct comes naturally. When the overpowered enemy observes the high morals of the victors, he is likely to be drawn towards Islām and Muslims, something which is bound to lead him on to the path of his own success in life – and this is the real objective of Jihād.

Forgiving disbelievers never means lack of vigilance against any impending harm from them

2. The second ruling which has been deduced from these verses is that forgiveness and generosity do not mean that one should become negligent about self-protection against the evil designs of enemies by giving them free rein to go ahead and keep causing loss and injury to their forgivers. No doubt, forgiveness and generosity are in order, but along with these, commonsense demands that one should take lesson from past experience and restructure the pattern of life ahead by blocking all holes and crevices through which one could come within the range of enemy hostility. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: لا يلدغ المرء من جحر واحد مرتين (One is not bitten twice from the same hole) meaning that a person does not put his hand twice in the same hole from which a poisonous reptile had bitten him.

The Qur’ānic proclamation of the withdrawal of Hijrah year 9 and the ensuing instructions given to the Mushriks that they should vacate the environs of the Sacred Mosque peacefully within the period of respite allowed are proofs of this wise strategy.

3. The initial verses of Sūrah Al-Taubah also tell us that forcing weak people to leave a place without reasonable notice of evacuation, or attacking them without warning is cowardly, and very ignoble indeed. Whenever such an action has to be taken, it is necessary to make a public announcement first so that the affected people, who do not accept the law of the land, may get the time to go wherever they wished, freely and conveniently. This becomes clear through the general proclamation of the Hijrah year 9 as mentioned in the cited verses and as demonstrated by the legal respite granted to all affected groups.

4. The fourth ruling emerging from the cited verses tells us that, in case there is the need to annul a treaty of peace already made – which is permitted subject to some conditions – it is far better to allow the treaty to remain valid until it expires automatically. This has been commanded in the fourth verse of Sūrah Al-Taubah where Muslims were required to fulfill their treaty obligations to the tribes of Banū Damurah and Banū Mudlaj for the remaining nine months.

5. The fifth ruling from the cited verses tells us about the standard Muslim attitude towards the enemies of Islām. When confronted with enemies, Muslims should always keep in mind that they are no enemy to them personally. The truth of the matter is that they are opposed to their disbelief, which is actually the cause of their own loss in the present world as well as in the Hereafter. As for the opposition of Muslims to them, that too is really based on good wishes for them. Therefore, Muslims should never abandon the opportunity to give good counsel to them, whether in war or peace. This theme appears in these verses repeatedly. It promises real prosperity for them in this world and in the world to come, only if they were to rescind their thinking. The text does not leave it at that. It also warns them of the consequences: if they refused to repent and correct, they would not only be destroyed and killed in the present world but, they would also not escape their punishment even after death. It is interesting that, along with the proclamation of withdrawal in these verses, the strain of sympathetic insistence also continues.

6. The sixth ruling comes out from the fourth verse where Muslims have been prompted to fulfill their pledge right through the end until the term of the peace treaty expired. Immediately thereafter, the verse has been concluded with the sentence: **إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ** (Surely, Allah loves

the God-fearing). This gives a clear hint to the advice that Muslims should observe utmost precaution in fulfilling the pledge they have given. They should never look for lame excuses and far-fetched interpretations only to find a way to contravene treaty obligations, as done by nations at large.

7. Details as they appear in the fifth verse carry the seventh ruling. When war in defense of a correct objective breaks out against any power, all available combat resources should be used fully and conclusively. That is a time when showing mercy and appeasement would be showing cowardice.

From the same fifth verse comes the eighth ruling, that is, trust in a non-Muslim who has become a Muslim depends on three things. (A) Taubah (repentance) over disbelief in the past, (B) the establishing of Ṣalāh and (C) the paying of Zakāh as due. Until these three conditions have been implemented practically, the option of war will not be withdrawn simply on the basis that someone has recited the Kalimah of Islām. When after the passing away of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, some people refused to pay Zakāh, Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضى الله عنه had declared a Jihād against them. On that occasion, by referring to this very verse in support of his action, he was able to convince and satisfy all Companions.

8. The ninth question in these verses concerns the meaning of the expression: *يَوْمَ الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ* (*yaumu 'l-ḥajju 'l-akbar*: The day of the great *ḥajj*). The sayings of early commentators differ in this matter. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, Sayyidnā 'Umar, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar, and Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn Zubayr رضى الله عنهم اجمعين say that 'the day of the greater *ḥajj*' means 'the day of 'Arafah' because the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said: الحج عرفة ('Arafah is the Ḥajj). (Abu Dāwūd, Tirmidhī)

9. Some others have said that it signifies: *يَوْمَ النَّحْرِ* (*yaumu 'n-naḥr*: the day of sacrifice), that is, the tenth of Dhu al-ḥijjah. In order to accommodate all these sayings, Sufyān ath-Thawrī and other authorities have said that all five days of the Ḥajj are the substantiation of: *يَوْمَ الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ* (*yaumu 'l-ḥajju 'l-akbar*: the day of the greater *ḥajj*) which includes 'Arafah and *Yaumu 'n-naḥr* both. As for the use of the word *yaum* or day in the singular, it is in accordance with the usage elsewhere – as the Holy Qur'ān calls a few days of the battle of Badr by

the name of يوم الفرقان: *yaumu 'l-Furqān* in the singular form. Then, there are the common wars of Arabia. They too are identified by the word *yaum* or day – even though, they may have been spread over many more days – such as, يوم البعث: *yaumu 'l-bu'āth*, يوم الاحد: *yaumu l'Uḥūd* etc. And since 'Umrah is called 'the smaller *hajj*, (حج اصغر), therefore, it was to make it distinct that Ḥajj was called 'the greater *hajj*' (*al-ḥajju 'l-akbar*). This tells us that, in the terminology of the Qur'ān, Ḥajj as it takes place every year is nothing but 'the greater *hajj*' (*al-ḥajju 'l-akbar*). As for the popular assumption that the year in which 'Arafah falls on a Friday is specially 'the greater *hajj*, it has no real basis except that the year in which the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم performed his last Ḥajj (حجة الوداع: *ḥajjatu 'l-wadā'*) just happened to be the year in which 'Arafah fell on the day of Jumū'ah. No doubt, this is a matter of distinction in its own place, but it has nothing to do with the sense of this verse.

In his *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, Imām Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣaṣ has said: By calling the days of Ḥajj as 'the greater *hajj*, the problem that 'Umrah cannot be performed during the days of Ḥajj has also been resolved here – because, the Holy Qur'ān has specified these days for 'the greater *hajj*.'

Verses 6 – 11

وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ
اللَّهِ ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦﴾ كَيْفَ
يَكُونُ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ عَهْدٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ رَسُولِهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ
عَاهَدْتُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۚ فَمَا اسْتَقَامُوا لَكُمْ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا
لَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٧﴾ كَيْفَ وَإِنْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ لَا
يَرْقُبُوا فِيكُمْ إِلَّا وَّلَا ذِمَّةً ۚ يُرْضُونَكُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتَأْبَى
قُلُوبُهُمْ ۚ وَكَثَرُهُمْ فُسْقُونَ ﴿٨﴾ اشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا
فَصَدَّوْا عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩﴾ لَا
يَرْقُبُونَ فِي مُؤْمِنٍ إِلَّا وَّلَا ذِمَّةً ۚ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُعْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي
الدِّينِ ۗ وَنَفَّصْنَا لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

And if any one of the Mushriks seeks your protection, give him protection until he listens to the Word of Allah, then let him reach his place of safety. That is because they are a people who do not know. [6]

How can the Mushriks have a treaty with Allah and His Messenger? Except those with whom you made a treaty near *Al-masjid-al-harām*. Then, as long as they remain straight with you, remain straight with them. Surely, Allah loves the God-fearing. [7]

How (can they have a treaty) while if they overcome you, they shall not observe any bond or treaty in your case. They want to please you with (words from) their mouths, but their hearts refuse. Most of them are sinners. [8]

They have taken a paltry price for the verses of Allah, so they have prevented (people) from His path. Indeed, evil is what they have been doing. [9]

They do not observe, in the case of a believer, any bond or treaty. And they are the transgressors. [10]

Then, if they repent and establish Ṣalāh and pay Zakāh, they are your brothers in faith. And We elaborate the verses for people who understand. [11]

Commentary

It was said in the first five verses of Sūrah Al-Taubah that, soon after the Conquest of Makkah, general amnesty was granted to all polytheists and disbelievers of Makkah and its environs. But, in view of their dismal record of treachery and breach of trust in the past, it was decided that no treaty would be signed with them in the future. It was despite this policy decision that injunctions to honor the treaty – made with these people earlier and which they had never contravened – were revealed whereby they were required to fulfill the terms of the treaty until it expired. As for those with whom there was just no treaty, or there was no treaty with a fixed duration, they too were granted suitable concession. Rather than they be ordered to leave Makkah immediately, they were allowed a respite of four months so that, during

this period of time, they could arrange to leave Makkah and go wherever they deemed fit, with convenience and in peace. Or, if the truth of Islām had become apparent to them in the meantime, they were welcome to become Muslims. The outcome of these injunctions was that the sacred site of Makkah was to be vacated by all treacherous disbelievers. The evacuation was being implemented without any intention to retaliate. In fact, it was enforced in self-defense because of consistent experience. Therefore, the door to a good future for them was left open even then. This has been mentioned in the sixth verse the substance of which is: If someone from among the disbelievers seeks asylum with you, then, you should grant it so that he could come close to you and listen to the Word of Allah and understand the veracity of Islām. Then, your responsibility does not end at granting him a temporary asylum. The truth of the matter is that, as soon as he has done what he had come for, it is the responsibility of Muslims that they should escort him under full protective arrangements to the place where he considers himself safe and happy. At the end of the verse, it was said that the particular injunction has been sent because these people are not sufficiently aware. By coming close, they could know things better.

Some rulings and points of guidance come out from this verse (11) as well. These have been discussed in details by Imām Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ. In brief, they are:

Proving the Veracity of Islām is the Duty of Muslim Scholars

1. First of all, this verse confirms that, in case, a disbeliever asks Muslims to explain the veracity of Islām to him with valid proofs, then, it becomes their duty to accede to his demand.

2. Secondly, it is obligatory on Muslims that they should allow and protect anyone who comes to them to learn more about Islām. Causing any hurt or harm to such a person is not permissible. This injunction, according to Tafsīr al-Qurtubī, is operative only in a situation when the purpose of the visitor is to listen to the Word of Allah and know more about Islām. In case, the objective of the visitor is business, or some other pursuit, it would depend on the discretion of relevant Muslim officials who would decide in terms of what is best in Muslim interests. Should they deem it fit, they may permit and should they think otherwise, they can act at their discretion.

Non-Resident Non-Muslims should not be permitted to stay in Dār al-Islām any longer than necessary

3. The third ruling stipulates that a non-Muslim at war, with whom Muslims have no treaty, should not be allowed to stay any longer than necessary – because, in the cited verse, a limit of stay and protection has been set by saying: **حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ** (until he listens to the Word of Allah).

4. According to the fourth element of guidance embedded here, it is the duty of a Muslim ruling authority to remain aware of the progress of the mission undertaken by any non-Muslim at war once he has entered into the Muslim country with valid permission (visa) and purpose. And, as soon as he has completed his job in the country, it is also the duty of Muslim *Amīr* (ruler) that he should arrange for his safe return.

Stated in the next four verses (7-10) is the wisdom behind the proclamation of withdrawal mentioned in the initial verses of Sūrah Al-Taubah. Here, by referring to the inherent meanness of pledge-breaking disbelievers whose malice and hostility against Muslims knew no bounds, it was advised in verses 7 and 8 that entertaining any hope from such people that they would ever abide by their pledge was simply wrong to begin with. It was said in the text: Except for some people with whom Muslims had entered into a treaty near the *masjid al-ḥarām*, how could any pledge given by these disbelievers be credible before Allah and His Messenger? The fact was that they were a set of people who, if given the least opportunity, would not blink about any relationship they had with them or bother to honor the word of promise given by them. The simple reason was that these people had no intention of honoring the treaty even when they were signing it. Their sole purpose was just to placate them. With their hearts set elsewhere, most of them were sinners, compulsive breakers of pledges and practitioners of treachery.

Uphold truth and commit no excess or injustice even against disbelievers is the teaching of Qur'ān

This statement of the Qur'ān provides guidance for Muslims that they should never surrender truth and justice even when they are dealing with confronting enemies. Whenever they have to take up an

issue with them, they are required not to slip into taking exaggerated approaches and stances against them. This is as it has been demonstrated in these verses where full consideration has been given to the case of the disbelievers of Makkah. The fact was that most of them had broken their pledge. Naturally, when something like this happens in that setting, people tend to make a sweeping allegation against everyone. But, the Holy Qur'an, by saying: *إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ* (except those with whom you made a treaty near *al-masjid-al-haram*), has exempted those who had not broken their pledge. In fact, it has ordered that Muslims should stay firm on their commitment as long as the others remain committed and faithful to their pledge. The breach of trust committed by other people should in no case influence their stance whereby they themselves may be led to become breakers of the pledge given to them.

Earlier when it was said that disbelieving people had nursed betrayal in their hearts right from the beginning and had no intention of staying faithful to their pledge, an exception was also granted. Similarly, when the text says: *أَكْثَرُهُمْ فَسِقُونَ* (Most of them are sinners – 8), it hints that all of them were not like that. There were some nice people among them too, who wanted to stand by their commitment, but they were not heard before others.

This is the same subject the Holy Qur'an takes up elsewhere saying in very clear terms: *لَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاؤُكُمْ عَلَيَّ وَلَا تَعْدِلُوا* (and malice against a people should not bid you to not doing justice – 5:8)

After that comes the ninth verse with the reason why these Mushriks were so chronically treacherous and what was it that ailed them. Thus, they too were given a prescription of hope to ponder about so that they could still correct themselves if they chose to. At the same time, Muslims at large were also served with a warning that they should take their guard against the pitfall of treachery and disobedience which had sucked these people in and make a total abstention from this behavior model their distinct life style. The reason is their relentless love of the material. The desire to acquire, possess and expend the limitless range of things of this world had blinded them to the limit that they would not hesitate to sell off the very Words of Allah and their own faith in exchange for paltry gains. This character is, to make an understatement, evil.

Moving on to the tenth verse, the text describes the extreme crookedness of these people by saying: لَا يَرْفِقُونَ فِي مَوَدِّعَةٍ (They do not observe, in the case of a believer, any bond or treaty). The sense is that this was no isolated case of disbelieving people acting treacherously against Muslims to whom they were bound by ties of kinship and treaty obligations. In fact, disbelieving people were a lot who would never consider kinship or pledge as valid grounds when dealing with Muslims.

Given the aforesaid behavior pattern of disbelieving people, it could have been but natural for Muslims to have become disillusioned with them forever and refuse to have any brotherly relationship with them under any condition. Therefore, as the Qur'anic justice and equity would have it, the eleventh verse gives the following instruction: فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَأَخِوَانَكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ (Then, if they repent and establish *ṣalāh* and pay *zakāh*, they are your brothers in faith).

Here we are being told that once an enemy – no matter how deadly and no matter how hurtful he has been – becomes a Muslim, things change dramatically. Allah Ta'ālā forgives his past sins, all of them. So, it becomes obligatory on Muslims too that they should forget the past, start afresh, take them as their brothers in faith and do whatever it takes to fulfill the rights enjoined under such relationship.

Three Conditions of Entry into the Islāmic Brotherhood

This verse makes it clear that there are three conditions of entry into the Islāmic brotherhood: (1) Taubah or repentance from Kufr and Shirk, (2) establishment of *Ṣalāh* and (3) payment of *Zakāh* – because, 'Imān (faith) and Taubah (repentance) are concealed matters. Common Muslims cannot find out their reality. Therefore, two of their outward signs were mentioned, that is, *Ṣalāh* and *Zakāh*.

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه said: 'This verse has made the blood of Muslims, who qualify as 'the people of Qiblah,' unlawful (*ḥarām*).' In other words, people who establish *Ṣalāh*, pay *Zakāh* and have said or done nothing against Islām as proved against them, shall be taken as Muslims in the matter of all religious injunctions – even though, they may not have true 'Imān (faith) in their hearts, or have hypocrisy (*nifāq*).

This is the verse Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضى الله عنه had quoted in sup-

port of his declaration of Jihād against those who had refused to pay Zakāh after the passing away of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. The noble Companions before whom he had made this assertion were satisfied with his approach. (Ibn Kathīr)

At the end of verse 11, the text stresses upon the need to abide by given injunctions, regarding those covered under a treaty and those who have repented, by saying: *وَنُفِّصِلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ* (And We elaborate the verses for people who understand).

Verses 12 - 16

وَأِنْ تَكَثَّرُوا آيْمَانَهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ عَهْدِهِمْ وَطَعَنُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ
فَقَاتِلُوا أَيْمَةَ الْكُفْرِ ۗ إِنَّهُمْ لَا آيْمَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْتَهُونَ ﴿١٢﴾
أَلَا تُقَاتِلُونَ قَوْمًا نَكَثُوا آيْمَانَهُمْ وَهَمُّوا بِإِخْرَاجِ الرَّسُولِ وَهُمْ
بَدَءُكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۖ أَتَخْشَوْنَهُمْ ۗ قَالَ لَهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَوْهُ إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ قَاتِلُوهُمْ يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَيُخْزِهِمْ
وَيَنْصُرْكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيَشْفِ صُدُورَ قَوْمٍ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَيُذْهِبِ
غَيْظَ قُلُوبِهِمْ ۖ وَيَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾ أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُتْرَكُوا وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ
جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَا رَسُولِهِ وَلَا
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَابْتِغَاءً وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

And if they break their oaths after they have made a covenant and speak evil of your Faith, then fight the leaders of infidelity – in fact, they have no oaths – so that they may stop. [12] Would you not fight a people who broke their oaths and conspired to expel the Messenger and it was they who started (fighting) against you for the first time? Do you fear them? Then, Allah is worthier that you fear Him, if you are believers. [13]

Fight them, so that Allah should punish them at your hands and disgrace them, and help you win against them and bring relief to bosoms of a believing people, [14] and remove the rage of their hearts. And Allah relents to whomsoever He wills. And Allah is (All-) Know-

ing, (All-) Wise. [15]

Do you think that you will be left alone while Allah has not yet seen those of you who struggle in *jihād* and never take anyone, other than Allah and His Messenger and the believers, as their confidant? And Allah is (All-) Aware of what you do. [16]

Commentary

It will be recalled that a cease-fire agreement with the Quraysh of Makkah was concluded at Hudaibiyah in the Hijrah year 6. That the Quraysh will not stick to the agreement was foretold in verse 7 of Sūrah Al-Taubah: **كَيْفَ يَكُونُ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ عَهْدٌ** (how can the Mushriks have a treaty...). Then, came verses 8, 9 and 10 with the causes of their pledge breaking. And in the 11th verse it was announced that, despite having broken their solemn covenant, if these Mushriks become Muslims and start expressing their faith in Islām through prayers and fasting, then, Muslims are duty-bound to keep their present dealings with them free of any effects from the past. In fact, they should take them to be their brothers in faith and treat them as such. In verse 12 cited above, Muslims have been told about the course of action they should take in the event these people do break their pledge, as prophesied earlier.

The actual words of the text read: **وَأِنْ تَكَفَرُوا بِمَا أَنَّهُمْ مِن بَعْدِ عَهْدِهِمْ وَطَعَنُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ** (And if they break their oaths after they have made a covenant and speak evil of your Faith, then fight the leaders of infidelity – 12). It is worth noting that the present situation in the text demanded the use of **فَقَاتِلُوهُمْ** (*faqātilūhum*: then fight them). The Holy Qur'an has said: **فَقَاتِلُوا أئِمَّةَ الْكُفْرِ** (then fight the leaders of infidelity) which bypasses the use of a shorter pronoun at this place. The word: **أئِمَّة** (*a'immaḥ*: leaders) is the plural of **Imām**. The sense is that these people by breaking their word of honor turned into leaders of infidelity and thus became deserving of a war against them. This statement also carries the wisdom and justification of the command to fight. Some commentators say that 'leaders of infidelity' at this place refers to the chiefs of the tribe of Quraysh in Makkah who kept on instigating people against Muslims and remained busy making war preparations. Fighting against them was particularly mentioned because these people were the real source of power the Makkans were credited with. In addition to that, since they were the ones with whom Muslims had bonds of close kinship, there was the possible apprehension that some conces-

sion could be granted in their case.

Honest critical study of Islām by Protected Non-Muslim Citizens of Dār al-Islām is possible – vilification is not

Some commentators have interpreted the words: **طَعَنُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ** (speak evil of your faith) to mean that speaking evil of the Faith of Muslims is included under contravention of pledge. A person who speaks evil of Islām and the Shari‘ah of Islām cannot continue to be a party to the treaty with Muslims. But, according to a consensus of Muslim jurists, it means vilification that is done to insult and belittle Islām and Muslims, openly and publicly. Honest intellectual criticism while conducting research into problems and rulings remains exempt from its purview – then, it is not supposed to be vilification in its lexical sense.

Therefore, for non-Muslim citizens of Dār al-Islām, any honest intellectual criticism can be allowed, but what cannot be allowed is vilification, contempt, insult or outrage against Islām.

In the same verse (12), it was said: **إِنَّهُمْ لَا أَيْمَانَ لَهُمْ** (in fact, they have no oaths). The sense is that these are the kind of people none of whose oaths are trustworthy – because, they are addicted to breaking their oaths and committing breaches of trust. Then, the use of the plural form of oaths here could also mean: ‘when they broke their oath, they also absolved Muslims of any responsibility for their oath and pledge.’

At the end of verse 12, it was said: **لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْتَهُوْنَ** (so that they may stop). This last sentence tells us that the objective of Jihād carried out by Muslims should never be the conquest of countries like common kings or to hurt the enemy and to take vengeance as belligerent people around the world would love to do. Instead of doing anything like that, when it comes to fighting that they must, the driving objective should be compassion for the enemy, the empathy and the desire that they would stop doing what was not right.

After that, to persuade Muslims to fight, they were told in verse 13 that there was no reason why they would not be ready to fight against the kind of people who had conspired to expel the Messenger of Allah. This refers to the Jews of Madīnah who had hatched a plan to expel the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم from the city of Madīnah. They had said: **لِيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْأَذَلَّ** (the one having more honor and power will cer-

tainly expel the one being humble and weak from there – 63:8). In their self-view, they were the people of honor and power while Muslims were weak and lowly. The answer they needed was given by Allah Almighty in His way. He took their proud statement as it was and made it come true in a manner that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his Companions, by turning the Jews out of Madīnah, proved that honor belonged to Muslims and disgrace to Jews.

Giving the second reason for fighting against them, it was said: **وَهُمْ** (and it was they who started [fighting] against you for the first time). The sense is that they were the aggressors. What Muslims have to do now is simply to defend themselves, an action universally sane and normal.

Then, to remove the awe of the enemy from the hearts of Muslims, it was said: **أَتَخْشَوْنَهُمْ فَأَلَّوْهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَوْهُ** (Do you fear them? Then, Allah is worthier that you fear Him) for there is no power that can cause His punishment to disappear. Finally, by saying: **إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ** (if you are believers), it was made clear that fearing anyone or anything other than Allah in a manner that obstructs the fulfillment of the injunctions of the Shari'ah of Islām is not what a true believing-practicing Muslim would do.

For Muslims, the same exhortation to fight in Jihād appears in verses 14 and 15 as well, though from a different angle. They were told:

1. If you get ready to fight them, the help and support from Allah will be with you. As for their enemies, they have already become deserving of Divine punishment because of their evil deeds but this punishment will not come down upon them from the heavens or up from beneath the Earth. Instead of that, says the verse: **يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ** that is, 'Allah shall punish them at their hands.'

2. As a result of this fighting, Allah Ta'ālā will mollify the hearts of Muslims after all those pains and sorrows continuously inflicted upon them by the disbelievers.

3. Then, the anger which filled Muslim hearts because of their treachery and pledge breaking was to be removed by Allah Ta'ālā when He punishes them at their hands.

In the previous verse (12), by saying: **لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْتَهُونَ** (so that they may stop), Muslims were told that they should not fight a people just to re-

lease their anger, rather make their correction and betterment the main purpose of their action. When they cleanse their intention from all irrelevant shades, and let it be for Allah alone, and fight for none but Allah, then, Allah Ta'ālā shall cause things to unfold in a manner that automatically removes the feelings of anger and sorrow raging in their hearts.

4. Finally, it was said: وَيَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ (And Allah relents to whomsoever He wills -15). This tells us that there will be an added gain as a result of this Jihād. There will be many from among the enemies who will have the *taufīq* of Islām. They will become Muslims. So, there were many arrogant ones at the time of the Conquest of Makkah who were put to disgrace while there were many others who embraced Islām.

History proves that the circumstances and events predicted in these verses were witnessed one by one as pointed out by the Holy Qur'an. Therefore, these verses contain many miracles.

Verses 17 - 18

مَا كَانَ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يَعْمُرُوا مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ شَاهِدِينَ عَلَيْهِمْ
 أَنْفُسِهِمْ بِالْكَفْرِ أُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ وَفِي النَّارِ هُمْ
 خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
 الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَحْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ
 أُولَٰئِكَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

It is not for the Mushriks to build up the mosques of Allah while they are witnesses of their own infidelity. Those are the ones whose deeds have gone waste. And in the Fire they shall remain for ever. [17]

In fact, the mosques of Allah are built-up only by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and those who establish *ṣalah* and pay *zakah* and who fear none but Allah. So, it is in all likelihood that they are to be among those on the right path. [18]

Commentary

Mentioned in the previous verses was how crooked the Mushriks of Makkah were, how they broke their pledges and what they did to de-

fend their false ways in religion. With this in view, Muslims were also brought around to stand up against them. In the last previous verse (16), Muslims have been told that Jihād is a test for them. This test is necessary because it helps in marking out a sincere Muslim from hypocrites and the weak-in-faith. Says the verse: 'Do you think that you will be left alone while Allah has not seen those of you who struggle in *jihād* and never take anyone, other than Allah and His Messenger and the believers, as their confidant?'

The address in this verse is also to those common people who were taken to be Muslims, though some of them were hypocrites while some others were weak in faith and kept wavering. Such people would pass on sensitive information about Muslims to their non-Muslim friends. Therefore, two signs of a sincere Muslim were identified in this verse.

Two signs of sincere Muslims

- (1) They fight disbelievers in the way of Allah.
- (2) They take no non-Muslim as their close friend to whom secrets are confided.

At the end of the verse, it was said: وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ (And Allah is [All] Aware of what you do) that is, before Him nobody can get away with false excuses and alibis.

This wisdom of Jihād mentioned earlier has appeared in another verse of the Holy Qur'an in the following words: أَحَسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ (Do people think that they will be left to say, "We believe," and they will not be tried? – 29:2)

On taking non-Muslims as close friends and insiders

The word: وليجة (*walijah*) used in verse 16 means an insider who shares secrets. There is another verse which uses the word: بطانة (*biṭānah*) to carry this very sense. Literally, 'biṭānah' means what is worn under normal clothing and is close to the body. It denotes a person who knows secrets as an insider. The actual words of the verse read: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بَطَانَةً مِّنْ دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأْلُونَكُمْ خَبَاءً (O those who believe, do not take anyone as insider but from your own selves for they would spare no effort to put you in trouble). (3:118)

Now we can turn to the present verses (17 and 18) where instructions have been given to cleanse *al-masjid-al-ḥarām* and other *masājid*

(mosques) of false modes of worship and replacing them with what is correct and acceptable.

A little background detail is in order at this point. When the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم got rid of all those idols the Mushriks used to worship from the Baytullah and the Sacred Mosque soon after the conquest of Makkah, it was a matter of relief, at least externally, for the Sacred Mosque was now free from the physical vestiges of Shirk. But, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had granted his old enemies pardon and protection soon after they were overpowered. They still used to do their 'Ibādah and Ṭawāf in the Sacred Mosque following their false ways.

That the Sacred Mosque was cleansed of idols was good, but it was also necessary to purify this sacred site from the fallout of idolatry and its false mores. The only way it could be done was to prohibit the entry of the Mushriks into the Sacred Mosque. But, this would have gone against the promise of protection given to them – and abiding by the terms of a treaty was far more important in Islām. Therefore, such orders were not given immediately. Instead, it was done in the year next to the conquest of Makkah. At that time, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had Sayyidnā Abū Bakr and Sayyidnā 'Alī رضی الله عنه make an announcement in the great gathering of Minā and 'Arafāt that, in the future, no 'Ibādah, Ḥajj or Ṭawāf performed in the Mushrik way will be allowed in the Sacred Mosque. Also prohibited through this announcement was the evil custom of making Ṭawāf in the nude that had lingered from the days of Jāhiliyah. It was in the gathering at Minā that Sayyidnā 'Alī رضی الله عنه proclaimed:

لَا يَحُجُّنَّ بَعْدَ الْعَامِ مُشْرِكٌ وَلَا يَطُوفَنَّ بِالْبَيْتِ عُرْيَانٌ

After this year, no Mushrik will perform Ḥajj and no naked person will make Ṭawāf of Baytullah.

And this respite of one year was given for the reason that there were many people among them with whom Muslims had a treaty and they had continued to abide by the terms of the treaty. That they should be made to obey a new law before the expiry of the existing treaty with them was contrary to Islāmic policy of tolerance. Therefore, a public announcement was made a year in advance to the effect that it has been decided to cleanse the Sacred Mosque from all Mush-

rik customs and ways of worship – because, their kind of worship would not let a mosque flourish, rather would go on to make it desolate.

These Mushriks of Makkah equated their pagan customs with ‘worship’ and thought that they were contributing towards the maintenance and functional thriving of the Sacred Mosque. They were proud of being the custodians of the Baytullah and the Sacred Mosque. Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās رضى الله عنه says, ‘when his father, before he became a Muslim, was taken prisoner at the battle of Badr, Muslims reproached him for staying on the side of Kufr and Shirk. He told them, ‘you only remember what is bad about us. You do not like to talk about our good things. Do you not know that we are the custodians of the Sacred Mosque? We take care of the building. We keep it filled with people. We manage it and we run a drinking water service for the pilgrims. Revealed thereupon were the verses: مَا كَانَ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يَعْمُرُوا مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ (It is not for the Mushriks to build up the mosques of Allah). It means that Mushriks (those who ascribe partners to Allah) do not have the right to build and populate the mosques of Allah. The reason is that a *masjid* is a place that has been built to worship One God while Shirk and Kufr are its antithesis that cannot be combined with the structure and function of a *masjid*.

The word: عمارة (*imārah*: building) appearing in this verse is a multifaceted word and is used to convey several meanings. It could mean the physical building of the *masjid* including all elements that go in raising and finishing it externally and internally. Then, it could also denote the maintenance of the *masjid* that would be inclusive of security arrangements, sanitation, upkeep and provision of necessary supplies. And then, it also includes the human dimension of the *masjid* – that believers present themselves in the *masjid* for ‘Ibādah. (Since there is no exact equivalent in English to carry this sense, the nearest one could come would be to populate, people, fill up, make the *masjid* flourish in the number of those present and in the quality of acts of ‘Ibadah they perform therein.) Incidentally, ‘Umrah (عمره) is called by that name in view of the fact that one visits Baytullah and makes the best of his presence there in terms of ‘Ibādah.

So, the sense of the Qur’anic word ‘*imārah*’ covers building, maintenance and presence. The Mushriks of Makkah took credit for all three.

They took special pride in considering themselves the custodians of the building of the Sacred Mosque. The present verses tell them that the Mushriks did not have any right to build the mosques of Allah while they were witnesses of their own infidelity. Because of their Kufr and Shirk, their deeds had gone waste and they were to live in the Fire of Jahannam eternally.

The expression: 'witnesses of their own infidelity' could have two meanings. It could either mean that they were virtually confessing to their Kufr and Shirk because of what they were doing as Mushriks. Or, it could refer to their implied confession and witnessing of their Kufr and Shirk when they identify themselves in social situations. Customarily, when a Christian or Jew is asked as to his religious identity, he would say that he was a Christian or Jew. The same would be the case with a fire-worshipper or idolater. They would identify themselves with what they believe in. Thus, the Mushriks will become witnesses of their infidelity against themselves. (Ibn Kathīr)

Verse 17 was describing the negative aspect as related to the Mushriks. It said that they did not deserve the honor of building and maintaining mosques. Verse 18 takes up the positive aspect relating to mosques by saying:

إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ
وَلَمْ يَحْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ

In fact, the mosques of Allah are built-up only by those who believe in Allah and in the Last Day and those who establish Ṣalāh and pay Zakāh and who fear none but Allah. So, it is in all likelihood that they are to be among those on the right path.

It means the building of mosques in the real sense is a serene task. It can be done only by those who are bound by the commandments of Allah in their 'Aqīdah (faith) and 'Amal (practice). They must believe in Allah and in the 'Ākhirah, establish Ṣalāh, pay Zakāh and fear none but Allah. At this place, only 'Īmān (faith) in Allah and 'Ākhirah (Last Day) have been mentioned. Faith in the Rasūl (Messenger) of Allah was not mentioned expressly because there is no way one can have faith in Allah Ta'ālā except that one puts his or her faith in His Rasūl – and wholeheartedly accepts the commandments that come from Al-

lah Ta'ālā through him. Therefore, 'faith in the Rasūl' is naturally included under 'faith in Allah.' This is why the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم once asked his noble Companions, 'Do you know what 'Īmān in Allah is?' The Companions said, 'Allah and His Rasūl know best.' He said, 'Īmān in Allah is that one bears witness to the fact that there is no one worthy of worship but Allah and that Muḥammad is the Rasūl of Allah.' This Ḥadīth clearly states that having faith in the Rasūl is included under having faith in Allah and is comprehensively united with it. (Maḏharī with reference to al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

As for the statement: 'fear none but Allah,' it means that, in matters of religion, one should not abandon the command of Allah out of some fear. Otherwise, fearing things that cause fear is quite natural. Beasts, snakes, thieves and robbers generate physical fear but that is not the kind of fear we are talking about here. When the magicians showed snakes made of ropes and staffs to Sayyidnā Mūsā, عليه السلام he had a sense of fear within himself as mentioned in the Qur'an: فَأَوْجَسَ فِي نَفْسِهِ خِيفَةً مُّؤْمِنِي - 20:67. Therefore, the normal fear caused by what causes pain or brings loss is neither contrary to the injunction of the Qur'an nor to the station of a prophet, walīyy or saint. However, one should not become so overcome by this fear as to start creating confusion about the injunctions of Allah Ta'ālā or leaving them out altogether. This is not the style of a true believer and this is precisely what is meant at this place.

Some related issues

When it is said in the present verses that Mushriks and Kāfirs cannot take up the task of 'maintaining' a *masjid* which was something only righteous Muslims could do, it refers to the trusteeship and administrative responsibility of the *masājid*. The outcome is that it is not permissible to appoint a Kāfir the trustee and administrator of any Islāmīc Waqf (endowment). As for the construction of the different units of the structure such as walls and doors, it does not matter even if some non-Muslim is assigned to do the job. (Tafsīr Marāghī). Similarly, when a non-Muslim makes a *masjid* as an act of *thawāb*, or contributes funds for its building, then, it is permissible to accept it. However, the condition is that there should be no danger of a religious or worldly loss, or blame, or usurpation of the property later, or harping on the favor done. (Al-Durr al-Mukhtār, Shāmī and Marāghī)

It was hinted in verse 18 that building a *masjid* and making it throb with multitudes of Muslims making prayers, remembering Allah and reciting the Qur'an is a task that can only be accomplished by a righteous Muslim. It proves that anyone who keeps coming to the *masjid* either to supervise arrangements for the security, maintenance, upkeep and supplies for the *masjid*, or for the *Dhikr* of Allah, or to learn about his religion, or to recite or teach the Holy Qur'an is a perfect believer. These deeds are sufficient as witnesses to this honor.

The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: 'when you notice that a person is punctual with his presence in the *masjid*, bear witness to his 'Imān – because, Allah Ta'ālā has said: إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ (In fact, the *masājid* of Allah are built-up only by those who believe in Allah... - 18). Imām Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah have reported this Ḥadīth on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī.

It appears in Al-Bukhārī and Muslim that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: 'a person who presents himself in the *masjid* morning and evening, Allah Ta'ālā sets aside a rank of Paradise for him.'

And Sayyidnā Salmān al-Farīsī narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: 'a person who comes into the *masjid* is a visiting guest of Allah Ta'ālā – and it is incumbent on the host that He honors the guest.' (Maḏharī with reference to Ṭabarānī, Ibn Jarīr, al-Baihaqī and others)

The commentator of the Qur'an, Qādī Thanā'ullāh of Panīpat has said, 'the expression 'maintenance of the *masājid*' also requires that the *masjid* should be cleansed of things and practices for which it was not made. It includes activities like buying and selling, worldly conversation, search of lost property, asking people for material help, recitation of idle poetry, disputation, fighting, disturbing peace by noises and things like that. (Maḏharī)

Verses 19 - 23

أَجَعَلْتُمْ سِقَايَةَ الْحَاجِّ وَعِمَارَةَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ كَمَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَجَهَدَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَوْنَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا
وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ

اللَّهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ يُبَشِّرُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ
وَرِضْوَانٍ وَجَعَلَتْ لَهُمْ فِيهَا نَعِيمٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٢١﴾ خَلِدِينَ فِيهَا
أَبَدًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا
تَتَّخِذُوا آبَاءَكُمْ وَإِخْوَانَكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنِ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْكُفْرَ عَلَى
الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

Have you taken the serving of water to the pilgrims and the maintenance of *Al-masjid-al-harām* as equal to (the acts) of one who believes in Allah and in the Last Day, and takes up Jihād in the way of Allah? They are not equal in the sight of Allah. And Allah does not lead the wrongdoing people to the right path. [19]

Those who believed and emigrated and took up Jihād in the way of Allah with their wealth and lives are greater in rank in the sight of Allah, and they are the successful ones. [20]

Their Lord gives them the happy news of Mercy from Him, and Pleasure, and of Gardens having an everlasting bliss for them, [21] where they shall dwell forever. Surely, it is Allah with whom there is a great reward. [22]

O those who believe, do not take your fathers and your brothers as your friends, if they prefer infidelity to Faith. And whoever from you has friendship with them, then such people are the wrongdoers. [23]

Commentary

The first four verses (19 – 22) relate to a particular event. A cursory look into its background shows that many Mushriks of Makkah felt proud that they kept the Sacred Mosque bustling with visitors and devotees and ran a drinking water service for the pilgrims. Keeping their rival Muslims in view, they claimed that no deed by anyone could match theirs. When Sayyidnā ‘Abbās رضى الله عنه came to Muslims as a prisoner from the battle of Badr, he had not embraced Islām by that time. His Muslim relatives reproached him for remaining deprived of the blessing of ‘Imān. In response, he too had said the same things, ‘you think ‘Imān and Hijrah are big feathers in your cap, but we too

have our own assets. We are the custodians of the building of the Sacred Mosque and serve water to the pilgrims. No deed by anyone can match these.' Revealed thereupon were these verses. (Ibn Kathīr on the authority of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭalḥah from Ibn 'Abbās)

And according to some narratives in the Musnad of 'Abd al-Razzāq, it was after the entry of Sayyidnā 'Abbās رضى الله عنه into the fold of Islām that Sayyidnā Ṭalḥah ibn Shaybah, Sayyidnā 'Abbās and Sayyidnā 'Alī رضى الله عنهم were talking together. Ṭalḥah said: 'I enjoy an excellence which none of you do. I have the keys to the Baytullah in my hands. If I wish I could go inside it and spend the night there.' Sayyidnā 'Abbās said: 'I am the administrator of the water service for pilgrims and I have rights to the Sacred Mosque.' Sayyidnā 'Alī رضى الله عنه said, 'I do not understand that which makes you so proud. As for me, I have said my prayers facing the Baytullah six months before anyone of you and I have participated in Jihād with the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.' Thereupon, these verses were revealed. They made it clear that no deed done without 'Īmān, no matter how merit worthy, carries any value in the sight of Allah, and no doer of such deeds, while still involved in Shirk, is acceptable with Him.

And the Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim reports an event on the authority of Sayyidnā Nu'mān ibn Bashīr رضى الله عنه who says that he was sitting with some Companions close to the Mimbar of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in his Mosque on a Friday. Someone from those present there said, 'In my view, after Islām and 'Īmān, there is no deed superior to serving water to the pilgrims and I do not care about any deed other than this.' Someone else retorted, 'no, Jihād in the way of Allah is the highest of all deeds.' When an argument started between those two, Sayyidnā 'Umar رضى الله عنه reprimanded both of them and said, 'stop quarreling near the Mimbar of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. The proper thing to do is to say your Jumu'ah prayer first, then you can go and ask the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم himself about it.' As suggested, they did go to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to find out his opinion on the matter. Thereupon, these verses were revealed where Jihād has been identified as the deed superior to the 'building' of the Sacred Mosque and the serving of water to pilgrims.

There is nothing far out about the possibility that the revelation of the verses themselves may have been aimed as an answer to the pride

and arrogance of the Mushriks. Later, when unpleasant things took place among Muslims, it is quite possible that the same verses were used as the deciding argument – which might have given the listeners the feeling that these particular verses were revealed in the background of that particular event.

However, the present 'āyat of the Qur'ān carry an answer to both these kinds of events – that an accomplishment, no matter how good and acceptable, is reduced to zero if it smacks of Shirk. Therefore, no Mushrik is superior to Muslims because of his association with the maintenance of the Mosque or the serving of water to pilgrims. And even after their rejection of disbelief and entry into Faith, the status of 'Īmān and Jihād is much higher than the maintenance of the Sacred Mosque and the serving of water to pilgrims. Muslims who took the initiative in 'Īmān and Jihād are superior to Muslims who did not take part in Jihād and remained rendering these services to the Sacred Mosque and the pilgrims.

After these introductory remarks, let us go back to the words of the verses and their translation once again. It reads:

أَجَعَلْتُمْ سِقَايَةَ الْحَاجِّ وَعِمَارَةَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ كَمَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَجَاهَدَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَوُونَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ .

Have you taken the serving of water to the pilgrims and the maintenance of *Al-masjid-al-haram* as equal to (the acts) of one who believes in Allah and in the Last Day, and takes up jihād in the way of Allah? They are not equal in the sight of Allah – 19)

Seen contextually, the purpose is to urge that each one from 'Īmān and Jihād is superior to the serving of water to pilgrims and the maintenance of the Mosque, that is, 'Īmān too is superior to both, and Jihād too. Thus, the superiority of 'Īmān provides an answer to what the Mushriks said and the superiority of Jihād corrects Muslims who said that maintaining the Mosque and serving water to pilgrims were superior to Jihād.

The Dhikr of Allah is superior to Jihād

Qāḍī Thanā'ullah has said in *Tafsīr Mazharī*, 'the precedence given to Jihād over the maintenance of the Mosque has been done in terms of physical and outward maintenance, that is, the building, repair,

cleaning and allied arrangements – for it goes without saying that Jihād takes precedence over these.’

But, the maintenance (*imārah*) of the *masjid* is not restricted to this sense alone. It has another meaning also, that of being present in the *masjid* for ‘Ibādah and Dhikr of Allah, which also applies here strongly. In fact, the genuine flowering of the objective of making, maintaining and manning the *masjid* with eager devotees comes out from this factor alone. Given this sense, the maintenance of the *masjid* – as very clearly stated by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم – is superior to Jihād. To substantiate, we can refer to the report of Sayyidnā Abū al-Dardā’ appearing in the Musnad of Aḥmad and in Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah. According to this report, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, ‘should I not tell you about an act that is superior to all your acts and certainly more so in the sight of your Master? – This act would raise your ranks to the highest levels, would be even superior to spending gold and silver in the way of Allah, and still be way superior to that you bravely fight your enemies in Jihād where you kill them and they kill you?’ The noble Companions said, ‘Do tell us about that act, Yā Rasūlallāh.’ He said, ‘that act is the Dhikr of Allah.’ This tells us that the merit of the Dhikr of Allah is more pronounced than that of Jihād also. And if the ‘maintenance of the *masjid*’ is taken in the sense of the Dhikr of Allah, then, it is superior to Jihād. But, at this place, the pride shown by the Mushriks was not based on the Dhikr of Allah and the ‘Ibādah performed in the *masjid*, instead, it was based on its structural and administrative aspects. Therefore, Jihād was deemed as superior to that.

And when we deliberate into different statements of the Qur’ān and Sunnah as a whole, it appears that the phenomena of the superiority of one act over the other depends on attending conditions and circumstances. There are conditions when one act is superior to the other. With a change in conditions, things could be the other way round. When Islām and Muslims must be defended at all costs, at that time Jihād shall definitely be more merit worthy as compared to all ‘Ibādāt – as evident from the event of the battle of Khandaq where the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had to miss four of his daily prayers (*qaḍā*). Conversely, when the need is not so acute, the Dhikr of Allah and ‘Ibādah will be more merit worthy as compared to Jihād.

At the end of the verse (19), by saying: وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ (And Allah does not lead the wrongdoing people to the right path), it was pointed out that the thing they were being told about was not difficult to understand. In fact, it was clear, as clear as it can be – that 'Imān is the foundation of all that is done, and is superior to all of them. Then comes Jihād that is superior as compared to the maintenance of the *masjid* and serving water to pilgrims. But, Allah Ta'ālā does not bless the unjust and the wrongdoing with the gift of understanding. Therefore, they keep at their crooked hairsplitting into things that are otherwise very open and obvious.

Verse 20 enlarges upon the subject initiated with the words: لَا يَسْتَوُونَ (lā yastawūn: they are not equal) in the previous verse (19) where it was said that the believing Mujāhidīn and those engaged only in maintaining the *masjid* and serving water to pilgrims are not equal. This was enlarged by saying: الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ أَكْثَرُ دَرَجَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ (those who believed and emigrated and took up *jihād* in the way of Allah, with their wealth and lives, are greater in rank in the sight of Allah, and they are the successful ones). The reason is that the Mushriks against them simply had no measure of success whatsoever. As for Muslims in general, they too shared this success in essence, but the success of those identified above had more to it. Therefore, they were the ones whose success was comprehensive.

Verses 21 and 22 tell us about the great reward and ranks these successful people shall have in the life to come:

يُبَشِّرُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنْهُ وَرِضْوَانٍ وَجَنَّاتٍ لَهُمْ فِيهَا نَعِيمٌ مُّقِيمٌ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا، إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ .

Their Lord gives them the happy news of Mercy from Him, and Pleasure, and of Gardens having an everlasting bliss for them, where they shall dwell for ever. Surely, it is Allah with whom there is a great reward.

These verses mention the merits of Hijrah and Jihād which require that one leaves his country, relatives, friends, companions, wealth and property, all in one stroke. As obvious, surrendering all these attachments is most difficult and painful. Therefore, in the next verse (23), the text disapproves of limitless attachment with these things and thereby prepares Muslim minds to welcome Hijrah and Jihād. It was

said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا آبَاءَكُمْ وَإِخْوَانَكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنِ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْكُفْرَ عَلَى
الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ .

O those who believe, do not take your fathers and your brothers as friends, if they prefer infidelity over Faith. And whoever from you has friendship with them, then such people are the wrongdoers.

As for the need to maintain strong bonds of kinship with parents, brothers and sisters and other kinsfolk and to treat all of them generously, the Qur'ān remains full of relevant instructions. But, this verse has made it very clear that each relationship has a limit. Every relationship out of these, whether that of parents and children or that of real brother and sister, has to be bypassed when it stands in competition with one's relationship with Allah and His Messenger. Should these two relationships come on a collision course on some occasion, then, the relationship that has to be kept intact is one's relationship with Allah and His Messenger. All relationships competing against it are to be ignored.

Some special notes and rulings

Some special notes and rulings emerging from verses 19 – 23 are being given below:

1. 'Īmān (faith) is the moving spirit of 'Amal (deed). A deed devoid of it, no matter how good, is nothing but a lifeless form, and simply unacceptable. It has no worth in terms of the salvation in the Hereafter. Of course, there is no injustice with Allah Ta'ālā. He would not let even good deeds of disbelievers that are devoid of the essential light of faith go waste in toto. Their return is given to them right here in this world of their experience. They are given possessions and wealth to procure articles and means of comfort and self-satisfaction as desired. Thus, their account stands all settled, something the Holy Qur'ān takes up in several verses of the Holy Qur'ān.

2. Sin and disobedience spoil human reason. One starts taking good as bad and bad as good. The statement: وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ (And Allah does not lead the wrongdoing people to the right path -19) releases a hint in this direction. Similarly, it has been counterbalanced in another verse of the Qur'ān by saying: "إِنْ تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا : "O those who

believe, if you fear Allah, He will provide you with a criterion (to distinguish between right and wrong) – 8:29.” This gives a clear indication that the attitude of obeying Allah and fearing Him gives polish and luster to human reason, balance and poise to thinking and a never-failing ability to distinguish between good and bad.

3. Even good deeds have a mutual rivalry for precedence. Correspondingly, the same element of precedence operates in the ranks of those who do good deeds. All doers of deeds cannot be placed in the same rank since things depend, not on abundance, but on the quality of deeds. It was said in Sūrah al-Mulk: رَبِّبُلُوكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا (so that He might test you as to who among you is better in deed – 67:2).

4. For blessings to remain everlasting two things are necessary – that there is no end to them and that they are not separated from those who are blessed with them. Therefore, a guarantee was given to the favored servants of Allah on both counts. By saying: نَعِيمٌ مُّثَمَّرٌ (Gardens having an everlasting bliss for them -21), it was declared that the blessings were eternal. Then, by saying: خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا (where they shall dwell forever -22), these successful people were assured that they shall never be separated from these blessings.

The real bond is the bond of Islām and 'Imān – all bonds of lineage and country must be sacrificed for it

5. The fifth point elaborated here is of basic importance. It settles that the relation with Allah and His Messenger should be given precedence over all relations of kinship and friendship. The relation that clashes against it deserves to be broken. This was the way of the noble Companions. This was why they rose to be the superior most people of the Muslim Ummah. It was some trail they blazed by sacrificing all that was with them, their life, wealth, property, relatives and bonds of all sorts, only for the sake of Allah and His Messenger. That the bond of Islām was supreme and universal stood proved when Bilāl from Ethiopea, Şuḥayb from Byzantium, Salmān from Persia, the Quraysh from Makkah and the Anṣār from Madīnah became brothers to each other. And that the bonds of lineage and tribe had to be cast aside was also demonstrated when, on the battlefields of Badr and 'Uḥud, swords were crossed between father and son and between brother and brother. These are significant evidences of the creed they held dear.

اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْنَا إِتِّبَاعَهُمْ وَاجْعَلْ حُبَّكَ أَحَبَّ الْأَشْيَاءِ إِلَيْنَا وَخَشْيَتَكَ أَحْوَفَ
الْأَشْيَاءِ عِنْدَنَا .

Yā Allah, bless us with the ability to follow them, and make Your love the dearest of everything in our sight and make Your fear the most fear-worthy of everything with us.

Verse 24

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ
وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ أُقْتِرَ فُتْمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا
وَمَسْكَنَ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي
سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

Say, "If your fathers and your sons and your brothers and your spouses and your clan and the wealth you have earned and the trade you apprehend will recede and the homes you like are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and *jihād* in His way, then, wait until Allah comes with His command. And Allah does not lead the sinning people to the right path. [24]

Commentary

This verse of Sūrah al-Taubah was revealed essentially about people who did not migrate from Makkah at the time migration was made obligatory for them. Their love for family and property had stopped them from carrying out their obligation to migrate. In their case, Allah Almighty asked the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to tell them what appears in the verse cited above.

As for the statement: "Wait until Allah comes with His command," Tafsīr authority Mujāhid has said that 'command' referred to here means the command to carry out Jihād and conquer Makkah. The sense of the statement is that the time is near when the evil end of those who sacrifice their relationship with Allah and His Messenger for the sake of worldly bonds shall become visible to all. That is the time when Makkah shall stand conquered, those who chose to discard their appointed duty shall face disgrace and their bonds with people

and things they fancied shall be of no avail to them.

Then, there is the interpretation of the famous Ḥasan al-Baṣri who has said that ‘command’ at this place means the command of punishment. The sense is that those who sacrificed their spiritual bonds as related to the Hereafter just for the sake of their attachment to what was blandly material and did not migrate as instructed were people who would be seized by the Divine command of punishment fairly soon. Either this punishment would come upon them right here in this mortal world, or they shall have to face the punishment of the Hereafter – which is certain. The purpose at this place is to serve a note of warning against the abandonment of the obligation of migration – but, what has been mentioned here is ‘Jihād’ and not Hijrah (migration), which is the next step after Hijrah. The hint embedded here is that the real thing has not happened yet. What has come up right now is no more than the initial command to migrate. There are people who did not have the courage to do even that. Ahead of them is the forthcoming command of Jihād following which they would have to surrender all worldly attachments for the sake of love for Allah and His Messenger, even stake their lives for that noble cause. And it is also possible that this may be a place where migration itself has been made to stand for Jihād – because, in reality, that too is nothing but a department of Jihād.

Finally, by saying: *وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ* (And Allah does not lead the sinning people to the right path) at the end of the verse, it was made amply clear that those who, despite the standing command of migration, opted for their temporal relationships and kept clinging to their family, relatives, wealth and property, shall soon find out that this conduct of theirs was not going to serve their purpose even in this mortal world. If they were thinking that they would keep basking in the sunshine of family, wealth and property in everlasting peace and tranquility, then, they would never realize this dream. Once the command of Jihād comes, these very attractions will turn into burdens too cumbersome to go along with – because, Allah Ta‘ālā does not allow the sinning and the disobedient to achieve their desired objective.

Standing Rules of Hijrah (migration)

1. First of all, when Hijrah from Makkah to Madīnah was made obligatory, it was not simply a matter of obligation, in fact, it was also

a hallmark and a symbol of being a Muslim. Anyone who did not migrate at that time, despite having the ability to do so, was not taken to be a Muslim. This injunction was abrogated after the Conquest of Makkah.

2. After that, the basic injunction which remained operative was: Should there be a land where it is not possible for one to comply with his or her religious obligations, such as praying and fasting in accordance with the injunctions of Allah, migrating from there shall remain a matter of duty (*farḍ*) for ever – on condition that one is capable of undertaking such migration. This is the first degree of compliance.

3. Compliance in the second degree is that one should leave every such place where sin and disobedience have a dominant role in life. This act remains recommended (*mustahabb*) for ever. (see details in Fath al-Bārī)

It will be noticed that the address in the verse under study is direct. Those being addressed are people who did not migrate when they were asked to do so because they cared more about their worldly bonds. But, the generality of the words of the verse is telling all Muslims that their love for Allah and His Messenger is obligatory on them in a special degree. That degree is the highest, the foremost. This degree requires that no other bond or love for anything or anyone should ever prevail over it. So, whoever fails to come up with this level of love becomes deserving of punishment from Allah. Let him, then, wait for it.

The Touchstone of True Faith (‘Imān)

Therefore, it has been reported in an authentic Ḥadīth narrated by Sayyidnā Anas ibn Mālik رضى الله عنه which appears in the two collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: No one can be a true believer until I become to him dearer than his father, children and everyone else in this world.

According to a Ḥadīth from Sayyidnā Abū Umāmah رضى الله عنه appearing in Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said: Anyone who takes a friend or makes an enemy for the sake of Allah or spends his wealth or withholds it for the sake of Allah has made his faith perfect.

These narrations from Ḥadīth prove that perfection of faith de-

pendence on the dominance of the love for the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم over all other kinds of love, friendship and enmity, concession and reservation – all of which must remain subservient to the will and command of Allah and His Messenger.

Tafsīr authority, Qādī al-Baidāwī and other commentators have said that there are very few people who could be considered exempt from the warning given in this verse. The reason is that even the greatest among those who practice and teach religious precepts and virtues seem to be subdued by their love for family and belongings – of course, with the exception of those Allah wills to be otherwise. However, Qādī al-Baidāwī explains further by saying that ‘love’ here means love that is within one’s control. It has nothing to do with love which one does not control, that which is natural – because Allah Ta‘ālā does not obligate anyone beyond one’s capacity and control. Therefore, a person may have his heart full of natural love for worldly bonds but he should not let it overpower him to the limit that he starts acting against the will and command of Allah and His Messenger. If so, this warning will not apply to him and he will be taken as one who keeps his love for Allah and His Messenger above everything. This is very much like the case of a patient who gets nervous about an unpleasant medicine or unexpected surgery. This is natural. But, he does agree to it rationally since it is for his own good. If so, it is not blameworthy. Then, commonsense never forces him to get rid of his natural nervousness and dislike. Similarly, if someone feels naturally uncomfortable while complying with some Divine injunctions due to his love for wealth and children, yet bears by the discomfort and carries those injunctions out, then, that is not blameworthy either. In fact, it is praiseworthy for he would be regarded as one who keeps his love for Allah and His Messenger on top of everything in the light of this verse.

Nevertheless, as for the high station of love is concerned, there is no doubt about the ideal that love must come to prevail over one’s nature as well and go on to turn every discomfort welcome while complying with what your beloved would like you to do. This is not so difficult to comprehend. Think of the seekers of material comfort in this world. Day in and day out, they would embrace the hardest conceivable labor with a smile to get what they want. For a salary check at the end of the month, one would sacrifice sleep, comfort and social relationships.

Honestly or dishonestly, such a seeker would let his desire dominate everything else to achieve his goal.

Moving away from the seekers of the material, let us consider the charisma of the People of Allah. When they seek Allah and His Messenger and the blessings of the-life-to-come, they too reach a station of love which pales out any thoughts of pain and discomfort. According to a Ḥadīth in al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: There are three traits which, if found in a person, would bless him or her with the sweetness of faith. Those three traits are: (1) That Allah and His Messenger are, in his sight, dearer than anything other than them, (2) that one loves a servant of Allah for His sake only, (3) and that the very thought of Kufr and Shirk gives one the feeling of being thrown away into the fire.

The 'sweetness of faith' mentioned in the Ḥadīth quoted above means this very station of love that makes the hardest possible labor most welcome for the true seeker. Love has its own chemistry of turning the sour into the sweet. Some Muslim scholars have pointed out that a heart when enriched with the sweetness of faith starts passing it on to other parts of the body which begin to relish it during acts of worship and obedience. In some reports, the same thing has been equated with the ecstasy of faith – and in Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: The delight of my eyes is in Ṣalāh.

Qāḍī Thanā'ullāh of Panīpat has said in Tafsīr Mazharī: This station of love for Allah and His Messenger is a great blessing – but, it can be acquired only when one stays close to the People of Allah. It is for this reason that Muslim mystics consider it necessary that it be sought with Shaykhs. The author of Rūḥ al-Bayān has said that this station of friendship can be acquired by the one who is ready to sacrifice, like Sayyidnā Ibrahīm Khalīlullāh, عليه السلام everything for the love of Allah – wealth, children, life, everything.

Finally, says commentator al-Baiḍāwī: The preservation and protection of the Sunnah and Shari'ah of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and the rebuttal of and the defense against those who oppose or malign them is also an open sign of love for Allah and His Messenger.

رزقنا الله تعالى وجميع المسلمين حبه وحب رسوله كما يحب ويرضاه

May Allah bless us and bless all Muslims with love for Him and

the love for His Messenger.

Verses 25 - 27

لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ ۖ وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ ۖ إِذْ
 أَعَجَبْتُمْ كَثْرَتَكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا وَصَافَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ
 الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُم مُّدْبِرِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
 سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ جُنُودًا لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا
 وَعَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۖ وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكُفْرِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُ
 اللَّهُ مَنِ ابْعَدَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٧﴾

Allah has surely blessed you with His help on many battlefields, and on the day of Ḥunain* : (remember) when you were proud of your great number then it did not help you at all, and the earth was straitened for you despite all its vastness, then you turned away on your backs. [25]

Then Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers, and sent down forces which you did not see, and punished those who disbelieved. And that is the recompense of the disbelievers. [26]

Yet Allah relents, after that, to whomsoever He wills. And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [27]

Commentary:

Described in the verses cited about are events relating to the scenario of defeat and victory at the battle of Ḥunain. Along with it, several primary and subsidiary problems have also been resolved as a corollary. As the verse opens, Allah Ta'ālā mentions His favor and grace which has descended upon Muslims on all occasions and under all conditions. It was said: لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ (Allah has surely blessed you with His help on many battlefields). Particularly cited soon after this opener was: وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ (and on the day of Ḥunain) that is, Muslims were blessed with the help of Allah on the day of the battle of Ḥunain as

*. Ḥunain : The name of a place near Makkah, the site of the battle of Ḥunain.

well.

The battle of Ḥunain was specially mentioned because many events and circumstances unfolded unexpectedly and extraordinarily during the course of this encounter. If you were to think about these happenings, you would realize that they make one stronger in faith and bolder in deed. Therefore, before we take up a literal explanation of the verses under study, it is appropriate to describe the major events of this battle. They appear in authentic books of Ḥadīth and history. We are describing them in a somewhat detailed manner so that it becomes easier to understand not only the verses mentioned above but also the lessons that these events teach. The major portion of these events has been taken from Tafsīr Mazḥarī. Necessary references to books of Ḥadīth and history may be seen there.

Ḥunain is the name of a place between Makkah al-Mukarramah and Ṭā'if. It is located at a distance of about ten miles from Makkah. When Makkah was conquered in Ramaḍān of Hijrah 8, the Quraysh of Makkah laid down their arms before the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. This alarmed the tribe of Banū Thaḳīf from Ṭā'if who were a branch of the tribe of Hawāzin known all over Arabia as big, brave, rich and warring. They got together and considered the challenge posed by the newly gained strength of Muslims after their conquest of Makkah. Once the Muslims settled down, they concluded, they would turn to them. Therefore, they decided, the wisest course for them was to launch a pre-emptive attack on Muslims much before they came upon them. To carry out this plan, the tribe of Hawāzin brought all its branches spread out from Makkah to Ṭā'if together. Included there were all big and small units of this tribe – except a few individuals who were less than a hundred in number.

The leader of this movement was Mālīk ibn 'Awf who became a Muslim later on and rose to be a major standard-bearer of Islām. However, at that particular time, his zeal to attack Muslims was the highest. Going along with him, the overwhelming majority of the tribe started preparing for war. Two small branches of this tribe, Banū Ka'b and Banū Kilāb, did not approve of this action plan. Allah Ta'ālā had blessed them with some foresight. They said: Even if the forces of the whole world from the East to the West came together against Muḥam-

mad, he would still overcome all of them. We cannot fight the power of God (with him). As for the rest of them, they all gave their pledges to fight. Mālīk ibn ‘Awf devised a plan to ensure that all of them abided by their commitment to the war. He proposed that all participants should take their families and valuables with them. The catch was that, in case they thought of bolting away from the battlefield, the love of wife, children and things of value with them would hold them back like shackles on their feet and they would be left with no freedom to desert the battlefield. As for their numbers, historians differ. According to the master of Ḥadīth, ‘Allāmah ibn Ḥajar and some others, the weightier opinion is that they were twenty-four or twenty eight thousand in number. Some others have given a number of four thousand. It is possible that, with the inclusion of women and children, the total number could be twenty-four or twenty eight thousand while the actual number of fighting men among them remained four thousand.

Anyway, when the news of their dangerous intentions reached the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in Makkah al-Mukarramah, he decided to confront them. He appointed Sayyidnā ‘Attāb ibn Asīd as the Amīr of Makkah al-Mukarramah, left Sayyidnā Mu‘adh ibn Jabal behind to teach people Islām, and asked the Quraysh of Makkah for weapons and other war supplies – of course, as a borrowing. The Quraysh chief, Ṣafwān ibn Umaiyyah spoke out: ‘Do you want to take this war material forcibly against our will?’ He said: ‘No, we would rather like to borrow it from you, a borrowing guaranteed to be returned.’ After hearing that, he gave one hundred coats of mail and Nawfil ibn Ḥārith offered three thousand spears likewise. According to a narration of Imām Zuhri, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was now ready to launch the Jihād with an army of fourteen thousand Companions – which included twelve thousand Anṣār of Madīnah who had accompanied him for the conquest of Makkah. Then, there were two thousand Muslims who were residents of Makkah and its environs and who had embraced Islām at the time of its conquest. They are known as ‘*al-ṭulaqā*.’ It was on Saturday, the 6th of Shawwāl that he marched out for this battle saying that the next day, *insha’Allah*, they shall be camping at the spot in Khaif banī Kinānah where the Quraysh of Makkah had assembled to write down their pledge to excommunicate Muslims.

As for the army of fourteen thousand Mujāhidīn, it did march out of

the city for Jihād. But, there was another crowd of people – many men and women of the city of Makkah – who also came out of their homes as spectators. Their hearts were excited with conflicting emotions. Speaking generally, if Muslims were to be defeated on this occasion, they thought, they would have a good chance of taking their revenge against Muslims – and if they were to win, they consoled themselves that they were not going to lose anything after all.

Shaibah ibn ‘Uthmān was one of these spectators. When he embraced Islām later on, he narrated what had happened to him: ‘In the battle of Badr, my father was killed by Ḥamzah and my uncle by Sayyidnā ‘Alī. My heart was full of anger. I was bent on taking my revenge. I took advantage of this opportunity and started walking alongside the Muslim forces. The purpose was to find an opportunity and attack the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. I kept hanging with them always on the look out for that opportunity until came the time during the initial stage of this Jihād when some Muslims had started losing their ground. When I found them running, I seized the opportunity and reached close to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. But, I saw that ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās was guarding him on the right and Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥārith on the left. Therefore, I dashed towards the rear with the intention of attacking him with my sword all of a sudden. Right then, he happened to look at me and he called out to me: ‘Shaibah, come here.’ He asked me to come closer. Then, he put his blessed hand on my chest and prayed: ‘O Allah, remove the Shaytān away from him.’ Now, when I raise my eyes, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم becomes in my heart dearer than my own eye and ear and life. He said to me: ‘Go and fight the disbelievers.’ Now, there I was staking my life for him, fighting the enemy valiantly right to the end. When the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم returned from this Jihād, I presented myself before him. At that time, he told me about the thoughts I had when I started off from Makkah with a particular intention and how I was shadowing him in order to kill him. But, since Allah had intended that I must do something good, I did what I did.’

Something similar happened to Naḍr ibn Ḥārith. He too had gone to Ḥunain with the same intention. However, when he reached there, Allah Ta‘ālā put in his heart the thought of the innocence of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and a feeling of love for him. This turned him

into a valiant Mujāhid who took no time in piercing through the enemy lines.

During the course of this very expedition, yet another event took place. This concerns Abū Burdah ibn Niyār. When he reached the place known as Awṭās, he saw that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was sitting under a tree and there was someone else with him. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم told Abū Burdah that he was sleeping when the man sitting with him came, grabbed his sword, positioned by the side of his head and said: 'O Muḥammad, now tell me who can save you from me?' I said, 'Allah!' When he heard this, the sword fell down from his hands.' Abū Burdah said: 'O Messenger of Allah, please allow me to behead this enemy of Allah, he looks like a spy.' The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: 'Abū Burdah, say no more. Allah Ta'ālā is my Protector until my religion prevails over all others.' After all that, he uttered not a single word of reproach for that person, in fact, let him go free.

When Muslims camped after reaching Ḥunain, Sayyidnā Suhail ibn Ḥanzalah came to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم with the news that one of their riders had brought a report that the entire tribe of Hawāzin had arrived with an array of their war materials. Hearing this, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم smiled and said: 'Do not worry. All this material has come as war spoils for Muslims!'

Once settled at the camping grounds, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم sent Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn Ḥaddād to gather intelligence from the area controlled by the enemy. He went there and stayed with them for two days watching all prevailing conditions closely. He saw the enemy leader and commander, Mālīk ibn 'Awf and heard him saying to his people: 'Muḥammad has yet to face a nation of experienced warriors. That fight against the innocent Quraysh of Makkah has given him false notions. He has become proud of his power. Now, he will find out where he stands. Let all of you go in battle formation at the early hour of dawn in a manner that each warrior has his wife, children and articles of value behind him. Then, take your swords out of the sheaths, break the sheaths, and attack, all together in one go.' These people were really very experienced in warfare. They had deployed their forces not only openly but secretly too. For example, they had hidden some units of their army in different mountain passes.

This was a view of how the army of disbelievers was getting ready