

Since the generality of the words 'kill them wherever you find them' might lead to the misconception that killing the disbelievers is allowed even in the precincts of *Haram*, this generality has been particularized in the next sentence of the verse by saying:

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يُقْتَلُوا فِيهِ

And do not fight them near *Al-Masjid al-Harām* unless they fight you there.

That is, 'you should not fight them close to *Al-Masjid al-Harām*, which includes all its environs in Makkah, unless they themselves start fighting you there.'

Rulings

1. In the *Haram* (the sacred precincts) of Makkah, it is just not permissible to kill even a bird or animal, let alone the human beings. However, this same verse tells us that in the event someone starts killing somebody else within the sacred precincts, then, that other person is permitted to fight back in defence. There is a consensus of the jurists on this point.

2. It also comes out from this verse that the prohibition of initiating *Jihād* or *Qitāl* is restricted to *Al-Masjid al-Harām* and its environs to which the sacred precincts extend in Makkah. At other places, just as the defensive *Jihād* is necessary, the initiating of *Jihād* and *Qitāl* is also valid.

Verses 192 - 195

فَإِنْ أَنْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝ وَقَتْلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونُوا
فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونُوا لِلدِّينِ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أَنْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى
الظَّالِمِينَ ۝ الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحُرُمَتُ قِصَاصٌ ۝
فَمَنْ اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ ۝
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ۝ وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ
يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۝

But if they desist, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. And fight them until there is no *Fitnah* any more, and obedience remains for Allah. But, if they desist, then there is no aggression except against the transgressors. The holy month for the holy month, and the sanctities are subject to retribution. So when anyone aggresses against you, aggress against him in the like manner as he did against you. And fear Allah and be sure that Allah is with the God-fearing. And spend in the way of Allah and do not put yourselves into destruction. And do good. Of course, Allah loves those who do good. (Verses 192 - 195)

Commentary

1. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ decided to travel to Makkah in the year 7 A.H. to perform his *qaḍā'* 'Umrah as envisaged in the peace treaty of *Hudaybiyyah*; his Companions who were to accompany him knew that disbelievers could not be trusted with treaties, or peace. It was quite possible that they may start fighting. Now, the blessed Companions had a problem before them. They thought if this fighting came, it would have to be within the sacred precincts of Makkah, which is not permissible in Islam. This doubt was answered in Verse 191 by stating that the sanctity of the sacred precincts of Makkah must certainly be observed by Muslims, but should the disbelievers start to fight within the sacred limits, then, it is permissible for them to fight back in defence.

2. The second problem that bothered the noble Companions was about the month, which was Dhul-Qa'dah, being one of the four known as the 'sacred months' wherein fighting anyone anywhere was not permissible. Now, the Muslims thought if the disbelievers of Makkah started fighting against them how could Muslims fight a defensive battle during a 'sacred month'? The verse under reference (194) was revealed to answer this doubt. The answer is that, the way a state of defence grants an exception to observing the sanctity of the *Haram* of Makkah, in the same manner, it allows an exception to observing the sanctity of the 'sacred months' also.

Ruling

There are four 'sacred months': Dhul-Qa'dah, Dhul-Hijjah, Muḥarram which are consecutive and the fourth is Rajab. Even before Islam,

fighting in these months was considered unlawful and the disbelievers of Makkah too used to observe their sanctity. Even in the early days of Islam, right through the year 7 A.H., this law was in force which is why the noble Companions were perplexed. Later, according to the consensus of the *Ummah*, this unlawfulness of fighting was abrogated and the permission to fight was given, but it is still preferable not to initiate fighting in these four months without the need to defend. Therefore, it can be said that the sanctity of the 'sacred months' has not been abrogated totally, but it holds good like the sanctity of *Haram*. Both of them have been subjected to an exception for the sake of defence.

Spending for *Jihad*

The verse 195 introduces the tenth injunction under the theme of 'righteousness' which began in Verse 177. So, in وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ : (And spend in the way of Allah...), Muslims have been obligated to spend money and materials according to the need of *Jihād* ordered in the way of Allah. From here, jurists have deduced the ruling that Muslims have some other financial obligations as well in addition to the mandatory obligation of *Zakāh*, but these are neither permanent nor bound by a 'threshold' or quantity, instead, it is obligatory on all Muslims to provide everything as and when needed. Of course, should there be no need, nothing remains obligatory. The expenditure on *Jihād* is included under this provision.

The literal meaning of the next sentence in this verse وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ as translated in the text are obvious. The verse forbids Muslims from throwing themselves into destruction by their own choice. However, the question remains: What does the expression, 'put yourselves into destruction', mean here? Commentators have explained it in different ways. The blessed Companion, Abū Ayyub al-Ansārī said: 'This verse was revealed about us. We can explain it best. It was when Allah gave Islam authority and power, we started talking that '*Jihād*' was not necessary any more, and that we could stay home and take care of our wealth and property'. Thereupon, this verse was revealed which made it clear that 'destruction' at this place means 'the abandonment of *Jihad*'. This proves that the banishing of *Jihād* from Muslim lives is the cause of their degradation and

destruction. This is why the blessed Companion Abū Ayyub al-Ansarī spent his entire life in *Jihād*, out of Madīnah, his home, so much so, that he met the end of his life in Constantinople (Istanbul), Turkey and was buried there.

The same approach to the meaning of this verse has been reported from the earliest authorities in *Tafsīr*, such as, Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās, Ḥudhayfah, Qatādah, Mujāhid and Ḍaḥḥāk. Sayyidnā Barā’ ibn ‘Azib said that to lose hope in the mercy and forgiveness of Allah is to go for personal destruction voluntarily; therefore, to lose hope in Forgiveness is forbidden. Others say that exceeding the limit while spending in the way of Allah so much so that the rights of the family are compromised thereby, is the act identified as 'putting yourself into destruction'; so, such excess in expenditure is not permissible. Still others think that the verse makes it unlawful to throw oneself into an offensive fighting in a situation when it is already obvious that one will be unable to do anything against the enemy other than dying at their hands.

Notwithstanding the apparently various interpretations of this verse, al-Jaṣṣāṣ synthesizes these by saying that all these rules can be inferred from this verse.

The last sentence of the verse (195): *وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ*: (And do good. Of course, Allah loves those who do good), gives an incentive to do everything nicely. The Holy Qur’ān calls this *Iḥsān*. Now, doing something nicely, can take two forms. When *iḥsān* relates to *‘Ibādah* (worship), its meaning has been explained by the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself in the well-known *ḥadīth* of Jibrā’īl where he said that 'you should worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, and if you cannot achieve that degree of perception, then you should, at the least, believe that Allah Almighty is seeing you'.

And when it (*Iḥsān*) relates to social transactions and dealings, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has explained *Iḥsān* by saying (as reported in the Musnad of Aḥmad on the authority of the noble Companion Mu‘ādh) that 'you should like for others what you like for yourselves, and in the same manner, you should dislike for others what you dislike for yourselves' (Maḏharī).

Verses 196 - 203

وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ
 الْهَدْيِ وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحَلَّهُ فَمَنْ
 كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِ أَذًى مِنْ رَأْسِهِ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِنْ صِيَامٍ
 أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَمَنْ تَمَعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا
 اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامٌ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ
 وَسَبْعَةً إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ تِلْكَ عَشْرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلَهُ
 حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ
 الْعِقَابِ ۝ الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَعْلُومَةٌ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ
 فَلَارْفَتْ وَلَا فُسُوقٌ وَلَا جِدَالٌ فِي الْحَجِّ وَمَا تَفَعَّلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ
 يَعْلَمَهُ اللَّهُ وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُونِ يَا أُولِي
 الْأَلْبَابِ ۝ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
 فَإِذَا أَقَضْتُمْ مِنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَأذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ
 وَاذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَيْتُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمَنِ الضَّالِّينَ ۝ ثُمَّ
 أَيْضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ النَّاسُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
 غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝ فَإِذَا أَقَضَيْتُمْ مَنَاسِكَكُمْ فَأذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ
 آبَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا
 وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلْقٍ ۝ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي
 الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ۝ أُولَٰئِكَ
 لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ۝ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ
 فِي أَيَّامٍ مَعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَنْ تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَنْ
 تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ لِمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ
 تُحْشَرُونَ ۝

وَقَدْ نَبَّأَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ بِمَا سَلَّمَ

And accomplish the Ḥajj and the 'Umrah for Allah, but if you are restricted, then whatever available of the animal offering. And shave not your heads until the offering reaches its place. But if anyone of you is ill, or has some trouble with his scalp, then there is a ransom through fasting or alms giving.

And when you are safe, then, whoever avails the advantage of the 'Umrah alongwith the Ḥajj, shall make whatever available of the animal offering.

And whoever finds none shall fast for three days during Ḥajj, and for seven days when you return; thus they are ten in all. This is for him whose family are not residents of *Al-Masjid al-Ḥarām*. And fear Allah and be aware that Allah is severe at punishment. The Ḥajj is (in) the months well-known. So whoever undertakes Ḥajj therein, then there is no obscenity, no sin, no quarrel in the Ḥajj. And whatever good you do, Allah shall know it.

And take provisions along, for the merit of provision is to abstain (from asking). And fear Me, O men of understanding. There is no sin on you that you seek the bounty of your Lord (by trading).

Later, when you flow down from 'Arafāt, recite the name of Allah near *Al-Mash'ar al-Ḥarām* (the Sacred Monument) and recite His name as He has guided you while before it, you were among the astray. Then flow down from where the people flowed, and seek forgiveness from Allah. Certainly Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.

And once you have fulfilled your rites, recite the name of Allah, as you would speak of your forefathers or even with greater fervor. Now among the people there is one who says: "Our Lord, give to us in this world...;" and he, in the Hereafter, has no share. And there is another among them who says: "Our Lord, give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter and save us from the punishment of Fire." For them there is a share of what they have earned, and Allah is swift at

reckoning. And recite the name of Allah during the given number of days. Then whoever is early in leaving after two days, there is no sin on him and whoever remains behind, there is no sin on him, if he is God-fearing. And fear Allah and be sure that you are going to be gathered before Him. (Verses 196 - 203)

Injunctions concerning Hajj and 'Umrah

In the series of injunctions appearing under the theme of 'righteousness' which has started from verse 177, the eleventh injunction relates to the Hajj. Since it is tied to Makkah al-Mukarramah and Ka'bah, the House of Allah, therefore, some relevant questions have been covered partly under the subject of Qiblah from verse 125 to 128 of Sūrah al-Baqarah. They begin from *وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَشَابَهَ* and end, at *وَأَرْنَا* *فَمَنْ* *تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ*, then, at the conclusion of the discussion on Qiblah, the injunction of Sa'y between *Safā* and *Marwah* has been taken up in verse 158, *إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ*, as a corollary. Now, Verse 196 - 203, from *فَمَنْ تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ* to *تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ*, the eight consecutive verses, present injunctions and questions about Hajj and 'Umrah.

The Hajj, with the strong consensus of the entire Muslim *Ummah*, is a pillar among the cardinal pillars of Islam and an important obligation. It has been clearly emphasised in the many verses of the Holy Qur'an and in numerous authentic *ahādith*.

According to the majority opinion, the Hajj became an obligation in the third year of *Hijrah*, that is, in the year the battle of *Uḥud* was fought, through the verse *وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حُجُّ الْبَيْتِ* (and as a right of Allah, it is obligatory on the people to perform Hajj of the House) of Sūrah *Āl 'Imrān* (Ibn Kathīr). In this verse, conditions of the obligation of Hajj have been stated and a stern warning has been given to those who do not perform Hajj in spite of having the ability to do that.

Out of the eight verses before us, the first verse *وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ* (And accomplish the Hajj, and the 'Umrah for Allah) was revealed, as agreed upon by the commentators, pertaining to the event of *Hudaybiyyah* which took place in the year 7 A.H. This tells us that the purpose of the verse is not to declare the initial obligation of the Hajj; that has been stated already. Instead, the intention here is to convey some special injunctions governing Hajj and 'Umrah.

The Injunction about 'Umrah

However, Sūrah Āl 'Imrān which declares Ḥajj as an obligation restricts itself to Ḥajj alone; 'Umrah is not mentioned there, while the present verse mentions 'Umrah, but does not state whether it is basically 'necessary' or 'obligatory'. It rather says that a person who begins Ḥajj or 'Umrah by going into *Iḥrām*, then, it becomes *wājib* or necessary for him to complete that, very much like voluntary prayers or fasting where the rule is that after one starts them, their completion becomes necessary. Therefore, we do not find out from this verse the answer to the question: Is 'Umrah *wājib*, or is it not? It simply tells us that once one starts it, it becomes *wājib* or necessary for him to complete it.

Ibn Kathīr cites, with reference to al-Tirmidhi, Aḥmad and al-Bayhaqi, a report from the blessed Companion Jābir that he asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ: 'Is 'Umrah *wājib*?' He said: 'Well, not *wājib*, but that you do it is better and meritworthy.' (According to al-Tirmidhi, this *ḥadīth* is *hasan ṣaḥīh*). This is why Imam Abu Hanīfah, Imām Malik and others say that 'Umrah is not *wājib*, but a *sunnah*. Looking back at the statement in the present verse that completing Ḥajj and 'Umrah after one has gone into *Iḥrām* becomes *wājib* or necessary, we face the question as to what happens if, after entering into the state of *Iḥrām*, there comes up some sort of compulsion which makes it impossible to complete the Ḥajj and 'Umrah. What has to be done in such cases has been clarified in the succeeding sentence which begins with "but if you are restricted."

Rules concerning *Iḥrām*

As this verse pertains to the event of *Hudaybiyyah* where the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions were in a state of *Iḥrām* and the disbelievers of Makkah had stopped them from entering Makkah and performing 'Umrah, thereupon came the injunction that the *fidyah* or ransom to get released from the *Iḥrām* is to offer the sacrifice of an animal, such as, a goat, cow or camel whichever is easy to get. After the sacrifice has been offered, *Iḥrām* can be removed, but within the next sentence وَلَا تَحْلِفُوا رُءُوسِكُمْ : (And shave not your heads) it has also been pointed out that removing the *Iḥrām*, which is legally possible only after having shaved or close-trimmed the hair on the head, is not

permissible until the sacrificial animal of the person in a state of *Ihrām* reaches its destined spot and is actually slaughtered.

The expression 'reaching its place', according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, means that it should be taken into the sacred precincts of the *Haram* and slaughtered there. If one cannot do it personally, he can authorise someone else to do it on his behalf. The situation of being 'restricted' by an enemy is clearly mentioned in this verse. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and some other jurists are of the view that if somebody is unable to complete Hajj or 'Umrah (after wearing *Ihrām*) because of sickness, he can also avail of the concession given by this verse, because the words 'if you are restricted' are so general that they include the restriction imposed by sickness also.

The manner in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ has practiced the instructions given in the Holy Verse is sufficient to disclose that although it is allowed in such an emergent situation to remove the *Ihrām* after offering a sacrifice, yet it will remain obligatory to perform the Hajj or the 'Umrah afresh as a *qada'* (whenever the circumstances allow to do so). That is why the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions did perform the 'Umrah next year as a *qada'* for the 'Umrah missed by them at *Hudaybiyyah*.

In this verse, the shaving of the head has been indentified as the signal for removing the *Ihrām* which proves that shaving the head (*ḥalq*) or trimming the hair (*qasr*) in a state of *Ihrām* is forbidden. In view of this, the next injunction tells us the way out for one who faces a compelling need to shave his head in a state of *Ihrām*.

Shaving in the state of *Ihrām*?

In the text of the Holy Qur'an, it is said: **فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِ أَذًى مِنْ رَأْسِهِ**, that is, if one is forced to shave hair on the head, or any other part of the body, because of some ailment or irritating lice, one can do so in proportion to the need, but it has to be redeemed by giving *fidyah* in the form of fasting, charity or sacrifice. The place for sacrifice is fixed; it has to be offered within the limits of *Haram*. There is no such fixed place for fasting and charity; these obligations can be accomplished anywhere. The number of fasts and the amount of charity find no mention in the words of the Holy Qur'an, but in a *ḥadīth* of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, the Holy Prophet ﷺ prescribed in a similar situation faced

by the noble Companion Ka'b ibn 'Ujrah that he should fast for three days or give 1/2 *sā'* of wheat as charity to six needy persons. This 1/2 *sā'* comes to approximately 1.632 kilograms of wheat or its price in cash.

Combining Hajj and 'Umrah during Hajj months

Before the appearance of Islam, the Arabs in *Jāhiliyyah* would not combine Hajj and 'Umrah during Hajj months, that is, after the advent of Shawwal. They thought it was a sin. Towards the end of this verse, their misconception was corrected by restricting the prohibition on combining Hajj and 'Umrah during the months of Hajj to only those who live within the limits of *Miqāt* because it is not difficult for them to return for 'Umrah after the Hajj months. But, for those coming from outside the *Miqāt* limits, it was declared permissible because it is not easy for them to make a special trip exclusively for 'Umrah all the way from such distances. *Miqāt* is one of the several stations appointed by Allah Almighty on every route leading to Makkah from all over the world and it has been made obligatory on everyone proceeding to Makkah to wear *Ihrām* at this point to perform Hajj or 'Umrah. Going beyond this appointed place without *Ihrām* is a sin. The verse **لَمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنْ أَهْلِ حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ** means just this, that is, combining Hajj and 'Umrah is permissible only for a person whose family does not live within the environs of *al-Masjid al-Harām*, or in other words, within the limits of the appointed stations known as *Miqāt*.

However, those who combine the Hajj and 'Umrah during the Hajj months are obligated to demonstrate their gratefulness for having been allowed to combine two acts of *'Ibādah*. This gratitude is expressed by offering a sacrifice, if one is capable of that. This sacrifice may be offered by slaughtering a goat, cow or camel whichever is easy. But, one who is financially incapable of doing so, he is obligated to fast for ten days, the first three within the Hajj days completing them by the ninth of Dhul-Hijjah, the rest of seven fasts he can complete after the Hajj at a place and time of his choice. He could do so while living in Makkah or when he returns home. If a person fails to fast for three days during the Hajj days, for him, in the view of revered Companions, and Imām Abū Hanīfah, offering a sacrifice is mandatory. As soon as

it is possible, he can have the sacrifice offered in the *Haram* through someone he knows (Jassas).

***Al-Tamattu'* and *Al-Qirān*; the two kinds of Hajj**

Combining the Hajj and 'Umrah during Hajj days takes two forms. The first method is to enter into *Ihrām* for Hajj and 'Umrah both right from the *Miqāt*. This is known as *Al-Qirān* in the terminology of *hadith*. Under this method the release from the *Ihrām* is tied with the release from the *Ihrām* of Hajj. The pilgrim has to stay in a state of *Ihrām* until the last day of Hajj. Under the second method it is possible to enter into *Ihrām* exclusively for 'Umrah from a *Miqāt* and after reaching Makkah al-Mukarramah, and performing the fixed rites of 'Umrah one can get out of the *Ihrām*. After that, when getting ready to go to Minā on the eighth of Dhul-Hijjah, he should enter again into the *Ihrām* of Hajj right within the *Haram*. This is technically known as *Al-Tamattu'*. Literally, the word *Tamattu'* covers both methods since it means 'to have the benefit of combining Hajj and 'Umrah both' which is equally applicable to both the methods detailed above. The words **فَمَنْ تَمَتَّعَ** (Then, whoever avails of the advantage) in the present verse of the Holy Qur'an have been used in this general sense.

The warning against violation of rules

The verse 196 ends up with the words 'Fear Allah' which is a command to adopt *Taqwā* - a Qur'anic term which has no equivalent in the English language, and denotes the attitude of fearing and abstaining from doing anything against rules set by Allah Almighty. This command has been followed by a warning: **وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ** (and be aware that Allah is severe at punishment) which means that anyone who knowingly acts against the injunctions revealed by Allah Almighty, for him the punishment of Allah is severe. The people who go in our days for Hajj or 'Umrah are widely negligent of this warning. To begin with, they do not make the necessary effort to find out the rules of Hajj and 'Umrah. Then a good many do not follow the rules strictly, even if they have the knowledge. Bad guides or careless fellow pilgrims sometimes make one miss the obligatory acts, let alone the *sunnah* and the proper etiquette of the pilgrimage. May Allah bless all of us with the ability to correct what we do.

The Hajj Months: Prohibitions

We now move to the second verse out of the eight that deal with

the rules of Ḥajj, which is: الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَاتٌ : 'The Ḥajj is (in) the months well-known'. The word, *ashhur* is the plural of *shahr* meaning the month. It will be recalled that in the previous verse it was said that one who enters into *Iḥrām* with the intention of doing Ḥajj or 'Umrah must complete it as prescribed. Out of these two, there is no fixed date or month for 'Umrah which could be done anytime during a year. But, for Ḥajj, the months and the dates and timings of what one must do are all fixed. It is for this reason that the verse opens with the clarification that the Ḥajj (unlike 'Umrah) has some fixed months which are already known. The months of Ḥajj have been the same from *Jāhiliyyah* also; they are Shawwal, Dhul-Qa'dah and the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah as it appears in the *ḥadīth* as narrated by the blessed Companions Abū Umamah and Ibn 'Umar (Maẓharī).

That the Ḥajj months begin from Shawwāl means that it is not permissible to enter into the *Iḥrām* of Ḥajj before it. According to some *Imāms*, the Ḥajj would simply not be valid with a pre-Shawwal *Iḥram*. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah rules that the Ḥajj thus performed will be considered valid, but it will be *makrūh* (reprehensible) (Maẓharī).

The verse 197, that is قَمَنَ فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ stresses upon the etiquette of Ḥajj and makes it necessary for everyone in the state of *Iḥrām* to strictly abstain from three things: *rafath*, *fusūq* and *jidāl*, which are being explained here in some detail.

A comprehensive word, *Rafath* includes marital intercourse, its preliminaries, including an open talk about love-making. All these things are forbidden in the state of *Iḥrām*. However, an indirect or implied reference to the act of love-making is not prohibited.

Literally *fusūq* means "transgression". In the terminology of the Holy Qur'ān, it means 'disobedience', the general sense of which includes all sins. Early commentators have taken it here in this general sense of the word but the blessed Companion 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar has interpreted the word '*fusūq*' here to mean only the acts which are prohibited and impermissible in the state of *Iḥrām*. It is obvious that this interpretation is more suitable to the occasion because the prohibition of sins as such is not peculiar to *Iḥrām*; they are forbidden under all conditions.

Things which are not sins in themselves but do become impermis-

sible because of the *Iḥrām* are six in number. (1) Marital intercourse, its preliminaries, even lovetalk. (2) Hunting land game, either hunting personally or guiding a hunter. (3) Cutting hair or nail. (4) Using perfume. These four things are equally impermissible for men and women both when in a state of *Iḥrām*. The remaining two basically concern men: (5) Wearing stitched clothes. (6) Covering the head and the face. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Mālik, it is also not permissible for women to cover their face while in a state of *Iḥrām*, therefore, this too is included in the common *Iḥrām* prohibitions.

The first of the above six things, that is, intercourse and its correlatives, though included under *fusūq*, has yet been separated from it, and has been introduced separately through the word *Rafath*, stressing thereby the importance of abstaining from it when in a state of *Iḥrām*. This is because 'amends' can be made for the contravention of other *Iḥrām* prohibitions through *kaffārah* (expiation). But, should one fall into the misfortune of indulging in intercourse before the *Wuqūf* of 'Arafāt (stay in 'Arafāt) Ḥajj itself becomes null and void and a fine in the form of a sacrifice of a cow or camel becomes obligatory and the Ḥajj will have to be performed all over again. Because this aspect was so important, the text has mentioned it expressly.

The word '*jidāl*' means an effort to upturn the adversary, therefore, a rough altercation or quarrel is known as *jidāl*. This word being very general, some commentators have taken it in the usual general sense, while others, keeping in view the place of Ḥajj and the importance of *Iḥrām*, have particularized the sense of *jidāl* here with a specific quarrel. In the age of ignorance, people differed about the prescribed place of *Wuqūf* (staying). Some thought staying in 'Arafāt was necessary, while others insisted that Muzdalifah was the prescribed place to stay and, therefore, did not consider going to 'Arafāt as necessary. They even claimed that it was where Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had stayed. Similarly, they differed in the timings of the Ḥajj as well. Some would do their Ḥajj in Dhul-Hijjah while some others would do it earlier in Dhul-Qa'dah and then, they would all quarrel among themselves around the subject and charge each other of having gone astray. The Holy Qur'ān said *Lā jidāl*, no quarrel, and put an end to all quarrels. What was proclaimed was the truth - the obligatory stay has to be

made in 'Arafāt, then, the necessary stay in Muzdalifah, and Ḥajj has to be performed in no other days but those of Dhul-Hijjah. Once the divine command is there, quarreling is forbidden.

According to this interpretation, the prohibition given in the verse is restricted to those acts only which are normally permissible, yet, they have been forbidden because of the *Iḥrām*, just as the permissible acts of eating and drinking are forbidden in the state of Fasting and *Ṣalāh* only.

But some commentators have taken *fusūq* and *jidāl* in the general sense. According to them even though the *fisq* and *jidāl* are sins, and deplorable at all places and under all conditions, but their sin becomes all the more grave in the state of *Iḥrām*. If one could think about the blessed days and the sacred land of the *Haram* where everyone comes to perform *'ibādah* at its best with fervent chants of *labbayk*, telling their Lord 'Here we are at Your call', with the garment of *Iḥrām* reminding them all the time that the pilgrim is devoted to his act of *'ibādah* within the sight of Allah, how could one stoop to do what is prohibited by Allah; obviously, under such condition, any act of sin or any act of entanglement with dispute turns into sinfulness at its worst.

Taking this general sense into account, one can see the wisdom behind the prohibition of obscenity, sin and quarrel as the place and time of Ḥajj have their peculiar conditions in which one might fall a victim to these three. There are times when one has to stay away from his family and children for a long time in a state of *Iḥrām*. Then, men and women perform Ḥajj rites at *Matāf* (the place around the Ka'bah where *tawaf* is made) and *Mas'ā* (place between *Ṣafā* and *Marwah* where *Sa'y* is made) and at 'Arafāt, Muzdalifah and Minā with hundreds and thousands of people coming in contact with each other. In such an enormous gathering of men and women, it is not so easy to control one's inner desires, therefore, Allah Almighty has first taken up the prohibition of obscenity. Then, since so many people are around at a given time, all deeply devoted to performing their prescribed rites, there are also occasions where sins such as theft creep in, therefore, came the instruction: *lā fusūq* (no sin). Similarly, during the entire Ḥajj trip, there are many incidents where people could get to quarrel

with each other because they are cramped for space or for some other reason. The injunction: *lā jidāl* (no quarrel) is to eliminate such possibilities.

The eloquence of the Qur'an

The words in the verse: *فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ* translated literally as 'then there is no obscenity, no sin, no quarrel ...' are all words of negation, that is, all these things are not there in Hajj, although the object is to forbid them, which could have taken the form close to saying - do not be obscene, do not be sinful and do not quarrel. But, the possible prohibitive imperative has been replaced here by words of negation and thereby the hint has been given that such doings have no place in Hajj and cannot even be imagined in that context.

After proclaiming basic *Ihrām* prohibitions, the sentence: *وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ* (And whatever good you do, Allah shall know it) instructs that abstaining from sins and the contravention of the *Ihrām* during the blessed days of Hajj and at sacred places is not enough. Taking a step farther, one should consider this occasion to be something that comes once in a lifetime, therefore, it is all the more necessary that one should make an effort to stay devoted to 'ibadah, the *Dhikr* (ذكر: also transliterated as 'Thikr', or 'Zikr', meaning 'remembrance') of Allah and good deeds. The assurance given is that every act of virtue and every demonstration of goodness from a servant of Allah shall be in the knowledge of Allah and, of course, shall be rewarded generously.

The sentence that follows immediately: *وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَى*: 'And take provisions along, for the merit of provision is to abstain (from asking)' aims to correct those who leave their homes for Hajj and 'Umrah without adequate preparation claiming that they do so because they have trust in Allah. Obviously, they have to ask for help on their way, or worse still, they themselves go through privation and suffering and in the process, bother others as well. Hence, the instruction has been given that provisions needed for the proposed trip for Hajj should be taken along. This is not against *tawakkul* or trust in Allah; it is rather, the very essence of *tawakkul*, which conveys the sense that one should first acquire and collect the means and resources provided by Allah Almighty to the best of one's capability and, then, place his trust (*tawakkul*) in Allah. This is the exact

explanation of *tawakkūl* reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Forsaking all efforts to acquire means of subsistence (*tark al-asbab*) and calling it *tawakkūl* is sheer ignorance.

Trading or earning during the Hajj

Verse 198: **لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ**: 'There is no sin on you that you seek the bounty of your Lord (by trading)' was revealed in a particular background of the *Jāhiliyyah* when the people of Arabia had distorted all rules of worship and social dealings by injecting in them all sorts of absurd customs rendering acts of devotion into amusement. They would not even spare the sacred rites of Hajj when they added to them ridiculous doings out of their wild imagination. In the great gathering at Minā, they would set up special bazaars, hold exhibitions, and put up trade promotion devices. But after the appearance of Islam when Muslims were obligated with Hajj, all these absurd customs were eliminated. The noble Companions رضى الله عنهم اجمعين, who would stake anything to seek the pleasure of Allah and to follow the teachings of His Messenger, started suspecting the validity of even the acts of trading or working for wages during Hajj days. They thought that earning in this manner is an outgrowth of the age of ignorance, may be Islam shall forbid it absolutely, so much so, that a certain person came to the blessed Companion 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar and asked: 'We are in the business of renting our camels. We have been doing it since long. People hire our camels to go for their Hajj. We go with them and perform our Hajj. Is it that our Hajj will not be valid?' Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar said: 'Some one came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and asked the same question you are asking me. The Holy Prophet ﷺ did not reply to his question at that particular time until the verse **لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ** was revealed. Then, he called for that person and said, 'Yes, your Hajj is valid.'

In short, this verse makes it clear that a person, who earns some profit by trading, or wages by working, incurs no sin. However, the practice of the disbelievers of Arabia whereby they had turned the Hajj into a trade fair was reformed through two simple words of the Qur'ān to the effect that they can earn if they have to, but let them earn what they do as a favour and blessing of Allah Almighty, and be grateful for it, never making it a material exercise of minting money. The words, **فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ**: 'the bounty of your Lord' point out to this factor.

Then, the expression: لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ preceding the words referred to above means that 'there is no sin on you' in this indulgence in earning which has a built-in hint that avoiding this indulgence too, if possible, is still better because it affects the ideal of perfect sincerity so desirable in the Hajj.

This whole issue, in fact, revolves round the original intention of a person. If his basic intention is to earn money through trading or employment but he has decided to perform the Hajj as an adjunct, or both the intentions are equally kept in mind, then, this is contrary to the ideal of sincerity and it will reduce the reward of Hajj and the blessings of Hajj would not fall to his lot as they normally would. And should it be that he leaves his home with the basic intention to perform his Hajj, but runs into unforeseen problems accidentally resulting in a shortage of Hajj expenses or needs of subsistence, he then, could go for a little earning through trading or employment to offset his shortage of need-oriented funds. This is, in no way, contrary to the ideal of sincerity. However, for one who has to do so, it is much better that he leaves the five special days of Hajj rites free of any engagement in trading or employment. Instead, he should devote these days to nothing but 'ibādah and dhikr of Allah. This is the reason why some 'ulamā' have ruled that trading or employment during these special days of Hajj are forbidden.

Staying in 'Arafāt and Muzdalifah:

The next statement in the same verse (198) is:

فَإِذَا أَفَضْتُمْ مِنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ وَاذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَيْتُمْ
وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمَنِ الضَّالِّينَ ۝

Later, when you flow down from 'Arafāt, recite the name of Allah near *al-Mash'ar al-Harām* (the Sacred Monument) and recite His name as He has guided you, while before it, you were among the astray.

The verse tells us that, on the way back from 'Arafāt, it is necessary (*wājib*) to stay overnight in Muzdalifah and to recite the name of Allah there, specially as taught.

Literally, 'Arafāt is plural in number. This is the name of a particular plain. Its geographical boundries are well-known. This plain

is located outside the limits of *Haram*. All *ḥujjāj* (Hajj pilgrims) must reach and stay there between noon (*zawāl*) and sunset (*ghurūb*) hours. This is the most important obligation of Hajj for which, if missed out, there is no alternative in the form of *kaffārah* (expiation) or *fidyah* (ransom).

Several causes have been cited for the name, 'Arafāt. Out of these, the clearer explanation is that 'Arafāt is a plain where man gets to know his Lord and, through his *'ibādah* and *dhikr*, learns how to get closer to Him, and in addition to that, Muslims from the East and the West meet and know each other by direct contact.

Emphasis has been laid in the text on the stay near *al-Mash'ar al-Ḥarām* on the way back from 'Arafāt after having spent the day there and after having departed the plain soon after sunset. *Al-Mash'ar Al-Ḥarām* is the name of a mountain which is located in Muzdalifah. The word, '*al-mash'ar*' means 'sign' or 'symbol', and '*ḥaram*' being 'sacred', the name signifies that this mountain is a sacred monument to Islam. The plain adjacent is called Muzdalifah. It is necessary (*wājib*) to spend the night on this plain and offer the combined prayers of *Maghrib* and '*Ishā*' at one time in Muzdalifah. The Qur'ānic expression: **فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ** translated as 'recite the name of Allah near *al-Mash'ar al-Ḥarām*' certainly includes all kinds of the remembrances of Allah, but here it particularly means the offering of two prayers at one time, that is, offering *Maghrib* with '*Ishā*'. This is the special act of '*ibādah* peculiar to the plain of Muzdalifah. Perhaps, the sentence that follows: **وَأَذْكُرُوا كَمَا هَدَيْتُمْكُمْ** (recite his name as He has guided you) is indicative of this aspect. It is said that one should remember Allah and recite His name in the manner He has taught without adulterating it with personal opinions because personal deduction would have demanded that the *Ṣalāh* of *Maghrib* be offered at the time set for it and the *Ṣalāh* of '*Ishā*' at its own time. But, on that day, Allah Almighty favours that the *Ṣalāh* of *Maghrib* be delayed and offered along with '*Ishā*'. From the Qur'ānic statement cited above, recite His name as He has guided you', we see the emergence of yet another basic ruling that man is not independent in worshipping and remembering Allah, that is, he cannot worship Him as he wishes and he cannot remember Him as he chooses. Instead, every '*ibādah* and

dhikr of Allah demands the observance of special rules of etiquette. These have to be performed as stipulated; doing it otherwise is not permissible. Then, Allah Almighty does not like any subtraction or addition, nor any change in its prescribed time or place, even though the change may lead to an increase in the act of worship. It is observed that people tend to add some features in voluntary prayers and acts of charity from their side without having any reason approved by the Shari'ah, and going a step farther, they take it upon themselves as something necessary while Allah and His blessed Messenger did not declare it as necessary, and last but not the least, such people have the audacity to regard those who do not do all that as in error. This verse exposes their false position by saying that such additional forms of worship reflect the practice of *Jāhiliyyah* when the disbelievers had used their personal opinions and choices to concoct forms of worship and had limited the serious act to few customs.

The third verse (199): **ثُمَّ أفيضوا من حيث أفاض الناس واستغفروا لله إن الله غفورٌ رحيمٌ** (Then, flow down from where the people flowed, and seek forgiveness from Allah. Certainly, Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful) was revealed in a particular background. The Quraysh of Arabia being the custodians of the Ka'bah enjoyed a unique position of influence and distinction in the country. During the days of *Jāhiliyyah*, while everyone went to 'Arafāt, the Quraysh would, in order to demonstrate their unusual importance, stop at Muzdalifah and stay there. They said that, being the custodian of the Ka'bah and the care-takers of the *Haram*, it was not proper for them to go out of the limits of the *Haram*. Since Muzdalifah is located within the sacred limits of the *Haram* and 'Arafāt is out of it, they would seize upon the excuse, stay in Muzdalifah and it was from there that they came back. The truth was that they loved to show off their pride and arrogance and made it a point to keep common people at a distance. Their erroneous conduct thus apprehended, Allah Almighty commanded them to go where everyone goes, that is, into the plain of 'Arafāt, and then, return from there with everyone else (it will be noted that in the accompanying translation of the text, the Qur'ānic word *afīdū* has been rendered into English literally with the word, 'flow' which succinctly suggests mingling with the multitude, something shunned by the Quraysh of *Jāhiliyyah*).

To begin with, behaving special and staying disconnected from

others is a standing act of arrogance which must almost always be avoided, particularly during the days of Ḥajj where the garment of *Ihrām* and the homogeneity of place and purpose teach the lesson that all human beings are equal, the distinction of rich and poor, learned and ignorant, big and small does not exist here, therefore, such display of assumed distinction, and that too in a state of *Ihrām*, further increases the degree of crime.

Human equality in practice

This statement of the Holy Qur'an teaches us an important principle of social living which demands that the the people of a higher status should not cut off their relations with those of a lower status; they should rather behave like members of a large family in their different forms of subsistence, stay and movement. This creates mutual brotherhood, concern and love, removes the walls between the rich and the poor, the employer and the employee. It was during his last sermon of Ḥajj that the Holy Prophet ﷺ openly declared for all times to come that no Arab is superior to non-Arab and no white person is superior to a black person. Superiority depends on *Taqwā* and *Itā'ah* (the fear of Allah and the obedience to His command). Therefore, those who wanted to establish a distinct status for themselves by staying at Muzdalifah, contrary to the rest, were told that this act of theirs was a sin and they must seek forgiveness for it so that Allah Almighty may forgive them and bless them with His mercy.

The prohibition of *Jāhili* customs at Minā

In the verses 199 to 201, some *Jāhili* customs have been corrected. One of these was that the Arabs of the *Jāhiliyyah* would, once they had finished their rites at 'Arafat and Muzdalifah and performed their *tawāf* and sacrifice and stay in Minā, hold gatherings to recite poetry and to eulogize the achievements of their forefathers. Such gatherings were obviously devoid of the remembrance of Allah. It was strange that they elected to waste such blessed days in activities which were of no consequence in relation to what they were supposed to do there. Therefore, they were told that, as soon as they have completed their *Ihrām* rites and come to stay at Minā, they should dedicate their stay to the remembrance of Allah and leave out the practice of indulging in

the reminiscences of their forefathers, specially the boastful claims about their achievements. Better still was to remember Allah, not them, and that too with greater attachment and fervor. There was nothing like being engaged in the *dhikr* of Allah. So, the Holy Qur'ān guides Muslims to shun the customs coming from the age of ignorance, specially in the great days of Ḥajj they have been blessed with, which are exclusively reserved for '*ibādah* and *dhikr* and have merits and blessings of their own, a gift from Allah which may not be available again if lost through carelessness.

In addition to that, the Ḥajj is a special act of worship which one gets to perform only after a long and generally exacting journey, separation from family and business and great expense of money and time. That unforeseen circumstances prevail is not a far-out prospect. It is quite possible that one fails to achieve the long-cherished objective of Ḥajj, inspite of all efforts and expenses. Now, if Allah Almighty has, in His infinite grace, removed all impediments and one has accomplished his Ḥajj obligation by successfully performing all required rites, then, the occasion calls for gratitude which further demands that one should keep busy in remembering Allah, avoid wasteful gatherings, engagements or conversations. Compared with the time spent by the people of *Jāhiliyyah* in forefather tale-telling which brought them no benefit here, or there, the thing to do here is the *dhikr* of Allah which is all radiance and benefit for this world, and for the Hereafter. No doubt, contemporary Muslims do not follow the custom of *Jāhiliyyah* any more by holding poetic recitals to eulogize their family trees, but there are thousands of Muslims from all over the world who still spend out these precious days of Ḥajj in wasteful gatherings, entertainments, amusements, shoppings and similar other pursuits of personal satisfaction. This verse is enough to warn them.

Some commentators have explained this verse by dwelling upon the analogy of 'father' used here, in some detail. They say that one should remember Allah as one remembered his father during his childhood when he was dependant on his father for everything. If man were to think when he is young, adult and rational, is he not far more dependant on Allah Almighty at all times and under all conditions, certainly much more than a child was on his father? As for the boastful claims about the honour of their fathers, something the people

of *Jāhiliyyah* used to make, this verse eliminates that too by saying that real honour comes through the *dhikr* of Allah. (Rūḥ al-Bayān)

Moderation in religious and worldly pursuits

Besides what the people of *Jāhiliyyah* used to do during their stay at Minā, some of them had another habit during the Ḥajj. Normally, they would be engaged in acts of devotion to Allah, yet when it came to making a prayer, they would focus all their attention to praying for worldly needs, such as, comfort, wealth, honour and their likes, showing no concern for the life to come. It was to correct this sort of approach in supplication that it was said that there are people who would use the great occasion of Ḥajj to pray for the insignificant gains of the present life and forget the Hereafter. For such people the Hereafter holds nothing because their conduct shows that they have gone through the obligation of Ḥajj merely in a formal manner, or have done it to earn prestige in their society. To please Allah and to earn salvation in the Hereafter are objectives alien to them.

It may be noted at this point that the verse mentions those who pray by saying: رَبَّنَا إِنَّا فِي الدُّنْيَا (Our Lord, give to us in this world) which does not include the word, حَسَنَةً (good). This indicates that they do not care to have what is really good even in this mortal world, on the contrary, they are drunk with their craze for material things that nothing short of a constant fulfilment of their desires would satisfy them. They just do not bother to check if it is good or bad, procured rightly or wrongly or what people think about them.

This verse extends a serious warning to those Muslims as well who prefer to pray for their material ends only even at the unique time of Ḥajj and at places so sacred, devoting most of their concerns towards that goal. There are many rich people who themselves pray, or request others they hold in esteem to pray for them, not for deliverance from the accounting of the *Akhirah*, but for increase in their wealth, growth in business, and for other worldly concerns. There are many who, by their profusion in *wazā'if* and *nawāfil* (voluntary acts of worship), come to believe that they are very devoted, pious and special. In reality, hidden behind this facade is the same love of the mundane life. Then, there are respected people who maintain relations with pious elders of

their time, as well as show their regard for deceased saints and *walīs*, but the prevailing aim of such relationships is the vague hope that their *du'ā* and *ta'wīdh* (prayers and spiritual charms) will work for them, worldly hardships will stay away, and their belongings shall be blessed. For such people too, this verse has special instructions. Stressed here is the fact that this whole affair rests in the hands of Allah who is All-Knowing and All-Aware. Everyone must assess his or her deeds, specially the intention behind whatever is done during the Ḥajj or *Ziārah*, which includes all *wazā'if*, *nawāfil*, *du'ā* and *ṣalāh*. Then, towards the later part of the verse, Allah Almighty refers to His virtuous and favoured servants - may be some of them are less prosperous in a material way - by saying:

مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ۝

And there is another among them who says: "O our Lord, give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter and save us from the punishment of Fire."

The word, *حَسَنَةً* (*ḥasanah*) used here is inclusive of all that is good, inwardly or outwardly. For instance, *ḥasanah* or 'good in this world' shall include personal and family health, increase and benedictory sufficiency (*barakah*) in lawful livelihood, the fulfilment of all needs, virtuous deeds, desirable morals, beneficial knowledge, honour and prestige, strength of faith, guidance into the straight path and perfect sincerity in *'ibādāt*. Similarly, *ḥasanah* or 'good in the Hereafter' shall cover everything from the Paradise, with its countless and endless blessings to the pleasure of Allah Almighty and the privilege of seeing Him.

In short, this *du'ā* is a compedium of all prayers in as much as it encompasses the entire range of man's worldly and other-worldly objectives. Apart from enjoying peace in the world, and peace in the Hereafter, the verse, refers in the end to the safety from 'the punishment of Fire' as well. It was for this reason that the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to pray with these words very frequently :

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ۝

Rabbanā 'ātinā fid-dunyā ḥasanah, wa fil-'āakhirati hasanah, wa qinā 'adhaban-nār.

Our Lord, give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter and save us from the punishment of Fire.

It is *masnūn* to make this prayer particularly while making *tawāf*. This verse also corrects those ignorant dervishes (so called mystics) who think that real *'ibādah* lies in praying for the Hereafter alone and claim that they do not, on that count, care much about the mortal world. In reality, such a claim is false, for man depends on fulfilling his worldly needs not only for his life and sustenance, but also for performing the acts of worship and obedience. Without these, serving the objectives of faith would become impossible. Therefore, the blessed practice of the prophets of Allah has been that they prayed to Allah for the good of both the worlds. One who thinks that praying to Allah for the fulfillment of his worldly needs is against the norms of piety and spiritual dignity is unaware of the great station of prophethood, and ignorant of man's own role in this mortal world. So, what is required is that one should not focus all his attention on his material needs as if they were the very purpose of life, but he should, along with it, show far more concern for what would happen to him in the Hereafter, and pray for it.

In the concluding part of this verse, the end of the other class of people who pray for the good of the *dunyā* (mortal world) and *ākhirah* (Hereafter) both has been stated by saying that they will be rewarded in both the worlds for their correct and righteous conduct and for their prayers. Following that, it has been said: وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ (And Allah is swift at reckoning) because His all-pervading knowledge and most perfect power is sufficient to assess the life-long deeds of each and every person who ever breathed in His creation; for this He needs none of those computing mechanisms and means on which only man depends. So, the time will soon come when He shall make man account for what he did, and it will be on the basis of that accounting that he will spread out His reward and punishment.

The emphasis on remembering Allah in Minā

In the last of the eight verses relating to injunctions about Ḥajj, that is, وَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْدُودَاتٍ (And recite the name of Allah in the given number of days), the Ḥajj pilgrims have been asked to engage themselves in the remembrance of Allah so that their Ḥajj meets a perfect ending and their post-Ḥajj life becomes correct and fruitful.

These 'given number of days' refer to أيام التشريق : (*ayyām al-tashriq*) during which it is necessary (*wājib*) to say *takbīr* (which is, الله اكبر الله اكبر, لا اله الا الله والله اكبر الله اكبر والله الحمد).

Immediately following is a clarification of the duration of stay at Minā and the deadline for throwing pebbles at the three Pillars. This was an issue debated by the people of *Jāhiliyyah*. Some thought it was necessary to stay at Minā upto the 13th of Dhul-Hijjah and throw pebbles at the three Pillars. According to them, to come back from Minā on the 12th was impermissible and those who did so were sinners. Similarly, others regarded coming back on the 12th necessary, and staying there through the 13th, a sin. Both were corrected in this verse by saying: 'مَنْ تَجَلَّىٰ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَنْ تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ : 'Then whoever is early (in leaving) after two days there is no sin on him and whoever remains behind, there is no sin on him ...' thereby proving that both parties calling each other sinners are involved in excess and error.

The correct position is that Ḥajj pilgrims have the option of acting on either of the two permissions. However, it is better and preferable to stay there through the third day (that is, 13th of Dhul-Hijjah). Jurists say that one who leaves Minā before sunset on the second day (i.e. 12th of Dhul-Hijjah), it is not necessary for him to do his *ramy* (throwing of pebbles on the three Pillars) for the third day. But, should the sun set while he is still in Minā, it does not remain anymore permissible for him to leave Minā until he has done his *ramy* for the third day. However, the *ramy* for the third day has a special concession that it can also be done between the post-morning and pre-noon hours.

If we look at the manner in which the choice of returning from Mina has been given to the *Hujjāj* - no sin if they return on the second day and no sin if they return on the third day - we shall realize that all this is for the convenience of one who fears Allah and obeys His commands, for he really deserves the Ḥajj, as said elsewhere in the Holy Qur'ān: إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ which means that Allah Almighty accepts (acts of prayer and worship) only from those who are God-fearing and obedient. Now, one who has been involved in sins much before Ḥajj, continued being negligent even during the Ḥajj and was callous enough not to abstain from sins even after Ḥajj, his Ḥajj is certainly not going to be of any good to him, although, the formal obligation has

been validly fulfilled, releasing him from the possible crime of not having performed the Ḥajj.

Closing this eight-verse unit, it was said: **رَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ** (And fear Allah and be sure that you are going to be gathered before Him), where He shall make you account for all your open and hidden deeds and give you the reward and punishment for these. This last line is really the essence of all Ḥajj injunctions given in these verses. It means that one should keep fearing Allah during the special days of the Ḥajj guarding oneself from any shortcoming in the prescribed acts of Ḥajj, as he should keep fearing Allah after the Ḥajj guarding himself against any pride of performance, and keep abstaining from sins because, on the day human deeds shall be weighed on the Balance, his sins will eat away his good deeds, that is, they will nullify the effect and weight of those good deeds. In a *ḥadith* about the great *'ibādah* of Ḥajj, it has been said that one who returns after having accomplished his Ḥajj, is so cleansed of his sins as if he was born on that day. This is why those performing Ḥajj have been instructed to maintain the quality of *Taqwā*, (that vital sense of responsibility before Allah). Being one who has been purified from sins, it is necessary to take all possible precautions against what tempts man to fall into sin so that one can earn the best of both the worlds, the *dunyā* and the *ākhirah*. If this is not done and the performer of Ḥajj goes back to a life of sin, even after such a cathartic experience, he shall find that the elimination of his past sins by forgiveness is not going to be of any use to him. Contrary to this, the *'ulamā'* have said that one who returns from his Ḥajj with his heart free from the love of *dunya* and attracted to the concern for the *ākhirah*, his Ḥajj is accepted and his sins are forgiven and his prayers are answered. From place to place during the Ḥajj, people pledge their obedience to Allah before His House, how can these pledges be thoughtlessly broken after the Ḥajj? If those who are lucky to perform their Hajj are a little more mindful of this factor, they might stay by their solemn pledge later on.

A pious elder said: 'When I returned from Ḥajj, it was by chance that a suggestion of sin crept into my heart whereupon I heard a voice

from the Unseen: Didn't you perform the Ḥajj? Didn't you perform the Ḥajj? This voice became a wall between me and that sin. Allah Almighty protected me.'

As against this, there is the case of another pious man from Turkey, who was a disciple of the famous Maulanā Jāmī. He was in such an unusual state of spiritual excellence in his normal life that he used to observe a halo of radiance over his head. He went to perform his Hajj, but after his return he discovered that he has lost that unusual state totally. He talked about it to his master, Maulanā Jāmī. He said: 'Before your Hajj, you had the gift of humbleness, you wept before Allah thinking of yourself as a sinner. After your Ḥajj, you became proud and picked up the airs of someone righteous, spiritually elevated. Therefore, this very Ḥajj of yours became the cause of your pride and that is why you lost that state of radiance.'

The emphasis on *Taqwā* (the fear of Allah) towards the conclusion of Ḥajj injunctions has yet another secret. It goes without saying that Ḥajj is a great act of *'ibādah*. Once it has been accomplished, that eternal adversary of man, the Satan, generally injects into man's heart the thought of self-righteousness which simply ruins all his deeds. Therefore, the final word said was about the need to fear Allah and the necessity to obey Him, not only before the Ḥajj and during the Ḥajj, but also after the Ḥajj when one must become much more particular in fearing Allah and alert in abstaining from sins by conscious effort, lest all that one has done in the form of the *'ibādah* of Ḥajj goes waste.

اللهم وفقنا لما تحب وترضى من القول والفعل والنية

O Allah, give us the ability to do what You love and are pleased with - in word, deed and intention.

Verses 204 - 207

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهُ
عَلَىٰ مَآفِقِ قَلْبِهِ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ ۝ وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي
الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَحِبُّ

الْفَسَادَ ۝ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ فَحَسْبُهُ
 جَهَنَّمُ ذُو الْبَيْتِ الْمَكَدِيِّ ۝ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ
 مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ۝

And among men there is one whose words, in this life, attract you; he even makes Allah his witness on what is there in his heart, while he is so stiff-necked when quarreling. And once he turns back, he runs about in the earth trying to spread disorder therein, and to destroy the tillage and the stock; and Allah does not like disorder. When it is said to him, "Fear Allah", he is overcome by the arrogance (he has) for sin. The hell is then enough for him, and it is, indeed an evil bed to rest. And among men there is one who sells his very self to seek the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is compassionate to His servants. (Verses 204 - 207)

In the previous verses, it was said that there are two kinds of those who make prayers. Some wish to have everything right here in this world, others pray for the good of both worlds, the mortal and the eternal. In the present verse, the same two kinds have been identified as those who are hypocritical and those who are sincere.

Verses 204-206 refer to a hypocrite, Akhnas ibn Shurayq known for his eloquence. He would come to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and try to impress him with his sworn allegiance to Islam, but no sooner did he walk out of his company than he would get busy with his anti-Muslim mischief-making. Any effort to make such a person fear Allah takes him to the other extreme when he pleases his pride through sin. So, 'the Hell is enough for him.'

Commentary

The last verse (207) portrays the true, the sincere Muslim who would stake his very life to achieve the good pleasure of Allah Almighty. This verse has been revealed to honour the sincere Companions who offered unmatched sacrifices in the way of Allah. It has been reported by Hākim, Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Hātim, with sound authorities, that this verse was revealed in connection with a particular event relating to the blessed Companion Ṣuhayb al-Rūmī. It has been reported that soon after he left Makkah on his emigration

route to Madīnah, he was accosted on his way by a group of disbelievers of the Quraysh. Seeing this, Companion Suhayb dismounted, took position, pulled out all the arrows from his quiver and said to the group: 'O tribe of Quraysh, you all know that I am far better in archery than any of you here. My arrow never misses its target. Now, I swear by Allah that you shall not reach me until there remains even one arrow in my quiver. Then, after arrows, I shall use my sword as long as I can. Only after that you can do what you can. However, if you want to make a deal, I can tell you where my money is in Makkah. You go and take that and let me go my way.' The confronting group of Quraysh agreed to do so. When Companion Ṣuhayb reached Madīnah, safe and unharmed, he went to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and told him everything about the incident. Upon this, he said twice:

ربح البيع ابايحيى ربح البيع ابايحيى

Profitable was your deal Abū Yaḥyā, profitable was your deal
Abū Yaḥyā!

The revelation of the verse under reference in connection with this particular event confirms the blessed comment made by the Holy Prophet ﷺ .

However, some commentators cite similar events relating to other noble Companions as the background of the verse's revelation (Mazhari).

Verses 208 - 210

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَآفَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا
خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ۝ فَإِنْ زَلَلْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ
مَا جَاءَتْكُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَاَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝ هَلْ
يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظُلَلٍ مِنَ الْغَمَامِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ
وَقَضَى الْأَمْرَ إِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ۝

O those who believe, enter Islam completely, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Surely, for you, he is an open enemy. And if you slip, even after clear signs have come to you, then you must know that Allah is mighty, wise. They are looking forward to nothing but

that Allah comes upon them in canopies of cloud with the angels and the matter is closed. And to Allah all matters are returned. (Verses 208 - 210)

The previous verses ended with a word of praise for the sincere. As sincerity (*ikhhlāṣ*) can sometimes touch the limits of excess inadvertently, that is, one does intend to come up with more obedience, but that obedience, when observed carefully, turns out to be exceeding the limits set by the Shari'ah and *Sunnah*. This is called *bid'ah*. This can be explained through the example of the blessed Companion 'Abdullāh ibn Salām and others who were, previous to their Islam, known scholars among the Jews. Since Saturday was the sacred day of rest (the Sabbath) in Judaism, and camel-meat was unlawful, they thought, once they were in Islam, to bring about some sort of a synthesis between the two faiths, through which they could continue to honour Sabbath as it was necessary under the law of Moses while Islam did not require dishonouring it; and similarly, they could simply avoid eating camel-meat in practice while believing that it was lawful, for it was unlawful in the law of Moses but Islam does not make it obligatory to eat it. Thus, they thought that they would stay in touch with the law of Moses and still not go against the Shari'ah of Muḥammad ﷺ, something that appealed to them as a stronger demonstration of obedience to divine laws and a closer approach to matters of faith. Allah Almighty corrects this thought in the present verse which aims to establish that Islam is an obligation in its totality. It is total and perfect only when what is not necessary in Islam is not considered to be a part of it. To take such thought or practice as part of the Faith is a Satanic slip which may bring far more severe a punishment than common sins would.

It is in this background of the verse's revelation, that believers have been asked to 'enter Islam completely', not making allowances for a faith other than Islam - a divisive approach which makes one an easy target of Satan. Therefore, the prohibition 'do not follow the footsteps of Satan', an enemy who would cheat you into taking to something which obviously looks very much like your Faith, but happens to be totally contrary to it in reality. After having received clear laws and rules that lead to the straight path, there is no justification left for any deviation. Those who still slip, they must

remember that Allah is Mighty, having the power to punish, and Wise too, lest one should misread any delay in punishment which comes when His Wisdom so dictates. Using an eloquent image, the text goes on to question the ultimate acceptance of truth at a time when it shall no longer remain worth accepting and all matters of reward and punishment shall revert to Allah with no power existing other than Him, why then would anyone become quixotic enough to stand against a Power so obvious, the result of which could be nothing but destruction.

Commentary

The word, **سَلِمَ** : (*silma*) in **أَدْخُلُوا فِي السَّلَامِ كَافَّةً** translated here as 'enter Islam completely', is used to convey two meanings, 'peace' and 'Islam'. At this place, according to the consensus of the Companions and their successors, it means Islam (Ibn Kathīr). The word **كَافَّةً** : (*kāffah*) means 'totally' and 'universally'. In the structural scheme of the sentence, this word appears as *hal* (an adverb, qualifying the verb before it with a particular state). There are two possibilities here. Firstly, the word be taken as the *hāl* of the pronoun in **أَدْخُلُوا** : (*udkhulū*) in which case the translation would be referring to the condition of the believers while entering Islam, which must be 'complete'. This would mean that their entire person, hands and feet, eyes and ears, feeling and thinking, after having embraced the Faith should all be within the parameters of Islam and the obedience to Allah. This is to warn against a state of being in which one may be physically carrying out the dictates of Islam while the heart and the mind are not fully satisfied, or in case, the heart and the mind are satisfied, yet what one does physically remains outside the pale of Islam.

Secondly, it is possible to take the word, *silma* as the *hāl* or indicated state of the Faith in Islam, in which case, the translation would be referring to the perfect and complete state of Islam in which the believers must enter. So, 'entering Islam completely' would mean that one must accept all injunctions of Islam, not that one accepts some and hesitates about others. Since Islam is the name of that particular way of life which has been given through the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*, therefore, it does not matter, which facet of life it concerns, it may be beliefs and acts of worship or social dealings or business transactions or government and politics or trade and industry or any other field; what

matters is one's entry into Islam as a complete system, an organic whole, unified, indivisible.

The gist of the two approaches given above is that no Muslim shall be deserving of calling himself a Muslim unless he accepts all Islamic injunctions truly and sincerely from the deep recesses of his heart, irrespective of the department of life they belong to, irrespective of whether they concern the outward physique of the body or the heart and the mind.

The background of the verse's revelation mentioned earlier in the introductory remarks also shows that one must keep nothing but the teachings of Islam in sight, practice it in its entirety which will, in consequence, make Muslims independent of all religions and nations.

Special Note

The verse holds out a stern warning to those who have got Islam all tied up with *ḡmasjid* and *'ibādāt* (mosque and the performance of acts of prescribed worship) neglecting injunctions relating to social living and business and personal dealings as if they were no part of religion. This negligence is wide-spread among the 'technically' religious people who do not seem to care much about rights and dealings, specially social rights. It appears that they do not regard these injunctions to be the injunctions of Islam, neither do they make an effort to find out what they are, or try to learn them in an orderly manner, nor think of acting in accordance with these injunctions. We seek refuge with Allah.

As regards the possibility of 'Allah Almighty and the angels coming upon them in canopies of clouds,' this will be on Doomsday. The correct position is that such coming of Allah Almighty belongs to the *Mutashābihāt*, statements of hidden meaning, about which there is a standard policy practiced by the majority of the blessed Companions, the *Tābi'īn*, their successors, and the revered elders of the Muslim *ummah*, that is, one must believe in its truth and avoid worrying about as to how this would happen because it is beyond human reason to find out the reality and the nature, the whats and the hows of the 'Being' and the Attributes of Allah Almighty, and this too is included therein.

Verses 211 - 212

سَلِّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ بَيِّنَةٍ وَمَنْ يُبَدِّلْ نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝ زَيْنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ۝

Ask the Children of Isra'il how many a clear sign We have given them. And whoever changes the blessing of Allah after it has come to him, then Allah is severe at punishment. Adorned is the present life for those who disbelieve and they laugh at those who believe while those who fear Allah shall be above them on the Day of Resurrection. And Allah gives, to whom He wills, without measure. (Verses 211 - 212)

Immediately earlier, it was said that opposing truth after clear signs have come, deserves punishment. The first verse here (211) cites the case of the elders of Banī Isrā'īl who were punished for their hostility to truth despite clear signs given to them.

Rather than follow the blessed guidance given to them, they chose to stray away from it and, as a result, underwent punishments, for instance, they received the Torah which deserved being accepted but they denied it, consequent to which, they were threatened with Mount Sinai coming down upon them. Again, they heard the Word of Allah which they should have loved and respected but they tinkered with doubts in it and consequently, were struck dead by lightning. Then, again, they were delivered from the Pharaoh through a passage-way made by parting the river, but they showed no gratitude, instead, took to the calf for which they were killed. Further again, they should have been grateful when *Mann* and *Salwā* was sent for them but they disobeyed and spoilage set in. When they showed their distaste for it, it stopped coming, throwing them into the toil of growing their own food. Lastly, the chain of prophets that appeared among them from time to time should have been a matter of great satisfaction for them, yet they started killing them for which they were punished, having been deprived of power.

In the wake of such misdeeds, some of which find mention in the

earlier part of Sūrah al-Baqarah, the divine law is that one who changes the blessings or clear signs of Allah, specially after it has come to him when he should have followed its guidance rather than turn back and go astray, then, the ultimate must come to pass, that is, Allah Almighty punishes such a deviant severely.

In the second verse (212), the real cause of the opposition to truth has been identified as the love of *dunyā* (the worldly life) and its material gains. One of the effects of this attitude shows up in the derogatory stance taken against those who love their faith. The reason is simple. When materialism overpowers, the urge for faith evaporates. In fact, people would go to the limit of abandoning their faith when it happens to be against their worldly interests and would even have the audacity to laugh at those who love and practice it. So, it should not be strange that many chiefs among the Israelites and the ignorant among polytheists would make fun of poor Muslims. It is in this context that the Holy Qur'ān says: 'Adorned is the present life for those who disbelieve' because of which 'they laugh at those who believe', although, these Muslims who have said no to *kufr* and *shirk* shall be in a state better than that of the disbelievers on the day of *Qiyāmah* (Doomsday), for the disbelievers will be in *Jahannam* (Hell) and the believers, in *Jannah* (Paradise).

The last sentence carries a warning for those who pride on their brute economic strength because it is Allah who 'gives, to whom He wills, without measure'. So, all this depends on divinely-ordained destiny and not on personal excellence or influence. As such, it is not necessary that one who is respected for personal possessions happens to be a recipient of honour with Allah as well. The truth is that real honour cannot be anything other than what turns out to be valid in the sight of Allah. That being that, would it not be a plain 'absence of sense' if one stands on the crutches of worldly riches and claims honour for himself and looks down upon the less fortunate as mean? The real consequence of such attitude shall be unravelled on the Last Day.

It has been reported that Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه said: 'Anyone who takes a Muslim man or woman low in status because of his or her hunger, Allah Almighty will put him to disgrace before a gathering of

all, from the first to the last. And anyone who falsely accuses a Muslim man or woman of a weakness, Allah Almighty would put him on a high mound until he falsifies himself.' (al-Qurtubi)

Verse 213

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ
وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اختلفُوا
فِيهِ وَمَا اختلفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوْتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ
الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَا اختلفُوا فِيهِ
مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ٥

All men used to be a single *Ummah*. Then Allah sent prophets carrying glad-tidings and warning and sent down with them the Book with the Truth to judge between people in what they disputed. And none but those to whom it (Book) was given disputed it after clear signs had come to them, led by envy against each other. Then Allah, by His will, guided those who believed, to the truth they disputed. And Allah guides whom He wills to the straight path. (Verse 213)

Earlier, the real cause of the opposition to truth has been identified as the love of the worldly life. Now, the present verses point out that, all along the lanes of time, Allah has been showing clear signs to establish the true faith, yet the seekers of the mundane benefits have been working against it to safeguard their material interests.

Commentary

Stated in the verse is the fact that there was a time when all human beings used to belong to one single community having common religion and belief - a faith, true and natural. Then came differences in temperaments and tastes, opinions and thoughts, consequently giving birth to contradicting beliefs, making it impossible to distinguish the true from the false. It was in order to make truth distinct from error and to show people the straight path of truth that Allah Almighty sent prophets with Books and revelations. After what the prophets عليهم السلام

did by way of moral education, people split apart in two groups. The first group welcomed the guidance sent by Allah Almighty and accepted to follow the prophets عليهم السلام. These are known as true Muslims. The second group belied the Scriptures and the prophets and refused to follow them. These are known as *kāfirs* or disbelievers. The opening statement in the verse **كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً** translated as 'all men used to be a single *ummah*', needs some explanation. Imām Rāghib al-Isfahānī has said in his *al-Mufradāt* that the word, *ummah* signifies a set of people gathered together for reasons of faith, time or place. This element of unicity could be that of beliefs and ideas, or that of presence in a geographical area at a given time, or that of heredity, language, colour and its likes. So, the sense of the statement is that there was a time when all human beings used to be a composite group. Two considerations emerge here which need elaboration:

Firstly, what sort of unity is stipulated in this verse? Secondly, what was the time when this unity existed? The first question was settled by the last sentence of this very verse which mentions the differences that came up later on, and that the prophets were sent to determine the true way out of the multiplicity of ways. It is obvious that the prophets and Scriptures sent to resolve these differences were not dealing with the differences in issues of heredity, language, colour, country or period. Instead, it was the difference of ideas and beliefs. This comparative examination tells us that the unity mentioned in this verse means the unity of ideas and the unity of beliefs.

So, as the sense of the verse appears now, there was a time when all human beings belonged to one set of beliefs. What was that set of beliefs? Two possibilities exist here. Either they were united under the belief of God's Oneness, or lived together under a state of disbelief and error. However, according to the majority of commentators, the weightier opinion is that all of them were united under the belief of God's Oneness. A verse to this effect appears in Sūrah Yūnus as well:

وَمَا كَانَ النَّاسُ إِلَّا أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَاخْتَلَفُوا وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ
بَيْنَهُمْ فِيمَا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ۝

All men used to be a single *ummah*. Then, they split. Had it not been the initial will of your Lord (that the true and false and the good and bad shall exist simultaneously in this mortal

world) all their disputes would have been settled once for all (leaving no trace of the enemies of truth). (10:19)

In Sūrah al-Anbiyā', it was said:

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ

This *ummah* of yours is a single *ummah* and I am your Lord.
So, worship Me. (21:92)

Also in Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, it was said:

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ

This *ummah* of yours is a single *ummah* and I am your Lord.
So, fear Me. (23:52)

All these verses indicate that the unity referred to here is the unity of belief and faith in the true religion.

Now, we have to determine the period of this universal human unity. The commentators of the Holy Qur'ān among the blessed Companions, Ubayy ibn Ka'b and Ibn Zayd said that the period refers to the period of 'Azal' (eternity without beginning) when the spirits of all human beings were created and asked أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ (Am I not your Lord?) to which every soul without exception said, 'Yes, You are our Lord'. That was the time when all human beings were on one true belief the name of which is Islam, the Faith. (Qurtūbī)

The blessed Companion 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās said that the period of this unity of belief dates back to the time when Sayyidnā Ādam came into this world with his wife. They had children who multiplied. All of them believed in the religion of Ādam and followed his teachings, specially that of God's Oneness. All of them, except *Qābil* (Cain), were obedient to the religious law.

In the Musnad of al-Bazzār, there appears an addition to the statement of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās cited above which says that this unity of belief prevailed from the time of Sayyidna Adam to that of Sayyidnā Idrīs. Upto that time all of them followed Islam and *Tauhid*, and the period in between them is that of ten *qarns*. Probably, *qarn* means a century which sets the period at one thousand years.

Some others have said that the period dates back to the time of the deluge in the days of Sayyidnā Nūh in which all living were swept

away except those who had boarded the ark with Sayyidnā Nūḥ. When the flood subsided, those who survived were all Muslims, monotheists and followers of the true faith.

In reality, all these three statements are not contradictory; all three periods were such that people were one community and followed the true faith.

The second sentence in the verse says:

فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيُحْكَمَ بَيْنَ
النَّاسِ فِي مَا اختلفوا فِيهِ

Then Allah sent prophets carrying glad-tidings and warning and sent down with them the Book with the Truth to judge between people in what they disputed.

It is worth noting that the first sentence said that all men used to be a single *ummah*, and in the second, this statement has been rami-fied by saying that Allah sent prophets and Books to resolve disputes. Obviously, the two sentences do not seem to synchronize because the cause of sending prophets and Books is the disputation of people, which did not exist at that time. However, the answer is very clear. The verse means that during the early period of human life, people adhered to one true faith, later on differences crept in, which led to dis-putations following which came the need to send prophets (عليهم السلام) and Books.

Something still remains. When mention has been made of a single *ummah* above, why is it that the incidence of differences has not been mentioned? Those who are blessed with some insight into the wisdom behind the style of the Holy Qur'ān would not find it difficult to answer the question, for the Holy Qur'ān, while relating past events, does not report the whole story anywhere, instead, it eliminates parts in between, which could be understood contextually. For instance, there is the prisoner in the story about Sayyidnā Yusūf عليه السلام who, after his release, came to the king and asked that he be sent to Sayyidnā Yusūf عليه السلام in order to seek an interpretation of the royal dream. This proposal of the prisoner is all that the Holy Qur'ān relates, then, the conversation begins with *يُوصَفُ أَيْهَا الصِّدِّيقِ*. The text does not say that the king liked his proposal and sent him to the

prison-house to see Sayyidnā Yusūf عليه السلام and that he reached there, then, addressed him. The fact is that reading the text with sentences earlier and later makes all this simple to understand.

Similarly, the mention of differences after the mention of a united community in this verse was not considered necessary because the advent of disputes is something known by the whole world all the time. What needed to be expressed was that, before all these overflowing disputes, there was a time when all human beings used to follow one true religion. This is what was stated. Now, the disputes visible all over the world were not something that should have been expressly identified. This was unnecessary. Nevertheless, very pointedly it was said that Allah Almighty did provide for the removal of these disputes through guidance. The words of the text say: **فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّينَ** that is, 'Allah Almighty sent prophets, عليهم السلام' who were to carry glad-tidings of eternal peace and bliss to those who follow the true Faith and to give warning of the punishment of Hell to those who turn away from it. Then, Allah helped prophets through His revelations and Books which were to make truth distinct from error in matters of beliefs and ideas. The text, after that, points out to the outcome. In spite of the prophets and Books with open truths, the world split itself into two groups. There were some who did not accept this clear guidance, and strangely enough, the first to deny this guidance were those to whom these prophets and verses were sent, that is, the Jews and the Christians. Far more astonishing is the fact that there was no possibility of any doubt or misgiving in Scriptures which were neither beyond their understanding nor were likely to throw them into confusion. In fact, these people knew and understood it, yet it was their lust for taking an opposite stand which made them deny it.

Then, there was the second group who were enabled to follow the straight path by Allah Almighty and they became the ones to say yes to the lead given by prophets, messengers and divine books sincerely and whole-heartedly. These very two groups have been identified in Sūrah al-Taghābun as follows:

خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَمِنْكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ

Allah Almighty created you, then, some of you became disbelievers and some of you, believers. (64:2)

To sum up, the gist of the sense in the verse **كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً** (All men used to be a single *ummah*) is that all human beings were initially and universally followers of the true faith. Then, temperamental multiplicity gave way to the promotion of self-interest which caused disputes to surface, so much so that a time came when beliefs too were disputed which in turn reached a point when the very root, the fine line of distinction between the true and the false, got all mixed up. Thereupon, Allah Almighty sent prophets **عليهم السلام** and His Books to guide people to the right path and to bring them back to the same true faith on which human beings already were. But, despite all guidance and very clear signs, there were some who dutifully followed these and there were others who, out of their obstinacy and hostility, took the road of denial and deviation.

Injunctions and related considerations

1. The verse tells us that Allah Almighty sent His prophets and Books into this mortal world for no other purpose but that people, who had left the single *ummah* following the true faith and branched out into different sects, should again be assembled into the same one community. Whenever people wavered from the right path, Allah sent a prophet, and a Book so that they act accordingly. The coming of prophets as a medium of reform and salvation continued when they again deviated which resulted in the coming of another prophet and another Book with the express purpose of putting people back on the right track, that is, on the straight path shown by their Lord. This is like health, a single fact of life as compared to diseases which are too many. When a certain disease showed up, Allah prescribed the appropriate medicine and regimen. Another disease brought another set of treatment.

Finally, came the most comprehensive of all prescriptions, one that will be ideally successful against all diseases until such time that Allah wills to keep this world going. This perfect prescription, a comprehensive blueprint of all diagnostic considerations, treatment par excellence, the most complete of all previous prescriptions which pre-empts all future possibilities of treatment, is none but that of Islam. For this came the last of the prophets **ﷺ**, and with him came the Qur'an. There used to be the recurring problem of Scriptures being interpolat-

ed, prophetic teachings being lost which necessitated the sending of new prophets and new Books in the past. This was set right when Allah Almighty Himself took the responsibility of seeing that the Holy Qur'ān remains protected against interpolations or changes. Then, to make sure that the teachings of the Holy Qur'ān remain intact in their original form and live right through the Day of Doom, Allah Almighty promised to create and sustain a set of people from the community of Muḥammad ﷺ, a group which will always adhere to the true Faith, keep circulating the correct teachings of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* among Muslims all over the world without ever flinching against any opposition or hostility. Therefore, after this, it was inevitable that the doors of prophethood and the coming of revelation be closed for ever. So, came the final proclamation, that of the end of prophethood.

Let there be no misgiving that during the course of history the coming of prophets and Books were ever a source of division or dissension between people. What is true, as stated earlier, is that all prophets and divine Books aimed at assembling people around one true faith to which they initially adhered.

2. We also discover here that the two-nation theory of Muslim and non-Muslim, the identification of nationhood on the basis of religion is exactly what the Qur'ān aims to support in *كَافِرٌ فَمِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَمِنْكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ* cited above. Along with it, we can also clearly see that the real foundation of the two-nation theory stands on raising a united nationhood, which flourished in the very beginning and which was based, not on the factor of the country of origin, but on believing in the Truth and following the straight path. The Qur'ānic statement: *كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً* (All men used to be a single *ummah*) stresses that there used to be real national unity in the beginning of the world when people followed the true faith. Disputes came later. Then came the prophets who invited them to that real unity. Those who rejected their call cut themselves off from this united nationhood and were known as a separate nation.

3. The third lesson we learn from this verse is that evil people have always elected to oppose every prophet and every divine Book and have been even eager to line up their maximum forces against them.

This being the customary situation allowed to prevail by Allah Almighty, people who have the strength of faith in their hearts should not feel bad about the chronic pursuit of intrigues and hostility by the evil ones against them. Very simply, just as the disbelievers took to the ways of their elders in the form of denial, hostility and prophet-bashing, all true Muslims on the straight path should take to the consistent practice of their elders, the great prophets عليهم السلام, by staying patient against injuries inflicted on them, nevertheless, keep calling them to the true Faith with wisdom, sound advice and good grace. Perhaps, it is because of this congruity of purpose, that the next verse counsels Muslims to maintain a stance of forbearance and patience against all situations of distress.

Verse 214

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ
 قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالصَّرَآءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ
 وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصُرَ اللَّهُ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ ۝

Do you think that you will enter Paradise despite that there have not yet come upon you circumstances as of those who have passed away before you? They were afflicted by hardship and suffering and were so shaken down that the prophet, and those who believed with him, began to say: "When the help of Allah (will come)?" Behold, the help of Allah is near. (Verse 214)

The previous verse has said how hostile the disbelievers have been to prophets and believers and, in a way, has comforted Muslims hurt by the mockery of disbelievers that there is nothing new about this antagonism. This has been there all the time. Further from this point, the present verse recounts the enormous amount of suffering faced by past prophets and believers at the hands of hostile disbelievers. This too is to console Muslims that they should be patient against the hostility of disbelievers as ideal happiness can only be achieved by getting ready and working hard for the Hereafter.

Commentary

There are two things worth serious attention in this verse:

1. Apparently, this verse seems to indicate that nobody shall enter Paradise unless he goes through hardships and sufferings, although, Qur'anic statements and sayings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ prove that many sinners will enter Paradise simply because of the grace, mercy and forgiveness of Allah Almighty, and that they shall undergo no hardship either. This is because hardship and suffering have different levels. The lowest degree is to resist against one's own desiring self and the Satan, or to strengthen the bases of one's beliefs by countering the forces working against the true Faith. This degree of achievement is within the grasp of every Muslim. Further on, there are the middle and the higher levels. The degree of one's strenuous effort shall be the degree of one's entry in to Paradise. Thus, nobody remains untried by effort and struggle and the resulting hardship and suffering. In a *hadith*, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

اشد الناس بلاء الانبياء ثم الامثل فالامثل

The hardships faced by the prophets are the hardest faced by men, after that, by those closer to them.

2. The second point one must note here concerns the prophets and their followers. That they reached a point of suffering when they cried out as to when will the help of Allah come, was not because of any doubt since that would be against the dignity of their station. In fact, the call was made in the background of Allah's promised help for which the time and place was left undetermined. As such, using these words in a state of distress indicated the desire for early help. Making such a prayer is not against one's trust in Allah (*tawakkul*) or against the station of prophethood. On the contrary, the fact is that Allah Almighty favours the earnest supplication of his servants. Who else other than the prophets and the pious of the community would be more deserving of what Allah likes?

Verse 215

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلَّوَالِدِينَ وَ
الْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ
خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ۝

They ask you as to what they should spend. Say:

"Whatever good you spend is for parents, kins, orphans, the needy and the wayfarer. And whatever good you do, Allah is all-aware of that." (Verse 215)

Commentary

Imperatives such as - 'leave disbelief and hypocrisy and enter Islam completely', 'listen to none when it comes to obeying the command of Allah', 'spend your wealth and give your life to seek the pleasure of Allah' and 'show fortitude against all sorts of hardships and sufferings' - have been emphatically mentioned in previous verses. Now, from this point onwards, there appear some details concerning this obedience which relate to one's wealth, life and other matters of marriage and divorce. All these form part of the general theme of righteousness which continues.

This statement of details is very special as these come in answer to questions raised by the noble Companions before the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The answer to questions asked came directly from Allah through the medium of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. If this were to be said in other words, one could say that the *Fatwā* (religious ruling) was given by Allah Almighty Himself. This too is correct because Allah Almighty has, in the Qur'ānic verse **قُلِ اللَّهُ يَفْتِيكُمْ فِيهَا** 'Say: Allah answers you about them...' (4:127) attributed the act of giving *Fatwā* to Himself. Therefore, there is nothing strange about this attribution.

It is also possible to say that these *fatāwā* (plural of *fatwā*) come from the Holy Prophet ﷺ which have been communicated to him through revelation. Anyway, what has to be realized is that the religious injunctions described in this section as answers to some questions asked by the noble Companions carry a significance of their own. Throughout the Holy Qur'ān, such special injunctions in the form of questions and answers appear at nearly seventeen places. Seven out of these happen to be right here in the Sūrah al-Baqarah, one in Sūrah al-Mā'idah and one in Sūrah al-Anfāl. These nine questions are from the noble Companions. Then come two questions in Sūrah al-A'rāf and one each in Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, Sūrah al-Kahf, Sūrah Ṭā-Hā and Sūrah al-Nazī'āt making a total of six questions, which were asked by the disbelievers. All these have been answered in the Holy Qur'ān.

The blessed Companion and commentator of the Holy Qur'ān,

'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās has said: 'I have not seen a set of people better than the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who, (despite their great attachment to matters of Faith and their deep love for and close relationship with the Holy Prophet ﷺ) asked very few questions.' The questions asked relate to a total of thirteen problems only, which have been answered in the Holy Qur'an because these noble souls never asked a question unless absolutely necessary (Qurtubi).

In the present verse (215), the *istiftā'* or questions asked by the noble Companions has been reported in the words, *يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ*: 'They ask you as to what they should spend'. The same question has been repeated in verse 219 in the same words: *يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ* but the answer to this one question has been given differently in the present verse (215) and later on, in verse 219.

Therefore, it is necessary to first understand the wisdom behind the two answers to one single question. This wisdom becomes clear by looking at the background in which these verses were revealed. For instance, the present verse was revealed in a particular situation when the Companion, 'Amr ibn Jamūh had asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ the question: *مانفق من أموالنا وأين نضعها*! (Ibn al-Mundhir - Mazhari) that is, 'what do we spend from our wealth, and where?' According to a narration reported by Ibn Jarir, this question was not that of Ibn Jamuh alone, rather, it was from Muslims in general. The question has two parts, that is, what and how much should be spent, and where should it go or who should be the recipients.

Let us now look at the second verse (219) which begins with the same question. The background of its revelation as narrated by Ibn Abī Hātim is as follows. When the Holy Qur'an commanded Muslims to spend in the way of Allah, some Companions *رضى الله عنهم اجمعين* came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and requested an elaboration of the injunction. They wished to find out what 'money' or which 'thing' they should spend in the way of Allah. This question has one simple unit of inquiry, that is, what should they spend. Thus, the two questions somewhat differ in their approach. The first question consisted of the 'what' and 'where' of spending. The second question is restricted to 'what' only. The Qur'anic answer to the first question shows that the second part of the question, that is, where should they spend, has been

given more importance and answered frontally and clearly. However, the first part of the question, that is, what should they spend, was answered as a corollary, and considered sufficient. Now let us go back to the two parts as they appear in the words of the Holy Qur'an. About the first part, that is, where should they spend, it has been said:

مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِّنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلَّوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ

Whatever good you spend is for parents, kins, orphans, the needy and the wayfarer.

Then, the other part of the question, that is, what should they spend, was answered as a corollary through the words, وَمَا تَفَعَّلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَيَأْتِيهِمُ اللَّهُ بِهِ عِلْمًا : 'And whatever good you do, Allah is all-aware of that'. The hint is that Allah Almighty has not placed any restriction on you as to the amount of what you should spend. The fact is whatever you spend in accordance with your capability will become deserving of a matching reward with Allah.

In short, the considered explanation of the heads of expenditure was given in the first verse (215), perhaps, in view of the real concern of the questioner about where to spend. Then, the question, what should they spend, was answered as a corollary and considered sufficient. The later verse (219) where the question was limited to what 'money' or what 'thing' should they spend was answered by saying: قُلِ الْمَغْرُورُ (Say: "The surplus"). These two verses yield some rules of guidance about spending in the way of Allah.

Rulings

1. These two verses are not concerned with the obligatory *zakāh* because the threshold of holdings for the obligatory *Zakāh* is fixed, and the obligatory ratio of spending under it has also been fully determined through the Holy Prophet ﷺ. None of these two have been specified in the verses under discussion. This tells us that the two verses refer to voluntary charities (*al-Sadaqāt al-nāfilah*). This also removes the doubt about the inclusion of parents as recipients of spending under verse 215, although, giving *Zakāh* to parents is not permissible under the teaching of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The reason is simple. These two verses have nothing to do with the obligation of *Zakāh*.

2. Another rule of conduct which emerges from this verse is that even the gift given or food served to parents and other near of kin, if the intention is to obey Allah Almighty in doing so, will be included under spending in the way of Allah and will deserve reward with Him.

3. Consideration should be given, while making voluntary charities, to spending only what is extra to personal needs. Spending while hurting one's own family, over-riding their due rights and subjecting them to straightened circumstances is no act of merit. Similarly, one who does not pay back his debt yet goes on squandering money in voluntary charities is not liked in the sight of Allah.

The statement about spending 'the surplus' (*al-'afw*), that which is extra to needs, has been interpreted as an obligatory injunction by the blessed Companion Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī and others. According to them, it is not permissible to hold in one's possession any money or materials surplus to needs even after paying of *ḡakāh* and fulfilling all rights due; it is necessary (*wājib*) to give everything extra to needs as charity (*ṡadaqah*). However, the majority of Companions, their successors (the *Tābī'in*) and the great *imams* of the Faith interpret the Qur'ānic verses in question to mean that whatever has to be spent in the way of Allah should be surplus to needs. It does not mean that one has to give in charity (*ṡadaqah*) everything surplus to need as something necessary or *wājib*. Moreover, this later position is what the consistent practice of the blessed Companions proves.

Verses 216 - 218

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا
 وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ
 يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ 0 يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ
 فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدٌّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ
 وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ
 مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ إِنْ
 اسْتَطَاعُوا وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ
 فَأُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ

النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ۝ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا
وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَةَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ
رَّحِيمٌ ۝

Fighting is enjoined upon you, while it is hard on you. And it could be that you dislike something, when it is good for you, and it could be that you like something when it is bad for you. Allah knows and you do not know. They ask you about the sacred month, that is, about fighting in it.

Say, "Fighting in it is something grave but, in the sight of Allah it is far more grave to prevent from the path of Allah, to disbelieve in Him, and *al-Masjid al-Harām*, and to expel its people from there and *Fitnah* (to create disorder) is more grave than to kill." And they will go on fighting you until they turn you away from your faith if they could. And whoever of you turns away from his faith and dies infidel, then they are those whose deeds have gone waste in this world and in the Hereafter. And they are people of the Fire. They shall be there for ever.

As for those who believed and those who migrated and carried out *jihad* in the way of Allah, they do hope for Allah's mercy and Allah is Forgiving, Very-Merciful. (Verses 216-218)

Explanation in brief:

Verse 216 establishes the obligatory nature of *Jihād* even though it may be burdensome for some temperaments. In this case, the truth is that it is Allah Almighty who knows the reality of everything while man does not possess the full range of that knowledge. Therefore, one should not decide on things being good or bad as prompted by personal desires, rather, one must say yes to the command of Allah and follow it consistently as the most expedient course of action.

Verse 217 begins with a question which was asked by some disbelievers from the tribe of Quraysh. It has been reported that some Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were by chance confronted by disbelievers while on a journey. During the engagement, one disbeliever got killed at their hands. The day this happened was the

first of the month of Rajab which, according to the calculation of the Companions, was the 30th of the *Jumādā al-Ukhirah*. It may be noted that Rajab is one of the 'sacred' months. So, the disbelievers taunted Muslims by saying that they did not even honour the sanctity of the 'sacred' month. The Muslims were worried and asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ about it. According to some narrations, as stated above, some disbelievers themselves came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and raised the question as a matter of objection.

The answer given is that 'fighting in a sacred month, is something grave' (but, Muslims did not do so intentionally, instead, this came to pass inadvertently because of a misunderstanding about the date). Moreover, what the disbelievers have committed is more grave than this, because the disbelief, the placing of idols in the Holy Mosque and the expelling of Muslims from there is a greater evil than killing a disbeliever in a state of war.

Injunctions and related considerations

1. The injunction declaring *Jihād* as obligatory appears in the first of the three verses under comment in the words: **كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ** : "Fighting is enjoined upon you..." which means that '*Jihād* has been made obligatory on you'. These words apparently seem to say that *Jihād* is obligatory on every Muslim in every condition. Some other verses of the Qur'an and the sayings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, however, have clarified that this obligation is not absolute, that is, every Muslim is not charged to perform it as *Fard 'Ayn*, (absolute and mandatory obligation on every Muslim) instead, it is *Fard 'alā al-Kifāyah* whereby, should a group of Muslims come forward to discharge this obligation, other Muslims would be considered absolved from it. However, should there remain just no group ready to discharge the obligation of *Jihād* at any time or in any country, the result will be that all Muslims will fall into the sin of abandoning an obligation. The saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the *hadīth*: **الجهاد ماض إلى يوم القيامة** means that it is necessary that there be, right upto the Day of Doom, a group of Muslims which keeps discharging the obligation of *Jihād*. Another verse of the Holy Qur'an says:

فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً وَكُلًّا وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ
الْحُسْنَى

And Allah has given precedence to *mujāhidīn*, who carry out *jihād* with their properties and lives, over those who sit away, and Allah has promised good for both. (4:95)

Here, the promise of good has been extended to those also who may not be able to take part in *Jihād* because of some compulsive excuse or because of engagement in some other religious service. It is obvious that the promise of good would have never been made for those who are absent from *Jihād*, in the event that it were an absolute obligation on every individual Muslim. Similarly, this is what appears in another verse:

فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ

Why could a small group from every large community of yours not come forward so that they pursue understanding in religion? (9:122)

Here, the Holy Qur'an itself suggests a division of work whereby some Muslims carry out *Jihād* and some keep serving the cause of religious education. This can be done only when *Jihād* is *Fard 'alā al-Kifāyah* and not *Fard 'Ayn*.

In a *ḥadīth* appearing in al-Bukhārī and Muslim, it is said that a person sought the permission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to take part in *Jihād*. He asked him: 'Are your parents alive?' He said, 'Yes, they are alive.' He said: 'Then, go. Serve your parents and earn the reward of *Jihād*'. Incidentally, this also tells that *Jihād* is a *Fard 'alā al-Kifāyah*. When a group from among the Muslims is staunchly discharging the obligation of *Jihād*, remaining Muslims can engage themselves in other services and duties. But, should there come a time when the 'Imām' or the leader of Muslims gives a general call under the compulsion of need and invites all Muslims to take part in *Jihād*, then, *Jihād* becomes an absolute obligation on everybody. In Sūrah al-Taubah, the Holy Qur'an says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ أَنْفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَتَأْتَلْتُمْ

O those who believe, what has happened to you that, when you are asked to come out in the way of Allah, you become heavy? (9:38)

This verse carries the injunction relating to the general call of *Jihād* mentioned above. In the same way, should it be that

disbelievers, God forbid, invade an Islamic country and the group engaged in defence is not fully capable of it, being weak or insufficient in number, then, at that time as well, this obligation becomes 'contagious', passing on from that first group to all Muslims close by, as an equally effective obligation. And in case, they too are weak or incapable, the obligation will pass on to Muslims close to them. This situation may reach a point when *Jihād* becomes an absolute obligation on each and every individual Muslim all over the world. It is in view of these verses from the Holy Qur'an that the majority of Muslim jurists and scholars of *ḥadīth* have set up the rule that *Jihād* is *Fard 'alā al-Kifāyah* under normal conditions.

2. Therefore, as far as *Jihād* remains a *Fard Kifāyah*, it is not permissible for the off-spring to go for *Jihād* without the permission of their parents.

3. It is not correct for one who has a debt to pay to take part in this *Fard Kifāyah* until such time that he clears his debt off. But, should there come a time when, either due to a general call for *Jihād* or an aggressive encirclement of Muslims by the disbelievers, *Jihād* becomes *Fard 'Ayn*, an absolute obligation on all, then, no condition such as that of the permission of parents or of the husband or of the creditor remains operative. Towards the end of this verse, it is as a mode of persuasion that *Jihād* has been identified as something which may, temperamentally, appear 'hard' but one must remember that human intelligence and effort fails so many times when it comes to the outcome. It is not at all surprising that the most intelligent person around may take the beneficial to be harmful and vice versa. If everyone was to look back into the events of his or her life, it will be noticed right there that there was something they were going after as beneficial turned out ultimately to be very harmful, or there was something they were avoiding as harmful which later on proved to be very beneficial. This scenario of human reasoning and planning failing time and again is a matter of repeated experience, therefore, it was said that fighting in the way of Allah may obviously appear to be a loss of life and property, yet the time will come when realities will be unveiled and we shall find out that this loss was no loss, instead, it was the ultimate in gain, and a source of eternal peace.