

thing of temporal benefit. Contrary to that, the intention made by Allah Ta'ālā was based on high determination, great objectives and benefits which were perfect and eternal. Then, in the second verse (8), it was further clarified by saying that there was nothing outside the power and control of Allah Ta'ālā. If He had so willed, Muslims would have triumphed over the trading caravan, but He deemed it compatible with the station and majesty of the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم and his noble Companions رضى الله عنهم اجمعين that the confrontation should be against the armed force which should result in their conquest, so that it becomes all too clear that truth is, after all, the truth and that falsehood is, after all, nothing but falsehood.

Noteworthy at this point is the question that Allah Ta'ālā is All-Knowing, All-Aware and certainly cognizant of the beginning and the end of everything. What then was the expedient consideration behind this ambiguous promise - that Muslims will overcome any one of the two groups? It seems possible that He could have pinpointed one group precisely and said that such and such group will be overtaken.

The reason for this ambiguity - and Allah knows best - seems to be that this was designed to be a test of the noble Companions to determine whether they opt for the easy, or the difficult. Then, this was part of their moral training as well - through which they were taught a lesson in high determination, in the struggle for great objectives and in how not to be scared of impending dangers.

Described in the third (9) and fourth (10) verses is what happened after Muslims stood combat ready against their armed opponents. When the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم saw that he has only three hundred and thirteen Companions by his side - and that too being mostly unarmed - and arrayed against them there was an armed force composed of one thousand strong men, then, he raised his hands of prayer before Allah *Jalla thana'uh* seeking his help and support. As he prayed, the noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, said: '*Āmīn*' (Amen : So be it). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه has reported the words of this *du'ā* (prayer) made by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم as given below in its translation:

"O Allah, let the promise You have made to me come true now. O Allah, if this modest group of Muslims were to perish,

then, on Your earth, there shall remain no one to worship You. (because, the earth is full of *kufr* and *shirk* and left here are these few Muslims who worship Allah as due)."

The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم kept busy with his *du'ā*, beseeching earnestly and plaintively so much so that the sheet wrap around his shoulders slided down. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضى الله عنه stepped forward and put the sheet back on his blessed body and said to him: '*Ya Rasūl* Allah, please worry no more. Allah Ta'ālā will surely respond to your prayer and fulfill His promise.'

This is the event referred to in the opening statement: *إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ* (when you were calling your Lord for help) of verse 9. It means that 'worth remembering is the time when you were calling your Lord and appealing for His help and support.' This appeal for help was though from the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in fact but, since all Companions by his side were saying '*Āmīn*' (So be it), therefore, the statement was attributed to the whole group.

Immediately after, there appears the statement which describes how this prayer has been answered. The words are: *فَأَسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُمَدِّدٌ بِأَلْفٍ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُرْسَلِينَ* (so he responded to you [saying]: 'I am going to support you with one thousand of the angels, one following the other' - 9)

The unmatched power with which Allah Ta'ālā has blessed angels can be gauged from the event which transpired at the time the part of earth on which the people of Sayyidnā Lūṭ صلى الله عليه وسلم lived was overturned upside down. This was done by Angel Jibra'īl with just one flick of his feather. So, there was no need to send such a large number of angels to participate in the combat - even one would have been more than enough. But, Allah Ta'ālā knows the nature of His servants as they also get impressed with numbers. Therefore, the promise of sending angels was kept synchronized with the numbers of the adversary in the combat, so that their hearts are put at rest fully and comprehensively.

The fourth verse (10) restates this aspect explicitly by saying: *وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ وَرَحْمَةً لِّرَبِّهِمْ قُلُوبِكُمْ* It means: 'Allah has done it only to give you glad tidings and so that your hearts might be at rest thereby.'

The number of angels sent to support Muslims in the battle of

Badr has been given as one thousand at this place, while in Sūrah 'Al-'Imrān (3: 124) the number mentioned is three thousand and five thousand. The reason for this lies in three different promises made under different circumstances. The first promise was that of one thousand angels, the reason for which was the prayer of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and the supporting plaint of common Muslims with him. The second promise of three thousand angels which appears first in Sūrah 'Al-'Imrān was made at a time when Muslims heard about the additional forces coming to join the Quraysh army. It has been reported in Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī as based on a narration of Al-Sha'bi from Ibn Abī Shaybah, Ibn al-Mundhir and others that on the day of the battle of Badr when Muslims heard that Kurz ibn Jābir Muḥaribī was coming with additional armed support for the disbelievers, they were disturbed and agitated. Thereupon, the verse of 'Al-'Imrān: أَلَمْ يَكْفِكُمْ أَنْ قَالَ: "Shall it not suffice you that your Lord should help you with three thousand of the angels sent down (for you)?" - 3:124) was revealed and referred to wherein is the promise of sending a force of three thousand angels from the heavens in order to support believers.

As for the third promise of five thousand, it was made subject to the condition that should the enemy launch a sudden offensive, a supporting force of five thousand angels will be sent down. That promise appears in the verse which follows verse 124 of Sūrah 'Al-'Imrān (3) cited immediately above. Given here are the words in which it has been mentioned:

بَلَىٰ إِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُم مِّنْ فَوْرِهِمْ هَذَا يُمْدِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ آلَافٍ
مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ

"Why not? If you stay patient and fear Allah and they come upon you even in this heat of theirs, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand of the angels having distinct marks" (3:125).

Some Commentators have said that this promise had three conditions: (1) Fortitude, (2) Taqwā or fear of Allah and (3) Sudden and all-out attack by the opposing forces. Out of these, the first two conditions were already fulfilled by the noble Companions for no departure from these was witnessed in this battlefield from the beginning to the end.

But, what did not take place was the third condition of a sudden attack. Therefore, things did not reach the point where the army of five thousand angels was to be inducted.

So, this matter remained revolving between one and three thousand which also lends to the probability that the figure of three thousand may mean the one thousand sent earlier to which an additional force of two thousand was added and made to be three thousand - and it is also probable that these three thousand were in addition to the first one thousand.

At this stage, it is also interesting to note that the promise of sending three groups of angels in these three verses (8:9; 3:124; 3:125) mentions a quality particular to each group. In the present verse, verse 9 of Sūrah Al-Anfāl, where the promise is for one thousand, the word used to describe the quality of these angels is *مُرْدِفِينَ* (*murdifīn*: translated here as 'one following the other'). Perhaps, the indication already given within the text is that there are others too coming behind these angels. Then, in the first verse of Sūrah 'Āl-'Imrān (3:124) quoted above, the quality of the angels has been given as: *مُنزَلِينَ* (*munzalīn* : translated as 'sent down [for you]'). The sense is that these angels will be made to descend from the heavens. In this, there is a hint towards the special arrangement made in this connection - that the angels already present on the earth will not be employed for this mission, instead of which, it will be by special appointment and despatch that these angels will be sent down from the heavens to fulfill the assignment they have been sent to carry out. After that, we have the second verse (3:125) of Sūrah 'Āl-'Imrān where the figure of five thousand has been mentioned. There, the quality of the angels has been stated to be: *مُسَوِّمِينَ* (*musawwimīn*: translated as 'having distinct marks') that is, they shall be appearing in a particular dress and distinctive signs and marks. This is corroborated by Ḥadīth narrations which report that the headgear of angels that descended during the battle of Badr was white and that of the angels who were sent down to help believers in the battle of Ḥunayn was red.

Finally, towards the end of the verse (10), it was said: *وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ* (And the help is from none but Allah. Surely, Allah is Mighty, Wise). Here, Muslims have been warned that all help, what-

ever and from wherever it may be, open or secret, is from Allah Ta'ālā alone and issues forth through His power and control only. The help and support of angels is also subject to nothing but His command. Therefore, all believers must look up to none but the most pristine Being of Allah who is One and with Whom there is no partner or associate - because, He is the possessor of Power and Wisdom at its greatest.

Verses 11 - 14

إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ النَّعَاسَ أَمَنَةً مِّنْهُ وَيُنزِلُ عَلَيْكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
لِّيُطَهِّرَكُم بِهِ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُم رِجْسَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَى
قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ ﴿١١﴾ إِذْ يُوحِي رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَلِكَةِ
أَنْبِیَ مَعَكُمْ فَثَبَّتُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا سَالِقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا الرَّعْبَ فَاضْرِبُوا فَوْقَ الْأَعْنَاقِ وَاضْرِبُوا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ
بَنَانٍ ﴿١٢﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُّوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٣﴾ ذَلِكَ فَذُوقُوا وَأَنَّ
لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٤﴾

When He covered you with drowsiness, as tranquility (descending) from Him and sent down upon you water from the heavens, so that He might purify you with it, and remove from you the impurity of Satan, and so that He might strengthen your hearts and make (your) feet firm therewith. [11]

When your Lord revealed to the angels: "I am with you. So, make those who believe firm. I shall cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. So, strike over the necks, and smite them (so as to even reach) every finger-joint of theirs." [12]

That is because they were hostile to Allah and His Messenger. And whoever becomes hostile to Allah and His Messenger, then, Allah is severe at punishment. [13] That is what you have to taste and for the disbelievers there is the punishment of the Fire. [14]

Commentary

Being enumerated from the very beginning are blessings of Allah Ta'ālā which descended upon His obedient servants. The events of the battle of Badr are parts of the same chain. Out of the many blessings bestowed by Allah Ta'ālā during the battle of Badr, the very first blessing is the bringing out of Muslims for this Jihād, which finds mention in: *كَمَا أَخْرَجَكَ رَبُّكَ* (When your Lord made you leave your home - 5). The second blessing is the promise of providing the support of angels which has been made in: *إِذْ يُعِدُّ كُومَ اللَّهِ* (And when Allah was promising you - 7). The third blessing is the answer to the prayer made and the fulfillment of the promise of support given, which has been mentioned in: *إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ* (When you were calling your Lord for help - 9). The fourth blessing finds its description in the first of the set of four verses cited immediately above (11). Mentioned here are two blessings for the believers: (1) The removal of anxiety and fatigue through a mass descension of drowsiness; and (2) the provision of water for them through rains which also made the battlefield smooth for them and muddy for the enemy.

According to the details of what happened there, when this first ever confrontation between *kufr* (disbelief, infidelity) and Islām turned into a certain battle, the army of the disbelievers of Makkah had already reached and set up camp at a place which was located on high grounds with water close to them. When the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and the Companions arrived at that place, the lower part of valley fell to their lot. The Holy Qur'an has portrayed the lay-out of this battlefield in verse 42 of this very Sūrah by saying: *إِذْ أَنْتُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الْقُصْوَى* (When you were on the nearest cliff, and they were on the farthest one - 8:42) a detailed description of which shall appear later.

The spot reaching where the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had first camped was considered strategically inappropriate by Sayyidnā Ḥubāb ibn al-Mundhir رضى الله عنه who knew this territory well. Keeping this in view, he respectfully inquired: 'Yā Rasūlallah! Does this place you have selected happen to be in compliance to a command from Allah Ta'ālā in which we have no say, or it has been taken to as simply based on opinion and expedience?' He said: 'No, this is not something Divinely ordained. This can be changed or re-located.' After that, Sayy-

idnā Ḥubāb ibn al-Mundhir submitted: 'If so, it is better to move forward from this spot, reach a water source close to the armed force of Makkan chiefs and take it over. We are sure to have an abundant supply of water there.' The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم accepted his proposal, marched ahead, took over the spot with water, had a water tank built there and saw to it that an ample supply of water has been stored in it.

After he had taken care of this strategic need, Sayyidnā Sa'd ibn Mu'ādh رضى الله عنه said: "Yā Rasūlallāh! We would like to put up a shaded structure for you at a secure place where you could stay and where your riding animals could be nearby you. The plan behind this arrangement is that we shall wage our Jihād against the enemy and if Allah were to bless us with victory, then, our plan is well-served for this is what we like for you. But, God forbid, should things turn out otherwise, then, you would be in a position to ride your camel and go back to join the rest of your Companions left behind in Madīnah - because, I am strongly inclined to believe that they are no less than us in terms of sacrifice for the cause and love for you. In fact, if they had any idea of the eventuality that you will have to fight against this armed force, then, none of them would have chosen to stay behind. I am sure when you are back in Madīnah, they will continue to be your companions in the mission.' On this gallant and noble offer, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم prayed for them. So, a ragtag awning of some modest sort was set up for him in which there was no one but he himself and Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضى الله عنه. Sayyidnā Mu'ādh رضى الله عنه, sword in hand, stood on the door, guarding.

This was the first night of confrontation. A bunch of three hundred and thirteen mostly unarmed souls stood against a thousand strong armed force, being three times more in numbers. They had already occupied the better spot of the battlefield. The lower part of the valley which was sandy and difficult to move around had fallen to the lot of Muslims. Everyone was concerned. Anxiety was natural. The Satan also started instigating some people: Here you are, claiming to be on the path of truth and at a time so crucial you are busy making Tahajjud prayers rather than go and take some rest. But, cast a look at the ground reality - you will see your enemy casting his heavy

shadows on you being far superior to you from all angles. Under these conditions, Allah Ta'ālā cast a unique kind of drowsiness on Muslims which made every Muslim, whether or not he intended to sleep, go to sleep compulsively.

Hafīz al-Ḥadīth, Abū Ya'lā reports that Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtaḍā رضی الله عنه said: On that night of the battle of Badr, there remained no one from among us who did not go to sleep. Only the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم remained awake throughout the night and kept busy with the Ṣalāh of Tahajjud right through dawn.

Quoting the Ṣaḥīḥ, Ibn Kathīr reports that, on that night, when the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was busy with the Ṣalāh of Tahajjud in his 'Arīsh, the twig-roofed hutment set up for him, he too was somewhat affected by drowsiness. But, immediately coming out of it with a smile, he said: "O Abū Bakr, here comes good news for you. This is Jibra'īl عليه السلام standing near the cliff" and saying this, he walked out of the hutment reciting the verse which follows: *سَيُهْزَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُوَلُّونَ الدُّبُرَ* (Soon the gathered group of the enemy will be defeated and they will turn [their] backs - 54:45). According to some narrations, when he came out, he pointed towards various spots and said: 'This is the spot where Abū Jahl will be killed, and this is for so and so, and this is for so and so.' Then, events turned out to be precisely as he had indicated. (Tafsīr Mazharī)

And as it happened during the battle of Badr where Allah Ta'ālā cast a particular kind of drowsiness on all Companions of the Prophet in order to remove their fatigue and tension, so it did during the battle of 'Uḥud.

Sufyān al-Thawrī رحمه الله عليه reports on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd رضی الله عنه that sleep during the state of war is a sign of peace and tranquility from Allah Ta'ālā - and sleep during the state of Ṣalāh is from the Satan. (Ibn Kathīr)

The second blessing Muslims received that night was that rains came and totally overturned all battle plans. The spot occupied by the Quraysh army was hit by heavy rains which made it muddy and difficult to walk through. Then, the spot where the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his Companions were camped was sandy and difficult to walk

through at the very outset. When rains came, this spot received the lighter part of it which helped firm up the sandy surface making the ground nice and easy to walk on.

The first of the four verses appearing above (11) mentions these very two blessings - sleep and rain - which, by upturning the blueprint of the battlefield, washed off the Satanic scruples which were bothering some weak combatants, scruples like: 'Here we are, on the side of truth, yet appear to be all subdued and overshadowed while there stands our enemy who is, despite being on the side of falsehood, basking in the sunshine of power, majesty and confidence!'

So, Muslims are being told in this verse to remember the time when Allah was covering them up with drowsiness to make tranquility from Him descend upon them, and He was sending down rains upon them so that He purifies them with that water - and removes from them the impurity of Satanic instigations and scruples, and strengthens their hearts, and makes their feet firm.

Mentioned in the second verse (12) is the fifth blessing which was beamed at Muslims in this battlefield of Badr. That came through the command addressed to the angels sent by Allah Ta'ālā to help Muslims, in which He said: 'I am with you. So, you make believers firm. I am going to cast terror into the hearts of disbelievers. So, strike over their necks, and smite them [so as to even reach] every finger-joint of theirs.'

Here, the angels have been charged with two duties: (1) That they should encourage, exhort and empower Muslims with steadfastness which can be done either by appearing on the battlefield, increase their group strength and participate with them in fighting, or also by using their unobserved ability to dispose matters (*taṣarruf*) they would make the hearts of Muslims firm and empower them to operate more effectively. (2) The second duty entrusted with them was that the angels should themselves engage in fighting and attack disbelievers. From this verse (at least for the purpose on hand), it is apparent that the angels did both. They acted upon the hearts of Muslims, increased their courage and strength, and took part in the actual fighting as well. This is also confirmed by some Ḥadīth narrations which have been reported in details in Tafsīr Al-Durr Al-Manthūr and Mazḥarī

and where eye witnesses to the participation of angels in actual fighting have been documented on the authority of the noble Ṣaḥābah.

In the third verse (13), it was said that the reason for whatever happened during this confrontation between *kufr* and Islam was that those disbelievers were hostile to Allah and His Messenger and whoever becomes hostile to Allah and His Messenger, then, for him the punishment of Allah is customarily severe. This tells us that, on the one hand, Muslims were the blessed ones in the battle of Badr for victory became theirs. On the other hand, by sending punishment on disbelievers through Muslims, they were chastised a little for their evil doings - while, the much heavier punishment awaits them in the Hereafter - both of which have been described in the fourth verse (14) by saying: *ذَلِكُمْ فَذُوقُوهُ وَأَنَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابَ النَّارِ* (That is what you have to taste, and for the disbelievers there is the punishment of the Fire).

In other words, what is being said here is: This is a little punishment from Us. So, taste it and better realize that, after this, the punishment of the fire of Jahannam is due to come for disbelievers, a punishment which is severe, lasting and unimaginable.

Verses 15 - 19

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقَيْتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا زَحَفًا فَلَا تُوَلُّوهُمْ
 الْأَدْبَارَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَمَنْ يُوَلَّهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ دُبُرَهُ إِلَّا مُتَحَرِّفًا لِقِتَالٍ أَوْ
 مُتَحَيِّزًا إِلَىٰ فِتْنَةٍ فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ
 وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٦﴾ فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ وَمَا
 رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ وَلِيُبْلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْهُ بَلَاءً
 حَسَنًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾ ذَلِكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُوهِنٌ كِيدِ
 الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنْ تَسْتَفْتِحُوا فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمُ الْفَتْحُ وَإِنْ تَنْتَهُوا
 فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَإِنْ تَعُودُوا نَعُدْ وَلَنْ نُغْنِيَ عَنْكُمْ فِتْنَتَكُمْ
 شَيْئًا وَلَوْ كَثُرْتُمْ ۗ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

O those who believe, when you face the disbelievers marching to battle, then, do not turn your backs on

them. [15] And whoever turns his back on them that day, unless maneuvering for battle or turning to join a company, turns with wrath from Allah, and his abode is Jahannam and it is an evil place to return. [16]

So, you did not kill them, but Allah killed them. And you did not throw when you threw but Allah did throw, so that He may bless the believers with a good favour. Surely, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. [17] Apart from that, Allah is the One who frustrates the device of the disbelievers. [18]

If you pray for victory, 'victory' has come upon you. And if you give up, it is better for you. And if you repeat, We shall repeat. And your people shall not suffice you at all, even though they are many in number; and Allah is with the believers. [19]

Commentary

Out of the verses appearing above, the first two (15-16) tell us about a military law of Islam. The word: زحف (*zahf*) translated here literally as 'marching to battle' denotes the confrontation and intermingling between the two armies. The sense is that once a war is on, turning back and deserting the battlefield is not permissible for Muslims.

The second verse (16) refers to an exception to this rule, and to a severe punishment for illegal deserters.

The exception covers two states: (1) إِلَّا مُتَحَرِّفًا لِّقِتَالٍ أَوْ مُتَحَيِّرًا إِلَىٰ فِتْنَةٍ (unless maneuvering for battle,) (2) أَوْ مُتَحَيِّرًا إِلَىٰ فِتْنَةٍ (or turning to join a company) that is, when a war is on, turning one's back is permissible only under two conditions. Firstly, this turning back from the battlefield should simply be strategic, just to hoodwink the enemy and certainly not to bolt away from the battlefield in reality. In short, the purpose in sight should be to launch a blitzkrieg or a lightning attack on the enemy by making them complacent about what may look like a real retreat. This is the meaning of the statement: إِلَّا مُتَحَرِّفًا لِّقِتَالٍ (unless maneuvering for battle) because the word: تحرف (*taḥarruf*) is used to refer to turning away towards a certain side obliquely. (Rūḥ al-Maʿānī)

The second state of exception in which it is permissible to turn one's back from the battlefield is that one realizes the weakness of one's combating force and moves back to gather additional support

from Mujāhidīn and come back into the battle with added strength. This is what the sentence: *أَوْ مُتَحَيِّرًا إِلَىٰ فِئَةٍ* (or turning to join a company) means because the word: *تَحَيَّرُ* (*tahayyuz*) literally means to join up and *فِيءٌ* (*fi'ah*) signifies a group, company or force. Thus, the sense is that should one back out from the battlefield with the intention of joining up with one's group, assembling the needed fighting support and returning to attack again, then, this is permissible.

After having mentioned this exception, the text describes the punishment of those who deserted the battlefield or turned their backs illegally without being under conditions which have been granted exception. The words are: *فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِبَاءٍ يَعْصِبُ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَيُسِسُ الْمُصِيرُ* that is, the deserter and dodger of a Jihād battle only 'turns back with wrath from Allah, and his abode is Jahannam (Hell) and it is an evil place to return.'

From these two verses (15-16) comes the governing rule that, no matter how large in numbers, and superior in strength and power, the adversary may be, it is *Ḥarām* (forbidden, unlawful) for Muslims to turn their backs from fighting them - with the exception of two conditions: (1) That this turning back is not for deserting the battlefield, instead, is a feinted move or strategic ploy, (2) and that it is with the intention to return with auxiliary forces and resume attacking afresh.

When these verses were revealed during the battle of Badr, this was the operating order of the time, that is, take on the enemy, irrespective of its numbers, strength and power, and irrespective of your own numbers and strength as compared to it, then do not turn back from the combat and run for life. This is how it was in Badr. Only three hundred and thirteen Mujāhidīn were facing one thousand, three times their number. It was later on that injunctions relaxing restrictions were revealed in verses 65 and 66 of Sūrah Al-Anfāl, now under study. In verse 65, twenty Muslims have been commanded to wage Jihād against two hundred disbelievers, and one hundred Muslims against one thousand of them. Then, in verse 66, the following law of additional relaxation was revealed:

الَّذِينَ خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا فَإِن يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِّائَةٌ صَابِرَةٌ
يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتَيْنِ

Now Allah Ta'ālā has granted relief to you in view of your weakness whereby one hundred steadfast Muslims shall be able to overcome two hundred disbelievers.'

The indication given here is that Muslims are, after all, expected to overcome an adversary twice their number, therefore, it is not permissible for them to turn their backs. However, if the numerical strength of the adversary turns out to be more than twice their number, then, under such a condition, it is permissible to disengage and leave the battlefield.

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه said: 'A person who fled against three did not 'flee' but one who fled against two is a deserter, that is, is answerable for a major sin.' (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī). Now, this is the injunction which holds good right through the Last Day. According to the consensus of the majority of the Muslim Ummah, and in the view of the Four Imams, the exact Islamic Legal position in this case is: Until such time the number of the adversary does not go beyond twice, it is Ḥarām to desert the battlefield, and is a major sin.

In the Ṣaḥīḥayn (Al-Bukhārī and Muslim), it has been reported from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضى الله عنه that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم identified seven things as fatal for a person. He counted fleeing from the battlefield also as one of these. And the Holy Qur'an rated the early retreat of the noble Companions during the battle of Hunayn as a Satanic slip which confirms that it is a great sin. The actual statement of the Qur'an is: إِنَّمَا اسْتَكْرَمَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ (Satan has but made them slip - 3:155)

Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd have reported the incident of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنه that once he left the battlefield, took refuge in Madīnah and presented himself before the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم where he confessed to his misconduct and expressed his utter dismay and confusion on having become a sinning deserter of the battlefield. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, far from being displeased with him, rather comforted him by saying: بل انتم العكارون وانا فتتكم (No, you are not of those who flee from battles, instead of that, you are here to seek support after which you are to go back into the battle and attack once again, and I am, for you, the support). Here, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has made it very clear that the act of those who fled into

Madīnah for refuge is included under the exception which permits leaving the battlefield in order to assemble and bring back additional support. It was actually on the basis of the specially high degree of fear, awe and recognition of the greatness of Allah Ta'ālā which was part of his persona that Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنه was disturbed even at this maneuvered retreat as well and went to the act of presenting himself before the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم as if he had committed some crime.

In the third verse (17), after recounting the rest of the event which transpired at the battle of Badr, Muslims have been instructed that they should not take the defeat of many by some and of the strong by the weak in the miraculous victory of the battle of Badr to be the outcome of their own effort and deed. In fact, they should be looking towards the most sacred Being of Allah whose help and support totally re-wrote all plans in this Battle.

The details of this event mentioned in the verse have been reported by Ibn Jarīr, Al-Ṭabarī, Al-Baihaqī and others as based on narrations from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه and others.

On the day of the confrontation at Badr, says the report, when the armed force of one thousand men of Makkah entered into the valley from behind the cliff, it did not hide its contempt for Muslims being low in numbers and weak in combat fitness. And on top of it, it came waxing proud over its numbers and strength, betraying great arrogance. At that time, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم raised his hands of prayer saying: 'Yā Allah! Here come Your beliers, the Quraysh of Makkah, all proud and arrogant. The promise of victory You have made to me, let that promise be fulfilled soon.' (Rūḥ al-Bayān) Thereupon, angel Jibra'īl came and said: 'You take a handful of dust and throw it towards the army of the enemy.' He did what he was asked to do. And according to a report of Ibn Abī Ḥātim based on a narration of Ibn Zayd, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم picked up a handful of dust and pebbles thrice; the first he threw towards the right of the army, the second towards the left, and the third towards the center. The outcome was that these one to three handfuls of dust and pebbles were Divinely spread out miraculously all over them, so much so that not one man from the force was left without having received part of this dust and

these pebbles over his eyes and face. Naturally, this caused a rampage in the army. Muslims pursued them. The angels were with them, fighting and killing. (Mazharī, Rūh)

Finally, some fighting men from the opposing side were killed, some were taken prisoners, the rest ran away and the battle was won by the Muslims.

This great victory was achieved by Muslims in the background which was initially full of dismay and hopelessness. So, when they returned from the battlefield, they started talking about it. The Companions got busy relating their deeds on the battlefield. Revealed thereupon was this verse: *فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ* (So, you did not kill them, but Allah killed them -17) through which they were instructed not to wax proud over their effort and deed, for that which happened there was not simply the outcome of their personal effort and deed. In fact, it was purely and simply the fruit of the help and support given by Allah Ta'ālā - and the enemies killed at their hands were not really killed by them, rather, they were killed by Allah Ta'ālā.

Similarly, addressing the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, it was said: *وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَى* (And you did not throw when you threw, but Allah did throw). It means that the specific outcome of the act of throwing, whereby it would reach the eyes of every fighting man in the enemy force and frighten them all, was not the direct effect of 'his' throwing. It was, in fact, the perfect power of Allah Ta'ālā which generated the format of this situation. To quote Rūmī for a chic poetic explanation:

مارمیت اذ رمیت گفت حق کارما برکارها دارد سبق

'And you did not throw when you did,' said Allah,
'Our Act precedes all other acts.'

Certainly valuable for Muslims - more valuable than their victory in Jihād - was this instruction which disengaged their minds from means and tied it up with the master-provider of all means, and through it, saved them from falling into the trap of pride and arrogance which generally intoxicates victorious nations. After that it was said that victory and defeat are subservient to the command of Allah and that His support is with those who are obedient: *وَلِيُجِيبَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْهُ بَلََاءٌ حَسَنًا* (so that He may bless the believers with a good favour). It means

that Allah blessed the believers with this great victory in order to give them the best of return for their obedience and struggle. The literal meaning of the word: بَلَاءٌ (*balā'*) is test or trial. As for the test taken by Allah Ta'ālā, it sometimes comes when someone is put to distress or hardship - and there are occasions when this is done by giving someone comfort and wealth. Here, the name of *ḥasan* (good) *bala'* (trial) has been given to a test which is taken by giving comfort, wealth, support and victory to find out if people who are so blessed take it to be a favour from Allah and are grateful for it, or take it to be the outcome of their personal excellence, become proud and arrogant and undo what they did - because, there is no room for pride from anyone before Allah Ta'ālā.

In contrast to this, yet another benefit which came out of this victory has been described in the fourth verse as: *ذَلِكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُوْهِبٌ كَيْدِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ* (Apart from that, Allah is the One who frustrates the device of the disbelievers - 18). In other words, it can be said that Muslims were blessed with this victory for yet another reason, that is, the plans of the disbelievers should be rendered ineffective through it, something which would make them understand that Divine support is not with them - and no plan can succeed without it.

The fifth verse (19) carries an address to the defeated disbelievers from the tribe of Quraysh and refers to an event which came to pass when the Quraysh army was about to depart Makkah on their mission to confront Muslims.

According to the report of that event, when the army of Qurayshi disbelievers was ready to march against Muslims, the commander of the army, Abū Jahl and other chiefs had made earnest prayers holding the covering drapes of the Baytullah in their hands before leaving Makkah. Strange as it would seem, they did not specifically pray for their own victory. Rather, the prayer they made was in general terms and its words were:

"O Allah, let victory come to the superior-most out of the two armies, and to the better-guided out of the two groups, and to the nobler out of the two parties, and to the religion and faith which is more sublime out of the two." (Mazharī)

It is interesting that these dim-witted people were under the

impression that they were the ones higher and superior and better-guided as compared to Muslims, therefore, they surmised that the prayer they were making was in their own favour. They actually wanted that Allah would, through their prayer, give His verdict as to who was true and who was false. Thus, when they win, their victory would become the Divine verdict on their being on the side of truth.

But, they did not know that the prayer they were making was really a curse for their own selves, and that it was a supplication for the good of Muslims. After the end of the battle came, the Qur'an told them: *إِنْ تَشْتَفِعُوا فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْفَتْحُ* (If you pray for victory, "victory" has come upon you) that is, 'if you are looking for a Divine verdict, that is before you - truth has triumphed and falsehood has been defeated. Then: *وَإِنْ وَكَنْتُمْ فَأَنْتُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ* (if you give up it is better for you) that is, 'now is the time when, if you abandon your disbelief and hostility, it will turn out to be better for you.' And, if you still decide to revert back to your wickedness and the threat of armed aggression, then, Allah too will revert back and support Muslims: *وَإِنْ تَعْمَدُوا تَأْتُوا* (And if you repeat, We shall repeat). In that case, the consequence would be: *وَأَنْ تَغْنَى عَنْكُمْ فَتَنْكَبُوا شَيْئًا وَتَكْفُرُوا كَثِيرًا* (And your people shall not suffice you at all, even though they are many in number) that is, 'your numerical superiority and group strength shall be of no avail against the help and support given by Allah.' As for the help and support of Allah: *وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ* (Allah is with the believers) that is, 'how can any group or power work for you when Allah Ta'ālā, the very possessor of absolute power, is with the Muslims?'

Verses 20 - 24

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا عَنَّهُ وَاتَّبَعْتُمْ
تَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَهُمْ لَا
يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ
لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا لَأَسْمَعَهُمْ وَلَوْ
أَسْمَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ

اللَّهُ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

O those who believe, obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not turn away from Him while you are listening.

[20] And do not be like those who say, "We have heard" while they do not listen. [21] Surely, the worst of all animals in the sight of Allah are deaf and the dumb who do not understand. [22] And had Allah seen in them some good, He would have made them listen. And had He made them listen, they would have turned away paying no heed. [23] O those who believe, respond to Allah and the Messenger when He calls you to what gives you life, and be sure that Allah intervenes between man and his heart, and that to Him you shall be gathered. [24]

Commentary

The event of the battle of Badr which has been described in a somewhat detailed manner in the previous verses contains many lessons in hard advice and wisdom both for those who adhere to Islam and those who stick to disbelief. These appear intermittently during the course of relevant narrations and serve as warning signals.

For example, in the previous verses, after having recounted the defeat and disgrace of the disbelievers of Makkah, it was said: **ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقَرُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ** (That is because they were hostile to Allah and His Messenger - 13). It means that the disbelievers of Makkah were defeated despite their numerical and logistic strength and the real reason behind it was that they had elected to act hostile to Allah and His Messenger. In this, there lies a chastening lesson for people who bypass the most perfect power of the Creator and Master of the heavens and the earth - the power that is visible and the power that is invisible - and who opt for placing their reliance on material strengths only, or just choose to cheat their own selves by hoping and praying that the help and support of Allah will be by their side despite all their acts of disobedience to Him.

In the present verse, the other side of this very problem has been taken up by addressing Muslims. Stated briefly, the truth of the matter is that Muslims were blessed with this great victory despite their low numbers and ill-equipped fighting force only through the

help and support of Allah Almighty - and this Divine help and support is the outcome of their obedience to Allah. This obedience is what Muslims have been obligated with and to this they have to adhere firmly: *يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ* (O those who believe, obey Allah and His Messenger). In the sentence which follows, the same subject has been further emphasized by saying: *وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَسْمَعُونَ* (and do not turn away from him while you are listening). The sense is that once you have listened to the Qur'ān, the true word of Allah, do not go about doing things against the norms of genuine obedience.

Listening denotes listening to what is the truth and it has four degrees in terms of effective response. (1) The hearer with ears simply heard some voice but neither tried to understand it, nor understood it, nor believed in or relied upon it, nor did he act accordingly. (2) He heard it through his ears all right, even understood it, but did neither believe in it nor acted accordingly. (3) He heard, he understood, even believed and trusted, but did not act accordingly. (4) He heard, he understood, he believed, he trusted - and acted accordingly as well.

It is obvious that the real purpose of listening is fully realized only through the fourth degree - which is the station of perfect believers. As for the earlier three degrees, the act of listening described there is imperfect and incomplete which, in a manner of saying, could be set aside as just not listening - as readily pointed to in the verses appearing next. The third degree mentioned above has the ingredients of hearing the truth, understanding it and believing in it, but lacks corresponding deeds. Here, the real purpose of listening is though not realized as it should be, yet belief has its own importance and can not be rejected as useless. This degree pertains to sinning Muslims. Then there is the second degree where we find only listening and understanding but no belief and no corresponding deed. This degree is that of the *munāfiqīn* (hypocrites) for they do listen to the Qur'ān, understand it too, even have a feigned claim to desired belief and deed, but the reality is that they do not believe and do what is right and due. Finally, the first degree is that of polytheists and disbelievers who listened to the message of truth and the 'āyāt of the Qur'ān with their own ears but were never motivated enough to understand and think about that.

In the verse cited above (20), the address is to Muslims who have been told that they do listen to the message of truth after all, that is, the initial requirement of listening, understanding and believing is present in their attitude as it is, but they have to do more than that. They must act, do what must be done and do it fully and faithfully. They have been asked not to do anything which would take them away from the path of obedience so that the real purpose of listening to the word of truth stands realized fully.

For added emphasis on the same subject, it was said in the second verse (21): *وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ* (and do not be like those who say, "we have heard" while they do not listen). Meant here are common disbelievers who claim to be listening but make no such claim about believing. Also meant here are the hypocrites who go beyond the elementary listening which they already do. In fact, they also claim to understand what that they listen to and to believe in it as well. But, the truth of the matter is that they both remain deprived of genuine deliberation and correct understanding. Therefore, their listening falls under the category of not listening. So, Muslims have been forbidden from becoming like them.

The third verse (22) strongly condemns those who do not listen to what is the truth thoughtfully and let it go unaccepted. The Qur'ān has declared such people to be worse than animals. The words used are: *إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ* (Surely, the worst of all animals in the sight of Allah are the deaf and the dumb who do not understand).

The word: *دواب* (*dawābb*) is the plural form of: *دابة* (*dābbah*). Literally, everything that walks on the earth is called '*dābbah*.' But, in usage, only quadruped animals are called '*dābbah*.' So, the sense of the verse is that the worst quadrupeds in the sight of Allah are the ones deaf against listening to the truth and dumb when it comes to accepting it. Even someone deaf and dumb could, if he has the least fund of reason in him, make himself understood by simple gestures in a two-way communication. But, these people are not only deaf and dumb, they are short on reason also. It is obvious that for a person, who is deaf, dumb; and devoid of reason too, the lines of communication shall remain blocked and there will be no way they would understand or be made to understand.

In this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has made it clear that human beings have been created with the best of destiny. They have been made the superior-most among the created and the universe has been placed at their service. These are great blessings which lie embedded in and dependent on listening to truth and obeying it. Once human beings turn their backs on listening to the truth, understanding and accepting it, all these blessings are sucked away from them and they are relegated to some species worse than animals.

It appears in Tafsīr Rūḥ al-Bayān that human beings are, in terms of their original creation, superior to all animals, but are lower in rank as compared to angels. But, when human beings strive on the pathway of obedience to Allah, their creator, they rise higher in status than angels too. However, should they turn away from the pathway of obedience to Allah, they are condemned to become the lowest of the low, far too worse than animals.

In the fourth verse (23), it was said: *وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا لَأَسْمَعَهُمْ وَلَوْ أَسْمَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ* (And had Allah seen in them some good, He would have made them listen. And had He made them listen, they would have turned away paying no heed). In other words, the sense of the verse is: Had Allah seen in them some pliability towards receiving good counsel, He would have blessed them with the ability to listen with faith - and if, in their present state of being with no desire to receive truth, He were to make them listen to what is true, they would have certainly turned away from it paying no heed.

The word: *خير* (*khayr*: good) at this place means the desire to find out the truth, for it is the quest for truth which opens the doors of deliberation and understanding and it is this very quest which enables one to believe and act. Thus, whoever has no quest for truth is as if he has no good in him. If such people did have some good in them, it is obvious that it would have been within the knowledge of Allah Ta'ālā. Now, when they have no good in them as borne by the knowledge of Allah Ta'ālā, it tells us that they stand deprived of every possible good in the real sense. Therefore, if they were to be invited to ponder, deliberate and believe in the truth within this state of deprivation, they would have never accepted it - rather, they would have turned away from it and run. This aversion, that is, would not be because of any flaw in the

religion they may have noticed which made them reject it. In fact, they just did not pay heed to what was the truth.

Incidentally, the stipulation made above also helps remove the nagging logical doubt which bothers many a learned people. They surmise that this is the first form of analogical deduction where the surrender of the middle premise seems to be yielding the wrong outcome. The answer is that the middle premise has not been repeated here because the sense of the first word: *لَاسْمَعُهُمْ* (*la asma'ahum*: He would have made them listen) is separate from the second: *وَلَوْ أَسْمَعُهُمْ* (*walau asma'ahum*: and had He made them listen) which carries its own sense apart from the first. Meant in the first is listening to accept and listening to benefit from, while the sense of the second is bland listening with nothing to it.

In the fifth verse (24), believers have been addressed once again. Commanded to obey Allah and His Messenger in a particular manner, they have been told that the thing to which Allah and His Messenger invite you is something which brings no benefit to Allah and His Messenger *per se*. Instead of that, all Divine injunctions have been prescribed for nothing but their own benefit. So, said in the manner pointed to above, was: *اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ* (respond to Allah and the Messenger when He calls you to what gives you life).

What is the 'life' mentioned in this verse? Since several probabilities exist in its interpretation, learned commentators have taken different interpretive positions. According to Suddiyy, that life-giving thing is 'Īmān (faith) because the disbeliever is dead. Qatādah said: That is Qur'an in which lies all life and success of both the worlds, *Dunyā* and 'Ākhirah. Mujāhid said: That is truth. Ibn Ishāq said: It means *Jihād* through which Allah *Ta'ālā* conferred honour on Muslims. All these probabilities mentioned here are sound as they are. There is no contradiction in them. The larger sense is that 'Īmān, Qur'an or the following of truth are things which put life into the heart and the life of the heart is nothing but that everything which becomes a barrier between the Creator and the created, barriers like inertia and desire, should be removed from the way of truth leaving it free from whatever obstructions there are in order that the heart is filled with the light of insight into the Creator.

Based on a narration from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضى الله عنه, Tirmidhī and Al-Nasā'ī have reported that on a certain day, the Holy Prophet ﷺ sent for Sayyidnā Ubāyy ibn Ka'b رضى الله عنه who was busy with his Ṣalāh at that time. However, he completed his Ṣalāh sooner than he would have normally done and presented himself before the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He asked: 'Why did you come so late despite that I called you?' Sayyidnā Ubāyy ibn Ka'b رضى الله عنه submitted his excuse: 'I was in the state of Ṣalāh.' He said: 'Did you not hear what Allah Ta'ālā has said in: *اَسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ* (Respond to Allah and the Messenger when He calls you)?' Sayyidnā Ubāyy ibn Ka'b رضى الله عنه said: 'I shall obey it from now on. If you call me, even when I am making my Ṣalāh, I shall present myself before you immediately.'

It is on the basis of this Ḥadīth that some Muslim jurists have said that anything done during Ṣalāh in obedience to the command of the Messenger of Allah would not be taken as interference in Ṣalāh. However, there are other jurists who say that Ṣalāh would though be terminated due to doings contrary to the standard rules governing Ṣalāh and it would have to be offered later as *qaḍā'* (replaced for the missed or terminated Ṣalāh). But, the proper thing to do is that should the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم call someone, even if he is in the state of Ṣalāh, then, he should terminate his Ṣalāh and obey the call.

As for this form of obedience, it is exclusive to the *Rasūl* of Allah ﷺ. But, there are other occasions when one may apprehend the danger of serious loss coming to someone, then, at that time too, Ṣalāh should be terminated and amends be made later by offering *qaḍā'*. For example, if a person in the state of Ṣalāh sees that a blind man is about to reach and fall in a well or ditch, then, he should immediately terminate his Ṣalāh and go to save the handicapped man.

At the end of the verse, it was said: *وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ* (and be sure that Allah intervenes between man and his heart). This sentence can have two meanings, and both vibrate with great wisdom and good counsel, something one should always remember and live by.

One possible sense of the sentence is: When you are blessed with

the opportunity of doing something good, or staying safe from sin, then, go ahead and do it immediately - make no delay and take the lease of time so granted to be a blessing, because there are occasions when Divine decree becomes an intervening factor between man and his intention and he cannot succeed in doing what he intends to do. May be, a sickness overtakes, or death itself does, or some pre-occupation emerges out of nowhere and one just does not get the time to do that good or avoid that sin. Therefore, human beings should welcome the leave granted in terms of the years of life and access to time and refuse to put off until tomorrow what must be done today - for, who knows what is going to happen tomorrow?

من نمی گویم زیان کن یا بفکر سود باش ای ز فرصت بے خیر در هرچه باشی زود باش

I do not say that you run into some loss or go for your gain
Whatever be your option, O man unaware of time, be quick!

The second possible meaning emerges from the indication given by the sentence that Allah Ta'ālā is very near to His servant. In fact, in another verse of the Qur'an (Qāf, 50:16): نَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ, Allah Ta'ālā says that He is close to man, much closer than his jugular vein.

Thus, the sense is that the heart of man is, in a special way, at the discretionary disposal of Allah Ta'ālā all the time. When He wills to keep a servant of His protected from evils, He puts a barrier between his heart and sins, and when misfortune is fated for someone, the barrier is placed between his heart and any possible good deeds by him. Therefore, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم used to include the following prayer frequently when he prayed:

يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ

O reverser of hearts! Keep my heart firm on the Faith chosen by You.

The ultimate outcome of this too is no other but that one should not delay doing what must be done in obedience to the injunctions of Allah and His *Rasūl*, rather, one should take the lease of time given to him as a God-given opportunity and just go ahead and do it, for no one knows whether or not the surge and urge of this good deed remains active later on.

Verses 25 - 28

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا
 أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَاذْكُرُوا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيلٌ
 مُسْتَضْعَفُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَتَخَطَّفَكُمُ النَّاسُ
 فَآوَاكُمْ وَأَيَّدَكُمْ بِنَصْرِهِ وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ
 ﴿٢٦﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَخُونُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ وَتَخُونُوا
 أَمْثَلَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ
 فِتْنَةٌ ۗ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

And beware of a punishment which shall not fall on the wrongdoers only, and be sure that Allah is severe at punishment. [25]

And remember when you were few in number, oppressed on the earth, fearing that the people would snatch you away. Then, He gave you shelter and fortified you with His support and provided you with good things, so that you may be grateful. [26]

O those who believe, do not betray the trust of Allah and the Messenger and do not betray your mutual trusts, while you know. [27]

And be aware that your wealth and your children are but a trial and that with Allah there is a great reward. [28]

Commentary

After having described some details of the battle of Badr and Divine blessings conferred on Muslims therein, the Holy Qur'an has offered words of good counsel to Muslims as based on the outcome of the Battle. This presentation begins from: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ (O those who believe, respond to Allah and His Messenger - 8:24). The verses cited immediately above appear in continuation to the same.

Out of these, the first verse (25) carries an instruction to stay safe from a sin particularly, a sin the severe punishment of which does not remain restricted to only those who commit sins in a society. In fact, people who have committed no sin also get afflicted by it.

Which sin is that? The answers given by commentators vary. Some say: This sin is the forsaking of the struggle to Bid the Fair and Forbid the Unfair (*amr bi 'l-ma'rūf* and *nahy 'ani 'l-munkar*). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه said: Allah Ta'ālā has commanded Muslims that they should not allow any crime or sin to take roots in their social environment because, if they failed to do so, that is, did not forbid it despite seeing such crimes and sins and despite having the ability or capacity to stop it or to forbid it, then, Allah Ta'ālā will universalize His punishment for all of them which will spare neither the sinners nor the sinless.

The sinless mentioned here are people who are no accomplices of sinners in their initial sin, but they have certainly committed the sin of avoiding or abandoning the Divinely ordained duty of Bidding the Fair. Therefore, let there be no doubt here about the statement made. For example, here it is not valid to say that the passing on of the punishment of a sin committed by someone else to another person is injustice and that it is contrary to the Qur'anic injunction: لَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى (No bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another person - 35:18) - because, here the sinners have been seized for the initial sin they themselves had committed while the sinless were seized for the sin of having abandoned the obligation of Bidding the Fair. Thus, no one's sin was placed on the shoulders of someone else.

According to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd رضى الله عنه and Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها appearing in Sharḥ al-Sunnah and Ma'ālim of Imām al-Baghawī, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has been reported to have said : Allah Ta'ālā does not subject common people with the punishment of some sin committed by a particular group among them - unless, there emerges a situation in which they see sin being committed around them and have the ability to stop it as well, yet, if they did not stop it, then, at that time, the punishment from Allah surrounds all of them.

Also reported authentically in Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd and elsewhere is that Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضى الله عنه said in one of his sermons: I have heard the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم say: When people see an oppressor and do not step forward and hold his hand from inflicting injustice, then, the time is near that Allah Ta'ālā makes His punishment fall on all of them alike.

According to a narration from Sayyidnā Nu'mān ibn Bashīr reported in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: Those who commit the sin of transgressing the limits set by Allah and those who ignore them knowingly or accomodate them psychophantly, that is, they do not try to stop them from that sin, are like passengers on two decks of a ship, the upper and the lower. People on the lower deck come up to procure water from the upper deck which causes discomfort for people there. Keeping this in view, the people of the lower deck opt for making a hole in the bottom of the boat and get their supply of water from there. Now, if the people of the upper deck see this misconduct and elect not to check and stop them from doing something like that, then, it is obvious, the water will fill into the whole boat and when the people of the lower deck will drown in it, those on the upper deck will not remain safe either, for they too will drown with the others.

It is on the basis of these narrations that many commentators have declared that the word: *فِتْنَةً* (*fitnah*) in this verse refers to this very sin, that is, the forsaking of the obligation of Bidding the Fair and Forbidding the Unfair.

It appears in Tafsīr Mazḥarī that this sin means the sin of the abandonment of Jihād specially at a time when a general call for Jihād is given to common Muslims from their Amīr, a call on which depends the security and defence of Islamic hallmarks. The reason is that this is a time when the curse of forsaking Jihād does not fall only on those who forsake Jihād but it also falls on the whole body of Muslims. Because Kuffār run over Muslim areas, women and children and old people and many innocent Muslims become victims of their killing and plunder. Their lives and properties are endangered. If that be the situation, 'punishment' would mean worldly distress and hardships.

The factual evidence of this explanation is that those who forsake Jihād have been condemned in the previous verses as well. Previous verses, such as: *وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَكُرْهُوْنَ* (while a group from the believers were averse to it - 8:5) and: *يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا زَحَفًا فَلَا تَوَلَّوْهُمْ الْأَذْبَابَ* (O those who believe, when you face the disbelievers marching to battle, then do not turn your backs on them - 8:15) have appeared in support of this approach to the problem.

The same thing happened at the battle of Badr when some Mus-

lims wavered with their choice of suitable conduct. They left their security post on the hills and came down. When this happened, the ill effects of their action did not remain restricted to those who had made the error, in fact, they hit the entire Muslim army, so much so that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was himself injured in this battle.

The second verse (26) also mentions several things which could make Divine injunctions easy on them. To persuade them towards the option of obedience to Allah, Muslims have been reminded of their past weakness and of how Allah has blessed them with power and confidence by changing surrounding conditions through His grace and mercy. The text says:

وَاذْكُرُوا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيلٌ مُسْتَضْعَفُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَتَخَطَّفَكُمُ النَّاسُ
فَأَوَّكِكُمْ وَأَيْدِكُمْ بِنَصْرِهِ وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ .

And remember when you were few in number, oppressed on the earth, fearing that the people would snatch you away. Then, He gave you shelter and fortified you with His support and provided you with good things, so that you may be grateful - 26.

In this verse, Muslims are being asked to remember the conditions they were facing in Makkah during the pre-Hijrah period following which they were given the finest sanctuary at Madīnah. Not only that, they were also blessed with Divine support, power and victory over adversaries, as well as assets of great value. Then, towards the end of the verse, it was said: لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ (so that you may be grateful). It means that the purpose behind this great transformation of conditions around them supported by the flow of Divine blessings was to give them an opportunity to show their gratefulness as obedient servants of Allah, for the finest demonstration of gratefulness, in the real sense, comes through nothing but obedience to what Allah commands them to do.

In the third verse (27), Muslims have been instructed not to commit any breach of trust (*khiyānah*) in the dual rights due against them, that is, in the rights of Allah (*Huqūqullāh*) or in the mutual rights of the servants of Allah as enjoined on each other (*Huqūqul-ʿIbād*) - either by failing to fulfill them totally, or by fulfilling them in a defective manner leaving one or the other shortcoming behind. Then, by saying:

وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (while you know) at the end of the verse, it was stressed that they already knew that breach of trust was an evil conduct lined with many a curse, therefore, going ahead to do something like that was not what an intelligent person would choose to do - and, since the cause of negligence or shortcoming in fulfilling the rights of the servants of Allah is usually one's attachment to property and children, a warning was given in verse 28 by saying: وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ (And be aware that your wealth and your children are but a trial and that with Allah there is a great reward).

The word: فِتْنَةٌ (*fitnah*) used here carries the sense of 'trial' as well as that of 'punishment.' Then, such things as become the cause of punishment are also referred to as '*fitnah*.' In different verses of the Qur'an, '*fitnah*' has been used to carry these three meanings. At this place, there is room for all three. There are occasions when one's own property and children become a can of troubles for him and that they would push him into negligence and disobedience and become the very cause of punishment right here in this world is all too obvious. Firstly, the sense could be that Allah aims to put you to test through your property and children for these are His blessings. Now, you prove whether you become grateful and obedient after having received these, or that you choose to be ungrateful and disobedient. Also possible is the second, even the third meaning, that is, should you become all engrossed in your love for your property and children and bring upon yourself the displeasure of Allah, then, these very children and property will become your punishment. There are occasions within this mortal world when one is engulfed into all sorts of hardships because of property and children and he starts experiencing the heat of punishment right here. Even if the case be otherwise, it stands settled that the property which was acquired or spent by ways counter to the injunctions of Allah Ta'ālā will itself become, in the Hereafter, the active agent of punishment through snakes, scorpions and brandings by fire - as stated clearly in several verses of the Qur'an and numerous narrations of the Ḥadīth. Finally, the third meaning is that these things become the cause of punishment. As pointed out a little earlier, it is quite evident that once these things become the cause of heedlessness towards and disobedience to Allah Ta'ālā and His injunctions, they automatically become the cause of punishment. At the end of the verse (28), it was said: وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ (and that with Allah there is a great reward). In

other words, one should understand clearly that for a person who is not all-subdued by his love for property and children while doing his duty of being obedient to the commands of Allah and His *Rasūl*, there is a great reward for him with Allah.

As for the thematic content of this verse, it applies to all Muslims, but the cause of its revelation, according to the majority of commentators, is the event relating to Sayyidnā Abū Lubābah رضى الله عنه as it came to pass during the battle of Banū Qurayzah. As reported, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and the noble Companions kept the fort of Banū Qurayzah under seige for twenty one days which compelled them to make the request that they be allowed to leave their homeland and go to Syria. In view of their wickedness, he did not accede to their request. Instead, he said that the only option of peace open to them was that they should now agree to whatever decision Sayyidnā Sa'd ibn Mu'adh رضى الله عنه gave in their case. Thereupon, they requested that Sayyidnā Abū Lubābah رضى الله عنه be entrusted with this duty in place of Sayyidnā Sa'd ibn Mu'adh رضى الله عنه. The reason was that the family and property of Sayyidnā Abū Lubābah رضى الله عنه were located in the Banū Qurayzah area. He, they thought, would take a lenient attitude in their case. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم sent Sayyidnā Abū Lubābah رضى الله عنه as they requested. When he reached there, men and women from Banū Qurayzah assembled around him and started crying. They asked: If we were to surrender at the command of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and come out of the fort, would he be lenient to us? Sayyidnā Abū Lubābah رضى الله عنه knew that leniency was not the settled policy in this matter. However, it was partly because of their wailing and plaint and partly because of his own love and concern for his family and children that he passed his hand sword-like over his neck giving the signal that they shall be slaughtered. Thus, as one would say, he disclosed the secret of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

The consideration of property and the love of children and family made him do what he did. But, he was immediately alerted to what had happened. He realized that he had committed a breach of trust reposed in him by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. When he returned from there, he was so overwhelmed by his sense of shame that he, rather than return to his master, went straight to his Masjid and it was a pillar of the Masjid that he tied himself to swearing that he will stay tied

like that until his *taubah* (repentance) was accepted, even if he were to die in that condition. So, for seven full days he stood there tied like that. His wife and daughter used to attend to him. They would untie him so that he could take care of his human compulsions and make his Ṣalāh. When he had done that, they would tie him again. He would usually avoid eating and drinking, so much so that he would faint out of weakness.

When the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم got this news initially, he said: If he had come to me first, I would have sought forgiveness for him and his *taubah* would have been accepted. Now that he has gone through this act of his, there is nothing left but to wait for the revelation of the Divine acceptance of his *taubah*. So, it was after seven days when, late at night, these verses relating to the acceptance of his *taubah* were revealed. Some Ṣaḥābah gave him the good news and reached out to untie him from the pillar. But, he said: Until such time that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would not decide to untie me, I would not prefer to be untied. Thus, when he came into the Masjid at the time of the Fajr Ṣalāh, he untied him with his own blessed hands. The real cause of the revelation of the cited verse which contains the prohibition of becoming overwhelmed by the concern and love for property and children and not fulfilling the trust of Allah is as stated above. Allah knows best.

Verses 29 - 33

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ
عَنكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِر لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٩﴾
وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ
وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَإِذَا تُتْلَى
عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا قَالُوا قَدْ سَمِعْنَا لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَقُلْنَا مِثْلَ هَذَا إِنْ
هَذَا إِلَّا آسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَإِذْ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ هَذَا
هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَابًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوِ اثْبِتْنَا
بِعَذَابِ الْيَمِّ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ وَمَا

كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

O those who believe, if you fear Allah, He will provide you with a criterion (to distinguish between right and wrong) and will write off your evil deeds and will forgive you. And Allah is the Lord of great bounty. [29]

And (remember) when the disbelievers were plotting against you to hold you (in detention) or to kill you or to expel you. And they were plotting and Allah was plotting, and Allah is the best of those who plot. [30]

And when Our verses are recited to them, they say, "We have heard, if we wish, we can say something like this. It is nothing but the tales of the ancient." [31]

And (remember) when they said, "O Allah, if this be indeed the truth (revealed) from You, then, rain down upon us stones from the heavens, or bring upon us a painful punishment." [32]

And Allah is not to send punishment upon them while you are in their midst, nor would Allah send punishment upon them while they are seeking forgiveness. [33]

Commentary

The previous verse mentioned property and children as being a trial for mortal man because these are things the concern and love for which make one so overtaken that one would usually turn heedless towards Allah, the Creator and 'Ākhirah, the life-to-come - though, the rational demand of this great blessing was that one should have shown a far pronounced tilt towards Him because of this favour.

The first verse out of those quoted above completes this very subject. Here, it is said that the person who keeps his emotion subservient to his reason, remains steadfast in this trial and sees to it that the obedience to Allah Ta'ālā and love for Him stay ahead of everything - which is called Taqwā in the terminology of Qur'ān and Sharī'ah - then, he is blessed with three things in return. These are: (1) *Furqān* (the criterion of distinguishing between right and wrong), (2) *Kaffārah* of *Sayyi'āt* (the expiation of evils done) and (3) *Maghfirah* (forgiveness from Allah).

Furqān and *Farq* are both verbal nouns having the same meaning.

In usage, Furqān is the name of the thing which separates and makes two things clearly distinct. Therefore, a decision is called Furqān because it makes the difference between true and false very distinct. The help and support from Allah is also called Furqān because, through it, the protagonists of truth are made to win and their antagonists are made to taste defeat which makes the difference between right and wrong and true and false loud and clear. In the Holy Qur'ān, it is in this sense that the battle of Badr has been called the Yowm al-Furqān, the Day of Distinction (between right and wrong).

According to the majority of commentators, the sense of providing Furqān to those who fear Allah is that the help and support of Allah Ta'ālā is with them. No enemy can hurt them and success goes with them in all objectives they undertake:

هرکه ترسید از حق و تقوی گزید ترسد ازوے جن وانس وهرکه دید

Whoever fears Allah and takes to piety (Taqwā)

Is feared at sight by Jinns and Humans of the world.

It appears in Tafsīr Mahā'imī that an indication has been given here towards the slip made by Sayyidnā Abū Lubābah رضی اللہ عنہ because of his desire to provide protection for his family and children as mentioned a little earlier in the event relating to him. He was in the error particularly for the reason that the correct and the only method of keeping his family and children protected was no other but that total obedience to Allah Ta'ālā and His Messenger صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم should have been made his personal benchmark as a result of which whatever belonged to him including his family and children would have come under the security umbrella of Allah Ta'ālā. Other than this, there are other commentators who say that Furqān in this verse means the wisdom and insight through which it becomes easy to distinguish between true and false, the genuine and the fake. Thus, the core meaning of the statement would be that Allah Ta'ālā arms those who observe Taqwā with such insight and intelligence that it becomes easy for them to go ahead and decide between the good and the evil.

The second blessing received in return for practising Taqwā is the *Kaffārah* of *Saiyyi'āt* which means that the errors and slips which get to be committed by the practitioner of Taqwā are expiated and replaced right here in this mortal world, that is, he is blessed with the

ability or *Taufīq* of doing such good deeds as pale out all his slips of conduct. Finally, the third thing one is fortunate to receive in return for Taqwā is forgiveness in the Hereafter and the ultimate pardon of all shortcomings and sins.

At the end of the verse (29), it was said: *وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ* (And Allah is the Lord of great bounty). By saying that Allah is limitless in His grace and favour, the hint given is that the return of a deed follows the measure of that deed. Here too, the good return mentioned as being the reward of Taqwā in three things comes as recompense or return but, Allah Ta'ālā is the master-dispenser of great grace and favour. When He gives, He is not bound by any measure, nor can anyone estimate or guess His favour and reward. Therefore, for those who take to Taqwā as their style of life, much greater hopes should be entertained from the grace and reward of Allah Ta'ala in things other than the three mentioned earlier.

The second verse (30) points out to a particular reward and favour of Allah Ta'ālā which has been conferred on the Holy Prophet *صلى الله عليه وسلم*, the noble Companions and, in fact, on the whole world. This came to be before the Hijrah when the Holy Prophet *صلى الله عليه وسلم* was encircled by the disbelievers and they were planning to detain or kill him. Then, Allah Ta'ālā made their unholy intentions lick dust and made it possible for the Holy Prophet *صلى الله عليه وسلم* to reach the city of Madīnah in perfect safety.

The related incident has been reported in Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr and Tafsīr Maḥzarī on the authority of narrations from Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr and others. According to details of this incident, when the news about visiting residents of Madīnah embracing Islām became known in Makkah, the Quraysh of Makkah started worrying about it. They thought that the matter of people becoming Muslims was something restricted to Makkah upto that point of time, an area where they held all power in their hands. But, as Islām had started spreading in Madīnah, many Companions of the Prophet had migrated to that city, it went to prove that Muslims had another center in Madīnah where they could assemble a fighting force against them and possibly decide to attack. Alongwith this, they also realized that this was just the beginning when only some Companions have migrated to Madīnah. There was strong likelihood that

Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم may also go and join them. Therefore, the notable chiefs of Makkah called a special meeting for mutual consultations at Dār al-Nadwah. This place called Dār al-Nadwah was the home of Quṣay ibn Kilāb and was located close to al-Masjid al-Ḥaram. These people used it as the place where they met to consult on national problems. During the Islamic period, it has been merged in al-Masjid al-Ḥaram. It is said that the present Bāb al-Ziyadāt was the place known as Dār al-Nadwah.

As customary, the Quraysh chiefs met at Dār al-Nadwah for this significant consultation. All known leaders from the Quraysh such as Abū Jahl, Nadhr ibn Ḥārith, 'Utbah, Shaybah, Umaiyyah ibn Khalaf, Abū Sufyān and others participated. The agenda considered was how to confront and block the rising power of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and Islām.

Before this consultative meeting could be called to order, there appeared Iblīs, the accursed, in the guise of an aged 'Arab Shaykh. People on the door of Dār al-Nadwah asked: Who are you and why have you come here? The answer given was: I am a resident of Najd. I have been told that you have assembled here to discuss an important national issue. So, as a well-wisher of our people, I am here in the hope that I too may be able to tender some useful advice on the matter under consideration.

His plea was heard. He was called in. Then, began the process of suggestions on the subject. According to a narration reported by Suhailī, it was suggested by Abū al-Bakhtārī ibn Hishām that 'he' (meaning the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) should be chained and detained in a house. The door should be locked and he should be left there until he dies, God forbid, his own death. Hearing this, the Shaykh of Najd - Iblīs, the accursed - said: This proposal is not sound for if you did that, this action is not going to remain hidden. In fact, it will be publicized far too widely. Then, you already know how good his Companions are in staking their lives for his sake. It is quite possible that these people may get together, attack you and rescue their prisoner from your detention. This caused voices to rise from all sides which supported the view of the Shaykh of Najd as sound. After that, Abū al-Aswad proposed that 'he' should be expelled out from Makkah. Let him go out of here and do whatever he wishes to do. This will make

our city safe from the disorder generated by him and, when we do so, we shall be doing no fighting and killing.

Hearing this, the Shaykh of Najd once again said: This proposal too is not sound. Do you not realize how soft-spoken a person he is? When people hear him talk, they are totally charmed by him. If he was left free like that, he would soon assemble a powerful group around him and attack you and defeat you. Now, it was Abū Jahl's turn to speak. He said: None of you seems to have understood what must be really done. Here is my plan of action. I propose that we pick out one youngman from each tribe out of all tribes of Arabia and arm each one of them with a lethal sword. Then, all of them, moving jointly and suddenly, attack and kill him. This action will at least deliver us from the problems engineered by him. Now, remains the aftermath of this killing. His tribe, Banū 'Abd Munāf, may rise with their claim of retaliation against the killing, something we are legally bound to face. So, in such a situation, when the actual killing was done, not by one single person, instead, by one person from each tribe, then, the claim of Qiṣāṣ, that is, taking life for life, cannot hold good after all. What would remain valid will be only the claim for blood money or property against *diyāh*. That we shall collect from all tribes, give it to them and be done with it.

When the Shaykh of Najd, Iblīs, the accursed in disguise, heard this, he said: This is it. Nothing else is going to work. The whole assembly voted in his favour and it was resolved that this sinister plan would be put into action exactly the same night.

What these ignorant people could not understand was the unseen power of the prophets, may they all be blessed. As a consequence, two things happened. On the one hand, Archangel Jibra'īl informed the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم about everything that had transpired at their meeting at Dār al-Nadwah giving him a counter-plan whereby he would not sleep in his bed that night and telling him that Allah Ta'ālā has allowed him to migrate from Makkah.

On the other hand, by the fall of the evening, the Quraysh youngmen put a cordon round the house of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. When he saw this, he ordered Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtaḍā رضى الله عنه that he should sleep in the Prophet's bed that night giving him the good news that the plan was though full of a danger to his life obviously, yet

the enemies would not be able to harm him in any way.

Happy to be at his service, Sayyidnā 'Alī رضى الله عنه went into his bed. But, the problem was as to how the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was to get out of this siege. This difficulty was resolved by Allah Ta'ālā through a miracle when the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, acting under the command of Allah Ta'ālā, came out with a handful of dust in one of his hands, responded to what his besiegers were saying about him, but it so happened that Allah Ta'ālā turned their sights and minds away from him in a way that none of them saw him even though he passed by them throwing dust on their heads. When he was gone, some visitor asked them as to why were they standing there. They said that they were waiting for the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. Thereupon, the visitor told them: You must be dreaming. He has already gone from here and while going he had been throwing dust on the heads of everyone among you. They all felt their heads with their hands which confirmed the fact that everyone's head had a deposit of dust on it.

When they went into the house, Sayyidnā 'Alī رضى الله عنه was lying in the bed of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, but the way he was tossing and turning in the bed made it possible for the besiegers to realize that he was not Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم, therefore, they did not venture to kill him. After carrying out their operation of siege right through the morning, these people went back disappointed and disgraced. This night and the event of Sayyidnā 'Alī staking his life for the sake of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم therein is rated to be among special merits credited to Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtaḍā رضى الله عنه.

The three suggestions made to deal with the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم during the consultative meeting of Quraysh chiefs have been mentioned by the Holy Qur'an in the verse: **وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ** (And [remember] when the disbelievers were plotting against you to hold you [in detention] or to kill you or to expel you - 30).

But, Allah Ta'ālā made all their plans and projections go to dust. That is why it was said towards the end: **وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمُنْظِرِينَ** (and Allah is the best of those who plot - 30). It means that Allah is the best of planners. His plan pales out all plans - as demonstrated in this case.

Lexically, the Arabic word: **مكر** (*makr*: translated as 'plot') means restricting one's adversary from carrying out his intention through some

strategem or plan. Then, if this action is taken for a good purpose, this type of '*makr*' is commendable and good - and should it be done for some evil purpose, it is blameworthy and bad. Therefore, this word can be used for man, and for Allah Ta'ālā as well. But, it is used for Allah only in an environment where the context and contrast of speech does not lend to any doubt of *makr* which is blameworthy (Mazhari) as it is here.

At this place, it is also noteworthy that the words used at the end of the verse are in the indefinite tense which denotes present and future. It was said: وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ (And they were plotting and Allah was plotting - 30), that is, they will keep plotting to hurt believers while Allah Ta'ālā will keep plotting to thwart and frustrate their plots. The hint given therein is that this will continue to remain a lasting mark of disbelievers that they go about engineering designs to hurt Muslims - while, in the same way, the help and support of Allah Ta'ālā shall also keep repulsing their evil designs against true believers.

Mentioned in verses 31 and 32 is the absurd remark made by Naḍr ibn Hārith, a participant of the same meeting at Dār al-Nadwah, with its reply appearing in verse 33. Naḍr ibn Hārith was a businessman who used to travel to different countries where he had repeated opportunities of seeing religious books of the Jews and Christians as well as witnessing their modes of worship. When he heard about the accounts of past communities appearing in the Holy Qur'an, he said: قَدْ سَمِعْنَا لَوْ نَشَاءُ: لَقُلْنَا مِثْلَ هَذَا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ (we have heard, if we wish, we can say something like this. It is nothing but the tales of the ancient - 31). Thereupon, some of the Companions challenged him: If you can say something like this, why would you not say it? The Qur'an had already spoken on the subject and made it the very criterion of the true and the false. The challenge of the Qur'an was beamed at the whole world. If its opponents were true, let them come up with the like of even a very small Sūrah. In contrast, those who claimed to stake their lives and sacrifice their wealth and children for the sake of upholding their counter-assertion could not even join up their abilities together and come out even with a small Sūrah which could stand on its own against the Qur'an. Now, after all this, to stand up and say that we too can say something like this, if we so wished, is something no self-respecting person would venture to say. Thus, when the Companions told him

that the Qur'an was nothing but the Divine word, he tried to counter the assertion by showing his own firm adherence to his incorrect faith by saying:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوْ
أُتِنَا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

O Allah, if this be indeed the truth [revealed] from You, then, rain down upon us stones from the heavens, or bring upon us a painful punishment - 32.

The answer to this was given by the Qur'an itself. First, it was said: وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ (And Allah is not to send punishment upon them while you are in their midst [in Makkah] - 33). The reason is that it is the customary practice of Allah Ta'ālā with all blessed prophets that He would not send His punishment over a habitation where they are present until He takes out his prophets from there. This is as it happened in the case of Sayyidnā Hūd, Sayyidnā Ṣāliḥ and Sayyidnā Lūṭ, may peace be upon them all. Punishment did not come as long as they remained in their towns. Punishment came when they were taken out from there. As for the Prophet of Islām ﷺ, he was sent to this world as universal mercy. That Divine punishment would come on him while he was present in a town was an eventuality counter to his station.

In a nutshell, the answer is: Because of your hostility towards Qur'an and Islām, you very much deserve to have stones rain at you but the presence of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in Makkah prohibits it. According to Imām Ibn Jarīr, this part of the verse was revealed at a time when he was present in Makkah. Then, came Hijrah to Madīnah where the second part was revealed as follows: وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ (nor would Allah send punishment on them while they are seeking forgiveness - 33). It means that following his migration to Madīnah, though the preventive factor of a mass punishment stood removed as he was not present there in Makkah, yet there did remain another factor preventing the coming of mass punishment even at that time since many weaker ones among Muslims who were unable to migrate had remained behind in Makkah and they were the ones who kept praying to Allah Ta'ālā for their forgiveness. It was for their sake that punishment was not sent upon the people of Makkah.

When, even these blessed souls migrated to Madīnah, the sentence appearing in the next verse (34): وَمَا لَهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يُعَذِّبَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ (And what is with them that Allah should not punish them while they prevent [people] from *al-masjid al-ḥarām*) was revealed.

The sense is that there were two hinderances to the coming of punishment. They both have been removed. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was no more there in Makkah, nor there remained those forgiveness-seeking Muslims in that city. Thus, there appeared to be no hinderance to the coming of punishment. Particularly so, because the people of Makkah were already deserving of punishment for their hostility to Islām while on top of which - despite being themselves incapable of any act of worship worth the name - they had started preventing people who wished to go into *al-masjid al-ḥarām* for 'Ibādah, 'Umrah and Ṭawāf. So, at that stage, their entitlement to punishment had become mature and complete. Consequently, it was through the Conquest of Makkah that punishment was sent upon them.

The event relating to the preventing of people from entering *al-masjid al-ḥarām* took place at the expedition of Ḥudaibiyah when the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had gone there with the intention of making 'Umrah with his Companions. The disbelievers of Makkah stopped him from entering the city and compelled him and all his Companions to undo their Iḥrām and return back. This happened in the Hijrah year 6. Two years later, in Hijrah 8, Makkah was conquered. Thus, it was at the hands of Muslims that punishment was sent upon them.

This explanation given by Ibn Jarīr rests on the assumption that the factor of the Holy Prophet's presence in Makkah should be considered as the hinderance to punishment while others have maintained that the presence of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in the world is itself the prohibitive factor against any mass punishment. As long as he graces the world with his presence, no punishment can come over his people. The reason for this is obvious. The state of his call to prophethood is different. It is not similar to that of other blessed prophets as they were sent to particular areas or tribes. When they left these and arrived at some new place, punishment would overtake the people they left behind. This is contrary to the case of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم whose prophethood and messengership is universal until the Last Day of this mortal life. So, the place of his blessed arrival and the

scope of his mission as a Messenger of Allah extends to the whole world. Therefore, as long as he is present in any part of the world, no punishment can visit his people.

Based on this Tafsīr, it would mean that the doings of the people of Makkah demanded nothing less than that they be struck with a rain of stones. But, two things became a hinderance to this punishment: (1) The presence of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in the world and (2) the seeking of forgiveness by the people of Makkah because they, despite being polytheists and disbelievers, used to say: *غفرانك غفرانك* (we seek Your forgiveness, we seek Your forgiveness) in their Ṭawāf. Though, this seeking of forgiveness by them coupled with disbelief (*shirk*) may not be beneficial in the Hereafter, but the benefit of doing that too in this world which accrued to them was that they escaped punishment in the mortal world. The standing truth is that Allah Ta'ālā does not let anyone's deed go to waste. If disbelievers and polytheists do something good, its return is given to them right here in this world. As for what is said after that - 'and what is with them that Allah should not punish them while they prevent [people] from *al-masjid al-ḥaram* - it would then mean that the absence of punishment in the world should not embolden these people to become arrogant and complacent thinking that they were no sinners or that punishment would not come upon them at all. May be, not in the mortal world, but there is just no escape or deliverance from the punishment of the Hereafter. Given this Tafsīr, the punishment mentioned in: *مَا لَهُمْ إِلَّا يُعَذِّبُهُمْ* (and what is with them that Allah should not punish them - 34) would be referring to the punishment of the Hereafter.

To sum up, it can be said that the verses cited here leave beneficial information for us: (1) That Allah Ta'ālā does not send punishment upon a locality in which people seek His forgiveness. This is His customary practice. (2) That no punishment would come upon the community of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, believing or disbelieving, while he is present among them. This is as it came to pass in the case of the people of Sayyidnā Nūḥ, Luṭ and Shu'ayb عليهم السلام. Their people were destroyed to the last person. Should some punishment visit individuals or a limited number of them, that would not be considered contrary to it - as was said by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that the punishment of *خسف*: *khasf* and *مسح*: *maskh* will visit his Ummah. *Khasf* means to sink into the ground or be swallowed by it while *Maskh* means dis-

figuration and transformation into an animal such as monkey or swine. The intimation intended is that there will be those limited few individuals of the community who would be visited by such punishments as well.

As for the phenomenon of the presence of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in this world, it will remain operative right through the Last Day of Qiyāmah because his mission of prophethood is operative till then. In addition to that, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is alive even at this time, though the nature and form of this life is different from his previous life. Now, any effort at this stage to engage in the debate as to what is the difference between these two lives will be ineffectual and futile - because, nothing that this community of Muslims has to do in terms of its religious or worldly duties depends on it. Neither has the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم himself, nor his noble Ṣaḥābah have liked such wasteful and unnecessary debates. In fact, they have prohibited it.

The essence of the submission is that the marvel of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم being alive in his resting place and the unbroken continuity of his prophethood right through the Last Day of Qiyāmah prove that he is in this world right through Qiyāmah, therefore, this community of his shall remain safe against any mass punishment until that fateful Day.

Verses 34 - 38

وَمَا لَهُمْ آلًا يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَمَا كَانُوا أَوْلِيَاءَهُ^ط إِنْ أَوْلِيَاؤَهُ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقُونَ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَمَا كَانَ صَلَاتُهُمْ عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ إِلَّا مُكَاءً وَتَصَدِيَةً^ط فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ لِيَصُدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ^ط فَسَيُنْفِقُونَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَةً ثُمَّ يُغْلَبُونَ^ط وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ يُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ لِيَمِيزَ اللَّهُ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَيَجْعَلَ الْخَبِيثَ بَعْضَهُ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فَيَرْكُمَهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَجْعَلَهُ فِي جَهَنَّمَ أُولَٰئِكَ

هُمُ الْخٰسِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا اِنْ يَنْتَهُوا يُعْفَرْ لَهُمْ مٰمَ قَدْ سَلَفَ ۗ وَاِنْ يَّعُودُوْا فَقَدْ مَّصَّتْ سُنَّتُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾

And what is with them that Allah should not punish them while they prevent [people] from *al-masjid al-haram*, even though they are not its custodians. Its custodians are none but the God-fearing, but most of them do not know. [34] And their prayer near the House was not more than whistling and clapping. So, taste the punishment, because you used to disbelieve. [35]

Surely, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to prevent [people] from the way of Allah. So, they shall spend it, then it will become remorse for them, then they shall be overpowered. And those who disbelieve shall be gathered into Jahannam, [36] so that Allah separates the impure from the pure, and puts some of the impure on some others, and heaps them all together and puts them into Jahannam. Those are the losers. [37]

Say to those who disbelieve that if they stop, they shall be forgiven for what has passed (of their sins), and if they repeat, then, the precedent of the earlier people is already established. [38]

Commentary

It was said in previous verses that the disbelievers of Makkah were though deserving, because of their disbelief and denial, of heavenly punishment coming down upon them, but the presence of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in Makkah was a prohibitive factor against the coming of a mass punishment on them. Then, after his migration to Madīnah, such punishment would still not come upon them because of the weaker ones among Muslims who, while living in Makkah, kept seeking forgiveness from Allah.

In the verses quoted above, it has been stated that though their due punishment was advanced till later either for the sake of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم or in consideration of the weaker ones among Muslims, they should not make the mistake of thinking that they are no more deserving of punishment. The fact is that their being deserving of punishment is loud and clear. Then, other than their disbelief and denial, there are many more crimes committed by them because of which punishment should be visiting them positively. The first two

verses (34, 35) list three such crimes by them.

1. Firstly, these people are themselves just not worthy of going into the Sacred Mosque and devote to acts of worship there as due - and these very people prevent Muslims who wish to go there to devote themselves to acts of worship, Ṣalāh, Ṭawāf etc. Here, the reference is to the event at Ḥudaibiyah when, in the Hijrah year 6, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had reached there with his Ṣaḥābah in order to perform 'Umrah at Makkah - and the disbelievers of Makkah had prevented him from doing so and had compelled him to go back.

2. Secondly, for no sane reason, these people assume and claim that they were the custodians of the Sacred Mosque whereby they would let anyone they permit come in and not permit anyone they did not wish to come in.

This thinking of theirs was a combination of two misunderstandings. To begin with, they took themselves to be the custodians of the Sacred Mosque although no Kāfir can become the custodian of any mosque. Then, they thought that a custodian had the right to stop anyone he wished from entering into the mosque - while, a *masjid* or mosque is a House of God and no one has the right to stop anyone from coming in it. Of course, exempted are particular situations in which there be the apprehension of someone desecrating the mosque or causing pain to other makers of Ṣalāh there. For example, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: Shield your *masājid* from small children, and insane individuals, and from mutual disputations. Small children mean children who have no sense of purity or impurity, therefore, the danger of the later is predominant. Then, the same danger of impurity as well as the danger of causing pain to those making Ṣalāh exists in the case of someone insane. As for mutual disputations, it amounts to desecration of the *masjid* and is also a source of causing pain to people making Ṣalāh there.

In the light of the Ḥadīth quoted above, the custodian (*mutawallī*) of the *masjid* does have the right not to allow such small children and insane individuals into the *masjid*, and see to it that no one indulges in mutual disputes in the *masjid* - but, in the absence of such situations, no custodian of a *masjid* has the right to stop a Muslim from coming into the *masjid*.

In the first verse cited above, it has been considered sufficient to state that there was no way these people could be taken as custodians of the Sacred Mosque when the rule was that only God-fearing Muslims could become its custodian. From here we learn that the custodian of a *masjid* should be a practicing-observing Muslim, in faith and conduct. And there are some commentators who take the pronoun in: ﴿رَبِّهِمْ﴾ as reverting to Allah Ta'ālā which would mean: 'only the God-fearing can be the *Awliyā* of Allah.'

According to the Tafsīr mentioned immediately above, the outcome of the verse would be that those who, despite acting contrary to Shari'ah and Sunnah, claim to be a *Waliyy* of Allah are liars and those who take such people to be a *Waliyy* of Allah are down in deception.

3. The third crime of these people, other than the filth of Kufr and Shirk which was already their way of life, was the state of their doings which were low down, much lower than the ordinary human level. A sampling of this was pointed to when it was said that the act of prayer which these people called Ṣalāh was nothing but that they would whistle with their mouths and clap with their hands. It is obvious that no reasonable person would call these acts 'worship' and 'prayer,' in fact, not even a regular human act. Therefore, at the end of the verse (35), it was said: ﴿فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ﴾ (So, taste the punishment, because you used to disbelieve), that is, the denouement of their disbelief and crimes is that they must now taste the punishment of Allah. 'Punishment' referred to here may mean the punishment of the Hereafter, as well as the punishment in the present world which came upon them in the battle of Badr at the hands of Muslims.

After that, described in verse 36, there is another event relating to the disbelievers of Makkah when they collected a huge fund to raise a powerful striking force against Muslims and then spent it to wipe out the true faith and its upholders. But, what happened finally was that lost to them was not only the wealth they had pooled together but that they, rather than achieve their objective, were themselves subjected to utter disgrace.

The event as reported by Muḥammad ibn Ishāq from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās صلى الله عليه وسلم is as follows. When the defeated, injured and surviving disbelievers of Makkah returned from the battle of Badr back to their city, the people whose fathers or sons were killed in

Jihād went to Abū Sufyān, the leader of the trade caravan. They told him: You know that this war was fought in defence of your trade caravan as a result of which we had to suffer from all this loss of lives and properties. Therefore, we wish that we be helped by this corporate trading venture so that we can take our revenge against Muslims in the future. The people of the trading company accepted their plea and gave them a huge amount which they spent on their bid for victory in the battle of 'Uḥūd. In this bid too, which was to avenge their defeat in the battle of Badr, they met a sad end and were overpowered as before. With the shock of defeat, left for them was the added remorse for having lost all that wealth they had invested in the unsuccessful challenge.

In this verse, the Holy Qur'ān has foretold the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم about this event much before it took place. It said there: "Surely, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to prevent (people) from the way of Allah. So, they shall spend it, then it will become remorse for them, then they shall be overpowered -36." Consequently, this is how it happened at the battle of 'Uḥūd. They spent everything they had collected. Then, they were overpowered as a result of which, on top of the shock of defeat, they were smitten by the remorse for having lost the wealth they had invested in their venture.

Al-Baghawī and some other commentators have attributed the subject of this verse to the expenses incurred on the battle of Badr itself. According to them, the thousand strong army of disbelievers which had gone to confront Muslims in the battle of Badr was already paid for. All expenses of their maintenance were guaranteed by twelve chiefs of Makkah, included among them being Abū Jahl, 'Utbah, Shaybah and others. It goes without saying that the cost of transporting and feeding one thousand men must have been enormous. This being the state of affairs, these people not only that they felt bad about their defeat, they were also extremely remorseful about having lost their wealth. (Mazhari)

At the end of the verse (36), given there is the evil end of these people in terms of the Hereafter: **وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ يُخْشَرُونَ** (And those who disbelieve shall be gathered into Jahannam).

In the verse under study, the mention of an evil end of spending wealth to stop people from following the true faith also includes the

disbelievers of today who spend enormous wealth in the name of hospitals, educational institutions and charities only to stop people from following Islām and to attract them to their call for the false. Similarly, also included here are all those who have gone astray, those who spend their wealth to invite people to listen to doubts and superstitions they have generated into the established collective beliefs of Islam. But, Allah Ta'ālā has His ways of keeping the faith revealed by Him protected. There are many occasions when it is openly noticed that such people fail to achieve their objective despite having spent huge amount of money and materials.

Verse 37 describes some consequences of the events mentioned earlier which, in a nutshell, are that the disbelievers used their wealth against Islām, then they were bitten by remorse and were utterly disgraced. This series of happenings had its own advantages which find mention in the opening sentence of this verse: *لِيَمَيِّرَ اللَّهُ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ* (so that Allah separates the impure from the pure).

The two words, *الخبِيث* (*al-khabīth* : impure) and *الطيب* (*aṭ-ṭaiyyib* : pure), stand in contrast to each other. The word, *al-khabīth*, is used to refer to that which is impure, filthy and forbidden while *aṭ-ṭaiyyib* set against it denotes what is pure, clean, nice and lawful. At this place, the use of these two words may be referring to the impure possessions of the disbelievers, and the pure possessions of Muslim as well. Given this projection, it would mean that the enormous wealth spent by the disbelievers was impure and filthy. The evil end it met was that they suffered the loss of wealth, and the loss of lives as well. As compared to them, Muslims spent very little of whatever they had in the name of wealth, but that wealth was pure and lawful. Those who spent it succeeded, not to mention the additional spoils of war that fell into their hand. After that, it was said:

وَيَجْعَلُ الْخَبِيثَ بَعْضُهُ عَلَى بَعْضٍ فَيَرْكُمَهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَجْعَلُهُ فِي جَهَنَّمَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُونَ .

'and (Allah) puts some of the impure on some others, and heaps them all together and puts them into Jahannam. Those are the losers - 37'

The sense is that the way magnet pulls iron and amber pulls grass and in the light of new scientific discoveries, the system of the world is

held together by the constant of force fields pulling things together, the case in deeds and morals is also identical. They have a pull of their own. One bad deed draws in another bad deed and a good deed draws in another good deed. Impure wealth pulls in another body of impure wealth and then this heap of impure wealth generates vestiges which are equally impure. As a result of this, Allah Ta'ālā will heap all impure wealth into Jahannam and those to whom it belonged would find themselves in a terrible loss.

And there is a large number of commentators who take *al-khābīth* and *at-taiyyib* in the general sense at this place, that is, pure and impure. Thus, pure would signify true believers and impure would mean the disbelievers. Given this approach, the verse would mean that through conditions mentioned above, Allah Ta'ālā likes to make the pure distinct from the impure, that is, make a true believer distinct from a disbeliever and - as a consequence of which - true believers are gathered together in Jannah and the disbelievers, all of them at one place, into Jahannam.

Appearing once again in verse 38, there is a patronizing address to disbelievers - which carries the elements of persuasion and warning both. The part of persuasion is that should they repent from their shocking deeds even then, and come forward to believe, then, all their past sins shall be forgiven. If they failed to desist even then, the warning part tells them that they better understand that Allah Ta'ālā would not have to think about making some new law for them. The law is already there. It has been in force in the case of disbelievers of earlier times. The same law would come into force against them too - that they were destroyed in the present world and became deserving of the punishment of the Hereafter.

Verses 39 - 40

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنِ
 انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فاعْلَمُوا
 أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَاكُمْ نِعَمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعَمَ النَّصِيرِ ﴿٤٠﴾

And fight them until there is no Fitnah (disorder or disbelief) and total obedience becomes for Allah. So, if they desist, then, Allah is indeed watchful over what

they do. [39] And if they turn away, then, be sure that Allah is your protector. He is the excellent protector and excellent supporter. [40]

Commentary

We are now on verse 39 of Sūrah al-Anfāl. Two words: *فتنه* (*Fitnah*) and *دين* (*Dīn*) used here need our attention since both are used in many shades of meaning lexically.

At this place, two meanings have been reported from authorities of Tafsīr from among the Ṣahābah and Ṭābi'īn: (1) That *Fitnah* is taken to mean *Kufr* and *Shirk*, and *Dīn* is taken to mean the *Dīn* of Islām. This very Tafsīr has been reported from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه. Given this exegetic view, the verse would mean that Muslims must continue fighting disbelievers until disbelief disintegrates yielding its place to Islām and there remains no religion and faith other than Islām. Given this situation, this injunction will be specific to only the people of Makkah and the people of Arabia - because, the Arabian Peninsula is the home of Islām. The presence of any other religion, other than Islām in it, shall be dangerous for Islām. As for the rest of the world, other religions and faiths could be kept existing as confirmed by other verses of the Holy Qur'an and reports from Ḥadīth.

(2) According to the second Tafsīr reported from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنه and others, *Fitnah* at this place means the chain of pain, retributive suffering and endless woes which the disbelievers of Makkah had always been inflicting on Muslims. As long as they were in Makkah, they kept braving all sorts of pain caused to them all the time. They could do nothing about it being virtually held by them in their clutches. When these people migrated towards Madīnah, they pursued each single Muslim and kept killing or looting them. Even after these people had reached Madīnah, the wrath and anger of the disbelievers kept showing up in the form of attacks on the whole city of Madīnah.

Set against *Fitnah*, the term *Dīn* means the state of exercising functional reach and control and prevailing over antagonists. Seen from this angle, the Tafsīr of the verse would be that Muslims must keep fighting disbelievers until fellow Muslims are delivered and secured from the tyrannies of disbelievers - and until Islām takes over so that it can defend and protect Muslims from the injustices inflicted on

Two things could result from Jihād against the enemies of Islām: (1) That they stop being oppressive to Muslims, either by entering the Islāmic brotherhood and becoming brothers-in-faith, or by remaining attached to their religion, they stop harassing and hurting Muslims and enter into a treaty of allegiance.

(2) That they reject both options and stick to their policy of confrontation. Injunctions covering both options have been mentioned in the next verse (40). It was said:

فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا عَمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

So, if they desist, then, Allah is indeed watchful over what they do.

It means that Allah Ta‘ālā would deal with them in the light of their conduct. Put simply, if they desisted, Jihād action against them will be suspended. Under this arrangement, Muslims may have apprehended danger from the disbelievers. Their readiness to sign a peace pact or their declaration to have become Muslims soon after the encounter of mutual killing may have possibly appeared to Muslims as nothing but some strategy of deception usually employed in wars. In a situation like that, stopping the ongoing war could have been harmful for Muslims. The answer to this apprehension was given by saying that Muslims are bound by deeds they see outwardly. The one who looks into hearts and knows their hidden secrets is none but Allah Ta‘ālā Himself. Therefore, when disbelievers declare their adherence to Islām or make a peace pact, Muslims have no choice but that they stop fighting and killing in Jihād. As for personal doubts about whether or not they have accepted Islām, or peace, honestly from their heart or all this is a cover for deception - these are things which fall in the domain of Allah. He knows it well that should they do something like that, they will be taken care of in some other way. Muslims should not lay the foundation of their matters and dealings on such thoughts and apprehensions.

If hands were raised against them after their declaration of Islām or pact of peace, those waging Jihād would turn into criminals - as it appears in a Ḥadīth of the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. There, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said that he has been commanded to fight the enemies of Islām until they accept the Kalimah: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ

رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (There is no god worthy of worship but Allah, Muḥammad is a Messenger of Allah), establish Ṣalāh and pay Zakāh. When they have done that, their life and property shall all become protected.¹ The only exception shall be that of a punishment given to them against a crime under the Islāmic Law. What remains of the accountability of their hearts - whether they are accepting the creeds and deeds of Islām heartily or that they are doing it hypocritically - shall be resting with Allah.

According to another Ḥadīth which Abū Dāwūd has reported from several noble Companions, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: Whoever does any injustice to a peace pact beneficiary (a person who has entered into a pact of allegiance with the Islāmic government) or brings him any harm, or makes him do something which is more than what he can physically do, or takes something from him without his genuine, heart-felt consent, then, on the Day of Judgement, I shall support that peace pact beneficiary against a Muslim who has done something like that.

The present verse of the Holy Qur'an under study along with reports from Ḥadīth have obviously exposed Muslims to a political danger. Think of an arch enemy who happens to be at their mercy. Just to save his life, the enemy recites the Kalimah of Islām. Right there, Muslims have been obligated to hold their hands instantly. One may think: With this style of combat, Muslims would be unable to overcome just about any enemy! But, Allah Ta'ālā has His own ways of doing things. Here, He has taken the hidden secrets of their hearts as His area of responsibility. In a miraculous manner, it has been demonstrated practically that Muslims never faced such an embarrassing situation in any of their battlefields. However, there have been hundreds of hypocrites in a state of peace who cheated, passed on as Muslims, even went about fulfilling the obligations of Ṣalāh and Ṣawm at least outwardly. Some of the miserably graceless among them had no other objective in sight but that they would exact a few benefits from Mus-

1. It should be recalled that this principle is restricted to the Arabian Peninsula, where no disbeliever is allowed to live as a permanent citizen. In other parts of the world, the disbelievers may opt for *jizyah* and may continue to profess their own religion, the punishment of their disbelief being deferred to the Hereafter. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani).

lims and remain safe from their revenge despite nursing hostility in their hearts. Then, there were some of those too who were doing so with political motives of spying on Muslims, find their secrets and maintain conspiratorial liaison with enemies. But, such was the Divine law that it instructed Muslims to treat all of them as they would treat Muslims - unless it was proved that they had themselves betrayed their hostility to Islām or contravened the peace agreement.

This teaching of Islām applied to the condition in which the enemies of Islām promise to desist from their hostility and enter into agreement to that effect.

The second condition is that they stick to their doggedness and hostility. The injunction covering this situation appears in the later verse (40) where it was said: وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاَعْلَمُوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ مَوْلٰىكُمْ بِعَمِّ الْمُوْلىٰ وَبِعَمِّ النَّصِيْرِ (And if they turn away, then, be sure that Allah is your protector. He is the an excellent protector and excellent supporter).

In brief, if they fail to desist from their tyranny and disbelief, the injunction Muslims are obligated with is the same as stated above, that is, continue fighting them. Since Jihād involves fighting and killing, it is usually associated with a big army, ample weapons and other hardware and logistic support. But, those days Muslims did not have much of this normally, therefore, it was possible that Muslims would have found this command to fight and kill somewhat heavy, or their lack of numbers or paucity of equipment may have led them to realize that they could not win a war like that. Therefore, Muslims were given the antidote they needed. They were told that it did not matter if the disbelievers had more men and equipment to fight with, but where in the world were they going to get the unseen support and help of Allah Ta'ālā which Muslims have with them and which they have been witnessing as being alongwith them on every battlefield. Then, towards the end it was said that, for all practical purposes, everyone in the world finds some help and support from someone or somewhere, but the touchstone of how effective and functionally superior it is depends on the power, strength, knowledge and experience of that helper or supporter. It goes without saying that a whole world-full of people could never exceed, even equal the power and strength and knowledge and perception of Allah Ta'ālā because He is an excellent protector and an excellent supporter with no one to match Him.

Verse 41

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي
 الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ إِن كُنْتُمْ آمَنْتُمْ
 بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ التَّفَىٰ الْجَمْعِ
 وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤١﴾

And know that whatever spoils you receive, its one fifth is for Allah and His Messenger and for kinsmen and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, if you do believe in Allah and in what We have sent down upon Our Servant on the decisive day, the day the two forces met. And Allah is powerful over everything. [41]

Commentary

Mentioned in this verse are injunctions of spoils and the law of their distribution. Before we take up the subject in detail, let us understand some important words first.

Lexically, the word: غنيمه (*ghanīmah*) is applied to property which is acquired from the enemy. In the terminology of the Shari'ah, property which is acquired from non-Muslims through fighting and killing, triumph and control, is called: غنيمه (*ghanīmah*, translated here as spoils). And the property which is acquired in peace and with consent, like: خراج جزية, *Jizyah*, *Khirāj* etc., is called: فية (*fai*). These two words have been used to describe injunctions of these two kinds in the Holy Qur'an. The present Sūrah al-Anfāl takes up injunctions relating to *ghanīmah* or spoils which is acquired from non-Muslims at the time of fighting and killing.

At this point, we should first keep in mind that, according to the Islāmic and Qur'anic view of things, the real ownership of the entire universe belongs to Allah Ta'ālā, the one and only Being who has created whatever there is in it. The only way through which the ownership of something can be attributed to human beings is no other but that Allah Ta'ālā may have Himself declared it, through His Law, to be under the ownership of someone. For instance, while mentioning quadruped animals in Sūrah Yā Sīn (23:71), it was said: أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا خَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِنَّا صَبَآءَ (Do they see not that We created the quadrupeds

with Our Own hands then they became their owners?) As obvious, the sense is that this ownership of theirs is not private and personal - it was Allah who made them the owners out of His grace.

When some set of people rebels against Allah Ta'ālā, that is, indulges in Kufr and Shirk, then, the first action Allah Ta'ālā takes to reform them is that He sends His Messengers and Books to them. When the unfortunate ones among them are not impressed even by this act of Divine grace, Allah Ta'ālā commands His Messengers to wage Jihād against them and kill them. The outcome of this was that the lives and properties of these rebels became *Mubāh* (allowed). They no longer had the right to benefit from the assets of life and property given to them by Allah Ta'ālā, instead, in a manner of saying, all that belonged to them was confiscated in the name of the Authority in command. These very confiscated properties are given the name of *ghanīmah*, spoils or war booty - which went out of the ownership of disbelievers and deposited itself separately as being under the ownership of Allah Ta'ālā alone.

According to the ancient Divine Law which governed such confiscated properties, no one was allowed to benefit from them. Such properties were, rather, gathered and placed on some open spot where lightening would come from the heavens and burn these up. This was the sign that their effort by way of Jihād was accepted.

One of the few unique distinctions bestowed upon the Last of the Prophets صلى الله عليه وسلم by Allah Ta'ālā was that *ghanīmah* properties (spoils) were made lawful (*ḥalāl*) for the Muslim community (as in a Ḥadīth of Muslim). And such was the quality of its lawfulness that it was classed as 'the purest of properties!' The reason for it is not far to find. Is it not that wealth and property which one acquires through hard labour comes to him under his ownership after having passed through chains after chains of transfers from the ownership of many human beings? Now, while passing through these numerous chains, there exists a strong probability of unlawful, impermissible or repugnant methods being employed somewhere in the pipeline. The case of *ghanīmah* or spoils happens to be quite contrary. Here, the ownership of disbelievers stands severed from them and passes directly into the ownership of Allah Ta'ālā, remaining there as such. Now, whoever gets it, gets it directly from what is owned by Allah Ta'ālā and that leaves

no doubt, or apprehension of unlawfulness or repugnance as could be the case in receiving from what is owned by human beings. This is like water drawn from a well, or natural grass, which reaches man directly as a blessing of Allah Ta'ālā without any human intermediacy in between.

To sum up, it can be said that *ghanīmah* or spoils which was not lawful for past communities was made lawful as a token of blessing and mercy for the Muslim Ummah. The rule of its distribution has been introduced by saying: **وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ** (And know that whatever spoils you receive - 41). To begin with, according to the rules of Arabic language, the word: **مَا** (*mā*) already signifies generality. Then, to put further stress on this generality, added there was the expression: **مِنْ شَيْءٍ** (*min sha'i*) which means whatever is collected as spoils, big or small, falls under the purview of this very law. Anyone who takes anything outside the provisions of the law of distribution, even if ordinary or small in his judgement, he will still be considered guilty of a serious crime. Therefore, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said that it is not permissible for anyone to take even a needle and its thread which is a part of the spoils (*ghanīmah* property) without his entitlement to it as his legally allotted share. In addition to that, he has given a severe warning against taking anything from spoils outside the allotted share. The name given to this act of misappropriation in spoils in Ḥadīth is *Ghulūl* where it has been declared as brazenly unlawful, far more serious than common theft.

By introducing the ground rule for distribution, all *mujāhid* Muslims were served with a notice that Allah Ta'ālā has made spoils lawful for them, but that it was lawful under a specific procedural regulation. Anyone who takes anything against it, then, that will be nothing but an ember of the fire of Jahannam.

This is what makes the law of the Qur'ān distinct from other laws of the world. Then, this is the real secret behind the perfect effectiveness and success of the law of Qur'ān when it begins by focusing on the need to fear Allah and to be concerned about the Hereafter and follows it up with warnings of consequences. After that, as part of the next article, penal punishments were also promulgated.

Otherwise, it is worth pondering how is it possible in the middle of the wild commotion of the battlefield that properties be acquired from

out of the possession of non-Muslims, properties the details of which are known neither to the commander of Muslims nor to someone else. On top of that, battles are fought on grounds which form part of desolate jungles and deserts where thousands of places exist as possible hideouts far from the arm of law. To stand guard over these properties with the sole strength of law was something just not possible for anyone. Ultimately, it was the fear of Allah and Ākhirah alone which enabled every single Muslim to desist from making even the minutest misappropriation in these properties.

Now, let us have a look at this rule of distribution. It was said: **فَأَنَّ لِلَّهِ** **حُمُسَهُ** **وَلِلرَّسُولِ** **وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ** **وَالْيَتَامَىٰ** **وَالْمَسْكِينِ** **وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ** (its one fifth is for Allah and the Messenger and for kinsmen and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer - 41).

First of all, worth pondering at this point is that the rule of the distribution of *ghanīmah* or spoils being described here covers the distribution of spoils as a whole. But, the Qur'an has elected to simply mention the rule as it applies to its one-fifth. No mention has been made of the remaining four shares. What is the secret behind it and what is the law which governs the distribution of the rest of four shares? If we ponder over and deliberate in the Qur'an, an answer to these two questions comes out from within the existing word arrangement of the text. To wit, addressing Muslims engaged in Jihād, the Holy Qur'an said: **مَا غَنِمْتُمْ** (*mā ghanīmtum* : whatever spoils you receive). There is a hint here to the effect that this property is the right of those who receive it. And after that, it was declared that one fifth from it was the share of Allah and the Messenger and others. Thus, the outcome is all too clear - the remaining four shares belonged to the *mujāhidīn* and to those who collected spoils among them. This is similar to what the Qur'an has said elsewhere in connection with the law of inheritance:

وَوَرِثَهُ أَبَوَاهُ فَلِأَبِيهِ الثُّلُثُ

And his parents have inherited him, then, his mother gets the one-third. (4:11)

Here too, the mention of mother has been considered sufficient which tells us that the remaining two shares are the right of the father. Similarly, after mentioning: **مَا غَنِمْتُمْ** (*mā ghanīmtum* : whatever spoils you receive), when only one fifth share was set aside for Allah, it became

clear that the remaining four shares were the right of the *mujāhidīn*. Later, the corresponding word and deed of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم fully clarified the rule in details that these four shares were distributed over *mujāhidīn* under a specific law.

Now, let us take up the details of that one fifth share which has been clearly determined by the Holy Qur'ān in this verse. The count of words used in the Qur'ān to say this here is six. The six words are: (1) لِلَّهِ (*lillāh* : for Allah), (2) لِلرَّسُولِ (*lirrasūl* : for the Messenger), (3) لِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ (*lidhilqurbā* : for kinsmen), (4) الْيَتَامَىٰ (*al-yatāmā* : orphans), (5) الْمَسَاكِينَ (*al-masākīn* : the needy) and (6) ابْنِ السَّبِيلِ (*ibn as-sabīl* : the wayfarer).

Out of these words, the first word: لله (*lillāh*) serves as the main heading under which this one fifth shall be disbursed. In other words, the statement made is that all these disbursements are exclusively for the sake of Allah. Then, the introduction of this word at this place carries a particular wisdom of its own which has been pointed out to in Tafsīr Mazhari. It has been said there that wealth and property coming out of *ṣadaqāt* (charities) had been declared unlawful for the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his family since it did not suit his station as a prophet of Allah, and also because it was a portion taken out from the wealth and properties of Muslims at large for the purpose of making these purified. The name given to such give outs in Ḥadīth is: اوساخ الناس (*awsākhu 'n-nās* : dirt removed from people). This is not fit for the high status of a prophet.

Since this verse has also given a share out of the one fifth of spoils to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his family, therefore, it was particularly stressed that this share did not wind its way through what was owned by people, instead, it was directly from Allah Ta'ālā - as mentioned a little earlier that the property of *ghanīmah* or spoils goes out from the ownership of disbelievers and passes directly into the sole ownership of Allah Ta'ālā. Thereafter, it is distributed as a reward from Him. Therefore, to indicate that the share given to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his kinsmen from the one fifth of spoils had nothing to do with charities given by people, instead, was grace and reward directly from Allah Ta'ālā, it was said at the beginning of the verse: لِلَّهِ (*lillāh*) which means that all this property belongs to Allah Ta'ālā, really and specifically, and it will be disbursed according to His command alone on heads as determined.

So, there remain five real categories of disbursement from this one fifth - the Messenger, the kinsmen, the orphan, the needy and the wayfarer. Then, there are different degrees of entitlement among them. One marvels at the eloquence of the Holy Qur'ān as to how delicately it has described the difference in their degrees of entitlement. For instance, the intensifying particle: لام (*lām*) has been affixed before the first two of these five as in: لِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَى (for the Messenger and for the kinsmen) - and the rest of the three kinds have been conjoined together and mentioned without the particle *lām*.

The particle *lām* is used for particularization in the Arabic language. In the word: لِلَّهِ (*lillāh*), the particle *lām* denotes exclusivity of ownership which means that Allah Ta'ālā is the real owner of everything - and in: لِلرَّسُولِ (*lirrasūl*), the objective is to highlight the speciality of entitlement since Allah Ta'ālā bestowed the right of disbursing and distributing the one fifth of spoils on the noble Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. The purport of this arrangement has been ably stated by Imām Ṭaḥāwī and Tafsīr Maḥzarī when they said: Though, five names have been mentioned at this place with reference to the heads of disbursement of one fifth of spoils but, in reality, the entire right of disposal rests with the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم who shall expend the one fifth of spoils over these five categories at his discretion. This is similar to what was said in the first verse of Sūrah al-Anfāl where the injunction about the entire collection of spoils was that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had the right to expend it where he wished or give it to whom he wished, all at his discretion.

Though, the verse (41) وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ (And know that whatever spoils you receive) by dividing the whole of spoils over five shares, declared that four of these were the right of the *mujāhidīn*, but the fifth share continued to be governed by the same injunction which had left its disbursement at the discretion of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. However, the only addition made there was that five heads of expenditure relating to this fifth share were spelt out and that it will keep revolving within these. But, according to the majority of expert scholars, it was not incumbent on him that he should make five equal shares out of this one fifth and distribute it equally over the five categories of recipients mentioned in the verse. Instead, what was necessary was no more than that he would give the one fifth of spoils within the same