

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

"O YOU WHO BELIEVE!"

VOLUME 1



JAMEEL KERBALLI

O YOU WHO BELIEVE

Reflections from the Holy Qur'an

Volume 1

Compiled by Jameel Kermalli

O You Who Believe...
Reflections from the Holy Qur'an

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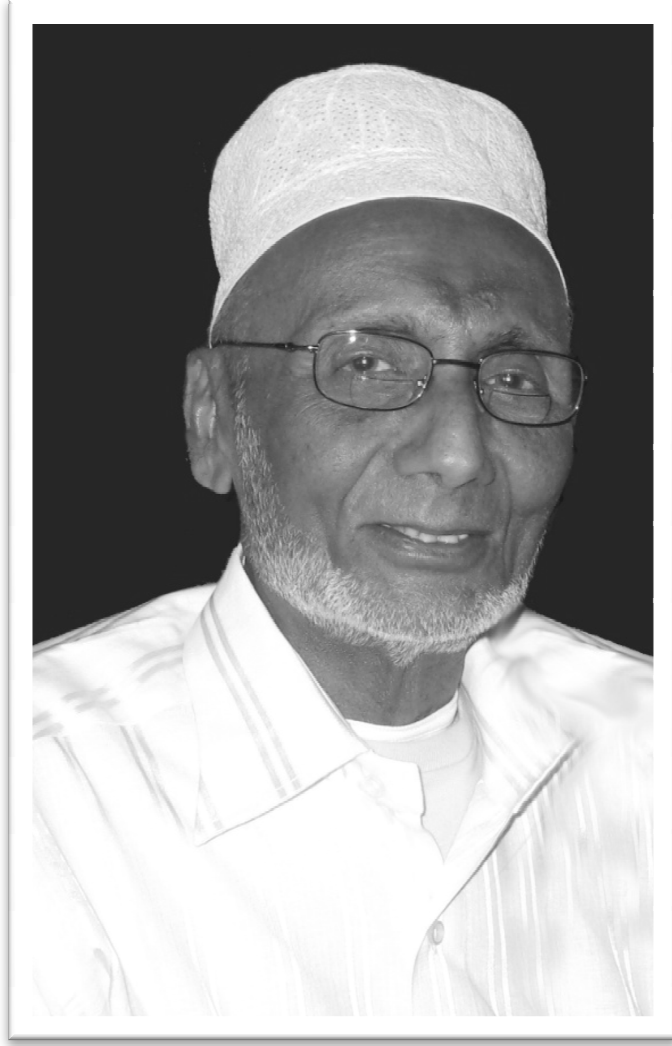
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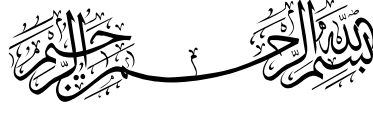
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يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ۖ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً
مَرْضِيَّةً ۖ فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي ۖ وَادْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي

“O soul at peace! Return to your Lord, pleased, pleasing!
Then enter among My servants! And enter My paradise!”
(Al-Qur’an, 89:27-30)

This book is dedicated to the loving memory of
Marhoom (Late) Al-Haj Aliraza Mohamedhusein Mulla Nanji
who passed away on Sha’ban 12th, 1430 AH / August 4th, 2009 in
Nairobi, Kenya. For the reward of his soul and the souls of all of the
deceased, please gift it with a recitation of Suratul Fatiha.



In The Name Of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful,

Introduction by the Compiler

The book is divided into an *Introductory Part* (which has EIGHT Sections), NINE parts (each parts contains TEN verses from al-Qur'an; last part contains 9 verses – 89 total), and a *Conclusion*.

INTRODUCTORY part:

- i. O' Believers in Qur'an
 - ii. Believers in Qur'an
 - iii. Degrees of Believers
 - iv. Believers Conviction
 - v. Believers and Muslims
 - vi. Believers
 - vii. Ali
1. The FIRST contains details and text on the first 10 Verses from al-Qur'an which begin with O' You Who Believe! (79 verses remaining).
 2. The SECOND part contains details and text on the next 10 Verses (11-20) from al-Qur'an which begin with O' You Who Believe!
 3. The THIRD (of the nine) part contains details and text on the next 10 Verses (21-30) from al-Qur'an which begin with O' You Who Believe!
 4. The FOURTH (of the nine) part contains details and text on the next 10 Verses (31-40) from al-Qur'an which begin with O' You Who Believe!
 5. The FIFTH (of the nine) part contains details and text on the next 10 Verses (41-50) from al-Qur'an which begin with O' You Who Believe!
 6. The SIXTH (of the nine) part contains details and text on the next 10 Verses (51-60) from al-Qur'an which begin with O' You Who Believe!
 7. The SEVENTH (of the nine) part contains details and text on the next 10 Verses (61-70) from al-Qur'an which begin with O' You Who Believe!

8. The EIGHTH (of the nine) part contains details and text on the next 10 Verses (71-80) from al-Qur'an which begin with O' You Who Believe!

The NINTH and last part contains details and text on the last 9 Verses (81-89) from al-Qur'an which begin with O' You Who Believe! (79 verses remaining).

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Jameel Kermalli is a graduate of the University of Southampton, UK with a Bachelors of Science (Hons.) degree in Psychology, majoring in Health Psychology. He is also a Board Certified Psychotherapist and a Board Certified Biofeedback Practitioner, specializing in EEG Biofeedback. His Doctorate is in Naturopathic Medicine and his areas of specialty include Homeopathic, Nutritional and Herbal Medicines. Jameel is also a Board Certified Nutritional Consultant.

He graduated on top of his class from *al-Hussaini Madressa* in Dar es Salaam and is a teacher in Islamic studies.

He has his own private practice in Lake Mary, Florida.

Jameel is also part of the team that has developed *The Hajj Board Game*, the first of its kind, due for release very soon. The Hajj Board Game, resembling monopoly, summarizes the Pilgrimage to the House of Allah, combining education, relaxation and mystery. The game is suitable for adults and youths, those going to Hajj, those having gone to Hajj and those who have not yet been blessed to undertake this sacred journey.

Jameel is also the author of a highly researched book, **The Truth About Islam - A Contemporary Approach Towards Understanding Islamic beliefs and Practices**, which is under preparation. This book is a scientific work relating to the Concept of Energy in The Universe, its Intelligence, and how Islamic beliefs and practices accord totally with known scientific and modern discoveries.

Please go through the site to get details: www.zahrafoundation.com

A brief Summary of the *Zahra Foundation* and their activities:

1. ISLAM, The Absolute Truth CD BOOK

DESCRIPTION

1. A scientific work relating to the Concept of Energy in the Universe, its Intelligence, and how Islamic beliefs and practices accord totally with known scientific and modern discoveries.

2. In the book, there is an explanation of the nature of the Aimmah (AS) using Science and how/why they are infallible, mistake-free and are blessed with maximum knowledge possible.

3. Also, Shia Fiqh - Jurisprudence - is explained using science; also Shia Beliefs and Practices.

2 & 3. The FIQH (ISLAMIC LAWS) CD's (TWO)

DESCRIPTION

1. All Fiqh Rulings in a Fiqh-Dictionary, where all the crosswords and other puzzles are generated - hundreds and thousands ...

4. The PUZZLE Books CD

DESCRIPTION

LEVEL ONE (25) CROSS WORD (05) CRISS CROSS (5) ISLAMIC MIND BENDERS (15) ISLAMIC CLOZE (10) WORD SEARCH

LEVEL TWO (25) CROSS WORDS (05) CRISS CROSS (50) LETTER TILES (5) ISLAMIC MIND BENDERS (50) TELEPHONE PUZZLE

LEVEL THREE (05) CROSS WORD (05) CRISS CROSS (75) QUR'ANIC RIDDLES (50) CRYPTOGRAM (50) FALLEN PHRASES

5. The HAJJ Game CD

DESCRIPTION

The Hajj Game, resembling monopoly, summarizes the Pilgrimage to the House of Allah, combining education, relaxation and mystery. The game is suitable for adults and youths, those going to Hajj, those having gone to Hajj and those who have not yet been blessed to undertake this sacred journey.

The HAJJ was developed in such a way so as to be played again and again, creating mystery and excitement every time it is played. It comes with a glossary of terms so that the game and the Hajj rituals are better understood. The questions are well designed, leading and exciting. Arabic Language questions were introduced as a way for

people to learn some bits and pieces of the language so that they can have no conversation problems whilst in Hajj.

6. The AIMMAH Game CD - resembling Monopoly

Madrasa Principals can make orders for the game to be used by students again and again, so the Life Histories of the 14 Infallible are learned.

The game was designed for the young and old, to experience the joy, thrill, mystery and challenge of a life-time.

CONTENTS:

- Instructions
- Older Players - 840 - Q and A
- Children Players - 280 - Q and A
- Children Players - Aimmah Riddles and Solve the Puzzles
- Older Players - Quranic Riddles and Solve the Puzzles
- Sayings, Stories, Deeds Which Invite Happiness and Displeasure of Allah.

7. Islamic Courses on CD

- Concentration in Prayer, 25 Strategies and 30-Day Workbook
- Spiritual Journey, Self-Building, Self-Purification
- ARSH - Throne of Allah - Details and Power of The Throne
- SATAN - the Accursed
- TASBIH of Fatima Zahra (AS)

Foreword

A tribute to Ada – An icon of community service

In a famous hadith, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has said that:

“When a person dies, all of his deeds are terminated except for three types:

1. An ongoing and perpetual charity he leaves behind;
2. Knowledge which was conveyed by him (to others) from which others benefit (a knowledge that continues to be implemented after his passing);
3. And a virtuous son or daughter he leaves behind who prays for him and asks for forgiveness on his behalf.

This foreword is a testimony of a personality who has been blessed with all the above three means of the **Thawabe Jaariya** (perpetual reward).

Indeed, the book you have in your hands has a unique history. It is a story of a believer whose lifelong dream was to have a compilation of the tafseer (exegesis) of the 89 verses of the Holy Quran where Allah ﷻ addresses the faithful with the words “**O you who believe**”. The individual who had this lifelong dream had actually handwritten the 89 verses with a hope that one day, he would be able to complete this task. Alas, this was not to happen during his lifetime. However, as he breathed his last breath, he managed to elicit a promise from his daughter, Kaniz Mavani of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada to have such a book published... This believer was none other than the late al-Haj Aliraza Nanji.

The compilation you are holding contains the 89 verses with the tafsir of the renowned Allamah Taba'taba'i, Ayatullah Sayyid Faqih Imami and S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali. This is an priceless compilation for those not well versed in Islamic thought as well as our Zakireen.

I sincerely thank the Almighty Allah ﷻ for the blessing of being a close confidant of al-Haj Aliraza Nanji, whom I consider an exemplary leader, teacher, role model and to me personally - a real friend in need and as such, it

is my privilege to write a few words of tribute to this very special man who touched many lives.

The name al-Haj Aliraza Nanji (fondly known as Ada), stood out as an icon of community service, touching humility, modesty, simplicity and contagious spirituality. His unassuming demeanor, his lean physique, his soft spoken tone, and above all his passion for imparting religious knowledge especially to the young were the hallmarks of a leader who inspired many towards community service. Truly the adage, “Sayyidul Qawm Khadimuhum” (The true leader of a community is the one who is the greatest servant towards them) could not be more apt in describing the essence and his style of his community service.

Al-Haj Aliraza Nanji was an accomplished social worker with an enormous passion and appetite for tabligh (propagation and education of the faith of Islam). In the last 40 years he had not only established numerous Madaris (Islamic schools) in Kenya but was also instrumental playing a leading role in establishing a boarding school in Nakuru, Tanzania. This school caters for the underprivileged students from all walks of life between the ages of five to twenty.

As one who championed the cause for the less fortunate in society and service to humanity in general, he devoted great efforts in setting up a medical centre at Riruta, Kenya on the outskirts of the capital city of Nairobi providing medical facilities to the deserving citizens of the country - irrespective of religion or racial background.

He was a founding member and chairman of the *Hajj Assistance Committee* which has been providing services to the hujjaj for the past 25 years. Since the inception of the *Hajj Assistance Committee* he performed all 25 Hajj and in spite of terminal illness at an advanced stage, he defied all odds and performed his last Hajj in December 2008 while at the same time, attending celebrations to mark the 25th anniversary of *Hajj Assistance Committee*.

The Hujjaj who make the pilgrimage through the auspices of group come from every corner of the globe, including those from other madhabs (Islamic denominations) as well. Those of us who have had the privilege of seeing him in action in the Holy Land often wonder where he derived his energy from! He

instilled in his team of volunteers the concept of providing service with a smile with the late Aliraza Bhai leading from the front!

He had been the Headmaster (Principal) of Hydery Madressa in Nairobi for close to 30 years and under his guidance, the Madressa was one of the first ones to organize a formal teacher's training program.

He was the main architect of the common syllabus for all Madaaris and a large parts of the syllabus has been incorporated within the syllabus of a number of Islamic weekend schools throughout the world.

I vividly recall how hard he tried to promote these text books in the Western Madressa in the eighties just as the community was settling down in the UK, USA and Canada and as a result, today thousands of students continue to benefit from his efforts.

In the early seventies when Aliraza Bhai had migrated to Canada, he played a pivotal role in establishing the Madressa in Toronto. His guidance at youth camps, his subtle attempts to ameliorate tensions within the community, his personal charity, and much more are all remembered.

Al-Haj Aliraza Nanji, in his pursuit to serve the less fortunate members of our society, travelled regularly to India and contributed tremendously in building flats for Sadaats and non-Sadaats as well as contributing towards building of mosques and madressas.

It is a mark of esteem and his remembrance of the ultimate journey (of death) that as the very person who played the role of a corpse in producing the "Ghusl, Kafan, and Dafan" video many years ago, was for a change and became benefactor of the duty taught by that very production - a rare occasion for him to receive a personal benefit from his tireless efforts of providing service to humanity.

These are but a few of the known services of Marhum Aliraza Nanji.

As a silent worker, the true spectrum of his charitable involvements are only known to himself and Allah ﷻ.

In those efforts, he was blessed with the unflinching support given to him by his beloved wife Nargis Bai, his loving daughter Kaniz, caring sons Onali and

Mohamed and his entire family. They have enabled Ada to be of such splendid service to community and humanity at large.

But alas, Jab Ahmade Mursal Na Rahe, to kaun rahega - 'If the sent Ahmad (Prophet Muhammad) can not remain (forever on this Earth), then who (of us) can remain alive forever?'

His passing away, is indeed a great loss to all of us and we feel sad that the community has lost yet another one of the towering personalities of his generation, which has contributed so much to the welfare of the community.

We pray for his maghfirat

His Excellency Manzoorali Kanani

Honorary Consul & Permanent Representative to UNEP & UN-Habitat of Union Of Comoros

Dedication to a Man of Struggle - ADA

It is with great sadness that our community lost ADA - Haji Aliraza bhai Nanji May Almighty shower his blessings on his soul.

I was first inspired by his work in the 90's when I was the secretary of Tabligh Sub Committee of KSI Jamaat of Dar es Salaam and since 1992, I was always guided by his spirituality. Indeed, his entire focus was to educate children and youth in teaching them the correct method of theology of the school of thought of Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام.

He personally had put in a lot of efforts to prepare the first text books of the Madressh and these have become very useful to almost all the global madaris - not only Africa. Since those years he had strived very hard not only for the Madressah, but he was also the pioneer of tabligh activities in Kenya.

I remember in the year 1994, myself and Dr. Shiraz Dato were looking for a venue for our youth camp and as soon as we informed ADA, he said, "Why not come to Nakuru Rasul al-Akram School" - and that is how the first batch of 35 students left for the *Nakuru Summer Camp* in 1995. In fact he was the backbone of all such camps handled since 1995 to 2002 in which over 600 youths (boys & girls) participated from more than 14 Jamaats in Africa.

He was totally devoted in the propagation work and one of the excellent works he performed was in establishing the *Bilal Muslim Mission* of Nairobi & Nakuru which till today is producing Shia reverters in that area.

In 2002 when we established the *Al-Itrah Foundation* in Dar es Salaam, our main aim and goal was to translate the Holy Qur'an Commentary into Kiswahili and from the year that we started to publish such translated versions in Juzuu of full Swahili, he always supported this move and told me that all of the Qur'ans which were sent to him were collected and very few were distributed, when I inquired the reason, he said, "The day we finish all chapters in 30 different volumes, that is when he will start distributing complete set to a Muballigh who can read full Qur'an at his own time in Swahili."

Time was not in his favour and by the time we reached Juz 26, ADDA had returned to his LORD.

He was one of the pillars of tabligh in the community and the world will remember him for many years to come.

When he was on chair of AFTAB and it was for the first time he made a point of calling a conference on HILAL and tabligh's way forward in the community and much more was achieved during his time.

Due to his struggle, today we all remember his firm commitment as far as Islam's propagation is concerned and he was always very humble to say YES to most of the activities.

Today, the Khoja and African communities have lost a person who was the main focus of movement of the Islamic system in this area.

Today, we in East Africa drew inspiration from ADA and it will continue with the challenges. We hope to continue the struggle with unity, tolerance and mutual acceptance.

His unique approach in solving the HILAL issue after the conference will always be remembered as a dynamic institution he conducted under AFTAB as indeed, today, this community has lost a fatherly personality who had vision in Tabligh to move it forward.

On behalf of my family, the Tabligh Board of KSI Jamaat & Al-Itrah Foundation, we extend our heartfelt condolences to his family members and to the community of Nairobi - Kenya.

With Salaams and duas
Mehboob Jafferli H. K. Somji
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
8th July 2010

The Way I Knew Marhoom Al-Haj Alireza Nanji

Surely if we try to describe Marhoom al-Haj Alireza Nanji, we won't be able to accomplish that in just a mere paper, however we can group his personality into various segments and this is because of his high integrity and weighty being in the area of propagation (of the faith of Islam).

Initially I met this great man in 1993 in a seminar on religion held in Nairobi, Kenya where he was active in the field of tabligh. The discussion at that gathering was how propagation can be enacted at a faster speed and how the various challenges can be faced.

I had no experience in this field since I had just finished my Hawza education. After the seminar, Marhoom Alireza took me to one of the centers called Kirigiti situated in the Kiambu District and it was in November of 1993, I started working with Marhoom Al-Hajj Alireza Nanji.

I am surely advantaged to have worked with this great personality for the period of 15 years, having faced different challenges in the field of tabligh. He was the model mentor who taught me this difficult work of propagation and instructed me as to way forward towards success in all of my daily endeavours.

He was a teacher whom, if one can appreciate the below traits of his noble character can truly benefit from him because all of his propagational activities were not for his own ego or self.

We can categorize his living into the following segments:

1. Piety

Allah ﷻ has said that for one who is pious, Allah makes his acts easy to do.

In all areas I had travelled with him or even when I was in his house, I don't recall seeing him ever neglecting the night prayers. He was actively talking about prayers and pilgrimage performance and he lived a simple life. He didn't want to be above others and his clothing was simple.

2. Cleanliness

Most of those who knew him talk of his attire and smartness. He often talked of cleanliness as being a part and parcel of a believer. So in his eyes, for one to be matured religiously, he had to clean in order to attain esoteric guidance.

3. Ordinary

Among the friends whom I met and learnt a lot from is Mzee al-Haj Alireza Nanji. Though he came from a rich family in Nairobi, but if you see how he dressed, the vehicle he used to use and the standard he was, one could notice that he lived like Imam Ali عليه السلام.

4. Hero

He was recognized by his herous entity in the field of propagation or in any disipline he went into. He could pacify the situation or make matters open without circumbulating so long as he was on the right path. Since saying the truth was his characteristic although it could be bitter.

5. Keeping Trusts (Amaana)

When he received something from a person, he would keep it safely, record down (what we was given) and then later on, pass it back to the owner without hesitation.

6. Remitter

In all his life he participated fully in using his resources and money for the cause of Islam. He wouldn't hesitate serving the cause of Allah ﷻ whenever he could and when others declined to use their resources, he pitched in to help.

7. He Did His Own

I recall visiting with him in one of the Bilal centers situated in Western Kenya (Busia, Vihiga). Him being an old man by this time, however he would still drive on his own fro home to the village - a distance of about 1,500 kilometers. He would walk in the village without bearing in mind his status and all the while, enduring the hardship of the roads in the upcountry.

Mzee al-Haj Alireza Nanji had a role model of a personality which showered him with fame and recognition in all parts he visited. Most of the believers in the remote areas of Africa knew his mobile number and they could communicate freely on matters pertaining to the centers.

He used to give pieces of advice to Mualims & Mualimas (male and female propagationists) to the way forward to success. He encouraged the youth to get married so that Shi'ite society might grow – and he gave specific encouragement to the Mualims (teachers of the community) so that they could take a prominent role in leading the society which is behind them.

He used to say, “Where are the Muslims in terms of technology or even going to the moon as we talk of seeing the moon during the Month of Ramadhan, that people should go as per the generation.”

He wanted to see hard work prevailing in the society, as hard work is avenue to success.

Surely our society has endured a loss which will never be recovered...

May almighty Allah rest his soul in peace

Sheikh Salman

Ahlul Bayt Centre

Arusha, Tanzania

INTRODUCTION

The religion of Islam emphasizes all Muslims, men and women, to try to understand the verses of al-Qur'an, in as much detail. The Aimmah عليه السلام are the foremost in this knowledge, followed by the great scholars in Islam, most of whose writings have been referred to in developing this certificate course. All verses in this course have **O Believer** in them, there is advice in each one of them, and so we have explored each one of them.

Goals and Objectives

There are 89 verses in al-Qur'an that have **O Believers** or begin with this remark, and this course will take you through each verse, its revelation and its understanding. Moreover, students will learn exactly why Allah ﷻ revealed such verses and what He wants from us. After all, the address is to all believers, and not Muslims – those who have brought with them belief, not only Islam.

Acknowledgments

This entire course was developed, and is a result of reading and researching many books in the Muslim World. Zahra Foundation takes no credit towards the development of this course. Tafasir Books written by Mir Ahmed Ali, al-Taba'taba'i, some other great Shia commentators of al-Qur'an like al-Ayashi, al-Shaikh Baqir al-Irawani, al-Mujahid, al-Sayyid Mustafa al-Khumeini and so forth, have all been instrumental towards the development of this course.

Together with the above, a number of books that have collected traditions of the Aimmah عليه السلام and the Prophet ﷺ were also helpful as these sacred 14 are The Masters in Commenting al-Qur'an and Allah ﷻ blessed these Perfect Souls with the highest possible understanding of the Divine Text.

Ali – The Foremost Believer

A companion was once standing with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ next to the Ka'bah when they saw Ali b. Abi Talib عليه السلام coming toward them. The

Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *My brother is coming toward us.* Then the Prophet ﷺ faced the Ka'bah and hit it with his hand and said:

I swear to the One who has my life in His hand that Ali and his Shia are the winners on the Day of Judgment. Ali was the first to believe in me. Ali is the most loyal to Allah. Ali is the most serious person in following the orders of Allah. Ali is the most just with his people. Ali is the fairest divider. Ali has the highest status in Allah's eyes.

Then the following verse was revealed:

Verily, those who believe and do good deeds are the best created beings.^{1 and 2}

Imam Husain عليه السلام's sermon on the day of Ashura – 10th of Muharram al-Haram:

Now then! Consider my family, and ponder as to who I am and then admonish yourselves. Then do you consider that killing me and plundering my sanctity and respect is lawful for you?

Am I not the grandson of your Prophet and the son of his Vicegerent and cousin, who was the foremost in believing and the bearer of witness upon everything that the Prophet had brought from Allah?

When the verse: *and warn your tribe of near relatives*³ was revealed, the Prophet ﷺ asked Ali to invite the tribe of his near relatives at the house of Abu Talib. Before the leaders of the Quraysh, like Isa, he said:

O Relatives! By Allah, I and I alone can offer you the most precious of gifts, the good of this world and of the hereafter. Allah has commanded me to call you to that which is the best-His worship.

I, therefore, call upon you to come forward and testify to my prophethood. Who among you will help me and join me in my task, and be my brother, my lieutenant, my vicegerent and my successor?

Ali was the only person who came forward in response to the call of the Prophet. Without delay, the Prophet declared:

¹ Al-Qur'an – Chapter 98, Verse 7

² Bihar al-Anwar 35:246

³ Al-Qur'an – Chapter 26, Verse 214

Verily Ali is my brother, my vicegerent and my successor. From this day, it has been made obligatory upon every one to obey the superior authority of Ali.

Mir Ahmed Ali writes that:

The above event has been recorded by a large number of notable scholars and prominent traditionists in their books, for example, Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abu Hatam, Ibn Marduwayh and Abu Na'im, and Bayhaqi, who has recorded it in both of his books, *Sunan* and *Dala'il*, and Tha'labi and Tabari in their great commentaries of surah al-Shu'ara. Tabari has recorded this also in his *Tarikh al-Umam wal-Muluk* (i.e. the history of the various people and their rulers), vol. 2, p. 217, in somewhat different words, and Ibn Athir has recorded this among the traditions universally accepted to be genuine in his *Tarikh al-Kamil*, vol 2, p. 22.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said about this verse,

And the foremost (in faith) will be foremost (in receiving rewards), those are they who will be brought nearest (to Allah), in gardens of bliss.⁴

The Prophet ﷺ replied,

Jibraeel told me they ("the foremost in faith") are Ali and his Shia. They are the foremost in receiving rewards; they are the ones nearest to Allah and they are honored by Allah.⁵

Virtues of Imam Ali عليه السلام Confirming His Status, and as The Original and Foremost Believer

1. al-Qummi (in his book *Stages of The Hereafter - Manazil al-Akhirah*) quotes al-Saduq who quotes from Abdullah, son of Abbas who says that he heard the Prophet ﷺ say:

The one who doubts the greatness and high honour of Ali will arise from his grave in a manner that in his neck will be bound a collar with

⁴ Al-Qur'an – Chapter 56, Verse 10-12

⁵ Amaali of al-Tusi 1:70

three hundred thorns in it, and on each thorn Shaytan will be seated who will be spitting on his face with rage.

2. The Prophet ﷺ has said:

O Ali, you are to me as Harun was to Musa. You are my brother in this world and the hereafter. Your flesh is my flesh; your blood is my blood.

You and I are from the same light.

3. The fifth Shiite Infallible, al-Baqir عليه السلام says:

When the verse was revealed: *...And everything We confined into a Manifesting Guide.*⁶

There were Abu Bakr and Umar who asked the Prophet if the manifesting guide was the Torah, the Evangel, or the Qur'an – the Prophet replied negative.

The Prophet then turned towards Ali, son of Abu Talib, and he said: Verily! This is the manifesting guide, in whom God has contained the knowledge of everything! The Prophet continued; O group of men! There is no branch of knowledge, which God did not bestow on me and I have conveyed that knowledge to Ali. Verily! God has contained in me knowledge and I have contained it in Ali. I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate.

4. Once, Ali, son of AbuTalib عليه السلام passed by riding the Prophet's mule and Salman was present among the people. So Salman said:

(O people)! Do you not rise to detain him and ask him questions? By Allah, Who split the grain and created the breathing creatures, no one but he (i.e. Ali) will inform you about the secrets of your Prophet. Indeed, he is the most learned about this earth and its chief element on which it rests. If you miss him, you will miss the knowledge and deny the people (its benefit).⁷

He said:

⁶ Al-Qur'an – Chapter 36, Verse 12

⁷ al-Amali

Ask me before you lose me. By Allah, if you ask me about anything that could happen up to the Day of Judgment, I will tell you about it. Ask me about the Book of Allah, because by Allah there is no (Qur'anic) verse that I do not know whether it was revealed during the night or the day, or whether it was revealed on a plain or on a mountain.⁸

5. In *al-Amali* by al-Mufid, Saeed, son of al-Musayyib is quoted to have said:

There is no verse between the two covers of the Qur'an, except that I know for whom it was revealed and when it was revealed, and whether on a plain, leveled land or upon a mountain. Surely, here in my breast is abundant knowledge! So, put your questions to me before you do not find me among yourselves, for when you have lost me, you will not find anyone uttering the words I utter.

6. Ali says in the *Peak of Eloquence* (in several of his remarkable sermons):

They (the Aimmah) are the trustees of His secrets, shelter for His affairs, source of knowledge about Him, centre of His wisdom, valleys for His books and mountains of His religion. With them Allah straightened the bend of religion's back and removed the trembling of its limbs.

None in the Islamic community can be taken at par with the progeny of the Prophet (Ale Muhammad). One who was under their obligation cannot be matched with them. They are the foundation of religion and pillar of Belief. The forward runner has to turn back to them while the follower has to overtake them. They possess the chief characteristics for vicegerency. In their favor exists the will and succession (of the Prophet). This is the time when right has returned to its owner and diverted to its centre of return.

No person in the world can be brought at par with them, nor can any one be deemed their equal in sublimity, because the world is over laden with their obligations and has been able to secure eternal blessings only through their guidance.

⁸ al-Amali

They are the corner stone and foundation of religion and the sustenance for its life and survival. They are such strong pillars of knowledge and belief that they can turn away the stormy flow of doubt and suspicion. They are such middle course among the paths of excess and backwardness that if some one goes far towards excess and exaggeration or falls behind then unless he comes back or steps forward to that middle course he cannot be on the path of Islam.

They possess all the characteristics, which give the superiority in the right for vicegerency and leadership. Consequently, no one else in the ummah enjoys the right of patronage and guardianship. That is why the Prophet declared them his vicegerents and successors.

He is the leader (Imam) of all who exercise fear (of Allah) and a light for those who seek guidance. He is a lamp whose flame is burning, a meteor whose light is shining and a flint whose spark is bright. His conduct is upright, his behavior is guiding, his speech is decisive and his decision is just. Allah sent him after an interval from the previous Prophets when people had fallen into errors of action and ignorance. Allah may have mercy on you.

7. In *al-Amali* by al-Mufid, the Prophet has said:

Allah, Most High, created the souls two thousand years earlier than the bodies attached it to the Throne and ordered them to greet me and obey me. So, the first one among men who greeted me and expressed his obedience to me was the soul of Ali.

8. Jabir, son of Abdullah al-Ansari reports a tradition that the great al-Mufid (author of more than 190 books and treatises) writes in his book *al-Amali*, the angel Jibraeel descended unto the Prophet, and said:

Allah commands you to address the people around you, informing them about the excellence of Ali, son of Abu Talib عليه السلام and has commanded all the angels to listen to what you will say. In addition, He reveals to you that whoever will oppose you about his affair, he shall enter Hell fire, and Paradise is for him who obeys you.

Then, the Prophet caused the announcement, (join) the congregational prayers. People assembled and the Prophet climbed the pulpit and commenced first by saying; I seek refuge from Shaytan,

the condemned and I begin in the Name of Allah, Most Merciful. Then he said:

O People! I am the bringer of good tidings and I am the Warner. I am the Prophet, born in *Ummul-Qura*. I am now conveying to you, from Allah, Most High, about a man whose flesh is from my flesh and whose blood is from my blood; he is treasure house of the knowledge and he is the one who Allah has selected from this community, chosen him, befriended him and guided.

Allah created me and him from one essence and blessed me with the Prophethood and blessed him with the task of purveying on my behalf. He made me city of the knowledge and made him its gate. He made him a treasurer of the knowledge and the source from whom divine laws are received. He blessed him with specific divine appointment, made clear his position, forewarned against animosity to him and made affection towards him obligatory, enjoining all people to obey him.

And He, Most High, says; Whoever hates him, hates Me and whoever befriends him, befriends Me. Whoever rises against him, rises against Me and whoever opposes him, opposes Me. Whoever disobeys him, disobeys Me and whoever harms him, harms Me. Whoever despises him, despises Me. And whoever loves him, loves Me and whoever obeys him, obeys Me.

Whoever pleases him, pleases Me and whoever protects him, protects Me. Whoever fights him, fights Me and whoever helps him, helps Me. Whoever intends foul against him, does so against Me and whoever plots against him, plots against Me.

O People! Listen to my command and obey it. For I warn you against the severe punishment by Allah. On the Day when every soul will find present before it every good deed, it has done; and whatever evil it has done, it will wish that there be between it and the evil it has done, a great distance. And Allah cautions you of Himself.

Then he took Amir al-Mu'mineen (Ali) and said; O people! This is the Master of the Believers and the Annihilator of the Infidels and the Proof of Allah to all humankind. O Allah! I have indeed, conveyed and

they are your servants. And You are able to reform them so reform them by Your mercy, O Most Merciful.

Then he came down from the pulpit and the Angel Jibraeel came unto him saying; O Muhammad, Allah sends you Peace and says, May Allah reward you best for having conveyed. You have indeed conveyed the message from your Sustainer and given your community the correct advice. You have pleased the faithful and constrained the infidels. O Muhammad, your cousin will be stricken with affliction and because of him, some will be surely tried. And those who do wrong shall soon come to know what punishment awaits them.

9. Saeed, son of al-Musayyib has said:

I heard a man ask Ibn Abbas about Ali b. Abi Talib عليه السلام. Abbas told him: Surely, Ali is the one who prayed towards both the Qiblah and swore allegiance to the Prophet on both occasions. He never worshipped an idol nor did he divine by the arrows. He was born a Muslim and did not associate any partner to Him, even for a wink.

The man said; I did not ask you that! I want to know from you about the sword which he proudly carried over his shoulder, came to Basra and killed forty thousand. Then he went to Syria, confronted the Arab leaders, pitting one against the other and then killed them. Then he came to Nahrawan and killed the Muslims up to the last one.

Ibn Abbas told him: Who do you think is more knowledgeable, Ali or myself? He said: If I had thought Ali to be more knowledgeable, I would not have come to you!

Upon hearing this, Ibn Abbas was enraged and he said; May your mother mourn you! Ali is the one who taught me. And his knowledge is from the Prophet ﷺ and the Prophet received knowledge from Allah, Most High. So, the knowledge of the Prophet is from Allah, and Ali's knowledge is from the Prophet and my knowledge is from Ali. And the knowledge of all the companions of Muhammad, رضي الله عنهم when compared to Ali's knowledge is just like a drop in the seven oceans.⁹

10. The Prophet ﷺ has said:

⁹ al-Amali

The victory of Ali on the day of the battle of the Ditch is much more in worth than the devotional worship performed by the created beings of both the worlds (seen and unseen) till the Day of Judgment.

Al-Khumeini confirms the sincerity Ali's in every second of his life (since the beginnings of creation), that even one strike of his sword on the day of Khaybar was, is and continues to be weightier in the books of Allah than the worship of the entire creation, including the non-living, the angels and the jinn.

I swear by the station of Ali b. Abi Talib عليه السلام that even if all the Archangels البرئيات and all the Prophets of Allah, except the Seal of Prophets محمد ﷺ, who is the lord of Ali عليه السلام and all others, if they try to utter a single Takbir (i.e. Allahu-Akbar - Allah ﷻ is Great) of Ali's, they will not be able to do it!

11. This Ali is the first person to believe in my prophethood and will be the first person to shake hands with me on the Day of Judgment. He is the truest person and the wisest discriminator in this nation. He will differentiate between truth and falsehood and he is the ruler of the faithful.
12. Ali is from me and I am from Ali and nobody can discharge my duty as a messenger except me or Ali.
13. Ammar! When you find Ali walking on one path and the people walking on a different track, then follow the path of Ali and leave the people. Ali will never lead you to destruction and will never misguide you.
14. Fatima! Are you not pleased with this, that Allah cast a glance on the dwellers of earth and selected from them two men; one of them your father and the other your husband?
15. Ali is the commander of the faithful. Allah, the Mighty and Glorious, appointed him wali in His highest heaven and made His angels the witnesses, and certainly Ali is the representative of Allah and His proof, and he is the Imam (leader) of all the Muslims.
16. There are three foremost persons: Yusha b. Nun, who was the foremost in believing in the prophethood of Musa, the companion Yasin, who was the

foremost in believing in the prophethood of Isa, and Ali b. Abi Talib, who is the foremost in believing in the prophethood of Muhammad.

Believers, According to Ali from Peak of Eloquence (Nahjul-Balagha)

- O' Creatures of Allah! The most beloved of Allah is he whom Allah has given power (to act) against his passions, so that his inner side is (submerged in) grief and the outer side is covered with fear.
- The lamp of guidance is burning in his heart.
- He has provided entertainment for the day that is to befall him.
- He regards what is distant to be near him and takes the hard to be light.
- He looks at and perceives; he remembers (Allah) and enhances (the tempo of his) actions.
- He drinks sweet water to whose source his way has been made easy.
- So he drinks to satisfaction and takes the level path.
- He has put off the clothes of desires and got rid of worries except one worry peculiar to him.
- He is safe from misguidance and the company of people who follow their passions.
- He has become the key to the doors of guidance, and the lock for the doors of destruction.
- He has seen his way and is walking on it.
- He knows his pillar (of guidance) and has crossed over his deep water.
- He has caught hold of the most reliable supports and the strongest ropes.
- He is on that level of conviction, which is like the brightness of the sun.

- He has set himself for Allah, the Glorified, for performance of the most sublime acts of facing all that befalls him and taking every step needed for it.
- He is the lamp in darkness.
- He is the dispeller of all blindness, key to the obscure, remover of complexities, and a guide in vast deserts.
- When he speaks, he makes you understand whereas when he remains silent then it is safe to do so.
- He did everything only for Allah and so Allah also made him His own. Consequently, he is like the mines of His faith and as a stump in His earth.
- He has enjoined upon himself (to follow) justice.
- The first step of his justice is the rejection of desires from his heart.
- He describes right and acts according to it.
- There is no good, which he has not aimed at, nor any likely place (of virtue) of the Qur'an.
- Therefore, the Qur'an is his guide and leader.
- He gets down when the Qur'an puts down his weight and he settles where the Qur'an settles him down.

The Characteristics of an Unfaithful Believer

- While the other (kind of) man is he who calls himself learned but he is not so.
- He has gleaned ignorance from the ignorant and misguidance from the misguided.
- He has set for the people a trap (made) of the ropes of deceit and untrue speech. He takes the Qur'an according to his own views and right after his passions.

- He makes people feel safe from big sins and takes light the serious crimes.
- He says that he is waiting for (clarification of) doubts but he remains plunged therein, and that he keeps aloof from innovations but actually, he is immersed in them.
- His shape is that of a man, but his heart is that of a beast.
- He does not know the door of guidance to follow or the door of misguidance to keep aloof there from.
- These are living dead bodies.

Believers and Muslims: Different Groups of People

The desert Arabs say:

*We believe. Say; You have no faith; but you (only) say - We have submitted our wills to Allah, for Faith has not yet entered your hearts. However, if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not belittle aught of your deeds: for Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.*¹⁰

Mir Ahmed Ali writes:

The desert Arabs, in general, were uncertain in their faith. Their hearts and minds were petty, and they thought of petty things, while Islam demands complete submission to the will of Allah. The reference here is to the Bani Asad who came to profess Islam in order to get charity during a famine.

This verse refers to the actual possibility of professing faith as lip-profession, without a deep, inward and living assurance of the heart, which in fact is the basis of reward given by Allah to His sincere servants. The lip-profession was resorted to because of many advantages available to the Muslims.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

Real submission to the will of Allah creates *iman* (conviction that enters and abides in the heart). So those who say; *We submit*, can be

¹⁰ Al-Qur'an, 49:14

called Muslims but they are not *mu'minin*, whereas *mu'min* is necessarily a Muslim. Islam is the outer circle and iman is the inner core. Islam is submission and iman is the full realization of the faith with complete conviction. Both can be verbal declaration without conviction, and both can be from the bottom of the heart, real and sincere.

A Believers' Conviction is Incomplete Without Certain Merits.

Be informed that you are expected to emulate the Sunnah of your Lord, the most Exalted, the most Great, then the Sunnah of your Prophet ﷺ, then the Sunnah of your Imam. Imam al-Rida عليه السلام is quoted on p. 241, vol. 2 of *Al-Kafi* as having said:

A believer does not reach the degree of conviction (iman) until he has acquired three merits:

- He follows a Sunnah from his Lord
- a Sunnah from his Prophet ﷺ
- and a Sunnah from his wali (master, Imam).
 - As for a Sunnah from his Lord, he has to conceal His secret; Allah, the most Exalted, the most Great, has said: *'He (alone) knows the unseen, and He makes no one acquainted with His mysteries, except a messenger with whom He is pleased...'*¹¹
 - As for a Sunnah of his Prophet ﷺ, it is tolerating people. Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, ordered His Prophet ﷺ to tolerate people, saying: *'Hold to forgiveness; command what is right.'*¹²
 - As for a Sunnah from his wali, it is taking to patience during trials and tribulations.

One who is expected to emulate an Attribute of his Lord whereby He is praised, there is no doubt that he is prepared to assume a great status and a

¹¹ Al-Qur'an, 72:26-27

¹² Al-Qur'an, 7:199

tremendous significance. It is so because Allah thus enables you to enter His abode which He chose and preferred for His friends, the elite ones, the loved ones, and it is Paradise. He, therefore, is bound to guide you to merits which make you look like the residents of such an abode so that you will be on par with the abode and with those who reside therein.

As for the abode itself, it is good and pure in the most perfect purity and light. Its residents are the prophets, messengers, martyrs and the truthful; therefore, the wisdom of the Wise One insists that there should be nobody inside this abode who looks like a stranger. Thus, you in such an abode will not look out of place.¹³

Through His munificence and mercy on you, He does not want you to abide except in the good and pure abode; therefore, His Divine care insists on guiding you to the most sublime of attributes, the most perfect, the most shiny, the most precious. He does not accept that you should emulate any merits except the ones which, due to their distinction, bring you sublimity and greatness, merits which He attributes to His own Self, praising thereby Himself. One whose merits are attributed to Him fits to reside in the abode related to Him. Since his neighbors in the said abode are friends of Allah, He has obligated him to adopt their mannerism. It is then that the Creator, Praise to Him, shall address his soul, which is now good and pure, having adopted such good and pure merits, saying,

O soul at rest and satisfied! Return to your Lord, well pleased and well-pleasing to Him! Enter, then, [your abode] among My devotees! Yes, enter My heaven!¹⁴

¹³ These statements, if absorbed, can turn the worship of a servant of Allah from one resulting from an effort to overcome reluctance to the world of adoration which is in sync with the nature of the mood. Since He wishes the residents of this abode to be all in harmony therein, He loves anything which brings about such harmony. If adoration is a hard undertaking in its first type, it is clear that the worship of a servant will then be involuntary, a manifestation of affectation, earning nothing more than rewards, whereas the true adoration is expected to lift the worshipper to the state of feeling at ease with the Lord of the Worlds. Such an ease makes the worshipper forget any hardship resulting from the effort to earn His Pleasure.

¹⁴ Al-Qur'an, 89:27-30

These merits are numerous. The Imam عليه السلام selected three of them in particular to be given preference, so much so that he described conviction as hinging on them:

First

- One has to keep his secret a secret because most people have shortcomings and are imperfect. But the attributes of perfection are so well known in their goodness, beauty and honor that people wish they have had them to adorn themselves by.
- Since they run contrarily to what the nafs wants, and since people's determination to oppose their nafs is weak, they feel reluctant to struggle to achieve the above.
- But when they find someone with the determination to adorn himself with them, they worry lest he, indeed, should acquire them and thus become superior to them.
- Since the nafs does not wish to lag behind the peers, actually it by nature wishes to surpass them, these people will try by all means to stop him from achieving his objective with their actions, statements and tricks.
- One person cannot confront countless people.
- The One Who decreed the Shari`ah did not make a way for the believer to save himself from all of this except when one conceals his secret.
- He must not demonstrate what he is determined to achieve.
- It is then that he will be spared the evil of people.
- He will then be able to stay connected with that path.

Since Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام, the skilled doctors and the kind men of wisdom, know that the evil-insinuating nafs is also one of the believer's enemies, belonging to the same category like those that stand to block his way, they عليهم السلام greatly commended the believer to conceal his secret, explaining to him that doing so

is one of the attributes of the Lord whereby He praised Himself, and that conviction hinges upon it.

What is meant here is to suspend self-resisting [when listening to Satanic insinuations]: the inclination of the nafs to show-off. The reason is that one to whom such an inclination is manifested will benefit therefrom, or he may be delighted therewith, or his advice or supplication may be solicited, perhaps he will convey such knowledge to those who may benefit from it. There may be other reasons why such a manifestation is sound.¹⁵ Such hindering insinuations must be rejected if one is sound of judgment at all due to Allah's will that he should hide his secret from them. He must confide his secrets only to the custodians of the secrets, the mysteries, of the Almighty. A wise person does not abandon the doing of what is more wise. He does not do anything except what is most perfect.

It is concluded from the above that the revelation [of one's secrets] harms people and runs contrarily to wisdom. You, too, must follow the example of your Lord in dealing with wisdom. You must avoid what corrupts; otherwise, it is nothing but corruption even if it has the appearance of righteousness! Our master, Imam Ali son of Imam al-Husain عليه السلام, said the following to al-Zuhri:

Beware of saying what the hearts reject even if you have an excuse for saying it, for you cannot excuse everyone who rejects what you may say.¹⁶

Among the poetry attributed to the Imams عليهم السلام is the following:

- The jewels of my knowledge; shall I from people hide

¹⁵ These are beautiful portraits of how Satan makes wrong look right. He resorts to the method of decorating falsehood in order to make it look like righteousness. Here is the role of one's insight which unveils such decoration; it is one of the requirements of treading the path to Allah Almighty. Such a decoration is possible in every stage of one's path. It diverts him from what is more important to what is most important. It is, hence, obligatory on every servant of Allah, whenever he goes forward or lags behind, to study the other possible alternatives so that he may select what is better from among similar options. This is closer to acting in accordance with one's actual obligation. This, in truth, is an act that pleases the Lord.

¹⁶ Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 71, p. 156

- Lest an ignorant person should see knowledge and is therewith tried.
- Before me, the Father of al-Hasan عليه السلام said the same and why
- To al-Husain عليه السلام, having admonished al-Hasan عليه السلام thereby.
- Lord! If the jewels of certain knowledge I discharged,
- I, with the sin of adoring idols will be charged.
- Thus, some Muslims will find it fit to shed my blood,
- Seeing as good what is most abhorred.

Such knowledge is very well known. There are many incidents which condone hiding a secret and condemn going to extremes in propagating something. The conclusion achieved therefrom is that one who is dominated by love for secrecy and contempt for its revelation sees through the eyes of reason. When he sees an occasion to reveal, he reveals as much as he sees necessary. Thus, he follows the recommendations of Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام who have said:

Do not convey wisdom except to those who are worthy of it; otherwise, you will then do wisdom injustice. Nor should you hold it back from those who are worthy of it; otherwise, you will then be unjust to them.¹⁷

Be admonished that the attribute of keeping a secret to yourself involves two issues:

- One is that a believer has a secret to keep.
- The other is that he has the faculty of concealing and hiding to the extent that his own nafs will not over-power him so as to reveal and to publicize it.

All of this involves the second. As for the first, suffices it what Imam Al-Sadiq عليه السلام once said to al-Mufaddal b. Salih:

O Mufaddal! Allah has servants who deal with Him with the sincerity of His secret, so He deals with them with the sincerity of His kindness. These are the ones whose books of reckoning will pass by Him empty,

¹⁷ Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 2, p. 78

so when they stand before Him, He shall fill them from the secrets of that with which they entrusted Him.

Al-Mufaddal asked the Imam, 'Master! Why is that?!' Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام said:

He granted them a respite till the time when the custodians [of His secrets] become acquainted with what went on between Him and them.

Our mentor, Asbul-Abbas, namely Ahmed b. Fahad, having cited this sacred tradition, said the following by way of comment:

Do not be unmindful about such lofty stations which are more precious than Paradise itself.¹⁸

I say that it is to this meaning that a poet refers, having done well when he said:

- The hearts of those blessed with knowledge have eyes
- That see what onlookers do not see,
- And the Sunnah with secrets silently speaks
- What even the honored scribes do not know,
- And hearts fly with no wings
- To the domain of the Lord of the World.
- All this is relevant to the first tradition.

Second

¹⁸ As we read in Uddat al-Da'i: For a believer to have a secret in life is a matter which has been overlooked by most people. They have contented themselves with building for the life of this world without having a particular endeavor to do what brings them eternal happiness. Every believer who believes in another life wherein the fruit of his deeds will be manifested has to have one particular concern in the field of bringing about a distinctive connection with his Lord, which is the axis of all his activities. It is clear that the nature of this connection varies from one servant of Allah to another according to what one has been given by the Lord of Existence of abilities till the matter reaches His loved one, the Chosen One who had with him all certain conditions which neither a close angel nor a sent Prophet could bear.

- One has to tolerate people.
- It is a Sunnah narrated about the Prophet ﷺ.
- We have already cited Ali عليه السلام as saying that the one loved by Allah the most is he who emulates His Prophet ﷺ.
- The wisdom behind it is similar to that about hiding your secret from people.
- Actually, the latter is one way to tolerate people.

Al-Kafi quotes Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام saying, ‘The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said:

My Lord ordered me to tolerate people just as He ordered me to perform the obligations.

He also cites his grandfather the Prophet ﷺ as saying,

Tolerating people is half the extent of conviction (iman), while kindness to them is half the livelihood.¹⁹

Then Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام commented saying,

Socialize with the righteous secretly and socialize with the sinners publicly; do not be harsh with the latter lest they should oppress you. A period of time will come wherein the only one who safeguards his creed is one thought to be not very smart at all. He accustoms himself to being called unintelligent, one lacking the faculty to rationalize.²⁰

The Imam عليه السلام also quotes his grandfather عليه السلام as saying,

If someone lacks three merits, he cannot accomplish anything:

- Piety which shields him from violating the sanctities of Allah ﷻ,
- Manners whereby he tolerates people, and
- Clemency whereby he responds to the ignorance of an ignorant person.²¹

Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام has also said:

¹⁹ Al-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 117

²⁰ Al-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 96

²¹ Al-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 95

One who keeps his hand from harming people keeps away only one hand while they will keep away from him many.²²

So my brother, what some people, who claim to be on the right track and are pious, say that they do not care about people, that they do not need them, and that they take them lightly, up to the end of such statements which fall in the category of lack of toleration ... all of this is actually following one's own desires.

It is ignorance about the way of Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام²³. Many people confuse tolerating people with pretending to get along very well with them, imagining that the mandated toleration is pretension. But the difference between them is quite clear. Contemptible pretension is agreeing on making what is ugly look as though it were beautiful. Or it may be abandoning its rejection out of the desire to attain what they have, so that one may thus acquire some worldly benefits or win their hearts without avoiding a wrongdoing.

What proves the beauty of kindness and toleration is that it leads to everything good. Traditions are very well known about a Syrian man who spoke inappropriately to Imam Ali son of al-Husain عليه السلام when the Imam was transported to Yazid, the curse of Allah be on him, in Syria. The Syrian said: 'Praise be to Allah Who killed you, Who proved your claims false and Who relieved the people of your mischief.' When the man finished his statement, the Imam عليه السلام said to him,

O sheikh! Do you read the Qur'an?

The Syrian answered in the affirmative.

²² Al-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 96

²³ This is a beautiful portrait of reality and of upholding the way of Ahlul Bayt G from the viewpoint of one who already does so. Holding others in contempt is one of the well known slippery paths in this field due to what the person who treads the path leading to Allah sees of the bright spiritual portraits which may distract him even from his obligation while dealing with people. Actually, if he looks at people as being the dependents of Allah Almighty, and that benevolence to them is one of the manifestations of obedience to the One Who created them, he will never hold a single one of them in contempt, even if the latter may be disobedient to his Lord. It is well known that if all the links of adoring the Lord come to an end, the link of the Creator with the one whom He creates remains to the very end.

The Imam عليه السلام asked him, Have you read this verse: Say: I ask no reward of you for this except the love of those near in kin? The Syrian again answered in the affirmative.

The Imam عليه السلام asked him, Have you read this verse: Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from you, you members of the family, and to make you pure and spotless²⁴? The old man again answered in the affirmative.

The Imam عليه السلام asked him again, O sheikh! Have you read this verse: And give to the near in kin his due right²⁵? The Syrian also answered in the affirmative.

The Imam عليه السلام said to him, We are the near in kin, and we are the family of your Prophet ﷺ!

It was then that the sheikh raised his hand to the heavens, wept and dissociated himself from Husain's killer [Yazid]. He wept and repented (Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 45, p. 129). So, look into how kindness attracts one to righteousness!

Toleration means abandoning denial in order to avoid or minimize a wrongdoing, or it may be a precaution against initiating a wrongdoing; so, how can this be compared with that?! Toleration may be a measure to avoid the mischief of the person whom you tolerate, or it may be to attract him to righteousness. All these objectives cannot be rejected. Or it may be the outcome of fear, or to render something wrong ineffective. It is then that kindness, a smile, toleration of harm and rewarding evil with goodness is nothing but toleration about which Allah has said:

*Repel (evil) with what is better: Then will he whom you once hated become, as it were, your friend and intimate! And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint, none but persons of the greatest good fortune.*²⁶

And it is similar to this verse:

²⁴ Al-Qur'an, 33:33

²⁵ Al-Qur'an, 17:26

²⁶ Al-Qur'an, 41:34-35

...Speak gently to him; perhaps he may take warning or fear (Allah).²⁷

And it is like a statement by Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام cited in *Al-Kafi* as follows:

While the Prophet ﷺ was once with Aishah, a man sought permission to meet with him. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'How bad the [timing of the] tribesman is! Aishah, therefore, entered her chamber, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ permitted the man to come in. When the man entered, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ received him with a smile on his sacred face and kept talking to him. When the man finished his talk and left, Aishah said: 'O Messenger of Allah ﷺ! You were not pleased with this man coming to meet with you [at a very inappropriate time], yet you welcomed him with your smile and paid him your full attention! The Prophet ﷺ said: The worst of Allah's servants is one with whom you do not wish to sit on account of his sins.²⁸

This is how one tolerates others. Such toleration is a sort of taqiyyah. Countless testimonials in favor of taqiyyah exist, so much so that the scholars of exegesis interpret the following verse as referring to it:

Truly the most honored of you in Allah's sight is (he who is) the most righteous [muttaqi] among you.²⁹

that is, the most fair in observing taqiyyah. It is even said that nine out of the ten portions of faith lies in taqiyyah as we read on p. 172, vol. 2, of *Al-Kafi*.

Suffices you a statement in *Al-Kafi* by Hammad b. Waqid al-Fahham who said: 'I once met Abu Abdullah عليه السلام face-to-face, but I turned my face away from him and kept going. After that I visited him and said: 'May I be sacrificed for your sake! I meet you face-to-face but I turn my face away from you out of my fear to trouble you.' He عليه السلام said to me,

May Allah have mercy on you! But a man met me yesterday at such-and-such a place and said to me, 'O Abu Abdullah! Yet there was nothing good or beautiful about meeting him.'³⁰

²⁷ Al-Qur'an, 20:44

²⁸ Al-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 246

²⁹ Al-Qur'an, 49:13

³⁰ Al-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 173

So, notice how the man earned the Imam's supplication to Allah to have mercy on him when he did not greet him upon seeing him face-to-face, and notice how one did not take note of the Imam's status, so the Imam was not pleased with him and said that there was nothing good or beautiful about such a meeting.³¹

From this incident and its likes, you come to know that a believer may abandon being gracious to someone when his action brings the latter envy and dissension. One may even be gracious to another by speaking ill of him as some Imams عليه السلام did to some of their closest friends; it is similar to the incident when al-Khidr عليه السلام made a hole in a ship so it might be spared confiscation by an oppressive king.

Third

Patience during the time of trials and tribulations. There is no doubt that life is a believer's jail. Any jail producing something good is by itself good. Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام said the following to a man who complained to him about being needy:

'Be patient; Allah will find an outlet for you.' Then the Imam remained silent for some time following which he asked the same man, 'Tell me, how is Kufa's jail?' 'Not roomy at all,' the man answered, 'And it stinks. Its inmates are in the very worst of condition.' The Imam said to the man,

You are already in a jail, and you nevertheless want to be enjoying ease while still being there! Have you not come to know that life is a believer's jail?³²

³¹ From this narrative and its likes do you come to know an important principle in the rules of dealing with people as required by Ahlul Bayt G. This principle is: taking everything into consideration when options abound. A believer opts for the most wise course of action, ignoring all others. Rationality, something which is advocated by numerous traditions, requires a believer to look into one matter from various angles so that, having done his calculations, he may arrive at the one which in the end pleases Allah Almighty the most, even when there are other options which please Him, too, but they are no match to his ultimate objective.

³² Al-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 195

A believer may either be eager for the Hereafter, so the basis of his stay in life is that the latter feels like a prison for him in addition to the other calamities to which he may be exposed.³³ Or he may be one feared as having inclinations for this world, desiring what is in it, so the munificence of the most Wise One comes to disturb him with all kinds of problems so that he may find it [life in this world] repugnant and not feel comfortable therewith; it is the abode of the oppressors.

Or he may be weak in his deeds of righteousness, obeying a little [of Allah's commandments]. The munificence of the most Wise One comes not to deprive him of the garment of trials and tribulations. Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام has said:

Had a believer known how many rewards he would have when afflicted with problems, he would have wished to be ripped off with scissors.³⁴

Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام has said:

If a believer is tried with an affliction, and if he takes to patience, he will be rewarded with rewards fit for a thousand martyrs.³⁵

Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام has also said:

As a servant of Allah may have a special status with Allah, the most Great, the most Exalted One, which he earns through one of two

³³ What a way this is to bring about a feeling of eagerness to those who are suffering from trials and tribulations! The compiler has clarified the effect of tribulation on all kinds of people, starting from the people of the Hereafter and ending with the custodians of the creed. But there is a huge difference between the effect of problems on the people who seek the Hereafter: It increases the latter's eagerness to the abode wherein there is neither tribulation nor exhaustion. It [adversely] affects the people who run after this life. It increases the rewards of those who inwardly feel closer to Allah. Such closeness is prompted by the Divine bliss which is relevant only to His friends, those who follow His Commandments, who are aware of His watchful eyes. It is from this onset that the Divine blessing descends upon those who are satisfied with their lots: 'We belong to Allah, and to Him is our return.' It is well known that the implication here is not simply that we shall be brought before Him [for judgment] without the existence of a state of link with the Absolute King, with the depth of belonging to Him.

³⁴ Al-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 198

³⁵ Al-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 75

merits: his wealth may disappear, or he may be tried with an affliction in his own body.³⁶

Affliction, then, may either bring a believer rewards, thus elevating his status, or it may be his penalty and atonement, and both are good and liked by a man of wisdom. As for the rewards, this is quite obvious. As for the penalty, it is on account of narratives from Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام that Allah is too Gracious to penalize His servant twice [in the life of this world as well as in the Hereafter]. Anything for which He penalizes him in the life of this world, he is not going to penalize him for it in the Hereafter.

So, if a believer has to be afflicted, he has to be patient. Allah created patience before affliction; otherwise, a believer's heart would have cracked like an egg falling on a solid ground. Imam Ali عليه السلام is quoted in *Al-Kafi* as having cited the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as saying,

Patience is of three types:

- At the time of affliction,
- During the time of obedience [of Allah's Commandments] and
- At the time of avoiding committing a transgression.
 - One who is patient when afflicted till he is solaced, Allah will write for him three hundred degrees between each is like the distance between the heavens and the earth.
 - One who is patient while obeying [his Maker], Allah will write for him six hundred degrees, the distance between each is like the distance between the corners of the earth and the Arsh.
 - And when one is patient in order not to commit a transgression, Allah writes for him nine hundred degrees the distance between each is like the distance between the corners of the earth and the end of the Arsh.³⁷

³⁶ Al-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 199

³⁷ Al-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 75

Al-Kafi also cites Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام as saying,

We [Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام] are quite patient, and our Shi'a are even more so.

Someone said to him, 'May I be your sacrifice! How can your Shi'a be more patient than you?! The Imam عليه السلام said:

It is so because we are patient about what we know, whereas they are patient about what they do not know.³⁸

Notice how kind Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام are! Notice how they appreciate their Shi'a, how the latter are rewarded even for the few calamities which are a fraction of those with which Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام are afflicted. They want their Shi'a to be attached to them so that they would not be separated from them. In the latter case, their Shi'a would decrease in number and perish, for Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام know that their Shi'a cannot receive salvation except when Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام consider them as part of them, making their holy souls and those of their Shi'a one in kind. It is then that there will be no possibility of rejecting the whole; everyone has to be accepted.

But if each person is judged individually, their Shi'a will inevitably perish. Their ultimate concern, their earnest objective with regard to their Shi'a, is that the latter become like them just as the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام said:

One who emulates a people almost becomes one of them.³⁹

Then they perfect all of this with their own intercession and with supplicating for their Shi'a. For example, the supplication of the Imam of the Time عليه السلام, may Allah hasten his reappearance and make me one of his sacrifices, which was heard by the Sayyid son of al-Tawus. It is the one in which he, while being inside the vault, supplicates for the Shi'a of Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام. Some of its text has slipped my memory. It includes the following:

- Lord! Our Shi'a are of us!
- They were created of the remnant of our mold and kneaded with the noor of our wilaya;

³⁸ *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 2, p. 76

³⁹ *Nahjul-Balaghah*, axiom 207

- so, place us in charge of their affairs, forgive the sins which they have committed out of their reliance on their love for us,
- and when their scales [of good deeds] become light, make them heavy with the surplus of our own good deeds.^{40 and 41}

Look at him, may Allah hasten his reappearance, and may He make me his sacrifice, and how he goes to extremes in mixing the Shi'a with their Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام so that they do not get separated from each other. He says that both were created from the same mold, and that the followers, sins originate from reliance for salvation from them on love for Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام. And once he supplicates to his Lord to complete their shortcoming with the surplus of the good deeds of their masters and of those who love them.

So, brother! They know what we do not. They are the ones who have said:

Do not look at the act of disobedience; look at the One Whom you disobey.⁴²

Because of their knowledge of our disobedience, and due to the intensity of their fear for us lest we should perish, they have guided us to the path of salvation which leads to safety. This path is: exerting a real effort to emulate Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام as much as possible, so much so that one's main concern should be not to forget about them for a twinkling of an eye. This is so on account of what Imam al-Ridha عليه السلام has said: that is, he is satisfied from a

⁴⁰ Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 35, p. 303, narrated in various different wordings

⁴¹ Contemplate upon the depth of the emotional link between this Infallible Imam of the Time and his subjects who shall be gathered under his banner. This should not make anyone wonder, for the Imam adopts the manners of Allah Almighty to the extreme degrees humanly possible. It is well known that the Imam-in-Charge, during his occultation, is not indifferent to what happens to the nation of his grandfather عليه السلام. It is so because he is the one who is most concerned about the events of this time in all their cycles, just as his grandfather the Commander of the Faithful used to feel the pain suffered by hungry people in Yamamah or Hijaz or anywhere else. From this onset, a person who truly loves someone does not add his own burden of worries to the burden already suffered by the person whom he loves. Rather, he tries his best to decrease his worries by doing whatever is required to remove the grief of his friend. Add to this how he goes far in supplicating for an ease for his hardship; surely there is no ease from hardship for all people except through his reappearance.

⁴² Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 74, p. 77

believer (mu'min) with his following of his master's tradition. He means that such a tradition incorporates all other traditions. Patience, then, in its three stages: during the time of affliction, during the time of obedience and during the time avoiding disobedience, leaves no tradition without including it. It has already been stated in the transmissions relevant to mut'ah that:

I hate for any man among you not to adorn himself with a merit done by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

The book titled *Al-Faqih* quotes Bakr b. Muhammad who cites Abu Abdullah عليه السلام saying that he asked the Imam عليه السلام about the mut'ah. The Imam عليه السلام answered,

I hate for a Muslim man to leave this life and there is one merit of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ which he did not do.⁴³

It is also narrated that a believer is not complete till he performs the mut'ah.⁴⁴ Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام, in an agreed upon tradition, is quoted as having said:

I hate for a man to die leaving one tradition of the Messenger of Allah without practicing it.⁴⁵

⁴³ Al-Faqih, Vol. 3, p. 463

⁴⁴ Al-Faqih, vol. 3, p. 466

⁴⁵ Al-Faqih, Vol. 3, p. 466:

But one must not be unmindful with regard to the law of making the best option when plenty are available about what is commendable. The traditions, in their first text, call for good merits, leaving the evaluation of practicing them to the individual himself who should rely on his insight and knowledge of the other principles of the Shari'ah. For example, the traditions relevant to the mut'ah, which the compiler mentions, advocate the revival of this tradition which cures a lingering problem in everyday life which cannot be solved except through permanent or temporary marriage, or the alternative is adultery. There is no comparison between what is haram and what is a Sunnah advocated by the Prophet and by the Imams G from among his offspring. But, by way of comparison, we have to take notice of another text which explains the importance of paying attention to other comparable issues when we implement the Sunnah. The father of al-Hasan is quoted as having said the following to some of his followers:

Do not over-emphasize the practice of mut'ah; rather, you should observe the Sunnah. Do not let it [mut'ah] distract you from your beds and lawful wives, or else the latter would disbelieve, dissociate themselves, complain about this practice and [even] condemn us. (Was'ail al- Shi'a, Vol. 14, p. 450)

This proves that Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام do not wish their Shi'a to neglect any of their practiced traditions. And if someone does so, he will be liable to do something hateful to them [i.e. smear their reputation]; may Allah protect us and our brethren from doing that, and may He enable us to bring happiness to them.

There is no harm here in pointing out to some of their traditions which they very much cared about, so much so that they upheld them and paid attention to them to the extent of treating them as obligations, perhaps Allah will enable us to emulate them in upholding these traditions except when there is a very strong reason not to, and in the presence of more serious obstacles:

Fulfilling a Promise: The way of Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام is that a believer must hold himself accountable to fulfilling his promise, out of his precaution against eventualities because of which he may fall into breaking his promise which, in their view, is quite serious.⁴⁶ As long as one cannot control unexpected events, he is not counted as a violator. If he makes a promise, he must uphold it and not falter. One who falters in fulfilling his promise goes against the way of Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام. Thus, he excludes himself from their motto, entering in the motto of others; may Allah protect us against such a situation.

What brings this notion closer to your comprehension is the will which the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله made to Ali عليه السلام to pay off his debts on his behalf⁴⁷ and to likewise fulfill his pledges. Had he not regarded his pledge just as he regarded a debt, and had he not held his conscience responsible for fulfilling it, his greatest excuse would have been death and thus inability to fulfill it; otherwise, he

⁴⁶ Notice the expression of the author, how he emphasizes this point although there is no proof from the Shari`ah that breaking a promise, because of an unexpected event, especially in the presence of the sincere intention to fulfill it, is haram. A believer who watches his conduct reaches a point where he avoids doing anything held by the Lord as ugly and contemptible, though it is not necessarily haram. He does so out of his apprehension lest he should incur the Wrath of the Master even in a degree commensurate with the extent of the deed. A lover is prompted by avoiding doing anything which the one he loves dislikes even if he is not obligated to do so as we, lovers in this world, do. So, what would you say about the love for the One loving Whom is the blessed result of His own munificence and favors?!

⁴⁷ Historians estimate the debts left by the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وآله at the time of his demise to be close to 400,000 dirhams which Ali did, indeed, pay off during a number of years. (Tr.)

would not have needed to obligate his wasi [the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام] to pay off his debts [and fulfill his pledges on his behalf]. Indeed, a poet did well when he composed the following lines:

- A good man is one who does good without a promise,
- And one who fulfills a promise is half a man;
- But if someone did not do either, he is a woman,
- And half a woman is one who insists on so doing.

Be advised that what we mean by fulfilling a promise, which is the way of Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام, when obstacles arise and excuses become available, is the situation when one is still able to fulfill his promise. But in the absence of such obstacles, this goes without saying. Breaking a promise without an excuse is surely a defect in the individual and an ugliness even if done by the least of all people. Such a conduct is not worthy of inclusion among the attributes of Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام which we would like to urge others to emulate. Other merits are:

Voluntary Benevolence Beyond and More than a Pledge: They treat this as an obligation. The Prophet ﷺ was always gracious in fulfilling his promise, that is, it was his habit, whenever he borrowed, to give to the lender more than what he owed him, so much so that he was very well known for sticking to this habit. As for his Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام, generosity is their demeanor and benevolence is their mark as we recite in the inclusive ziyarah. They were the embodiment of acting upon this verse:

Allah commands [the doing of] justice and benevolence...⁴⁸

It is said that Ali عليه السلام emancipated one thousand slaves from his own personal toil.⁴⁹ He was not satisfied with just emancipating them, but he provided them with means of earning a livelihood as well. Also, once he promised a bedouin to give him four thousand dirhams, so he sold the orchard which had been planted by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He, thus, gave him what he had

⁴⁸ Al-Qur'an, 16:90

⁴⁹ Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 63, p. 320

promised him and a lot more.⁵⁰ Voluntary benevolence which exceeds the amount owed, or more than what was promised, has a way in winning people's hearts even if its amount is small. It is understood, from examining the way of Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام, that they adhered to it.⁵¹

Self Denial Even While in Need

Allah Almighty has said:

*...They give others in preference over their own selves, even though poverty is their lot.*⁵²

Be informed that if a believer does not uphold self-denial, making that a priority, he will sooner or later be overcome by his own ego, by the desire to oppress, to abandon equity, though it may be for periods of time. He will then stop being a believer (mu'min), for a believer is one from whose evil people are safe, unlike one who upholds self-denial. The maximum impetus of the latter's nafs is that he should abandon such self-denial. So, if he does abandon self-denial, he will not abandon the basis of fulfilling his obligations. At any rate, he will be safe from committing injustice.⁵³

⁵⁰ Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 41, p. 45

⁵¹ A believer has to absorb the philosophy behind spending in all its Shari`a-related and ethical aspects which include taking into consideration people's feelings. He should bear in mind that what he spends is dealing with the wealth of his Master with the latter's permission, even as he tackles the demands of this Master. So, there should be no amazement after that because what is worthy of amazement is spending from the real wealth, not from the purported wealth. This is why you find them spending while being fearful because they will return to their Master Who will ask them about what they had spent, including spending on commendable causes, because there is a possibility of something wrong with the way whereby they earned the wealth or how they spent it. One of the philosophical aspects of spending is that if one gives someone something by way of charity, he must not follow his giving with reminding that person of it, nor should he follow it with harming him. Doing so nullifies the requirements of benevolence, obstructing the possibility of its being replenished in the future.

⁵² Al-Qur'an, 59:9

⁵³ This observation by the author is beautiful. He sets safe cycles for the believer further from the dangerous ones. He calls for self-denial which, were one to obey his own inclination to abandon it, will still maintain the basis of his spending security against extravagance. This is the way which has to be followed in all ethical fields; otherwise, one who seeks a path to Allah will permit himself to

All of this is a drop in the bucket, yet feeling satisfied with this much is better. Allah's help do we seek; Allah suffices us, and how Great the One upon Whom we rely is!

Degrees of Believers

Believers are of Various Degrees Distinguishing One from the Other With Regard to Their Limits.

This chapter deals with the many different degrees of iman and each mu'min's share thereof. Al-Miqdad, may Allah be pleased with him, occupies the eighth degree, while Abu Dharr [al-Ghifari], may Allah be pleased with him, occupies the ninth. Salman, may Allah be pleased with him, occupies the tenth, and so on.

In *Al-Kafi*, Abdul-Aziz al-Qaratasi is cited as having said:

Abu Abdullah عليه السلام said to me,

O Abdul-Aziz! Iman falls into ten degrees: it is like a ladder, one step is ascended after the other. Nobody, therefore, who occupies the second should say to the one who occupies the first: 'You do not have anything, till he ascends to the tenth.

So, do not look down upon one who is below you or else he who is above you may cause you to slip and fall. When you see someone occupying a degree less than yours, raise him kindly to you, and do not over-burden him so you may cause him to break, for anyone who causes a believer to break has to rejoin what he breaks.⁵⁴

Surely Allah blesses Muhammad ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammad عليه السلام, the righteous ones, the purified.

Destiny has hindered the completion of this work; so, I plead to Allah, the King, the all-Knowing, to grant us those who will complete this speech; surely none loses hope of His mercy except those who are mean.

enjoy some permissible facets the legality of which is in doubt, such as talking nonsense or doing what is haram. His nafs will then entice him into looking at what is definitely haram.

⁵⁴ *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 2, p. 37

Believers in al-Qur'an

- It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is this that one should believe in Allah
- and the last day
- and the angels
- and the Book
- and the prophets,
- and give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives,
- and keep up prayer
- and pay the poor-rate;
- and the performers of their promise when they make a promise,
- and the patient in distress
- and affliction and in time of conflicts-- these are they who are true (to themselves) and these are they who guard (against evil).⁵⁵

The Prophet said:

Whosoever acted in accordance with this verse, he surely perfected (his) faith.

Allamah Taba'taba'i writes that when the qiblah was changed from Baitul-Maqdis to the Ka'bah, there ensued a long drawn out controversy and conflict in the public. It was then that this verse was revealed.

Allamah continues to write:

- The words, the one who believes in Allah and the last day... define the righteous ones, and explain their real state.

⁵⁵Al-Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 177

- The verse introduces them with all three aspects of belief, deeds and morals, in three stages.
- The first stage begins with the words, the one who believes in Allah.
- The second is the sentence, these are they who are true.
- In addition, the third is, and these are they who are the pious.

According to Mir Ahmed Ali, righteousness (belief after attaining Islam) is this that one should believe:

- in the unity of Allah with all His attributes;
- in the last day of judgment;
- in the angels;
- in the book of Allah;
- in all the prophets and messengers of Allah;
- and give away wealth out of love for Allah to the near of kin, and the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer, and the beggars, and for the liberation of slaves;
- and keep up the (obligatory) prayers.

O Believers in al-Qur'an

When asked to comment on al-Qur'an, Chapter 36, Verse 20 - and from the remote part of the city there came a man running, he said: O My People! Follow the messengers ..., the Prophet ﷺ said about this Believer from the people of Ya Sin:

There were three persons who, without a moment of hesitation, responded to the call of three prophets: believer from the people of Firaun⁵⁶, believer from the people of Yasin⁵⁷, and Ali b. Abi Talib⁵⁸; and

⁵⁶ Al-Qur'an, 40:28

⁵⁷ Al-Qur'an, 36:20

⁵⁸ Al-Qur'an, 26:214

they never worshipped any god save Allah even for *the twinkling of an eye*, they are the most truthful and Ali is the best amongst them.⁵⁹

And the best of believers, *it is Ali*, the Prophet has said and reported in *al-Dur al-Manthur*.

Chapter 3, Verse 7, Mir Ahmed Ali comments further:

It is a historical fact that all the companions of the Prophet, before embracing Islam, for a long time in their lives, were idolworshippers. The Prophet, Bibi Fatima and Ali b. Abi Talib and their children were the only ones who were free from the impurity of polytheism right from the day they were born. All Muslims, in every age, add *Karamallahu Wajhu* (Allah graced and honoured his face above others) after the name of Ali, because he never worshipped any *ghayrallah* (other than Allah).⁶⁰

Ikrimah narrates from Ibn ‘Abbas that he said:

No verse was revealed (with the words); O You Who Believe!, but Ali is its chief and its head. Allah has admonished the companions of Muhammad ﷺ in more than one place, but He has never mentioned Ali except with good (words).⁶¹

Allamah Taba’taba’i says that the same hadith up to the words *its head* has been narrated in *Tafsirul Burhan* from Muwaffaq b. Ahmad from Ikrimah from Ibn Abbas; al-Ayyashi also has narrated it from Ikrimah; and we have quoted this hadith earlier from *al-Dur al-Manthur*. Some traditions quote ar-Ridha عليه السلام as saying:

There is not in the Qur’an: O You Who Believe, except about us.

al-Hajj Mujahid has narrated in many traditions concerning the virtues of Amir al-Mu’minin Ali عليه السلام. He writes:

Whenever in any place the phrase O Believers! occurs in the Qur’an Amir al-Mu’minin Ali عليه السلام is to be considered the foremost of them

⁵⁹ Tafsir Thalabi

⁶⁰ Tafsir al-Ayyashi

⁶¹ Tafsir al-Ayyashi

and the most meritorious, as he has surpassed them all in embracing Islam.⁶²

In his exegesis of the verse 274, in the Chapter of al-Baqarah of al-Qur'an:

- The tafsir (exegesis) of Abu al-Hajjaj Mujahid, son of Jabr (or Jubayr), a Makki and Makhzumi (21-104 or 105/642-722 or 723), is the work of a leading commentator of an Iranian origin and belonging to the Tabi'un, the generation following that of the Prophet ﷺ and his companions.
- He had studied the sciences of the Qur'an and the arts of Qur'anic hermeneutics (tafsir and ta'wil) under Amir al-Mu'minin Ali b. Abi Talib عليه السلام and Ibn Abbas, Jabir al-Ansari, Umm Salamah, Umm Hani bint Abu Talib, and others.
- Ibn Asakir (d. 571/1175), in *Ta'rikh Dimashq*, has given an elaborate biographical account of him and describes him in these words - Sufyan Thawri would say; One should learn the exegesis of the Noble Qur'an from four persons: Sa'id b. Jubayr, Mujahid, Ikrimah and Dahhak b. Muzahim. Qatadah would say; Mujahid is the most learned of the Tabi'un in the exegesis of the Qur'an.

Ibn Abbas reports:

We were sitting with the Prophet when Ali entered. Ali said: Peace be on you, O Messenger of Allah.

The Prophet replied: Peace be on you too, O Commander of the Believers.

Ali responded; O Prophet, you call me the Commander of Believers while you are still alive?

The Prophet answered; Yes, while I am alive.

Then the Prophet continued; O Ali! You passed by Jibraeel and I yesterday and did not say Salaam. So Jibraeel said; Why did the Commander of the Believers not say Salaam to us. I swear to Allah, we would have been pleased if he had said Salaam to us and we would have responded.

⁶² Furat al-Kufi, *Tafsir Furat al-Kufi* (Tehran: 1410/1990), p. 49.

Ali answered; It looked like you and Dehya were in a private meeting so I did not want to interrupt.

The Prophet said; He was not Dehya, he was Jibraeel. I asked Jibraeel why he called you the Commander of the Believers. Jibraeel told me that in the Battle of Badr, Allah told Jibraeel to come to me (the Prophet) and tell me to order the Commander of the Believers to ride his horse in front of the army lines because the angels love to watch him do that. So Allah named you the Commander of the Believers that day in the heavens.

Then the Prophet said; O Ali! You are the commander of everyone in the heavens and the commander of everyone on earth. You are the commander of those who have passed away and the commander of those who are yet to come. There is no commander before you and no commander after you. It is forbidden for anyone who has not received this title from Allah to be called by this name.

Harithbin al-Khazraj the holder of the flag of Ansar, once said: I heard the Messenger of Allah telling Ali:

No one precedes you after me except a *Kafir* (unbeliever), and no one disobeys you except a *Kafir*. The people of the seven skies call you the Commander of the Believers by the order of Allah.



Verse 1

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقُولُوا رَاعِنَا وَقُولُوا انظُرْنَا وَاسْمَعُوا وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2:104

O You Who Believe!

- Say not (to the Messenger) words of ambiguous import, but words of respect; and hearken (to him).
- To those without faith is a grievous punishment.

Commentary

Allamah Taba'taba'i

O you who believe! It is the first place in the Qur'an where the believers have been addressed in this way, *O you who believe!* This mode of address has been used in some eighty-five places in the Qur'an.

Addressing the believers as *O you who believe!* or describing them as *those who believe*, is a special distinction accorded to this ummah. Otherwise, the previous nations are variously described as *the people* (e.g., the People of Nuh, and, the People of Hud).

The epithet, *those who believe*, is, therefore, a mark of honor awarded to the believers of this ummah.

All the believers are united, one of them being from another; all of them are of one rank; none has any excellence over the others; nor has an earlier believer any superiority over the later ones; their main qualification is the true belief, and all of them, are equal in it. Such a meaning would not fit the wording of the verse, which clearly shows that the preceding believers have a sort of

superiority over their offspring, who would be raised to the rank of their progenitor as a token of honor to the latter.

Abu Nu'aym has narrated in Hilyat al-Awliya from Ibn Abbas that he said - The Apostle of Allah ﷺ said:

Allah has not revealed any verse (beginning) with, *O you who believe!* but that Ali is its head and leader.⁶³

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

This verse shows how much the Jews disliked the Holy Prophet. It also prohibits use of any word bearing sinister meaning with reference to him.

The Jews and the idol-worshippers did not like that *khayr* (good), the Qur'an, should be revealed to the Holy Prophet. As *the mercy unto the worlds*, the Holy Prophet himself was *khayr* because *khayr* (good) is *rahmah* (mercy). He, the last law-giver messenger of Allah, was a descendant of prophet Ismail, the younger son of prophet Ibrahim, therefore, the Jews, who were the descendants of prophet Ishaq, the elder son of prophet Ibrahim, did not like the advent of the promised prophet in the progeny of prophet Ismail.

Al-Qur'an - Chapter 2, Verse 90-91 - They knew that the ministry of the Holy Prophet was genuine and Islam was the true religion of Allah, but their prejudice and envy led them astray. The same prejudice and envy created the venomous group of the hypocrites (*munafiqin*) who opposed the Holy Prophet in his lifetime, and, after him, persecuted, murdered and tried to destroy completely his Ahlul Bayt. The hatred of the Israelites against the non-Israelites was reflected in the hatred of the non-Hashimites against the Hashimites. Allah chooses whom He pleases for His mercy and grace.

Evil is that for which they have sold their souls -- that they should deny what Allah has revealed, out of envy that Allah should send down of His grace on whomsoever of His servants He pleases; so they have made themselves deserving of wrath upon wrath, and there is a disgraceful punishment for the unbelievers.

And when it is said to them, Believe in what Allah has revealed, they say: We believe in that which was revealed to us; and they deny what

⁶³ Durrul Manthur

is besides that, while it is the truth verifying that which they have. Say: Why then did you kill Allah's Prophets before if you were indeed believers?⁶⁴

These verses are in reply to the arrogance of the Jews. The Jews, out of envy, denied that Allah had sent down *Injil* on the prophet Isa and the Qur'an on the Holy Prophet. Although they said that they only believed in what was revealed to the Israelite prophets, despite the prophecy of the promised prophet in their book, they still killed their own prophets.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

The honorific and enlivening sentence *O you who have faith*, addressed to the believers, has occurred 80 times in the Qur'an. The above verse is the first one, which contains this phrase.

It is interesting that this phrase has occurred only in the verses that have been revealed in Madina, viz. it is not seen in the Makkan verses. It may be for the reason that with the emigration of the Prophet ﷺ to Medina, Muslims gathered together and it was then that the situation of Muslims became stabilized, especially when they formed a strong, powerful government. Hence, Allah ﷻ addressed them with this phrase:

O you who have faith!

This phrase conveys another meaning, too. It indicates that now that you have faith and have submitted to the truth, i.e. you have taken a covenant with Allah; you should obey Him according to the commandments that have come along with it. In other words, your faith necessitates that you follow these instructions accordingly.

Ibn Abbas, the leading commentator, is narrated to have said that the early Muslims, when the Prophet ﷺ was speaking and teaching them the divine verses and commandments, often asked him to speak slowly so that they could comprehend the material well and could have opportunity enough to ask their questions.

⁶⁴ Al-Qur'an, 2:90-91

For this purpose, then, they applied the phrase */ra'ina/* derived from the root */arra'a/* to give respite, which means: *give us respite, wait for us*. But the Jews took the same word from the Arabic root */ar-ra'unah /* used with the meaning of *foolhardiness, thoughtlessness, foolishness*, which means: *make foolish of us* and suggests an insult.

It is well understood from this verse that the Muslims, should be careful to avoid giving their enemies any pretext, because they may misuse even one short sentence against them. The Qur'an advises the Muslims to avoid uttering even the smallest common word, which they might transform into a term of reproach in order to weaken the spirits of the Muslims. They should be careful not to select words which have multiple or ambiguous meanings that may be misused by the enemies to mock them thereby but rather should choose appropriate, unambiguous words. They must guard themselves against the cynical trick of using words, which sound complimentary to the ear but have a hidden barb in them.

When Islam is so meticulous that it does not let Muslims give their enemies pretext for these little things, the duty of Muslims is clear for greater and more important subjects, both concerning their interior affairs and international matters.

It is also notable that in many references of Islamic literature, including the ones of the Sunnite, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is narrated to have said:

No verse has Allah revealed with *O you who have faith* save that Ali is at its top and is its chief.



Verse 2

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2:153

O You Who Believe!

- Seek help with patient perseverance and prayer,
- For Allah is with those who patiently persevere.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

A single theme joins the five verses (153 – 157) like a pearl-string; the sentences from a sequence and the topic is developed harmoniously; the beginning leads to the end, and the end points to the beginning. It shows that they were revealed together, not separately. The context indicates that they must have been revealed shortly before the law of *al-jihad* (war in the way of Allah) was promulgated and the Muslims were ordered to fight in the cause of religion.

The verses prepare the believers for some trials which they will have to undergo, some misfortunes which will befall them. Not the usual type of trial and hardship, but some extraordinary misfortunes which will afflict the whole community and will continue, recurring every now and then.

Man, like any other creature in this world, always faces some hardships and troubles, which disturb and disrupt the pattern of his personal life. Death, sickness, fear, hunger, grief, poverty and deprivation are but a few examples of such personal misfortunes. It is the course, which Allah has laid down for His servants. This world is a place of struggle and competition; the life is a chain of never ending changes and transformations. And you shall not find

any alteration in the course of Allah and you shall not find any change in the course of Allah.⁶⁵

The verses encourage the believers to fight for Islam. They are told that there is coming to them a trial, a hardship. Only if they bear it patiently, they shall reach the high ranks of spiritual perfection, receiving the blessings and mercy of Allah, and being guided aright by Divine Guidance. Also, it tells them how they may get help in bearing those burdens they should seek assistance through patience and prayer. Patience will protect them from fear and anguish, and will save their plans from disruption. As for prayer, it will turn their attention to their Lord, and help them in putting all their affairs in the hands of the Almighty Allah, because all power belongs to Him.

We have explained briefly about patience and prayer, under the verse; And seek assistance through patience and prayer; and most surely, it is a hard thing except for the humble ones.⁶⁶ Patience is one of the most important characteristics, which the Qur'an praises very highly. It repeatedly tells the believers to be patient and there are about seventy verses on this theme. It praises it in such laudable ways as ...and bear patiently that which befalls you; surely it is of the acts which require determination⁶⁷; And none are made to receive it but those who are patient, and none are made to receive it but those who have a mighty good fortune⁶⁸; only the patient will be paid back their reward in full without measure.⁶⁹

Likewise, prayer is one of the greatest acts of worship and devotion, which the Qur'an always exhorts the believers to do. It has been praised in these words; surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil.⁷⁰ Wherever Allah exhorts the people to some good deeds, prayer is always placed at the head of the list.

⁶⁵Al-Qur'an, 35:43

⁶⁶Al-Qur'an, 2:45

⁶⁷Al-Qur'an, 31:17

⁶⁸Al-Qur'an, 41:35

⁶⁹Al-Qur'an, 39:10

⁷⁰Al-Qur'an, 29:45

Then Allah praises patience that Allah is with those who have this virtue: In this respect, this verse differs from the verse⁷¹ which had focused attention on prayer; and most surely, it is a hard thing except for the humble ones.

But this verse singles out the patience, because here the talk is about-facing the difficulties and fighting against the enemies; and in this context, patience acquires a greater importance. Surely, Allah is with the patient ones. It is a special proximity unlike the company mentioned in the verse; *and He is with you wherever you are.*⁷² This latter verse says that Allah controls your affairs and His knowledge encompasses you; while the verse under discussion means that Allah helps and aids the patient ones. Patience, therefore, is the key to get relief from distress.

Qur'an - Chapter 2, Verse 45 - Man seeks assistance in such affairs and tasks as he cannot manage alone, and in hardships and difficulties which he cannot overcome himself. In reality there is no helper except Allah. Man can, therefore, manage all his affairs and overcome all his difficulties by courage and steadfastness (i.e. by patience) and by looking towards Allah (i.e. by prayer). These two factors are the best way to get assistance: patience makes even the great misfortunes look trivial, and putting all his confidence in Allah awakens the spirit of faith; and thus man comes to realize that the cause which he is relying upon can never fail to produce the desired effect.

as-Sadiq عليه السلام said:

Whenever Ali عليه السلام faced a difficulty, he used to stand up for the prayer and then recite this verse: and seek assistance through patience and prayer.⁷³

The same Imam said about this verse:

The patience means fasting.

Also he said:

When a man is confronted by a hard misfortune, he should fast. Surely Allah says: and seek assistance through patience, that is, fast.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Al-Qur'an, 2:44

⁷² Al-Qur'an, 13:4

⁷³ al-Kafi

The author says: al-Ayyashi too has narrated the theme of these two traditions in his *Tafsir*. Interpretation of *patience* as fast is based on the *flow* of the Qur'an.

Abul-Hasan عليه السلام said about this verse:

The patience means fast; when a man is visited by a hardship or misfortune, he should fast; surely Allah says: *And seek assistance through patience and prayer; and most surely it is a hard thing except for the humble ones.* And the humble one is he who shows humility in his prayer, turning all his attention to it; and it means the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Leader of the faithful عليه السلام.⁷⁵

The author says:

The Imam has inferred from this verse the desirability of fasting and praying when one is facing any hardship or turmoil; and likewise, the desirability of seeking the divine help through the medium of the Prophet and Ali عليه السلام at that time. In this way, the tradition interprets the fast and the prayer as the Prophet and Ali عليه السلام.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Qur'an - Chapter 2, Verse 45 - Wasta-inu (seek help) applies to worldly as well as spiritual matters as stated in verse 5 of al-Fatihah. *Sabr* (patience) and *salat* (prayer) curb vain desires, pride and self-indulgence and lead to humility, acceptance and obedience. The Arabic word *sabr* has many shades of implied suggestions - willingness to endure, submission, self-control, serenity, poise, and ability to continue.

To liberate the human ego from the clutches of the excessive attachment to bodily wants and material success, a refined discipline has to be built through subordinating the body to the control of the spiritual energy, otherwise mere formal rituals and recitation of chants and charms do not help man to rise above the level of animal life, as has been shown by Ali b. Abi Talib عليه السلام.

The whole world bears witness to the fact that in wisdom, spiritual achievements, and bodily strength there is no one who can be compared with him. He stands high and above in the select company of the most devoted

⁷⁴ al-Kafi

⁷⁵ al-Ayyashi

servants of Allah. The lives of the Holy Prophet, Bibi Fatima, his daughter and the Holy Imams is a brilliant light which throws light on the path to be followed by the sincere faithful who seek assistance (*wasta-inu*) to build up the balanced character mentioned above, and referred to in this verse. It is reported that whenever the Holy Prophet or any of the holy Imams, or Bibi Fatima faced any difficulty, they prayed salat and sought Allah's help.

Qur'an - Chapter 2, Verse 4 - The literal meaning of *salat* is the middle of the backbone. When used as a verb, it means the bending and unbending of the backbone. It is particularly employed when an animal is curved at the time of delivery. Figuratively, it was used for a bending posture at the time of giving or taking something. From this, it was adopted for prayer, to signify a submissive attitude. The Qur'an has drawn on this word to describe man's praying attitude towards Allah, as well as Allah's turning towards His creatures.

In Islam, the purpose of prayer is to please Allah, and nothing pleases Allah but that which is the most beneficial to His creatures. Therefore, no prayer is approved by Islam save that which has been prescribed by Allah, nothing less, nothing more, as man has no right to add, omit or alter the prescribed prayer.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

The phrase / *wasta'inu* / *seek help from Allah* is a guiding imperative phrase because at every moment and in all affairs a mortal is in need of Allah's help, whether it is something which is inside his free will, because he is not an absolutely independent subject, though he is created free in will; or it is something which is outside of his will. Real Faith can never be mere empty words. It must express or manifest itself through patience or endurance in all that befalls the individual to show his faithfulness to God, and the help from God must be sought through prayers or supplications to the Lord.

The first is having patience in worldly hardships and perseverance in bearing its bitter circumstances. And also having patience in tolerating the hardship of performing Divine services, and obtaining knowledge and good ethics, patience in withholding one's self from lusts and the fleeting pleasure of committing sins and yielding to low desires, is necessary. This bitterness of hardship, which is short in time, finally results in a sweet fruit, which lasts a

long time. Concerning the epithets of the true believers, Amir al-Mu'minin Ali عليه السلام has said:

The short period of patience resulted in a long period of tranquility for them.

The objective meaning of the phrase *Allah is with the patient ones* is that His help, assistance, guidance, success, favors, the protection from pests, the perfection of intentions, as well as His other blessings are showered upon the patient by Him.

Above all, of the aforementioned bounties, there is the reward of Allah granted to the patient believers in the Hereafter about whom He says:

Those who patiently persevere will truly receive a reward without measure!⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Al-Qur'an, 39:13



Verse 3

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ
تَعْبُدُونَ﴾

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2:172

O You Who Believe!

- Eat of the good things that We have provided for you,
- And be grateful to Allah, if it is Him you worship.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Tabataba'i

The preceding verses were addressed to the *men* in general; now a selected group among them (i.e., the believers) is especially spoken to. Thus, this talk issues forth from the preceding one. It seems as though Allah is turning away from an intractable and self-opinioned group that was impervious to reason, and looks towards those who would listen to, and accept the call of, the Speaker, because they believe Him.

The difference in the two speeches springs from the change of the audience. The believers were expected to accept what was said to them. Therefore, they were told to eat from the good things that We have provided you with. The expression is more loving than the previous impersonal phrase addressed to the general public: eat the lawful (and) good things out of what is in the earth. The loving expression of the verse under discussion paves the way for the direction that they should be thankful to Allah alone, because they are monotheists, they do not worship anyone other than Allah. It was for this very reason that Allah said: that We have provided you with, and did not say, what you have been provided with, or what is in the earth. The Qur'anic expression

(in active voice) shows that Allah is known to them and near them, is affectionate and compassionate to them.

Apparently it should have been *give thanks to Us*, but the Qur'an says, *give thanks to Allah*. This expression is more appropriate for the theme of monotheism which the verse leads to. And for the same reason the next phrase, *if im it is that you worship*, was preferred to a shorter, *if you worship Him*. The present expression restricts and confines the worship to Allah alone.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

The Holy Prophet and the holy Imams have enjoined to say *Bismillah* before eating, and to say *Alhamdulillah* after eating. In this way eating, an act of unification at the physical level, becomes a function of devotion. The state of gratitude to Allah is bound to increase love for Allah, and thus increases the quality of worship and devotion.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

In this verse, too, Allah advises us to be grateful for using the blessings and bounties, and thank Him. There is a tradition from the holy Prophet ﷺ, cited in Tafsir Safi, stating that Allah says that *He creates people, but they worship other than Him; and, He provides (them) sustenance, but they thank others save Allah*.

However, being thankful to Allah is a means of continuity and abundancy of bounties. And, to be grateful to Allah is a sign of sincerity and the purity of one's Faith.

It is narrated from Imam Hadi عليه السلام who said that the wrath of Allah encompasses those who prohibit or deprive themselves from the godly lawful things and permissible deeds.



Verse 4

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلِ الْحُرِّ بِالْحُرِّ وَالْعَبْدُ
بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأُنْثَىٰ بِالْأُنْثَىٰ فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ فَاتَّبِعْهُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدِّ إِلَيْهِ
بِإِحْسَانٍ ذَلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ فَمَنْ اعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ
أَلِيمٌ﴾

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2:178

O You Who Believe!

- The law of equality is prescribed to you in cases of murder: the free for the free, the slave for the slave, the woman for the woman.
- But if any remission is made by the brother of the slain, then grant any reasonable demand, and compensate him with handsome gratitude, this is a concession and a Mercy from your Lord.
- After this whoever exceeds the limits shall be in grave penalty.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

The verse is addressed to the believers. It means that the law promulgated herein applies to the Muslims only. As regards the non-Muslims - whether under protection of an Islamic State or not - the verse is silent about them. Some people think that this verse has abrogated the verse 5:45 (life is for life); because it does not allow killing of a free person for a slave, or of a man for a woman. But actually there is no room for this supposition. The position of this verse vis-à-vis the verse 5:45 is like that of an explanation vis-à-vis its text.

Its literal translation is: *then whoever is remitted any thing by his brother.* “Whoever” refers to the murderer; the heir/s of the murdered person may waive his/their right of retaliation. Therefore, “any thing” refers to that right; it is used here as a common noun, in order that the rule may cover all possibilities, whether there was a full remission or partial.

Let us say, for example, that there are many heirs and only some of them waive their right; then there shall be no retaliation; instead the blood money will be imposed. The heir of the murdered person who has the right of retaliation) has extraordinarily been described here as the “brother” of the murderer; this expression has been used to awaken the feeling of love and kindness in the heart of the aggrieved party, and gives a hint to him that remission and forgiveness is highly preferable in the eyes of Allah.

Its literal translation is: *then following according to usage, and payment to him in a good manner.* Both phrase are subjects with their predicates implied. Thus literally it would mean: then it is obligatory on the aggrieved “brother” to follow that remission with demand for the blood-money according to usage; and it is obligatory on the murderer to pay it to the aggrieved brother, that is, heir of the slain, in a good manner without any annoying delay.

The permission to commute the retaliation into blood-money is alleviation from your Lord, and therefore, once effected, it cannot be changed. The heir of the slain person cannot revert to retaliation after granting remission. If he transgresses the limit and retaliates after remission, then he shall have a painful chastisement.

Before this verse was revealed, the Arabs were fond of some adages and maxims (on the subject of murder and retaliation), of whose rhetoric and fluency they were very proud. For example: ‘To kill some is to keep alive all’, and ‘To increase killing is to decrease killing’. And the most remarkable in their eyes was the sentence: ‘Killing stamps out killing.’

But when this verse was revealed all were forgotten. Some of its distinguishing points are as follows: The verse has fewer letters, and is easy to pronounce. “the retaliation” with definite article is a proper noun, while “life” is common noun - it shows that the resulting good is greater and more widespread than the retaliation. It explains the result in clear words and

describes the real philosophy of the law, that is, the life. It unambiguously shows by what means the desired result can be obtained: Obviously, it is the retaliation that leads to life, and not the killing. (After all, many killings are done unjustly, and they do not lead to life, they are negation of life.)

The word, “retaliation,” covers also other punishments besides killing, that is, the reprisal in the matter of injury, etc. - and such retributions too lead to the society’s life. The word conveys another extra meaning, as it shows that the retribution has resulted from unjust killing. (Compare it with their maxim, “Killing stamps out killing”, which does not give any idea that “killing” refers to any punishment.) Then there is an exhortation in this sentence, as it points to a life reserved for the people, whom they are oblivious of; it behooves them to take hold of it as it really belongs to them; it is as if someone tells you: There is a property belonging to you with so - and - so, or in such and such a place.

Lastly, the opening word of the verse, that is, “for you” makes it clear to the men of understanding that the law-giver only desires to protect their interest, and no benefit is ever to accrue to him.

as-Sadiq عليه السلام said about the word of Allah, the free for the free:

A free man shall not be killed for the slave but he shall be beaten a severe beating and be fined the blood-money of the slave. And if a man kills a woman, and the heirs of the slain (woman) want to kill him, they shall pay half of his blood-money to the man’s heirs.⁷⁷

al-Halabi narrates from as-Sadiq عليه السلام. He says:

I asked him about the word of Allah the Mighty, the Great: but he who forgoes it, it shall be an expiation for him (5:45); he (the Imam) said:

His sins shall be expiated, as much as he forgives.

And I asked him about the word of Allah, the Mighty, the Great: but if any remission is made to anyone by his (aggrieved) brother, then (the demand for the blood wit) should be made according to usage, and payment should be made to him in a good manner. He said:

⁷⁷ al-Ayyashi

He who has got the right (i.e. the aggrieved party) should not put his brother (i.e. the murderer) in difficulty, when he has made settlement with him concerning the blood-money; and he who has got the duty (of paying the blood-money) should not delay in its payment when he has ability to do so; and he should pay it to him in a good manner.’

And I asked him about the word of Allah, the Mighty, the Great: so whoever exceeds the limit, he shall have a painful chastisement. He said:

It refers to a man who accepts blood-money or forgives, or makes compromise, then exceeds the limit (and kills the murderer); so he shall be killed as Allah, the Mighty, the Great, has said.⁷⁸

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

In this verse the *Law of Qisas* (requital, settlement) is set forth in detail. It is enforceable strictly according to the demands of justice tempered with the spirit of mercy. Allah is the forgiving, and therefore man must be able to forgive. The heirs of the slain have the choice to pardon the murderer if someone on behalf of him pays them the blood-price, after which brotherhood is again restored among the parties concerned.

Before the advent of Islam, more often than not, the scenario after a murder was a chain of brutal and bloodthirsty reactions. The families and the tribes of both the slayer and the slain used to engage themselves into a war of attrition, generation after generation, involving innocent men, women and children. Islam, through the Holy Prophet, put a stop to this barbaric collective human behaviour and gave a just and kind system of justice to the human race, which for the first time, without ignorance and superstition, applied compassion and understanding in order to live in peace and harmony.

“Payment should be made according to recognised usage in a good manner” is called *diyat* (blood-money). In the end this verse says that moderation in punishment is an alleviation from the Lord. Verse 92 of al-Nisa prescribes moderation when the murder is not premeditated and intentional. Verse 93 of al-Nisa clearly declares that a great punishment awaits the murderer who kills

⁷⁸ al-Kafi

a believer intentionally. In addition to the legal penalty, in the hereafter, he will abide in hell for ever.

Verse 9 of al-Hujurat says that if two groups of believers fight one another, promote peace between them. Then if one of them turns aggressive against the other, fight against the aggressive party till it returns to Allah's authority. If it does so, make peace among them equitably and be impartial.

Compare these practical ways of ensuring peace and harmony among the conflicting forces, a regular and day-to-day phenomenon in the human society, with the imaginary, decorative and unreasonable slogans introduced by the Christian Church:

When a man hits you on the cheek, offer him the other cheek too; when a man takes your coat, let him have your shirt as well. Give to every one who asks you; when a man takes what is yours; do not demand it back.⁷⁹

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

The custom in the Age of Ignorance among some Arabs was so that when an individual was murdered from their tribe, they would decide to kill as many members from the murderer's tribe as they could. Their thought was so harsh that they were ready to destroy even the entire people of the murderer's tribe for only a single murder. Then, the above verse was sent down and announced the just law of retaliation, (*Qisas*).

This Islamic decree was, indeed, a medial status between the two different injunctions which were current at that time. Before the revelation of this ordinance of Islam, some people considered retaliation necessary, with no changes, so that nothing else was permissible to substitute it, while some other groups believed that only the rule of blood-wit should be followed. So, Islam decreed the law of retaliation in the case of the discontent of the heirs of the murdered, and blood-wit when both parties agree upon it.

From this verse on, in the current Sura, a series of decrees and ordinances of Islam are stated and completed.

⁷⁹ Luke 6:29 and 30

At first, it begins with the protection of the value of blood which is an extraordinary important problem in social connections. Through this verse, Islam makes all the concerning old customs invalid. The Qur'an, addressing the believers, says:

“O’ you who have Faith! Retaliation (Qisas) is prescribed for you in the matter of the (unlawfully) murdered ...”

Thus, on one hand, the avengers of blood are advised not to be immoderate in taking a blood-price if they dispense with retaliation, and take the blood-wit with a fair price and according to what Islam has appointed and also by installments so that the party be able to pay it.

And, on the other hand, through the sentence: *“...let the payment be made to him with kindness”*, it recommends the murderer to pay the blood-price in a right style and without any negligence so that his debt be entirely paid on time. Therefore, the Qur'an has defined the duty of each party and how they should treat to each other.

At the end of the verse, for emphasis and to attract the attentions to the fact that transgressing the limits of Allah, from the side of whoever it may be, deserves a severe punishment, it says:

“...This is an alleviation from your Lord, and a mercy; so whoever transgresses the limits after this, he shall have a painful punishment.”

This equitable command for ‘retaliation’ and ‘forgiveness’ which makes up a quite logical manly assemblage, condemns, on one hand, the wrong method of the Ignorance Age which considered no equality in retaliation and, similar to the tyrants of this very age of space, sometimes killed hundreds of people in excuse of the murder of one person.

And, on the other hand, it does not shut the door of pardon to people. In the meantime, it does not lower the respect of blood, and does not allow murderers to become bold and presumptuous.

And also, thirdly, it announces that neither of the two parties is permitted to transgress the limits after accepting the principle of pardon and blood-wit. This command was issued in spite of the old custom of the Ignorant tribes

where the heirs of the murdered might kill the murderer even after forgiving him and taking the blood-wit.



Verse 5

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2:183

O You Who Believe!

- Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you,
- That you may (learn) self-restraint.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

(On verses 183-18) Obviously, the first sentences have been revealed to prepare minds for the final ones. The first two verses are like a preparatory statement, with which a speaker tries to keep the audience calm and quiet, and this ensures that they do not become restless on hearing the tough commandment which he is to announce shortly. All these sentences in these two verses gently lead the hearer's mind to the ordinance of the fast of Ramadan. They mention such things as to remove gloom and anxiety, cheer the soul and imperceptibly assuage the mood of unruliness and disobedience. They point to various concessions and indulgences which have been incorporated in the commandment. And all this is in addition to the goods of this world and the next which may be earned by following the law.

It is for this reason that the sentence *O you who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you* if followed by the phrase as it was prescribed for those before you – hinting that you should not think it as a heavy burden nor should you feel gloomy, for it is not a new command for which you have been singled out; it was ordained for previous peoples also.

It further encourages them by pointing out: by following this command you may get which you aim at by your faith – and that is piety (taqwa) which is the best thing for those who believe in Allah and the Day of Judgment – and you are believers. This is the import of the phrase so that you may guard yourselves (tattaqun, from the same root as taqwa).

Moreover, this worthy action, which inspires the hope of piety in you (as it did in your predecessors) does not involve all your time, nor even most of it. It is only for a counted number of days. The word days (*ayyaman*) is a common noun, and it shows insignificance. Its adjective, “counted”, hints that the number is very easy (as we see in the words of Allah in the Qur’an, 12:20 *And they sold him for a small price, some counted pieces of silver*).

This mode of address reminds them of a virtue (faith, belief) which encourages them to accept whatever order is given to them by their Lord, even if it is against their desires and habits.

“Siyam” and “Sawm” are infinite verbs meaning to abstain from an action, like abstaining from eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, talking, walking, etc. Also it is said that it means abstaining from desirable and coveted things. Later in religion, it was mostly used for abstaining from some specified things from dawn-break up to sunset with intention.

Those before you means the nations that came before the advent of Islam: the followers of the previous prophets, like the followers of Musa and Isa etc. It is the meaning understood from this phrase wherever it occurs in the Qur’an.

The comparison as it was prescribed for those before you is not general; it does not cover all the peoples, nor all the details of the Islamic fast. In other words, it does not mean that the fast was prescribed for the followers of all previous prophets, nor that the fast ordained for them was like the Islamic fast in all the details, like period, rules and other particulars. The comparison is only in the principles of fasting and abstaining from some things – without any regard to the particulars.

Idol-worshippers fasted to please their deities, or, on committing a sin, to extinguish their deities’ anger, or to get their prayers granted. This turns the fast into a trade or barter; the man performs what is needed by the deity and

the deity in its turn grants the prayers of the man; the worshipper pleases the deity so that the deity may do what will please the worshipper.

There is no doubt that one may achieve piety through fasting. Everyone naturally feels that for union with the sublime world of holiness and for rising to the height of perfection and spirituality man should first of all restrain himself from gratifying material desires. He should keep away from satisfying the body's lust and inclinations, and purge his soul from the love of worldly affairs. In short, he should guard himself against all such things which may carry him away from his Lord. This is piety (taqwa) which is achieved through abstinence from lust and desires.

Even more beneficial and more effective for the common man is the abstinence from common lawful desires like food, drink and sex. This trains him to keep away from unlawful things; and creates in him the will to guard himself against sin and evil, and to come nearer to Allah. Obviously, when he accepts the words of Allah by abstaining from lawful desires, and heeds to and obeys His commandment, he will be more needful and obedient to His words in connection with sins and unlawful things.

As-Sadiq عليه السلام said:

The Messenger of Allah, in the early days of his prophethood, used to fast continuously so that people would think that he would not leave a single day's fast, and then to leave the fast continuously so that they would say he would not fast again.

Then he changed this regime and began fasting on alternate days, and this was the fast of Dawud.

Then he changed it and started fasting three bright days (ie., 13th, 14th and 15th of the lunar month when the moonlight is the brightest).

Then he again divided the three days – one day each in every ten days, the first and the last Thursdays and the Wednesday in the middle.

And he continued with this regime till he left this world.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ al-Kafi

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Fasting is a means of restraining and controlling the *nafs*, so that contentment (*rida*), and all the other blessings of this great discipline may be experienced.

- The fasting of the ordinary man is to withhold only from food and drink.
- The fasting of the pious man is to curb sensory desires, to refrain from looking at the unlawful, hearing the harmful, and thinking about the distasteful, or about what stimulates the lower nature.
- The fasting of a true believer is to seal the heart from paying any attention to other-than-Allah (*ghayrallah*), and safeguard himself with thorough awareness of the divine laws.

Fasting (*sawm*) is one of the obligatory functions of the faith, next only to the prescribed 5 times a day prayers (*salat*), in importance. It trains the Muslims to guard themselves against evil as well as conditions them to suffer physical affliction and exercise self control in the defence of faith and the faithful.

Fasting, although not as perfectly regulated and decisive as in Islam, was prescribed for the followers of the previous prophets also, and was also in vogue, in varying forms, in different parts of the world. Among the Jews it was done in times of sorrow and affliction. Among the Hindus in India, fasting is undertaken as a penance or to achieve spiritual power. The Sabians were also prescribed fasting for one full month and the object of fasting among them was almost identical to Islamic fasting.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

Next to several important ordinances of Islam stated in the former verses, these current verses refer to another ordinance, i.e. fasting, which is one of the most serious acts of worship. The Qur'an, with the same tone of emphasis that was applied for the previous verses, says:

“O you who have Faith! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you...”

Then, immediately after this, it refers to the philosophy of this humanizing worship and, in a short but meaningful sentence, says:

“...so that you may guard yourselves (against evil),”

According to what the Late Kulayni says in his famous book (*Al-Kafi*), *piety is rendered into one's restriction from sin*. Most sins originate from wrath and lust.

Fasting brings the extravagance of this instinct under control, which, consequently, decreases corruption and increases piety.

From the point of various affects that fasting may spiritually and materially produces in the unity of man; it has different dimensions that can be discussed. The ethical dimension and the philosophy of fasting are the most important of all.

Indeed, the most important philosophy of fasting is this very spiritual status of it. A person who has many kinds of food and drinks available at his reach to use of them whenever he is hungry or thirsty cannot be so tolerant at the time he is in lack of them. But the one who observes the fast is like a plant which grows in a dry desert. It resists when water is rare, stands steadfast against strong storms and intense cold. Such people can deal with deprivations when they are challenged with them, and, therefore, can be firm and perseverant.

Fasting trains the soul of a person. With temporary restrictions, fasting gives man perseverance, authority in will, ability of challenging with severe deprivations, and, since it controls restive instincts, it showers light and inner purity into the heart.

However, fasting causes man to promote from the animate nature so that he can ascend unto the rank and the world of angels.

And, also, the famous tradition from Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام is another hint to the same matter which says:

Fasting is a protector from Fire.

Another tradition narrated from Arnir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali عليه السلام says that the Prophet ﷺ was asked what they would do that Satan be banished, and he ﷺ answered:

Fasting blackens his face; charity breaks his back; the love in (the path of) Allah, and persistence in righteous deeds put an end to him, and seeking (Allah's) forgiveness cuts his aorta.

When Ali b. Abi Talib عليه السلام, stating the philosophy of worship, speaks about fasting and he, says:

(Allah has laid down) fasting as a trial of the people in their sincerity...

In another tradition, the holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

Verily, there is a door for (entering) Heaven by the name of *Al-Rayyan*, (quenched of thirst) none enters therein but fasting ones.

Explaining this tradition, the late Sadduq cites in his book *Ma'aniul-Akhbar* the reason that this name has been taken for that door of Heaven is that much of the toil of a fasting person is because of his thirst. So when the fasting ones enter this door, they will be so saturated that they will never become thirsty thereafter.

It is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام in a well-known tradition that Hisham b. Hakam asked him about the reason for the divine legislation of this ordinance when he عليه السلام said:

Allah has enjoined fasting in order to settle equivalence between the rich and the poor, and this is for the sake that the rich feel the taste of hunger and, consequently, be merciful toward the poor (by giving them their rights). And, since the things are usually available for the rich, then Allah, the Exalted, is pleased when equivalence is erected between His servants. So, He, thereby, has ordained that the rich feel the taste of hunger and pain so that they feel sympathy for the weak and be merciful toward the hungry.

Alexy Sufurin, a Russian scientist, writes in his book that by means of fasting a specific result can be obtained in treating diseases such as: anemia, dyspepsia, chronic extended enteritis, furuncle and inner abscess, consumption, rheumatism, gout (padagra, chiragra, gonagra), dropsy, sciatica, some ophthalmic diseases, diabetes, skin diseases, renal diseases, and so on.

Treatment through fasting is not limited to the foregoing diseases alone, but also the sicknesses concerning the fundamentals of the body involving the bodily cells like cancer, syphilis, and plague can be cured by means of fasting.

The holy Prophet ﷺ is narrated to have said in a famous tradition:

Fast to be healthy.

Again, in another tradition he ﷺ has said:

The stomach is the site of all ailments, while dietary (abstinence) is the head of all remedies.

The existing Torah and Bible indicate that the Jews and the Christians had fasting, too, (Math. 6:16, 17; and Luke 5: 33-35). The followers of some other religions used to fast in times of sorrow and affliction.

In the Lexicon of the Bible it is cited that fasting, in general, has always been practiced among every nation and in any religion at the time of an unexpected sorrow or disaster.

It is also caught from the Torah that Moses عليه السلام had forty days of fasting. It is cited in the Old Testament thus:

When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of covenant which the Lord made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water.

Also, at the time of repentance and seeking the pleasure of the Lord, the Jews fasted. So, it is cited in the Lexicon of the Bible that when the Jews got the opportunity that they wanted to state their weakness and humility before the Lord, they fasted in order that they confess their faults and to obtain the pleasure of His Essence by means of that fasting and repentance.

It is probable that the *Great Fasting with atonement*, which was for one particular day a year, was common among the Jewish people. They had, of course, some other temporary days to fast in remembrance of the destruction of Jerusalem, etc., too.

As the Bible indicates, Jesus عليه السلام had also forty days of fasting. It says thus:

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2) And when he had fasted forty days and nights, he was afterward an hungred.

It is also understood from the Evangel that the disciples of Jesus used to fast. It says:

And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink? And he said unto them, Can you make the children of the bride chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast those days.

Again, it is cited in the Lexicon of the Bible that the lives of disciples and believers, in old times, were full of negation of pleasure and tremendous toils accompanied with observing the fast.

Thus, the Qur'anic sentence saying:

...as it was prescribed for those before you...

is also confirmed whit many historical religious evidences existing in other divine religions even after they had been perverted.



Verse 6

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَآفَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُواتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ﴾

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2:208

O You Who Believe!

- Enter into Islam whole-heartedly.
- And follow not the footsteps of the evil one; for he is to you an avowed enemy.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

(On verses 208-218) These three verses, together with the four that follow them, guide us as how to preserve religious unity in human society: To enter into total submission, to limit oneself to the word spoken by Allah and to that deed whose path is shown by Allah. They declare that religious unity was never disintegrated, nor was the happiness of both worlds turned into misery with disaster visited upon the territory of a people, except when they left submission, manipulated the signs of Allah by altering them and putting them into the wrong place. This had happened to the children of Israel and other people, and will surely happen to this ummah also. But in the end Allah promises them His help, Surely the help of Allah is near.

Again, as the hearers are already believers the submission called for means total submission to Allah after believing in Him. Hence the word wholly in the translation. It follows that believers must submit all their affairs to Allah, they should not decide themselves what was good for them and what was not, they should not prepare or select any path for themselves without the guidance of Allah and His Apostle. They must remember that no people were destroyed

except that they followed their own views and desires, and talked without true knowledge; and no people forfeited the right of life and happiness except that they became disunited.

It is clear from the above that following the footsteps of Satan does not mean following him in all the falsehood which he invites to, because a believer cannot follow Satan in all satanic schemes. Rather, it means to follow him in the matters of religion. Satan furnishes some paths of untruth with the signposts of truth; in this way, he puts into religion what is not from religion. Thus, a believer is deceived into following that path without realizing his error.

One way of becoming aware of such an interpolation is to find out whether Allah and His Apostle have ever mentioned it in their teachings of the religion.

Abdul Rahman says - I asked Abu Abdillah about a man who vowed to slaughter his child. He said: That is from the footsteps of the Satan.⁸¹

Mansfir b. Hazim said:

Abu Abdillah عليه السلام said to me: 'Have you not heard about Tariq? Verily, Tariq was a cattle-dealer in Madina. He came to Abu Ja'far and said: "O Abu Ja'far! I have taken an oath by divorce (of my wives), emancipation (of my slaves) and vow." Thereupon, (Abu Ja'far, AS) said to Him: "O Tariq! verily this is from the footsteps of the Satan."

Abu Ja'far عليه السلام said:

Every oath taken in the name of other than Allah, is from the footsteps of the Satan.⁸²

As-Sadiq عليه السلام said:

When a man takes oath for not doing a thing while what he has sworn against, its doing is better than its leaving, then he should do that which is better; and there is no penalty on him; surely it (i.e., such oath) is only from the footsteps of the Satan.⁸³

⁸¹ at-Tahdhib

⁸² al-Ayyashi

⁸³ al-Kafi

The traditions, as you see, interpret the footsteps of the Satan as the deeds supposed to bring one nearer to Allah, while in fact they are not so, because the shari'ah does not recognize them as we have explained above. Of course, as for the divorce, etc. (mentioned in the second tradition), there is an additional reason for the invalidity of such oaths; and that is making it conditional on some contingency in future; and it is against the principle of immediate and unconditional effecting of such transactions. (It is a topic of jurisprudence.) Oath in the name of other than Allah refers to an oath which has no validity in the shari'ah, and to swearing by what Allah has not sworn by and to which He has given no excellence.

Al-Baqir عليه السلام said about the words of Allah, And the parable of those who disbelieve is as the parable of one who calls out...

That is, their likeness when you call them to the faith is like the caller who calls out to the cattle which understands nothing other than hearing a voice.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Silm means *iman*, the inner core or depth of the faith. The use of this word in this verse points out that "you who believe" are those who know and believe in the religion but are unaware of the scope and extent of the depth of *iman*, so they are invited to surrender and submit with perfect belief and thorough conviction; then alone they will not follow the footsteps of Shaytan, who is an open enemy.

As reported by *Ayyashi*, Imam Muhammad b. Ali al-Baqir عليه السلام had also explained this verse as above and added that it also means that all Muslims are enjoined to believe in *imamat* and follow its divine guidance after the *risalat*, which ended with the Holy Prophet.

By not following the *imamat* of Ali, after the Holy Prophet, the Muslim ummah was easily deceived by the whims and fancies of incompetent and selfish leaders, and by not paying attention to the command of Allah to submit, as given in this verse, the ignorant Muslims were caught in the web of sects, sub-sects, and many schismatic schools of thought. The safest way to enter into submission is to follow the Holy Prophet and the holy Imams of his Ahlul Bayt.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

It is narrated from Akramah that this verse was revealed about the Jews who had converted to Islam, such as: Abdullah b. Salam, Thabat b. Salam, Ibni-Yamin, Asad and Asid (the sons of Ka'b), Shu'bat b. Amr, Bahira Rahib, Sa'id b. Amr, and Ghays b. Zayd. They went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and asked him to allow them to glorify Saturday and recite the Torah; and, similar to the custom in the Age of Ignorance, to avoid consuming the milk and meat of camel.

The worldly peace is possible only under the Shadow of Faith. The Qur'anic words /silm/ and /salam/ in lexicon mean 'peace' and 'quietness'. So, this verse invites all the believers to peace, and in view of the fact that it addresses the believers, the verse means that peace can come into existence only with the existence of Faith. Thus, war and anxiety cannot be removed only by relying on mere human made rules and laws based on material affairs. Then, it is only by the use of the spiritual power of Faith that human beings, in spite of all their differences, can live peacefully and in fellowship together when they, consequently, may form a worldly government.

“O' you who have Faith! enter you all into submission (to Allah in being in peace)...”

It is evident that material affair such as: language, race, wealth, geographical region, and social classes are totally the origin of separation and dispersion. They cannot provide the real worldly peace which needs a firm circle of connection between the hearts of human beings in the world. This linking circle is only Faith in Allah which is beyond those differences. Therefore, a certain worldly peace without Faith is impossible; the same manner that the inner peace and tranquility in the unity of a person and in his spiritual environment, without having a true Faith, is impossible.

“...and follow not the footsteps of Satan...”

As it was formerly mentioned, the Satanic temptations and deviations usually come forth gradually and, according to the meanings of the Qur'an, each of them is counted as the following of a step of Satan. Here, this fact is stated again that deviation from the right and following the stimuli of enmity,

hypocrisy, fighting and blood-shedding usually begin from slight and simple stages. Believing people should be aware of their advent in order to stop them. There is a proverb common among Arab people which say: Verily, a destructive fight begins with a slap.

“...for he is a manifest foe for you...”

The enmity of Satan against human kind is not something hidden or unknown. Satan has decided and sworn to behave inimically towards man since the beginning of the creation of Adam, and does his best to settle this enmity among the human race. Yet, as it has been described before, this opposition and hostility can not harm the true believers but it is a secret alongside the path of spiritual development. onymous with complete peace.



Verse 7

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعُ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ وَلَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2:254

O You Who Believe!

- Spend out of (the bounties) We have provided for you,
- Before the Day comes when no bargaining (will avail), nor friendship nor intercession.
- Those who reject Faith they are the wrong-doers.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

This verse is rendered as a warning to the believers, telling them to give alms and not to lose the respite they have in this life. They are recommended to provide some fitting provisions thereby for their certain journey; the next life, the Hereafter.

The meaning is quite clear. The last sentence implies that not spending in the way of Allah is unbelief and injustice.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

To provide or give help in cash and kind to the needy has been identified with the “spending in the way of Allah.” It is an exhortation, not a compulsion. According to your conscience you have the liberty to spend in the way of Allah “out of what He has given to you”, whether you have large means or a moderate income.

“Before the day comes” implies that one has to do good in this world. What you sow (in this life) you shall reap (in the life of the hereafter). “There will be

no bargaining, nor any friendship nor intercession” means that wrongdoers will not be able to claim salvation in exchange of good deeds done by their ancestors or their posterity; or on account of the acts of their religious leaders as the Christians think that Jesus, by his blood, has redeemed the sins of his followers. This verse categorically denies this type of assertion and warns the people not to indulge in such a false belief. The wicked will be punished.

To make the social life in this world egalitarian every individual should contribute to the welfare of the human society out of what Allah gives him. The overall effect of this system covers every person in the community.

Islam is the only religion which makes spending (in the way of Allah) obligatory. Every Muslim must follow the divine commandments as to how the bounties of Allah, given to him, should be shared with his less fortunate relatives and fellow-creatures.

This verse tells us the order in which charity should be given.

First, in the list, are the parents, then the near kindred, the orphans, the needy and the wayfarer. There is no reward if parents and the nearer kindred are overlooked in order to meet the demands of others. The needs of the parents should be cared for as a duty without the embarrassment of their having to ask for the same. The Holy Prophet advised his followers to take care of the parents, brothers and sisters, and the nearest relatives first, and then the others. It must also be noted that wars (in self-defence) require funds. To finance such wars is as important as spending for the helpless relatives, because it is in the interest of the whole community that the invaders should not be allowed to destroy the polity of the faithful.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

What should be spent in the way of Allah? Whatever good that may benefit others is the answer. As Zakat (the poor-tax) is compulsory, it cannot be made a part of “whatever good you do”, which has no connection with Zakat. Also, Zakat cannot be spent on the members of the family. The word *afwa* in verse 219 of this surah makes it clear that only surplus should be given. The Holy Prophet has defined the surplus, and how much and to whom it should be given. In all events moderation is the guideline.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

On the Resurrection Day, there will be neither any bargain to buy the means of felicity and security against one's infidelity, nor any friend or intercessor to make their infidelity invalid.

"...before there comes a day wherein shall be no bargaining neither friendship, nor intercession; and the infidels - they are the unjust."

They are deprived from intercession in that world because they were the cause of deprivation for others in this world. For example, a miser person not only is unjust to himself, since he extinguishes the light of generosity inside his self and wastes his situation in the Hereafter, but also practically proves inequity against others when he ignores the Divine commandments.



Verse 8

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَبْطُلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِثَاءَ
النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ
وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الْكَافِرِينَ﴾

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2:264

O You Who Believe!

- Cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury - like those who spend their substance to be seen of men, but believe neither in Allah nor in the Last Day.
- They are in parable like a hard, barren rock, on which is a little soil: on it falls heavy rain, which leaves it (just) a bare stone.
- They will be able to do nothing with what they have earned.
- And Allah guides not those who reject faith.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

The context of the verses (261 - 274) indicates that they must have been revealed all together. Their theme is spending in the way of Allah. They begin with a parable to show that charity increases in the hands of Allah, one to seven hundred or even more, by the permission of Allah. Another parable shows that this increase is sure to happen; it cannot fail. They go to forbid insincerity in spending, that is, spending to show others how generous one is, and give one more parable to demonstrate the futility of this, that such spending does not increase and bears no fruit.

Also, they admonish the believers not to follow charity with reproach and injury, because these two evils nullify alms and make their reward forfeit. Then they say that spending should be from their good and lawful wealth, and not from unlawful or worthless things, as it shows niggardliness and miserliness. Thereafter they prescribe who should be given charity - the poor men who are besieged in the way of Allah. Finally it again reminds them of the great reward of charity which they shall find with Allah.

In short, the verses exhort the believers to spend and explain to them the following things:

- First: The purpose of spending: It should be to seek the pleasure of Allah, not to show off to people.
- Second: The fashion and condition of this good work: It should not be followed by reproach and injury.
- Third: The quality of the wealth to be spent: It must be lawful and good, not unlawful or worthless.
- Fourth: The qualification of the receivers: It should be given to those poor who are besieged in the way of Allah.
- Fifth: The rewards of such spending in this world and in the next.

One of the two pillars of Islam is the Rights of the people; and spending for the welfare of the people is one of the things to which Islam pays the utmost attention. It exhorts a believer to spend for this purpose, and has laid down the rules and opened up the ways for such spending - some of these ways are obligatory and others highly recommended: zakat, khums (the one-fifth tax), penalties to expiate certain illegalities, various types of redemption, obligatory spending and recommended charities. Then there are laws to establish and regulate endowments, settle-ments for residence, or for life, wills, gifts and many similar things.

All this has been done to improve the living standards of the poor classes - the people who cannot meet their expenses without help from others. The intention of Islam is to raise their level to bring them nearer to the people of means.

On the other hand, it has strictly forbidden the rich people from pompous living and showing off their wealth. It has allowed them to live in a reasonable and honorable manner; but has prohibited extravagance and the squandering of wealth in a lavish style which is above the reach of the average person.

The aim of both sets of rules was to create a community life that would be neither too low nor too high, whose various groups would be nearer to each other, and would have a fairly uniform standard of life. Such a society would give life to the institution of unity and cooperation; and would eradicate conflicting designs and uproot enmity and antagonism. The Qur'an holds that the true religion must organize life in all its multifarious activities, putting it in order in such a way that man's bliss is guaranteed in this life as well as in the next one. Such a religion will bless man with true knowledge, noble character and pleasant life; he will be free in this life to enjoy the bounties given to him by Allah, and to remove from himself unpleasant things and all types of misfortune.

This is a fact, the truth of which was demonstrated by the Prophet during his lifetime when he had the authority in his hands. He showed its correctness and demonstrated how it created a stable society, growing, developing and bearing good results.

It was this society for which the Leader of the faithful, Ali عليه السلام felt nostalgia, and the passing away of which he remembered sorrowfully, in one of his speeches:

You live in a period when the steps of virtue are moving backwards, and the steps of evil are moving forward; and Satan is increasing his eagerness to ruin people. This is the time when his equipment is strong, and his traps have been widely spread and his prey has become easy (to catch). Cast your glance wherever you like. Do you see (anything) except a poor man suffering (the pangs of) poverty, or a rich man changing Allah's favor for ungratefulness, or a miser trampling the right of Allah to increase his wealth, or an arrogant person (who behaves) as though his ears hear any counsel with difficulty.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon 129

The verse proves that charity becomes forfeited if it is followed by reproach and injury.

Some people say that this verse shows that subsequent sins (and especially big ones) nullify the good deeds preceding them. But this inference is uncalled for. The verse only talks about reproach and injury vis-à-vis charity.

As the verse is addressed to the believers, and as one who does a good deed to show to men is not a believer (because he does not do that deed for the sake of Allah) the prohibition was not extended to showiness; it was confined to reproach and injury, because there is no danger of showiness for a believer. The verse likens the alms-giver who follows his alms with reproach and injury to the one who spends to show off to men; and the likeness is in the forfeiture of charities, although there is a difference between both. The charity of one who spent to show off to men was null and void ab initio; while that of the one who followed it with reproach and injury was correct and valid to begin with, but was later nullified because of these sins.

It shows that disbelief here does not imply that the showy person does not believe in Allah at all. Also it proves that doing a deed with the intention of showing off to men implies that such a doer has no faith in Allah and the last day, in so far as that deed is concerned.

“al-Wabil” is heavy rain, descending with force. The pronoun in “They shall not gain” refers to “him who spends to be seen of men”, because “him” stands for the whole group of showy persons. The sentence “They shall not gain anything of what they have earned” describes the reason for the analogy; and it is the common factor of the two sides of this simile. The sentence “And Allah does not guide the unbelieving people” describes the general principle: a man who does a deed to show to people is in that particular respect an unbeliever, and Allah does not guide such people. This sentence, therefore, gives the reason for the forfeiture mentioned in this verse.

The man who spends to show off to people can get no reward for such spending. Look at a smooth rock, upon which is some earth, then a heavy rain falls upon it. Now, rain, and especially a heavy downpour, is the apparent cause of the earth coming to life again; it makes it green and adorns it with plants. But if earth settles on a smooth rock it cannot remain in place in a

heavy rainfall; it is washed away and the bare rock is left there for everyone to see - the rock which cannot absorb water, nor can it nourish a seed to grow. Rain and earth both together are the most important causes of plant life and growth; but as their place was a smooth rock their effect was totally nullified, although none can attribute any fault or defect to these two life-giving ingredients.

Thus is the case of the man who does a good deed but not with intention of seeking the pleasure of Allah; his action becomes totally null and void, even when the deed, for example, spending in the way of Allah, is among the most effective causes of getting divine reward. But the heart of such a man is like that smooth rock; it is unable to receive divine mercy and grace. And thus he gets nothing of what he had earned.

The verse shows that the acceptance of a deed depends on sincere intention and on the pure aim of seeking the pleasure of Allah. Sunnis and Shi'as have narrated from the Prophet that he said:

Verily, deeds are according to intentions.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Imam Ali b. Abi Talib says that *he who has wealth but does not show off, or he who has the power to avenge but forgives, or he who gives good counsel even to his enemy, or he who spends in the way of Allah with no strings attached, without making it known, is the true hero.*

To attach strings to charity, or to make it known, or to reproach the overly solicitous seeker of help, is an exercise in futility and renders the charity useless.

While giving Zakat and sadqa, one positively lays claim to the act of goodness done in obedience to Allah, but salat is an act of devotion which implies self-denial; the devotee is engrossed in the greatness of the absolute.

Sublime was the devotee, Ali b. Abi Talib, who performed these two different acts at the same time - prayed as well as spent in the way of Allah, and, therefore, was declared to be the wali of the faithful along with Allah and His messenger, in verse 55 of al-Ma'idah.

We are barren like rocks. To be fertile and of benefit to ourselves and to others, we must cover ourselves with the moist earth of *ihsan* (giving more than what one deserves). If we cause harm or injury, it is as if the fertile soil was washed off, leaving us once again barren.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

Consider a piece of rock covered with a little amount of dust. When it be sown with good seeds and exposed to fresh air and sunshine, and then, a harsh rain falls upon it, the rain will surely wash-out the thin dust from the rock and scatter the containing seed with the dust. Consequently, the hard impenetrable rock, on which no plant can grow, appears with its rough feature.

This is not for that the fresh air; sunshine and falling rain have had a bad effect. It is because the place where the seed was sown has been an inappropriate place for the aim. Its appearance was adorned while its inner side was an impenetrable rough rock with a mere thin amount of dust over its surface. It is in a state that plants and trees, besides having suitable conditions above the ground, need a good preparation under the ground for the roots in order to spread and feed.

The Qur'an has likened the hypocritical deeds and charities followed with reproach and injury, that which originate from the callous, hearts, to a rock covered with a little dust from which no profit can be gained. So, the efforts of the farmer and the sower will be wasted, too.

Consider a green grass garden which is located on a high productive land and benefited from fresh free air and sufficient sunshine. Useful downpour-falls water it, but when the rainfall is not enough, drizzles and drops of dew preserve the pleasantness and freshness of the garden. As a result, such a garden usually yields its fruits two-fold more than the other ordinary gardens. This sort of gardens, besides having productive land, enjoy of dew and drizzles added to enough rainfalls. They have such a beautiful view that attracts the attention of any visitor from the distance. They are also safe from the threat of floods.



Verse 9

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ
الْأَرْضِ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِآخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ
وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ﴾

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2:267

O You Who Believe!

- Give of the good things which you have (honourably) earned,
- And of the fruits of the earth which We have produced for you.
- And do not even aim at getting anything which is bad, in order that out of it you may give away something, when you yourselves would not receive it except with closed eyes.
- And know that Allah is Free of all wants, and worthy of all praise.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

Whatever the grammatical explanation, the meaning of the verse is a quite clear. Allah explains the condition of the wealth which should be spent: it should be from one's good property; and not from bad property which the spender himself would not deign to accept unless he connived at it. Giving bad wealth in charity is not generosity at all; it is getting rid of an unwanted item. Such spending will not create any love of generosity in the donor's heart, nor will it bring to him any spiritual perfection.

That is why the verse ends on the sentence "and know that Allah is Self-sufficient, Praiseworthy." When you spend anything, keep in view the Self-sufficiency and Praiseworthiness of Allah. He needs nothing, yet He

appreciates your good spending. Therefore, spend from your good property. Or, it may mean: *He is Self-sufficient and Praiseworthy. You should not bring to Him what is not fit for His Great Sanctity.*

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

This verse is a summation of the preceding verses from 261 to 266. The priority in life is to spend in the way of Allah of the good things that we earn and possess, and of what Allah has given us out of the earth; and not to give that which we reject as bad, because we ourselves would not take it unless its price is lowered, therefore, in verse 92 of Ali Imran we are reminded:

“You will not attain unto piety until you spend of that which you love.”

The rich are warned not to give their rejected and unwanted things as charity to the poor.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

It is narrated from Imam as-Sadiq عليه السلام that this verse was revealed about a group of people who had earned some wealth from usury at the Age of Ignorance. They usually spent out from it in charity in the way of Allah. Allah prohibited them from that action and commanded them to spend out in charity from the good property they had earned.

In *Majmaul-Bayan Fi Tafsiril-Qur'an*, next to narrating this tradition, it quotes from Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali عليه السلام who said:

This verse has been revealed about those who used to mix the dry and bony dates with good dates when they wanted to spend in charity.

They were, therefore, commanded not to do that action.

These two occasions of revelation are never contradictory with each other. The verse may have been revealed upon both groups, when one of which is due to spiritual goodness and the other concerns to the appearance and material goodness.

In the previous verses, the effects of charity, the qualities of givers of charity, and the deeds that may corrupt this godly action and ruin its reward were pointed out. In this verse, the quality of the property, which is to be spent in

charity, is explained. In the first phrase of the verse, Allah commands believing people to spend from good of their wealth.

Some of people have the habit of spending out in charity mostly from the worthless and worn out things that they do not use any longer themselves. This kind of charities are neither effective in growing spiritual training of the essence of humanity in the giver of charity, nor is so useful to the needy. It can be counted sort of disgrace and scorn unto them, too.

This sentence explicitly prohibits Muslims from doing that. It says how they spend in charity from those things which they themselves do not like to accept, but hatefully. Must their Muslim brothers, and beyond that, the Lord, in Whose way they spend out in charity, be considered, in their view, lower than themselves?

Indeed, the verse points to a precise fact. It is that the charities given in the way of Allah have two ends. On one end there are the needy ones, and on the other end there is Allah, for Whose sake the charity is spent. In this case, if the charity is taken from the low and worthless things, from one hand, it is counted an aspersion to the high rank of the Lord that the giver of charity has not regarded Him eligible for a 'good' thing. On the other hand, it is a disgrace to the needy ones who, in spite of their poverty, mostly have a high level of faith and human hood, whose soul may be injured because of such a disagreeable charity.



Verse 10

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2:278

O You Who Believe!

- Fear Allah,
- And give up what remains of your demand for usury,
- If you are indeed believers.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Tabataba'i

These verses were revealed to emphasize the prohibition of interest and to put strong pressure on the interest takers; they are not the verses that originally legislated the prohibition of interest; their language is not that of legislation. The law forbidding interest was ordained most probably by the following verse of the third chapter:

“O You Who Believe! Do not devour interest, making it double and redouble, and fear Allah, that you may succeed.”⁸⁵

Also look at one of the verses under discussion: “O You Who Believe! Fear Allah and forgo what remains (due) from interest, if you are believers.” It shows that the Muslims, even after the previous prohibition, sometimes took interest; and therefore Allah ordered them to desist from this practice and to remit that part of the interest which remained due from the debtors. With this background, the meaning of the following sentence becomes quite clear: “To whomsoever then the admonition has come from his Lord, then he desists, for him shall be what has already passed, and his affair rests with Allah. . .”

⁸⁵ Al-Qur'an, 3:130

Even long before the verse of the third chapter, a Makkan chapter (the 30th), had condemned the practice of taking interest:

“And whatever you lay out as interest, so that it may increase in the properties of men, it shall not increase with Allah; and whatever you give in charity, desiring Allah’s pleasure - it is these (persons) that shall get manifold.”⁸⁶

It shows that interest was a thing abhorred since the early days of the Call, before the *hijrah*; then it was clearly forbidden in the third chapter; and finally it was most forcefully condemned and denounced in these seven verses (under discussion – 2:275-281), the style of which clearly shows that interest was forbidden long before they were revealed. It also proves that these seven verses were revealed after the third chapter.

Moreover, interest was prohibited in Judaism, as Allah says about the Jews:

“And their (Jews) taking interest, though indeed forbidden were they against it.”⁸⁷

And also He says quoting them:

“This is because they say: there is nothing upon us in the matter of the unlearned people.”⁸⁸

Add to it the fact that the Qur’an verified their book and did not abrogate this law. All of this together was enough to make the Muslims understand that interest was prohibited and forbidden in Islam.

These verses of interest have some connection with the preceding verses of spending in the way of Allah. And this connection has been clearly pointed out in these verses: for example, *“Allah effaces interest and He causes charities to grow”*; *“and that you remit (it) as alms is better for you.”* Likewise the verse of the thirtieth chapter contrasts it with alms; and that of the third chapter is followed by praise of spending, exhorting the believers to spend benevolently in the way of Allah.

⁸⁶ Al-Qur’an, 30:39

⁸⁷ Al-Qur’an, 4:161

⁸⁸ Al-Qur’an, 3:75

Moreover, reason also recognizes the contrast and mutual opposition of interest and charity. Interest is taking without giving anything in exchange; charity is giving without taking anything in exchange. The evils emanating from interest are poles apart from the good effects of charity. Charity spreads mercy and love, strengthens the morale of the poor members of society, increases wealth, maintains good social order, and then as a result of mutual love and respect, peace reigns over the land. The evils resulting from interest are exactly opposite to these good effects.

Allah has, in these verses, condemned interest in the most emphatic words. No other deed has been condemned in such a harsh tone. The only exception is befriending the enemies of religion, which also has been execrated with equal force. All other major sins have been condemned emphatically in the Qur'an, but the level of their condemnation is far below that used for these two evils. Not only fornication, liquor and gambling, but even more grievous sins like murder and creating mischief in the earth seem milder than these two - interest and making friends with the enemies of religion. Why? The reason is very clear. The bad effects of the above-mentioned sins remain mostly confined to individuals, one or more; further, they impair only some particular psychological traits of the doer.

But these two evils bring such destruction in their wake that religion is uprooted and even its signs are obliterated; the life-line of human social order is severed; human nature is over-powered by their harmful intoxication, and it loses all its control over the people's thinking and action.

History has shown why the Qur'an had spoken so forcefully against befriending the enemies of religion and against interest. Look at the pitiable condition of the Muslim countries. They started adulating the enemies of Islam, making friends with them and adoring them. They inclined psychologically towards them. And now we see the result: they have fallen down into the pit of perdition; they are plundered and pillaged by the same "beloved" enemies; they have no control over their own destiny; they have lost their wealth, their honor and even their identity; they deserve neither death nor life; they are not allowed to die, and they are not given any

breathing space to enjoy the bounties of life. Religion has departed from there, and virtue abandoned them long ago.

As for interest, it caused the treasures of the earth to be concentrated in few select houses, and the wealth to be hoarded by the takers of interest. The money gave them power over other less fortunate human beings. It was the real cause of the world wars. It divided mankind into two opposing groups: the wealthy who enjoy all the blessings of life, and the poor who find it difficult to meet their barest necessities. The grouping has already appeared. It is a calamity which has shaken the earth and leveled the mountains. It is threatening humanity with downfall and the world with destruction. Then evil was the end of those who did evil.⁸⁹

You will see that what Allah described about interest and making friends with the enemies of religion was a forecast of the carnage which has now come true.

The verse addresses them with their attribute of belief and faith, and then reminds them to fear Allah. It prepares the ground for the order which follows, *“and forgo what remains (due) from interest.”* It shows that when these verses were revealed, there were some believers who indulged in this sin and their debtors still owed them some interest payments. Therefore, Allah ordered them to forgo that amount. This order was followed by the threat: *“But if you do (it) not, then be apprised of war from Allah and His Apostle.”*

The verse ends on the words, *“if you are believers.”* This shows that desisting from interest is an inseparable characteristic of belief. It puts more emphasis on the preceding sentences: *“and whoever returns (to it) - these are the inmates of the Fire...”*, and: *“Allah does not love any ungrateful (unbeliever) sinner.”*

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Historically, this verse instructs the faithful to stop taking usury on what they have already put into that system, once they have clearly seen its wickedness and satanic touch.

⁸⁹ Al-Quran, 30:10

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

It is cited in some commentary books, such as: Majmaul-Bayan, Al-Mizan, and Maraqi, that when the verse upon the prohibition of usury was revealed, some of the companions of the prophet ﷺ, like Khalid-b.-Walid, Abbas, and Uthman, had claimed some amount of interest from people. They asked the Prophet ﷺ about their claims, when the above mentioned verse was revealed.

After the revelation of this verse, the holy Prophet ﷺ said: “My uncle, Abbas, is not rightful to demand interest either.” Then, the Messenger of Allah added: “First of all, my relatives must abandon usury.” He also in a sermon said:

I put all the interests of usury (belonging to) the age of ignorant under my feet, and the first one I put is the interest of Abbas.

1. The requisite of faith is to dispense with the rights of others and the prohibited wealth.

“...if you are faithful.”

2. The sign of piety is giving up the unlawful commodity.

“O’ you who have Faith! be in awe of Allah, and forgo what remains (due to you) of usury...”



Verse 11

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ وَلْيَكْتُبَ بَيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ وَلَا يَأْبَ كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ وَلْيُمْلِلِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا يَبْخَسْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ سَفِيهًا أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يُمْلَ هُوَ فَلْيُمْلِلْ وَلِيَّهُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَاسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ مِمَّنْ تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكَّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَىٰ وَلَا يَأْبُ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا وَلَا تَسْأَمُوا أَنْ تَكْتُبُوهُ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُ وَنَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا وَأَشْهِدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ وَلَا يُضَارَّ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ وَإِنْ تَفَعَّلُوا فَإِنَّهُ فُسُوقٌ بِكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيَعْلَمُكُمْ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2:282

O You Who Believe!

- When you deal with each other, in transactions involving future obligations in a fixed period of time, reduce them to writing.
- Let a scribe write down faithfully as between the parties: let not the scribe refuse to write: as Allah Has taught him, so let him write.

- Let him who incurs the liability dictate, but let him fear His Lord Allah, and not diminish aught of what he owes.
- If their party liable is mentally deficient, or weak, or unable Himself to dictate, let his guardian dictate faithfully, and get two witnesses, out of your own men,
- And if there are not two men, then a man and two women, such as you choose, for witnesses, so that if one of them errs, the other can remind her.
- The witnesses should not refuse when they are called on (for evidence).
- Disdain not to reduce to writing (your contract) for a future period, whether it be small or big: it is more just in the sight of Allah.
- More suitable as evidence, and more convenient to prevent doubts among yourselves - but if it be a transaction which you carry out on the spot among yourselves, there is no blame on you if you reduce it not to writing.
- But take witness whenever you make a commercial contract.
- And let neither scribe nor witness suffer harm. If you do (such harm), it would be wickedness in you.
- So fear Allah.
- For it is God that teaches you.
- And Allah is well acquainted with all things.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

“And let him who owes the debt dictate ... but if he who owes the debt is unsound in understanding...”

The whole phrase “*he who owes the debt*” has been repeated here instead of using a pronoun. It was done to remove any possible misunderstanding, as a pronoun could easily be mistaken to refer to the “scribe” mentioned in the preceding sentence.

“...or (if) he is not able to dictate himself, then let his guardian dictate...”

The manifest and separate pronoun *huwa* (translated here as *himself*) has been included in the sentence to show that in this particular case the debtor and his guardian both have the right to dictate. In the first two situations, when the debtor is deficient in understanding or is weak (in body or mind), the guardian has total authority, and the debtor himself cannot deal in his own affairs. But in this third situation when the debtor is, for any reason, unable to dictate himself, then the guardian shall have joint authority to do so. Therefore, this pronoun has given the following meaning to the phrase: “what such a debtor himself can do, he should do it ; but what he is unable to do, his guardian shall do it.”

“...so that if one of the two errs, the (second) one of the two may remind the other.”

In this sentence a word, *hadhar* is understood before “an” ; together they literally mean, “lest one of the two errs...” ; the words, “one of the two” have been repeated in this sentence. While at first glance it would appear that the second phrase could be replaced by a pronoun, the fact is that the two phrases do not have the same significance. The first phrase (if one of the two errs) refers to either of the two without pointing to a particular woman; the second phrase (the one of the two may remind...) points particularly to the second who has not erred. That is why we have added the word (second) in its translation.

“And fear Allah.”

The believers should guard themselves against disobeying the orders and prohibitions promulgated in this verse. “And Allah teaches you” ; it is an independent sentence, not connected with the preceding one, “and fear Allah.” The sentence describes the grace of Allah bestowed on the believers. In this respect it is like the words of Allah in the verse of inheritance: Allah makes it clear to you lest you err (4:176). Allah in both these sentences shows that He has bestowed His bounties upon the believers by teaching them the rules of religion and by instructing them as to what they were allowed to do and what not.

Some people have said that the sentence, “and fear Allah, and Allah teaches you”, were connected to each other. According to them, they show that there

is a relation of cause and effect between the two - when people fear Allah then Allah teaches them.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Everything in the religion of Islam points to clarity and certainty. Therefore, all contracts of debt should be recorded. It is incumbent upon a Muslim to act as mediator, witness, or scribe when called upon to do so. All the parties to a contract of debt should safeguard themselves with full awareness of Allah's laws, a reminder which has been repeated twice in this verse, because Allah knows all things and what He teaches us is for our own good in the larger interest of human society. If we do not follow His guidance then surely we transgress. The laws prescribed in this verse develop and maintain a progressive, welfare-oriented, civilised social order.

Every contract of debt should be written down by a scribe with fairness. He who owes the debt should dictate without diminishing anything. If he is unsound or weak in understanding then his guardian should dictate with fairness. Two witnesses should be chosen to witness the written contract. If there are not two men, then one man and two women must be called in to witness, so that if one woman errs, the second may remind the other.

If the transaction is for ready merchandise which is given and taken from hand to hand, then there is no blame on any party in not writing it down.

Refer to fiqh for the details pertaining to the contracts of debt. In this verse Allah teaches us to write down and record the fact so that there may be no dispute in future. The one very important consequence of learning the art of writing is literacy. According to the Qu'ran knowledge or education is the most valuable virtue. According to Tabari, the Holy Prophet, in order to remove illiteracy, asked the literate pagan captives, after the battle of Badr, to teach reading and writing to the Muslims. In return, he set free one pagan if he had taught writing to ten Muslim boys.

When the Qur'an has asked the faithful to record in writing the transactions between individuals to avoid disputes, then it becomes all the more imperative that the sayings and doings of the Holy Prophet, one of the two main sources of Islamic ideology and jurisprudence, should have been

faithfully recorded. However on account of political exigency, after the departure of the Holy Prophet, it was not done, lest the fighting spirit of the Arab soldiers be adversely affected if their attention was diverted to intellectual progress. Not only was the writing down of the Holy Prophet's sayings stopped but large libraries in the conquered lands of Egypt and Persia were burned and destroyed in the days of the second caliph on the plea that if those books were in agreement with the Quran, they did not need it, and if they were not, then they deserved destruction (Tabari, Yaquti and others).

As a result of not writing down the sayings and doings of the Holy Prophet, a great many disputes surfaced among the Muslims, dividing them in several sects and schools of thought.

At a time when the Muslim ummah was conquering far away lands and bringing in camel-laden booties in the streets of Madina, according to the well-known Muslim historian, Amir Ali, in his book *The Spirit of Islam*, Ali was giving lectures in the masjid to spread knowledge, wisdom and intellectual progress, which emerged in full force among the later Saracen race.

It must be noted that it was Ali who advised the second caliph not to destroy the famous library in Alexandria, which was founded by the Greek scholars. Ali and the men attached with the holy house of the Ahlul Bayt continued to record the traditions of the Holy Prophet in writing. Bukhari refers to a sahfah maintained by Ali which contained the true dictations of the Holy Prophet. According to many historians, Abdullah b. Abu Rafi-i, the freed slave of Imam Ali, had produced a recorded document containing the sayings of the Holy Prophet, narrated by Ali ibna Abi Talib.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

After stating ordinances of charity given in the way of Allah, and the problem of usury, this verse, which is the longest verse of the Qur'an, expresses some ordinances upon the commercial and economical affairs in order that the capitals gain their natural growth and no difficulty or conflict comes forth for people.

There are nineteen significant instructions about financial communication and trading in this verse which are dealt with in the following.

1. In the first ordinance it says:

“O’ you who have Faith! When you contract a debt for a stated term, then write it down...”

This meaning, however, makes the problem of loan clear, too, saying that it is permitted, as well as appointing a time for the loan. The verse under discussion includes the whole debts which are found in bargains, like: a time-bargain, purchases on credit, and the loan itself.

2 & 3 Then, to create more confidence and that the contracts to be safe from the probable interference from the side of either of the parties, it says:

“...and let a scribe write it down just between you...”

Thus, contracts must be arranged by a third person who is just.

4. The person who is able to write must not refrain from writing.

“...and no scribe may refuse to write as Allah has taught him...”

5. That is, for the sake of that blessing which Allah has bestowed upon him, he should not flee from performing that writing of contract, and he must help the two sides of the bargaining in this essential problem.

“...So let him write, and let the one who incurs the debt dictate...”

6. The next point is:

“...and he should be in awe of Allah, his Lord, and not diminish it.”

7. Following this point we read:

“...And if he who owes the debt is unsound in understanding, or weak (mentally), or if he is not able to dictate himself; then let his guardian dictate.”

8. The Guardian should also observe justice in dictating and confessing the debt of those who are under his guardianship.

“...justly...”

9. Then it adds that besides that beware

“...and call to witness from among your men, two witnesses...”

10 & 11. We are then told:

“...from among your men...”

means that, these two men should be both ‘grown up’ and ‘Muslim’.

12. And then:

“...but if two men are not available, then a man and two women...”

13. Then:

“...from among those whom you approve as witnesses...”

14. In the case that witnesses are two men, either of them can bear witness independently. But when the witnesses are two women and a man, those two women must bear witness with together:

“...so that if either of the two women errs, the other will remind her...”

It is for the reason that women, because of the strong emotions they have, may be affected by some factors and deviate from the right path.

15. One of the ordinances upon this subject is that:

“...and the witnesses should not refuse (to evidence) whenever they are summoned...”

Therefore, bearing witness is obligatory, when the invitation for the matter comes forth.

16. Debt should be written down whether it is small or big, because the safety of the economical relations, which Islam means requires that, even in the contracts concerning the small debts, the documents be written, too. That is for the same reason that the next sentence of the verse says:

“...And be not averse to writing it down, be the transaction small or big, with its fix term...”

Then, it adds: ...That is more equitable in Allah’s sight and more proper for testimony, and the surest way of avoiding doubt among yourselves...

This sentence, in fact, is a hint to the philosophy of the above mentioned ordinances about writing transactional documents. It vividly shows that these recorded documents can be applied by the judge as witnesses and proofs.

17. Then, one aspect is exceptionally separated from this ordinance, when it says:

“...unless it is ready merchandise which you handle between yourselves, then there is no sin on you not to write it down...”

18. In cash transactions, though arranging and writing document is not necessary, still calling to witnesses is better for them, because it can prevent the probable future disputes. So, it says:

“...And have witnesses when you are trading one with another...”

19. For the last ordinance mentioned in this verse, it says:

“...And let no harm be done to a scribe or witness...”

Then, it is added:

“...and if you do, that is transgression on your part...”

Finally, after mentioning all these ordinances, the Qur’an invites people to piety, virtue, and obedience to Allah, saying:

“...be in awe of Allah...”

Next to that, it reminds that whatever is necessary for your material and spiritual life, Allah teaches you:

“...and Allah teaches you...”

The occurrence of the above two phrases beside each other indicates that piety and worshipping Allah have a deep effect in appearing insight, cognizance and the increase of knowledge.

And, He is aware of everything that is good or evil for people. So, He determines what is good and appropriate for them.

“...and Allah is All-Knowing of all things.”



Verse 12

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا فِرْيَقًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ يَرُدُّوكُم بَعْدَ
إِيمَانِكُمْ كَافِرِينَ﴾

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3:100

O You Who Believe!

- If you listen to a faction among the People of the Book,
- They would (indeed) render you apostates after you have believed!

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

The verses as is evident from thematic continuity, indicate that the People of the Book (a group of them – i.e., the Jews – or a group of the Jews) disbelieved in the Divine Revelation, and hindered the believers from the way of Allah by trying to show that it was a crooked and unright way, and presenting to them the actually crooked misleading way as the way of Allah. They did so by creating doubts in the believers' minds, in order that the believers would see the truth as falsehood and the falsehood (to which they invited them) as truth. The preceding verses had pointed to the Jews' deviations, for example, their denial of the fact that all food was lawful to them before the revelation of the Torah, and their rejection of the abrogation of the previous *qiblah*, that is, Baytul-Maqdis.

These verses therefore put the finishing touches to the preceding ones which had described the lawfulness of all food before the Torah and declared that the Ka'bah was the first House appointed for the men. Now these verses admonish the Jews because they were constantly trying to create doubts and mislead the believers; also the verses warn the believers against following the

advice of those unbelievers, because if they listened to their call, they would themselves become unbelievers; then they exhort and encourage them to hold fast to Allah so that they would be guided to the path of true faith and guidance would continue for ever.

The verse shows that the Book of Allah and the verbal and practical guidance given by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ are sufficient to guide a man to every truth and reality in which he could possibly go astray.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Whenever the Qu'ran addresses the people of the book to reproach them for their mischievous deviation from the right path, shown by all the scriptures, it should not be confined to those Jews and Christians who opposed Islam and the Holy Prophet in his time, but as Imam Jafar al-Sadiq has pointed out, it includes all the people of the book in post-Islamic era and also all those who claim their religions to be divinely revealed, in all ages, till the day of resurrection. The holy Ahlul Bayt have said that the pagans of Arabia and the trans-caspian sea are excluded from the "people of the book", as their doctrines were not based upon the revealed word of Allah.

At all events the Muslims are not kept out from the application of the censure wherever notified in the Qur'an. There are instances of mischievous deviation from the right path, denial of the divine signs, creation of obstacles in the path of Allah, and attempts to twist the words of Allah and His Holy Prophet to serve selfish ends, which gave rise to sectarianism in the early stages.

The Holy Prophet has said:

You will go back to infidelity after me when discord and strife, among you, will divide you.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

In several commentary books it is cited that one of the Jews by the name of Shash-b.-Qays once passed by the gathering of Muslims consisting of members of two tribes called Aus and Khazraj and saw that they were very sincere with each other. He became worried about it and said to himself that formerly these two tribes were opposite to each other, but now, under the leadership

and direction of Muhammad ﷺ, they are living with each other peacefully. If this leadership continues, the existence of the Jews will be in danger.

He, systematically gathered a group to help him, and commissioned a young man to go inside them and to excite them by reminding them the memories of their fight in Biqath (the place where those two tribes fought against each other), so that the fire of a hard combat was going to be lit between them. The Prophet of Islam ﷺ, with his soothing words, warned them and made them aware of that evil plot. Therefore, they put their swords down and kindly embraced each other while they were shedding tear and were regretful.

According to the commentators, in this incident, the above verse and the two former verses were revealed which caused the reproach and blame of the People of the Book as well as warning the Muslims.

O' you who have Faith! if you hearken to a party from among of those who have been given the Book, they will turn you back, after your faith, into disbelievers.



Verse 13

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3:102

O You Who Believe!

- Fear Allah as He should be feared,
- And die not except in a state of Islam.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

The verse talks of *at-taqwa* as it rightfully should be done, that is, a piety that is not tainted by the least wrong. Such piety is the pure servitude which is never marred by an iota of obliviousness or heedlessness; it is obedience without disobedience, gratitude without ingratitude, remembrance without forgetfulness; it is the true Islam, that is, the highest grade of Islam. Accordingly, the words, *and do not die unless you are Muslims*, would mean: Continue on this condition of ideal *at-taqwa* until you die.

This verse gives a different ideal than the words: *Therefore fear Allah as much as you can* (64:16). This command enjoins man not to leave fear of Allah in anything as much as he can. But ability differs from man to man according to people's strength, understanding and will. There is no doubt that the ideal piety is not within easy reach of a majority of men. There are, in this spiritual journey, many stations, locations and danger points which cannot be spotted except by those who know. Also there are many delicate points and subtle differences which cannot be recognized except by those who have been purified. There is many a stage of piety which a common man would say, was beyond human ability; he really believes it to be far above the human strength – while the truly pious people have long past that stage and are now

progressing towards even more difficult goad, through much more harder terrains.

The two verses (*fear Allah with the fear which is due to Him; fear Allah as much as you can*) then give the following connotation: All people are called and invited to the ideal piety; then they are told to proceed to that goal as much as they can, everyone according to his own ability and strength. In this way, all will come on the path of piety; but they will be in different stages and various stations according to their own understanding and ambition, coupled with the Divine help and support, that is, bestowed on deserving servants. (This is what one understands after pondering on the two verses.)

It is clear from the above explanation that the two verses are neither different from each other in meaning nor identical; rather, the first verse (*fear Allah with the fear which is due to Him*) points to the ultimate goal, while the second (*fear Allah as much as you can*) shows the way.

Abu Basir says - I asked Abu Abdillah عليه السلام about the words of Allah, *fear Allah with the fear which is due to Him*, and he said:

He should be obeyed, and not disobeyed; remembered and not forgotten; and thanked, and not shown ingratitude.⁹⁰

Al-Khatib narrates from Anas that he said - The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

No servant fears Allah with the fear which is due to Him until he knows that what has befallen him could not miss him, and what has missed him could not reach him.⁹¹

Ibn Shahrashub quotes from at-Tafsir of Waki that Abd Khayr said - I asked Ali b. Abi Talib عليه السلام about the words of Allah: *O you who believe! fear Allah with the fear which is due to Him*, and he said:

By Allah, no one acted upon it except the House of the Messenger of Allah; we remembered Him, so we do not forget him; and we thanked Him, we are never ungrateful to Him; and we obeyed Him, so we never disobeyed Him.

⁹⁰ Ma'anil-akhbar; at-Tafsir, al-Ayyashi

⁹¹ Ibid.

When this verse was revealed, the Companions said - We are unable to do it.

Then Allah revealed, *Therefore fear Allah as much as you can.*

Waki said: *that is, as much as you are able to do.*⁹²

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Ittaqullah means to safeguard oneself with awareness of the boundaries (physical, moral and spiritual laws) laid down by Allah so as to keep clear of sins and transgressions. There is no room for “fear” in Islam. Please refer to the commentary of Fatihah: 1 to 4; Baqarah: 2; Ali Imran 31. Taqwa means piety or to ward off evil and take refuge with Allah, not out of fear, but because of the awareness and insight of the consequences if one breaks or tampers with the laws made and enforced by Allah for the benefit and welfare of mankind.

Haqqa tuqatihi means it is the duty of the creature to be aware of the creator’s will and command. It is His prerogative that His creatures should, willingly or unwillingly, obey Him and carry out His commands.

Wa antum muslimun means full of faith, perfect in conduct, and strict in the observance of the law, which is possible when one surrenders and submits oneself unconditionally to Allah.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

1. Every day we must promote to a higher stage.

“O’ you who have Faith! be in awe of Allah as it is due to Him...”

2. Mere belief is not enough, but to remain faithful is the condition. Beginning is not so important while the ending is more important.

“...and do not die unless you are Muslims.”

3. Islam not only teaches us how to live, but also teaches us how to die.

4. Piety is the only key to the goodness of destiny.

⁹² al-Burhan fi tafsiril-Qur’an, al-Bahrani

Any perfection such as Faith, knowledge and piety has stages. There are elementary stages and the stages higher than that up to the absolute perfection. For instance, we recite the Qur'an where it says: "*O' Lord! Increase me my knowledge!*" Or in *Makarim-ul-Akhlaq*, the supplication, we, asking the Lord, recite: "*O' Lord! Expand my Faith to a perfect faith.*" And, in the above mentioned verse we recite: "*...be in awe of Allah as it is due to Him...*"

Imam as-Sadiq عليه السلام in this regard, says:

The due piety is in the fact that Allah be obeyed and not to be disobeyed; to be remembered and not to be forgotten, and to be thanked with no ingratitude.

This shows that there are some stages and steps in piety.



Verse 14

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بِطَانَةً مِنْ دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأْلُونَكُمْ خَبَالًا وَدُوَامًا
عَنْتُمْ قَدْ بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تَخْفَى صُدُورُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمْ
الآيَاتِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ﴾

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3:118

O You Who Believe!

- Take not into your intimacy those outside your ranks -
- They will not fail to corrupt you;
- They only desire your ruin.
- Hatred has already appeared from (the utterance of) their mouth;
- What their hearts conceal is far worse -
- We have made plain to you the Signs, if you have wisdom.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

The verses, as you see, now avert to the original theme, describing the behavior of the People of the Book – and particularly the Jews – exposing their disbelief in the Divine Revelation, their going astray and their hindering the believers from the way of Allah; and preceding ten verses were a talk within talk, a parenthetical speech. The verses are thus connected with the foregoing discourse.

Intimate friend has been called '*al-bitanah*' (inner lining of a garment) – i.e., opposite of '*az-ziharah*' (outer side of a garment) – because such a friend knows the inner thoughts and secrets of man; "they do not fall short," i.e. they leave no stone unturned; '*khabalan*' (harm, mischief); insanity is called '*al-khabl*'

because it harms or destroys understanding; “they love what distresses you” : “what” in this sentence is for *masdar*, and it means: they love your distress, your grievous harm; “vehement hatred has already appeared from out of their mouths” : It means that their enmity and hatred is very obvious from their way of talking, from slips of their tongues; it is a fine metaphor; the verse does not describe what they have kept hidden in their hearts, it just says: “and what their breasts conceal is greater still” ; this apparent vagueness indicates that the hatred hidden in their hearts is so varied and so great that it is beyond description – this vagueness puts even greater stress on the word “greater.”

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

The believers are warned not to make friends with the enemies of Islam, their associates and relatives. Tolerance is desirable only when it is known that there is no joining of hands to launch an offensive against the true faith. It is a wise maxim to preserve the faith from the contaminating influence of impiety and infidelity. The disbelievers will not fall short in corrupting or vitiating the true belief of the believers, because they cannot control their hatred. The believers are bound to believe in all revealed books, but their enemies do not believe in the final book of Allah. To make mischief they pose as believers and plot to harm the faithfuls, but the end they seek shall never be achieved. The glory of the true believers shall continue and increase and shall never perish. Allah knows the spite that is rankling in the breasts of the enemies of the true faithfuls, and has laid it bare.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

Following to the verses stated, the kind of relations the Muslims may have with the disbelievers, this verse points at one of the most sensitive subjects, and, in the form of a delicate resemblance, it warns the believers. It says:

“O’ you who have Faith! Do not take intimate other than yourselves. They do not fall short in corrupting you...”

It is never such that their experience of friendship with you hinders them to desire pain and loss for you because of difference in religion and creed. In the contrary, they are interested in your distress and suffering.

“...They like what distresses you...”

They are usually careful of their statements and behaviour in order that you do not be cognizant of their interior mysteries and that their secrets would not be uncovered. They speak carefully and cautiously, yet the signs of enmity are manifest from among their speech.

“...Hatred has already appeared from (the utterance of) their mouth...”

In short, by this means, Allah has shown the way of recognition of the inward state of the enemies; and informs us from their hidden minds and their interior mysteries. It says:

“...while what their breasts conceal is greater...”

Then, it adds:

“...We have made the Signs dear for you if you ponder.”



Verse 15

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَا أَضْعَافًا مُضَاعَفَةً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3:130

O You Who Believe!

- Devour not usury, doubled and multiplied,
- But fear Allah,
- That you may (really) prosper.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

Refraining from interest is a very important concomitant of this spending benevolently and doing good to others. That is why the verses begin with it; it paves the way for exhortation to good-doing and spending. We have already explained — under the verses of spending and interest in the chapter of The Cow — that spending in all its aspects is the cornerstone of society; it is the virtue that vitalizes the human society with the spirit of unity; it channels its scattered resources to achieve happiness and felicity in this life, and strengthens it to ward off every pernicious perversion. Interest is diametrically opposed to benevolent spending in this respect.

The sentence, “*And guard yourselves against the fire, which has been prepared for the unbelievers*”, indicates that the interest-taker is unbeliever, as has been explained under the verses of interest in the chapter of The Cow: “*And Allah does not love any ungrateful sinner.*”⁹³

⁹³ Al-Qur'an, 2:276

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Neither lend nor borrow money on interest, simple or compound. Islam has forbidden usury for all ages and in all circumstances, regardless of any “commercial” consideration. “Multiplied manifold” implies an unjust economic system by making the rich richer and the poor poorer. The basis of prosperity and success, both in this world and the hereafter, is love of Allah and awareness of His laws, not greed of gold.

Riba literally means a growth or an addition. The additional amount, collected over and above the capital given as a loan, is interest or usury. It is an abuse or a misuse of the power one holds over the weak or the needy, and therefore, strictly forbidden. Spending in the way of Allah for the welfare of the human society has been prescribed in the preceding verses. With enough means at one’s disposal, it is a sin not to part with some of it in order to help the needy.

When giving in the way of Allah, as a free gift, under such circumstances, has been prescribed, then those whom Allah has given enough, must at least lend that which is needed by the needy, without charging any additional payment, because practising usury is akin to being confounded by Shaytan, and is tantamount to digging one’s own grave. Inherent in a transaction of usury is the element of enslavement and abuse, because a person who is in need of material help cannot pay back more than what he had originally taken; therefore Islam has prohibited usury. In the transaction of usury, both the givers and the takers suffer. The lender, in love of more and more material gains, becomes heartless and selfish. Those who take loans become extravagant and ruin their families. This scenario is diametrically opposed to the very purpose of the religion of Islam - establishment of a fair, kind and welfare-oriented social order. If there is no temptation of usury, material help will be given to only those who are really in need of it.

Trade, on the other hand, is a mutual transaction in which both parties feel satisfied, in which both either hope to gain or run the risk of a loss. If financial help is required for business or trading, a different relationship can be structured between the two parties, such as a partnership or some form of sharing profit and loss.

Those who say usury is only like trading will rise on the day of resurrection in a state of insanity, as those rise whom Shaytan has prostrated by his touch.

The prohibition took effect from the day this verse was revealed. The usury collected by the lenders prior to the promulgation of this prohibition was allowed to be retained by them.

In banking transactions, the directions of the religious jurist (mujtahid-faqih) should be followed to determine bank charges, commission and profit as fixed or as agreed or as actual dividends.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

This verse, together with its eight subsequent verses, has been located among the verses about the Battle of Uhud. This arrangement, perhaps, is for the sake that the existence of ethical and economical themes is helpful in a defensive system. The society whose members are the people of sincerity and devotion, who hasten to do good, to repent, and are obedient to the godly leader, will be successful in war, too. But, the society whose members are mammonish, miser, disobedient, and persist in committing sin, surely will be defeated.

However, the verses on the prohibition of usury have been revealed gradually and in several stages. The first step of the prohibition of usury was a critical attack against the usury of the Jews.

This verse is for the prohibition of the usury doubling it over and over again, but, later, Islam gradually prohibited devouring even a penny of usury and introduced it as a fighting against Allah.

1. Before the prohibition of the principal of usury, its ugly outstanding forms were prohibited.

“...doubling it over a over again...”

2. In the economical affairs, observing piety is intensively necessary. In other words, the existence of a safe and sound economy is the sign of piety therein.

“...Do not devour usury...and be in awe of Allah...”

3. Prosperity cannot be obtained by wealth and usury, but it can be obtained by piety-

“...and be in awe of Allah: that you may be prosperous.”

4. Usurer is impious and an impious person does not become prosperous. A usurer is prosperous neither in this world, nor in the Hereafter. In this world he is involved with grudge and rancour of others, and in the coming world he will encounter the Wrath of Allah.



Verse 16

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُرَدُّوكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ فَانقَلِبُوا

خَاسِرِينَ﴾

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3:149

O You Who Believe!

- If you obey the unbelievers,
- They will drive you back on your heels,
- And you will turn back (from faith) to your own loss.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

It is the continuation of the verses revealed about the battle of Uhud. These verses exhort and encourage the believers to obey none except their Lord, because He alone is their Guardian and Helper; it calls them as witness that Allah had fulfilled His promise to them, and the debacle and disaster which they suffered on that day was brought upon them by their own hands, because they had transgressed the limits of what Allah had told them and His Messenger had invited them to; in spite of that Allah has forgiven them of their sins because He is Forgiving, Forbearing.

It may possibly be inferred from the context that the unbelievers - after the battle of Uhud, when these verses were revealed - were putting ideas in the believers' minds (just as "friendly" advice!) to hold them back from fighting and to incite strife and disunity among them, in order to create rift and division in the camp of Islam. This implication might probably get support from the verses 173-175 coming later: *Those to whom the people said: "Surely men have gathered against you, therefore fear them." It is only the Satan that frightens his friends; so do not fear them, and fear Me if you are believers.*

It has also been said that the verse alludes to the shouting by the Jews and the hypocrites on the day of Uhud, “Muhammad has been killed; you should return to Your families.” But this explanation is nothing.

The verse first made it clear to the Muslims that if they obeyed the unbelievers and were inclined towards their friendship seeking their help, they would suffer a great loss, that is, they would turn back to infidelity, would become unbelievers themselves. Then it strikes at this idea by showing them the bright reality that “Allah is your Guardian and He is the best of the helpers.”

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

When the Jews of Bani Qaynqa were plotting to create hostility between the two Muslim tribes (Aus and Khazraj) this verse was revealed. It is a warning to the Muslims “not to pay attention to the disbelievers because they will make you turn on your heels; and you will be the losers. Allah is your guardian and He is the best of helpers (if you are sincere and steadfast in your faith and have implicit confidence in His guardianship and in His help).”

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

After the end of the Battle of Uhud the enemies of Islam, in the form of advice and sympathy, scattered the seed of discord among the Muslims, and made them distrustful unto Islam. This verse warns the Muslims and awares them that they must avoid following the enemies, because, after paving the honourable spiritual development along the path of Islam, they may bring Muslims back to corruption and disbelief.

“O’ you who have Faith! if you obey those who disbelieve, they will turn you back to your (faithless) ancestors, so you will turn back losers.”

What damage is worse than this that a believer changes Islam with infidelity, prosperity with wickedness, and reality with falsehood.



Verse 17

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقَالُوا لِأَخْوَانِهِمْ إِذَا ضَرَبُوا فِي
الْأَرْضِ أَوْ كَانُوا غُزًى لَوْ كَانُوا عِنْدَنَا مَا مَاتُوا وَمَا قُتِلُوا لِيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ حَسْرَةً
فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ﴾

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3:156

O You Who Believe!

- Be not like the unbelievers, who say of their brethren, when they are travelling through the earth or engaged in fighting: “If they had stayed with us, they would not have died, or been slain.”
- This, that Allah may make it a cause of sighs and regrets in their hearts.
- It is Allah that gives Life and Death -
- And Allah sees well all that you do.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

It is the continuation of the verses revealed especially about the battle of Uhud. It deals with another affair affecting them, i.e., the grief and sorrow that had overwhelmed them because so many of their braves and notables had been slaughtered. The overwhelming majority of the martyrs was from the Helpers; as reportedly no more than four of the Emigrants were martyred. It gives rise to the surmise that most of the resistance was from the Helpers' side and that the Emigrants had left the battleground long before them.

The word, “those who disbelieve”, refers to the unbelievers not to the hypocrites, as some people think. It is not the hypocrisy, per se, which incites such talks — although the hypocrites had uttered these words. Such talk, in

reality, is a product of disbelief. Thus it was necessary to ascribe it to the unbelievers. *ad-Darb fil-ardh* (lit., striking in the earth) metaphorically means travelling. *Al-Ghuzza* is plural of *al-ghaizi* (fighter) like *at-talib* and *at-tullab* or *ad-darib* and *ad-durrab* “so Allah makes this to be an intense regret in their hearts”, i.e., so that Allah may punish them through this intense regret; it has thus put the means in place of the end.

The words, “*Allah gives life and causes death*”, explain the reality about which the unbelievers had gone astray, and had said: “*Had they been with us, they would not have died and they would not have been slain.*” The words, “death”, as used here, covers natural death as well as slaughter - we have explained earlier that when used alone, this word covers every type of death. The clause, “*and Allah sees what you do*”, explains the reason for the prohibition contained in the words, “*be not like those who disbelieve.*”

In the clause, “*they would not have died and they would not have been slain*”, death is mentioned before slaying; the sequence follows that of the preceding clause, “*when they travel or engage in fighting.*” Also, unlike slaying (which is an abnormal happening) death is a natural and normal phenomenon; therefore the normal was mentioned before the abnormal.

The verse, in short, admonishes the believers not to be like the unbelievers; they should not say about someone who dies outside his home town or among strangers, or is slain when engaged in jihad, that if he had been with them he would not have died or been killed. This type of talk throws one into mental agony and divine punishment - it is the intense grief put in their hearts. Moreover, it emanates from sheer ignorance: Being near them or away from them neither gives life nor causes death. Giving life and death is among the affairs exclusively reserved for Allah - the One Who has no partner or colleague. Therefore, the believers should fear Allah and not be like the unbelievers; and Allah sees what they do.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

“Their brethren” means the Muslim relatives and friends of the infidels and the hypocrites who had to journey in the cause of Islam and face hardship or fight the enemies of Islam and die in the battlefield.

The infidels ridiculed the deserters when they reached Madina for having lost their friends and relatives in the battle of Uhad and assured them that if they had been with them (the infidels) they would not have suffered the misfortune. The ignorant infidels and “their brethren” did not know that Allah is the giver of life and death and that ultimately the infidels themselves had to regret for not becoming Muslims, because finally Islam was to emerge victorious.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

We ought to stand firm against discouraging propagations and inspirations, and gossips should not be retold. We must know that death and life are from the determinations of Allah and are not concerned to fight and journey. So, the enemy cast the evil propagation in the form of sympathy and regret.

Thus, Allah is the Clear sighted and the Cognizant. So, be careful of your conditions, thoughts, and deeds.



Verse 18

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3:200

O You Who Believe!

- Persevere in patience and constancy,
- Vie in such perseverance,
- Strengthen each other,
- And fear Allah,
- That you may prosper.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

This final verse is like the sum total, giving a gist of all that has been said in this chapter. It ends the chapter with a summary of its main theme.

The order is unrestricted. The clause, “be patient”, covers every type of patience: Patience in hardships, patience in the obedience of Allah, and patience against the disobedience of Allah. However, it refers to individual’s patience, as the next clause shows.

“al-Musabarah” translated here as helping each other in patience, literally means vying with one another in being patient. It implies collective patience - when individuals bear a common hardship together and each one’s patience is augmented by others’ steadfastness. In this way, their strength is enhanced, their patience redoubled and its effect multiplied. This phenomenon may easily be experienced, if we first look at an individual as a single person, and then look at his behavior in a group when he becomes a part of a collective whole, each one acting on and reacting towards the others. We shall describe this topic in detail, God willing, in its place.

“al-muraba’tah” is more comprehensive than *al-Musabarah* (vying with one another in patience; helping each other to be patient), because *al-muraba’tah* implies people’s linking up with one another in their powers, faculties, and activities in all affairs of their religious life - in time of ease as well as in difficulties. As the main aim of these orders is to let the believers attain the reality of happiness of this world and the next - otherwise only partial worldly happiness can be achieved which obviously is not the real happiness - these orders have been followed by the words, “and fear (the wrath of) Allah, that you may be successful”, i.e., you may achieve total and real happiness and success.

as-Sadiq عليه السلام said about the words of Allah: “O you who believe! be patient and help each other in patience and remain lined up”:

Have patience in misfortunes, and help each other to be patient in trial (and temptation) and be lined up with him whom you follow.⁹⁴

The same Imam said:

Be patient about your religion, and have patience against your enemy and be linked up to your Imam.⁹⁵

The same Imam said:

Be patient about the obligatory commandments, and help each other to be patient in misfortunes, and be linked up to the Imams.⁹⁶

Ali عليه السلام said: “Be lined up for the prayers.” He said:

That is, remain waiting for them, because (the system of) garrisoning did not exist at that time.⁹⁷

Ibn Jarir and Ibn Hayyan have narrated from Jabir b. Abdullah al-Ansari that he said: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘Should not I guide you to that by which Allah erases the mistakes and covers the sins?’ We said: ‘Yes, indeed, O Messenger of Allah!’ He said:

⁹⁴ Ma’anil-akhbaar

⁹⁵ at-Tafsir, al-Ayyashi

⁹⁶ al-Kafi

⁹⁷ Majmaul Bayan

To perform wudhu properly in spite of inconveniences, and to walk many times to the mosques, and to wait for the (next) prayer after the prayer; so that is the lining up.⁹⁸

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Rabita means to participate in the garrisoning of the frontiers. This was a duty imposed by the Holy Prophet. It could be performed by turns-the minimum period is 3 days, and the maximum is 40 days.

To persevere (have endurance in suffering) and excel in perseverance, be ever ready to defend, and safeguard oneself with full awareness of Allah's laws are the ruling principles for the human soul to journey through this world to salvation and eternal bliss.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

This verse recommends kinds of perseverance and patience when confronting misfortunes, as follows: In the first stage be patient in personal adversities and desires.

“O’ you who have Faith! do persevere...”

In the second stage: persevere more against the pressure of the enemy.

“... and out do (all others) in endurance...”

In the third stage: try to protect the geographical bounds against the invasions of the foreign enemies; try to protect the ideological and theological bounds by means of scientific argumentations; and try to protect the bounds of the heart (mind) from the attack of temptations.

“...and be ready (to guard the bounds),...”

⁹⁸ Durrul Manthur



Verse 19

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ
لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيِّنَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا
كَثِيرًا﴾

An-Nisa (The Women) 4:19

O You Who Believe!

- You are forbidden to inherit women against their will,
- Nor should you treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the dower you have given them,
- Except where they have been guilty of open lewdness.
- On the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity.
- If you take a dislike to them it may be that you dislike a thing -
- And Allah brings about through it a great deal of good.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

The talk returns to the subject of women, guiding the Muslims about some related matters. This piece contains the clause: “And live with them in a proper manner; then if you hate them, it may be that you dislike a thing while Allah has placed abundant good in it.” It is a basic Qur’anic principle which regulates woman’s social life.

The Arabs of the era of ignorance counted wives of a deceased person as part of his inheritance if the woman was not the heir’s mother, as history and

traditions have reported. The heirs took the widow as part of their share; one of them threw a cloth on her and she became his property. If he wished, he married her, inheriting the deceased's marriage – without giving her a fresh dowry. If he disliked marrying her, he held her in his custody; then if he was so pleased, he gave her in marriage to someone and used her dowry himself; and if he wished, he kept her in straitened condition, not allowing her to marry, until she died and he inherited her property, if she had any.

Apparently, the verse forbids some custom that was prevalent among them; and as some exegetes have written, it could be the above-mentioned system of inheriting the widows.

But the clause, “against (their) will”, does not agree with this interpretation, whether we take it as an explanatory clause or a restrictive one. If it were taken as an explanatory clause, it would imply that that inheritance was always disliked by woman, always happened against their will – and obviously it was not so. If it were taken as a restrictive clause, it would mean that that inheritance was unlawful only if took place against the woman's will, but there was no harm if she freely agreed to it – but this too is not correct.

Of course, dislike and unwillingness was a certainty when the heirs prevented them from re-marrying, coveting, in all or most cases, their property after taking their possession by inheritance. Obviously, it is this factor – contriving to inherit the woman's property against her will – which this verse has forbidden.

As for marrying them by inheritance, this verse does not deal with it; that is forbidden by a coming verse, which says: *And marry not women whom your father married...* So far as the custom of giving them in marriage to someone else and usurpation of their dowry by the concerned heir is concerned, it is forbidden by such verses as: *and women shall have the benefit of what they earn.*⁹⁹ Also the verse: *... then when they have fully attained their term, there is no blame on you for what they do for themselves in a proper manner,*¹⁰⁰ discredits the whole custom, guiding the people to the Islamic way.

⁹⁹ Al-Quran, 4:32

¹⁰⁰ Al-Quran, 2:234

As for the words: *and do not straiten them in order that you may take...*, they do not refer to the afore-mentioned prevention of their re-marrying (with intention of getting their property on their death), because the subsequent clause: *in order that you may take part of what you have given them*, clearly speaks about taking away part of the dowry which the oppressing husband himself had given her; it does not refer to any property which she might have got from other sources.

In short, the verse stops men from inheriting women's property against their will; it is not concerned with the custom of taking women themselves as part of inheritance. Accordingly, either the word, 'women', metaphorically refers to their property, or the word, 'property of', is implied before it.

The verse makes it unlawful to put the wife in straitened condition – in any way – with intention of compelling her to pay back to the husband a part of dowry for dissolution of marriage-tie, so that she may extricate herself from that difficult life. Imposing such difficulties with this intention is unlawful for the husband. Of course, if the wife commits manifest indecency, i.e., adultery, then he may put restrictions on her, keeping in straitened condition, in order that she may pay him something to obtain divorce.

Every individual is an integral part of society, having equal importance with all other parts; they all together constitute human society; and each of them has a responsibility to strive as much as he can to make up the society's deficiencies. He earns and makes what is beneficial, takes from it according to his requirements, and gives the surplus to the society. If someone is treated in a different way, and is oppressed in a manner that his identity as an integral part is nullified, then he becomes a vassal, he is exploited but is given nothing in lieu of his labor. But it is exceptional case.

Allah has described in His book that all people – men and women alike – are branches of a single human root; parts and components of one human species. Society, for its existence, needs males as much as it need females – in equal degree. Allah has said: *you are (sprung) the one from the other.*¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Al-Quran, 4:25

There is nothing contradictory when we see that each sex has been bestowed some distinct characteristics which are not found in the other. For instance, men on the whole are distinguished for their strength and hardiness; and women by nature are more endowed with sentiments and soft-heartedness. Humanity, in its creative and social lives, needs demonstration of strength and hardiness as much as it requires permeation of love and mercy. The two qualities together present the forces of attraction and repulsion which are prevalent in human society.

Thus the two sexes are equally balanced in weight, effect and influence; in the same way as individual males are equal in their effect and influences on this structure, in spite of their difference in natural and social matter, like strength and weakness, knowledge and ignorance, intelligence and obtuseness, smallness and greatness, leadership and subordination, mastership and servitude, nobleness and vileness, and so on.

Man, *per se*, has got the faculty of understanding and free will; with that independent will he chooses what is beneficial to him and discards what is harmful. Living in a society he has the right to choose whatever he wants – as long as it does not go against the society's well-being – with independent will without any hindrance from anyone; he is not bound to opt for someone else's choice without any will of his own. But, as you have seen, this principles is not in conflict with specialization that some classes, or a few members of the same class, should be distinguished with some special qualities – or should be particularly devoid of some qualities.

As for example, Islam reserved judiciary, administration and *jihad* for men; also they have been given responsibility of maintaining the women. Or, as minor children are not competent to make any acknowledgement or deal, and are exempted from the *shari'ah's* obligations. These examples show that different classes and individuals are governed by different laws – which are based on difference of their weight in society – although all of them are equal in their basic value in human social structure, where the only criterion is that all are human being having understanding and free will.

Such restrictions and exclusions are not peculiar to the Islamic laws; they are found, in varying degrees, in all civil codes; nay, in all human systems, even in

primitive customs. The clause, that encompasses all these meanings, is the word of Allah: *and live with them in a proper manner*, as explained above.

At the time when the Qur'an was revealed, human societies did not accord the women the status of human being; they were not considered as integral component of humanity. Some well-advanced civilizations treated them as an appendage – beyond the human circle – whose only purpose was to be used and exploited by man. Others recognized that women were human beings, but of inferior quality; they were deficient in humanity, like children and idiots, but with one difference: While children's or idiot's deficiency was removable (after adulthood or by treatment, respectively) women could never attain full human status. Consequently, it was necessary for them to live as a dependent under total authority of men for ever. It is interesting to note that Allah has not said: if you dislike their marriage; He has ascribed the dislike and hate directly to their person: "if you hate them" ; probably this expression was used keeping the above-mentioned social norm in view.

Abul-Jarud narrates from Abu Ja'far عليه السلام about the word of Allah, O you who believe! it is not lawful for you that you should inherit women against (their) will:

It was a custom in the [era of] of ignorance [and] when the Arab tribes first accepted Islam, that when a relative of a man died leaving a woman, that man threw his cloth on her and thus inherited her marriage by the same dowry which the [deceased] relative had given her; the man inherited her marriage as he inherited his (the deceased's) property.

When Abu Qays b. al-Aslat died, Muhassan son of Abu Qays threw his cloth on the woman of his father; and she was Kubayshah bint Mu'ammār b. Mu'bad. So, he inherited her marriage; then he left her – he neither went in to her nor spent on her (maintenance).

So, she came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said: 'O Messenger of Allah! Abu Qays b. al-Aslat died and his son, Muhassan, inherited my marriage. Now he does not come to me, nor does he spend on me, nor has he released me so that I may join my own people.'

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'Go back to your house; and if Allah ordains something concerning your matter, I will inform you.' Then it

was revealed: And marry not women whom your fathers married, except what has already passed; this surely is indecent and hateful, and it is an evil way.

Thus she joined her own people. Also there were (other) women in Madina whose marriage, like that of Kubayshah was inherited; but they were inherited from sons. Then Allah revealed: O you who believe! it is not lawful for you that you should inherit women against (their) will.”¹⁰²

at-Tabrisi has written about the clause, *unless they are guilty of manifest indecency*, that it is better to apply this word to every sin; and has said that it is narrated from Abu Ja’far عليه السلام.¹⁰³

Ash-Shaybani has said:

Indecency is adultery, and the verse means that if a man comes to know of her indecency, then he may take ransom (from her); and it is narrated from Abu Ja’far عليه السلام.¹⁰⁴

Ibn Jarir has narrated from Jabir: Verily, the Messenger of Allah has said:

Fear Allah about women; because you have taken them in Allah’s trust, and have made their bodies lawful (to you) by the word of Allah; and it is your right on them that they should not let anyone you dislike trample your bed; if they do so then you (may) hit them (but) not violently; and they have a right on your for their maintenance and clothing in a proper way.¹⁰⁵

Ibn Jarir has narrated from Ibn Umar that he said: Verily, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

O people! The women near you [i.e. your wives] are [like] conscript labor [i.e. they are joined to you for ever]; you have taken them in Allah’s trust, and have made their bodies lawful (to you) by the word of Allah. So you have got right on them, and it is among your rights on them that they should not let anyone trample your bed, nor should

¹⁰² at-Tafsir, al-Qummi

¹⁰³ Majma’ul Bayan

¹⁰⁴ at-Tafsir, al-Burhan

¹⁰⁵ Durrul Manthur

they disobey you in any good (thing); and when they do so [i.e. fulfill their rights] then they have got right of maintenance and clothing in a proper way.¹⁰⁶

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

In pagan Arabia, widows were divided amongst the heirs of a deceased as goods and cattle. The heir either married the widow to some one else and kept her dower, or refused to let her marry unless he was paid a handsome amount as a settlement, or else married her himself. Another manoeuvring was to harass the wives by imprisoning them in their houses in order that they might be forced to claim separation and thus to relinquish their dower or their inheritance. All such barbaric customs were swept aside by this verse.

If the wife is at fault, then it is she who must relinquish her dower, whole or in part, to obtain separation. For details refer to fiqh.

Understanding the biological handicaps of women, men should live with them with tolerance and justice, even if they do not love them, because men may not like a thing, yet Allah might have endued it with goodness. Love, justice, goodwill and fair treatment is the essence of the matrimonial code of Islam.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

It is narrated from Imam al-Baqir عليه السلام that the above verse was revealed about the men who used to keep their wives without treating with them as a spouse, waiting for their death in order to possess their properties.

The verse may hint to the fact that only the wealth is heritable, and the wife of a man after his death does not belong to any one as heritage. After the death of her first husband, a woman can choose another husband with her own decision.

1. Islam is the defender of the rights of women.

“O’ you who have Faith! It is not lawful for you to inherit the women against their will...”

2. Women have the right of possession.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

“...to inherit the women...”

3. Conjugal life should be based on mutual love, not on taking possession of wealth.

4. Taking back the dower forcefully is unlawful.

“...and do not straiten them in order that you may take a part of what you have given them...”

“...unless they are guilty of manifest lewdness...”

5. Women should be treated well.

“...but deal kindly with them ...”

6. Many of goodnesses lie among the unpleasant things.

“...and if you hate them, it may be that you dislike a thing while Allah has placed abundant good in it.”



Verse 20

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُم بَيْنَكُم بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً
عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا﴾

An-Nisa (The Women) 4:29

O You Who Believe!

- Do not eat up your property among yourselves in vanities;
- But let there be amongst you traffic and trade by mutual goodwill;
- Nor kill (or destroy) yourselves,
- For verily Allah has been to you Most Merciful.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

The verses have a sort of connection with the preceding ones, inasmuch as these contain prohibition of swallowing up properties by wrongful means, while the former had, *inter alia*, prohibited usurping women's dowries by confining and restraining them and exceeding the limit. We may say that these verses describe a rule in its general form while the former had given one of its specific examples.

The connotation of eating is well-known; it means using up an edible item bit by bit by swallowing. As it implied mastery, control and consumption, they say: The fire ate the fire-wood; as the fire annihilates the wood by burning, it is likened to consuming the food by eating and swallowing. Also they say: He ate the property; i.e. he consumed it by getting control over it. This is because the main use a man makes of a property is to eat it, as taking food is the most essential thing man needs for his existence; that is why, if he uses a thing, it is said: He has eaten it. But the word is not applied to every use; it implies the

use with complete mastery over the item in a way that removes all other's control over it; it may be through possession or such other authority. In short, he consumes the goods by having mastery over it as an eater uses up the food by eating.

Why has the clause, “do not swallow up your property”, been qualified with the words, “among yourselves?” The qualifying phrase connotes collective earning and joint usage of property. Consequently it implies, or shows, that the forbidden swallowing up refers to that usage where the property is variously rotated and circulated among themselves.

Thus the sentence, when further qualified with, “by wrongful means”, makes such dealings unlawful which do not lead the society to happiness and success, which bring harm to it and push it to corruption and destruction; these are the dealings which are unlawful in the eyes of *shari'ah*, like interest, gambling and deceptive trade, e.g. selling something for stone-fruit or rubble and things like that.

Accordingly, the excepted clause, “except that it be trading by your mutual consent”, is unrelated to the main sentence; it is a disjointed exception; yet it was put here to remove a possible misunderstanding. When the verse prohibited eating up people's property by wrongful means – and a lot of dealings prevalent in a corrupted society, through which properties change hands, are unlawful in the *shari'ah's* eyes, like deals involving interest, cheating, gambling, etc. – someone could think that it would demolish the pillars of society, and tear the social fabric to pieces, leading people to perdition and destruction.

At-Tabrisi says in *Majmaul-bayan* about the words of Allah, *by wrongful means*, that there are two explanations given for it, one of which says that means: *usury, gambling, paying less than fair price, injustice*. And he says that this meaning is narrated from al-Baqir عليه السلام.

Al-Baqir عليه السلام and as-Sadiq عليه السلام have said that it *means gambling, forbidden deals, usury and (false) oaths*.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Nahjul- Bayan

Asbat b. Salid has said: “I was with Abu Abdillah عليه السلام. A man came to him and said: ‘Tell me about the words of Allah: “O you who believe! do not swallow up your property among yourselves by wrongful means.’ He said:

- He refers here to gambling.
- And as for the words, *and do not kill yourselves*, He refers by it to a Muslim who attacks polytheists on his own, and enters their camps and is killed.
- So Allah has forbidden them to do so.¹⁰⁸

The verse is general and covers all unlawful ways of swallowing up. Gambling and other similar things have been mentioned only as examples. In the same way, what has been said in explanation of killing oneself, actually enlarges the circle of prohibition instead of reducing it; it does not limit the meaning to the given example.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Every believer’s property is his own-Islam gives the right to own private property.

Fairplay and honesty in trade has been emphasised, and dishonesty has been described as killing one another.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

1. Personal possession is respected while domination in others’ properties is unlawful, except for correct bargaining which are perfected on mutual consent.

“O’ you who have Faith! do not devour each other’s property among yourselves in vanity, except that it be a trade by your mutual consent...”

2. A definite society, or an Ummah, has one unit of soul and a common fate.

“...each other’s property among yourselves...”

3. Any kind of domination which is not based on ‘divine truth’ is forbidden. Some of its instances are; usurpation, theft, barring from inheritance,

¹⁰⁸ at-Tafsir, al-Ayyashi

gambling, defraud, falsification, and purchasing the means of mischief and sin. It is so, because all of these instances are the examples of vanity.

“...do not devour each other’s property among yourselves in vanity...”

4. Bargains should be performed on the basis of mutual consent, not compulsively or unwillingly.

“...a trade by your mutual consent...”

5. The life of a person is respectable. Therefore, suicide, and murdering others is ‘unlawful’.

“...and do not kill your (own) selves (one another)...”



Verse 21

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارَى حَتَّى تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا
جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّى تَغْتَسِلُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَى أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ
مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا
فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا غَفُورًا﴾

An-Nisa (The Women) 4:43

O You Who Believe!

- Approach not prayers with a mind befogged,
- Until you can understand all that you say,
- Nor in a state of ceremonial impurity until after washing your whole body.
- If you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes from offices of nature, or you have been in contact with women, and you find no water, then take for yourselves clean sand or earth, and rub therewith your faces and hands,
- For Allah does blot out sins and forgives again and again.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Tabataba'i

It was mentioned [vide al-Mizan (Eng. Transl.), vol.3, pp. 282-286 (tr.)] under the verse: *They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance...*¹⁰⁹, that there are five different verses on the subject of intoxicants; if we put all of them side by side, it will appear that this verse (...do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated...) was revealed after the verses "...you obtain from them intoxication

¹⁰⁹ Al-Qur'an, 2:219

and goodly provision...¹¹⁰; and Say: My Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed, and sin...¹¹¹; but before the two remaining verses: They ask you about the intoxicants and games of chance. Say: In both of them there is a great sin and (some) profit for men; and their sin is greater than their profit.¹¹² And, O you who believe! intoxicants and games of chance and (sacrificing to) stones set up and (dividing by) arrows are only an abomination of Satan's handiwork; shun it therefore, that you may be successful.¹¹³ This was the last-revealed verse on this subject.

Of course, if you say that praying while intoxicated means here praying lazily and sluggishly (as has been interpreted in some coming traditions), then there is nothing to argue.

Prayer in this verse means mosque; that is why it goes on to prohibit entrance to those who are in a state of major ritual impurity [which one gets on sexual intercourse or after ejaculation]. The question arises as to why the house of prayer has metaphorically been called 'prayer'. The reply: It was necessary because of the clause, "until you know (well) what you say."

Had Allah said: 'do not go near mosque until you know what you say', it would have appeared disjointed, or given some other unintended meaning. The real purpose is to make them appreciate that during prayer they stand before the Most High, the Most Great God and get the honor of addressing the Lord of the worlds; it is not proper for them to become intoxicated and lose their sense with the abomination of intoxicant, not knowing what they were speaking. This meaning was more relevant to 'prayer'. But prayer is mostly offered in mosque with congregation, according to the system established by the Prophet ﷺ; and also it was intended to describe the law about entry of a person in condition of major ritual impurity into mosque. Therefore, brevity demands this metaphorical use and style, as you see.

Accordingly, the words, "until you know (well) what you say", give the reason of prohibition of drinking liquor in a way the intoxication continues till

110 Al-Quran, 16:67

111 Al-Quran, 7:33

112 Al-Quran, 2:219

113 Al-Quran, 5:90

beginning of prayer. In other words, We have forbidden you liquor in order that you may know what you are saying; but it is not the main purpose of the prohibition – it does not mean that do not start prayer until you know what you say, but if you know what you say you may drink.

Muhammad b. al-Fadhl narrates from Abul-Hasan عليه السلام about the words of Allah: *do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated...*, that he said:

It was before liquor was prohibited.¹¹⁴

This tradition must be taken to mean that the verse was revealed before the prohibition of liquor was clearly expounded. Otherwise, it will go against the Qur'an. The 33rd verse of the seventh chapter had clearly forbidden sin which includes intoxicants; and the 219th verse of the second chapter explicitly says that there is a great sin in liquor. It means that liquor was forbidden in Makkah before the *hijrah*, because the seventh chapter is of Makkan period [and the second chapter was the first one revealed at Madina], and everyone knows that the verse under discussion was revealed in Madina [after the second chapter].

Zurarah narrates from Abu Ja'far عليه السلام that he said:

Do not stand for prayer sluggishly, sleepily or sullenly, because it is a trait of hypocrisy; surely Allah has forbidden the believers to stand for prayer while intoxicated – that is, from sleep.¹¹⁵

There are other traditions interpreting the intoxication as sleepiness. Al-Ayyashi has narrated two such *ahadith* in his *at-Tafsir*; and al-Kulayni has reported it in his *Al-Kafi* through Zayd ash-Shahham from as-Sadiq (AS.) and through Zurarah from al-Baqir عليه السلام. Also al-Bukhari has narrated in his *as-Sahih* through Anas from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Sukara may mean the state of intoxication, or, according to Imam Muhammad b. Ali al-Baqir, slumber and sleepiness.

¹¹⁴ *at-Tafsir*, al-Ayyashi

Junuban means the state of seminal pollution- after the emission of semen, either in waking or in sleep. A total ablution or bathing is obligatory before praying the salat. Physical cleanliness, in Islam, is a sine qua non for moral and spiritual purification. If water is unobtainable (or injurious to health) tayammum should be performed.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

The following Islamic legal ordinances can be extracted from the above-mentioned verse:

1. Canonical prayers are invalid when the person is intoxicated. The holy verse says:

“O’ you who have Faith! do not approach prayer when you are intoxicated, until you know what you say...”

The reason of it, of course, is clear, because ‘prayer’ is the talk and invocation of the servant with Allah and the action must be performed in an utmost conscious state.

2. The prayer is invalid for the person who is in ritual impurity. So, the Qur’an says that you should not approach prayer when you are polluted:

“...nor when you are polluted...”

Next to that, it has stated an exception for this ordinance. It says:

“...unless you be passing through ...”

In this state establishing prayer is permissible on the condition of dry ablution, which will be dealt with in the following.

3. The words refer to the allowance of establishing prayer or passing through a mosque after performing a legal bathing, which has been stated by saying:

“...until you wash yourselves...”

Dry Ablution for the Excused

Through the next phrase, all religious aspects of dry ablution are stated. At first, it points to the situation in which water is harmful for the health of the body.

“...And if you are ill or on a journey...”

Then, it continues saying:

“...or one of you come from privy or you have touched the women...”

And, when in this situation, there is not water for ablution:

“...and you cannot find water...”

In this condition, you must have recourse to dust:

“...then betake yourselves to pure earth...”

In the next sentence, it has stated the style of having recourse to dust. It says:

“...then wipe your faces and your hands; ...”

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an points to this fact that this ordinance is a kind of facilitation and discount for you, since:

“...verily Allah is Pardoning, Forgiving.”



Verse 22

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا﴾

An-Nisa (The Women) 4:59

O You Who Believe!

- Obey Allah,
- And obey the Messenger,
- And those charged with authority among you.
- If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you do believe in Allah and the Last Day -
- That is best, and most suitable for final determination.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

As you may see, the verses are not without some connection with the preceding ones. Beginning from the words, And worship Allah and do not associate any thing with Him...¹¹⁶, the whole speech is directed towards exhorting people to spend in the way of Allah for strengthening all classes of society and fulfilling the believers' need; and condemning those who refrain, and prevent others, from discharging this obligation. Then comes this call to obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority, cutting out the roots of discord and avoiding dispute and disagreement; advising them to refer all disputes – if there be any – to Allah and His Messenger; they should guard themselves against hypocritical behavior, and must surrendered to the

¹¹⁶ Al-Qur'an, 4:36

decisions of Allah and His Messenger. This tenor continues until it arrives at verses calling for Jihad, explaining its underlying reason and ordering the believers to band together in the way of Allah. All these prepare the believers for fighting in Allah's ways, and put their internal affairs in good shape on a sound basis. Here and there one or two verses have been revealed in a parenthetical style which have not adverse effect on continuity of speech, as was pointed out under the verse, O you who believe! do not go near prayers when you are intoxicated...

After calling the people to worship Allah alone, and do good to various groups of believers, and condemning those who cast aspersions on this idea or prevent others from Allah's way, the talk again turns to the basic theme from a different angle, from which grow up other branches. It leads to reinforcing the foundation of Islamic society, as it exhorts and urges the believers to preserve their unity and to remove every type of dispute or discord by referring it to Allah and His Messenger.

There should be no doubt whatsoever that when Allah tells us to obey Him, it means that we must obey Him in all the realities and laws which he has sent to us through His Messenger.

As for His Messenger, his orders emanate from either of his two lawful authorities: First: His legislative authority based on divine revelation other than the Qur'an. By this authority, he teaches the people details of what is mentioned in general terms in the Qur'an, and explains all the related matters. Allah says: and We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to them what has been revealed to them.¹¹⁷

Second: What he, in his wisdom, decides in administrative and judicial matters by the authority given him by God. Allah says: ...that you may judge between people by means of that which Allah has taught [shown] you;¹¹⁸ It is the opinion with which he used to judge between people according to the laid down judicial laws; and it is the decision he used to take on important affairs. Allah had told him to consult the people seeking their advice: and take counsel with them in the affair; but when you have decided, then place your

¹¹⁷ Al-Qur'an, 16:44

¹¹⁸ Al-Qur'an, 4:105

trust in Allah.¹¹⁹ Thus the people would participate in consultation; but the decision would be of the Prophet alone.

The above discourse shows that the Messenger's obedience has a connotation distinct from Allah's obedience, although the Messenger's obedience is in reality the obedience of Allah Himself, because it is Allah who has obliged the people to obey the Messenger as He has said: *And We did not send any messenger but that he should be obeyed by Allah's permission.* People have to obey the Messenger in what he explains by divine revelation and in what he decides and orders by his divine wisdom.

It shows that the people with authority – *whoever they might be* – have no authority to legislate a new law or to abrogate a rule established by the Qur'an or the *sunnah*. Otherwise, it would serve no purpose to order people to refer their dispute to the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, to Allah and the Messenger, as may be inferred from the verse 36 of chapter 33: "*And it is not for a believing man or a believing woman to have any choice in their affairs when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter; and whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he surely strays off a manifest straying.*" Allah decides by giving a law; His Messenger decides by elaborating a divine law, giving an order or pronouncing a judgment. As for the persons vested with authority, they have power, in executive matters, to decide according to their discretion, and in judicial and general matters, to bring to light the decisions of Allah and His Messenger.

Undoubtedly, the obedience, ordered by the words, "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger", is general, without any condition or restriction. It proves that the Messenger cannot issue any order or prohibition contrary to Allah's actual order or prohibition. Otherwise, making his obedience compulsory would be a contradiction in terms on the part of Allah; far be it from His sublime presence. It necessarily follows that the Messenger ﷺ was *ma'sum* (infallible), sinless, free from error.

The same argument applies in case of the persons vested with authority. But the presence of *al-ismah* (sinlessness) in the Messenger is independently established by proofs from the reason and the Qur'an and the *sunnah* without

¹¹⁹ Al-Qur'an, 3:159

depending on this verse. Apparently, it is not the case with the people vested with authority. Someone therefore could imagine that it was not necessary for these people of authority to be *ma'sum*, sinless, and that the verse could be explained even without believing in their *ismah*.

Suggestion: *Ulul-amr*, who are entitled to unconditional obedience, may be a group – and may thus be referred to with plural sense. It may be an association of many persons each individual counted as a possessor of authority, inasmuch as he has influence over people and his words are obeyed.

For example, army commanders, scholars, rulers and community elders. The author of al-Manar has suggested that this refers to *ahlul halli wal-qa'd* (=lit. those who tie and untie; i.e. people having influence and authority), who are trusted by the *ummah*; including scholars, military commanders, leaders in fields of commerce, industry and agriculture, as well as trade-unionists, political leaders and chief editors of influential newspapers. This is what we mean when we say that *ulul-amr* means people of influence and authority. It is collective body of the leaders of the *ummah*.

COMMENT: The problem is that the complete verse cannot be explained in the light of this suggestion.

As you have seen, the verse proves the sinlessness of the *ulul-amr*; and even those who support the above suggestion, have to admit that the verse confirms their sinlessness.

The question arises: Who among this body of influential persons is sinless? Is each of its members sinless, so that the collective body could be called sinless? Because a group is but the sum total of the individuals. But it is evident that there never was in this *ummah*, even for a single day, a group of influential people who had authority to jointly manage the Muslim's affairs and whose every member was sinless and free from error. Obviously, it is impossible for Allah to order us to obey a group which had never existed in reality.

Or does it mean that sinlessness, a real attribute, exists in that collective body as an adjective exists in its qualified noun? Although each individual member may commit sins, and in common with all other human beings can indulge in polytheism and disobedience, and although the opinion he forms may be

erroneous or may lead to sin and straying, but when the said body collective reaches at a decision it remains safe from mistakes and errors – because the collective body is sinless. But this too is impossible. How can a real attribute, that is, sinlessness, exist in an abstract idea, i.e. the collective body? A real attribute cannot stand in a mentally posited idea.

Or, does it mean that sinlessness of this body is attributable neither to its individual members nor to the collective body? That it only signifies that Allah protects this body in a way it does not order any sin, nor does it arrive at a mistaken decision. Its case is not different from a *mutawatir* [a tradition narrated in every stage by so many narrators as to make their collusion for a lie impossible (*tr.*)] information which is protected from falsity, although none of its narrators or informants is sinless, nor is this freedom from falsity attributed to the chain of narrators when looked at as a composite group.

All that it means is that a habit has been formed which prevents falsehood from seeping in that information. In other words, Allah protects a *mutawatir* information from infiltration of falsehood. In the same way, opinion of *ulul-amr* is protected from mistakes and errors, although neither the collective body nor its individual members are free from sin and mistake. Nor do they have any special quality or attribute. It is nevertheless safe from falsehood and error, like a *mutawatir* tradition. This is what sinlessness of *ulul-amr* means. The verse only shows that their opinion is never confused; it is always right and in conformity with the Qur'an and the *sunnah*. It is a special divine providence for this *ummah*; and it has been narrated from the Prophet ﷺ that he said: “My *ummah* will not unite on errors.”

The tradition accordingly would mean as follows: Never will the entire *ummah* unite on error concerning any matter; there will always be among them those who would be on right guidance – either all or some of them, at least the sinless one. It will correspond with the verses and traditions showing that Islam; the religion of truth, would never disappear from the earth, would continue up to the Day of Resurrection. Allah says: ...therefore if these disbelieve in it, We have (already) entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers in it;¹²⁰ And He made it a word to continue in his posterity;¹²¹

¹²⁰ Al-Quran, 6:89

Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian;¹²² Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it; a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One.¹²³ There are many verses having the same connotation.

There were countless gatherings after the Prophet's death, in which influential and powerful leaders of the Muslims collectively decided whatever they thought correct, and followed what in their opinion was the right path; but all this led them to nowhere; they went on blundering into far-reaching errors; their attempts to bring happiness to the Muslims increased on the *ummah's* misfortune and unhappiness. The society which was based on religion turned soon after the Prophet ﷺ into an imperialism – oppressive and destructive. Let scholars make in-depth study of the disturbances and mischief that raised their head, since the Messenger of Allah ﷺ departed from this world; and have a look at what followed. On every page of Islamic history they will find blood spilled, honors defiled, properties looted, religious laws ignored and divinely ordained punishments nullified. Let them look for its origin and discover its roots. Was there any effective cause other than the opinions formed and decisions taken by the powerful and influential leaders, which they had yoked the *ummah* with?

So this is the position of the most important pillar on which they want to build the structure of Islam! This is the effect of the 'opinion' of influential and powerful leaders who, they tell us, are referred to by the words, *ulul-amr* (those vested with authority), and who, according to them, are free from error in their opinion!

Those who believe that *ulul-amr* refers to the people of influence and power, have no escape from admitting that those people were not sinless, not free from mistakes and errors. That the *ulul-amr*, like all other people could be right in some cases and wrong in the others. But inasmuch as theirs was a distinguished group, experienced in public affairs, the ratio of their mistakes was much smaller. Allah has made their obedience compulsory. Although they

¹²¹ Al-Quran, 43:28

¹²² Al-Quran, 15:9

¹²³ Al-Quran, 41:42

could at times be wrong, but Allah has granted indulgence to such mistakes, keeping in view the overwhelming good emanating from their management of affairs. If they issue an order or give a ruling which contravenes the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, and that order or ruling happens to be congruous with the good of the *ummah* – even if it interprets a religious law contrary to what was hitherto done, or changes it to bring it into line with the demands of time or inclinations of the *ummah* or conditions of the modern world – this new verdict will be followed, and religion will recognize it as good.

Why? Because religion aims only at society's happiness and advancement. This attitude is clearly seen in the way the Islamic governments behaved in the early days of Islam as well as later one. Whenever a law prevalent in the Prophet's days was changed or any system established by him discarded, the only reason given was that that law or system was in conflict with one or another right of the *ummah*; and that the good of the nation demanded that a new law should be enforced and a new system established which would satisfy people's aspirations for blessings of life. A scholar [Ahmad al-Amin in Fajrul-Islam] has openly written that a caliph has full authority to act contrary to explicit religious laws if he thinks it to be in the best interest of the *ummah*.

Accordingly, the Muslim nation would not be any different from other civilized societies inasmuch as they all have an elected body which decides the laws of the society keeping in view the demands of the situation at a given time.

This opinion, as you see, is held by those who think that religion is a social system presented in the garb of religion. It is governed by the same factors which govern other human societies leading them on the path of evolution step by step. Islam was a high ideal which was perfectly suitable for those who lived during and near the days of the Prophet.

It is now clear that it would be meaningless to interpret the phrase: *those vested with authority from among you*, as 'the people having influence and power' (whatever meaning we give to this latter phrase). The only meaning now possible is: Those individuals from among the *ummah* who are sinless, free from error and mistake in their words and deeds, whose obedience has been made obligatory. The only way to recognize is through clear divine

affirmation, either in His own words or through His Prophet. This explanation corresponds with what has been narrated from the Imams of *Ahlul Bayt* that it is they.

As for the claim that *ulul-amr* refers to the rightly guided caliphs, commanders of expeditions or religious scholars whose opinions and words are followed, it is rebutted on two counts:

First: The verse proves their sinlessness, and undoubtedly, none of these three groups was or is sinless – except what a group of Muslims believes about the right of Ali عليه السلام.

Second: All these interpretations are just claims without any evidence.

Objections have been raised against the explanation that the phrase refers to the sinless Imams of *Ahlul Bayt* عليه السلام:

First Objection: In case this meaning was correct, it was necessary for Allah and the Messenger to clearly identify them [to the *ummah*]; and if it were done, no two persons would have disputed about them after the messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Reply: It is clearly mentioned in the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, like the verse of Guardianship, Purity and others; and the traditions like that of Ark (The parable of my *Ahlul Bayt* is like the parable of Noah's Ark; whoever boarded it was saved, and whoever stayed away from it was drowned); and that of the Two Precious Things (Surely I am leaving among you two precious [or weighty] things, the Book of Allah and my off-springs who are my *Ahlul Bayt*; as long as you would hold fast to both of them you would never go astray after me). These have been quoted in the discourse on "Decisive and Ambiguous Verses" in the third volume of the Arabic edition.¹²⁴

Second Objection: Their obedience is conditional to their identification, because an order to obey them without recognizing them would be a command to do the impossible. As their obedience is conditional, this verse cannot apply to them because it is unconditional.

¹²⁴ Eng. vol. 5, pp. 46-93

Reply: This objection bounces back to the objector. Every obedience [even of the people of influence and power] is conditional to their recognition. The only difference is that we may recognize the people of influence and power by ourselves without referring it to Allah and His Messenger, while a sinless Imam can be identified only through an introducer. However, the condition of recognition is equally present in both cases; so both should be contrary to the verse.

The fact is that although identification is counted as a condition, it is not like other conditions. It only means that when one is obliged to do something, he has to recognize the object of obligation and its other concomitants; but the obligation does not depend on it. If recognition were like other basic conditions which affect the obligation itself, like 'ability' for *hajj* or existence of water for *wudhu*, then nobody would be obliged to do anything at all.

Third Objection: We are unable, these days, to reach a sinless Imam and learn knowledge and religion from him. Therefore, he cannot be the *ulul-amr* whose obedience is obligatory for the *ummah*, because there is no way to have any contact with him.

Reply: This problem is created by the *ummah* itself, not by Allah or the Messenger. The *ummah* opted for wrong ways and was untrue to itself. Thus the responsibility and obligation to obedience stays unchanged. Suppose a nation killed its prophet. Can they claim that now they were unable to obey him because he was no more? Moreover, the objection may be directed to the objector himself, because nowadays there is not a single *ummah* in Islam in which the people of influence and power from among themselves could enforce what they would decide for it.

Fourth Objection: Allah says, *then if you quarrel about any thing, refer it to Allah and the Messenger*. If *ulul-amr* means a sinless Imam, it was necessary to say, refer it to the Imam.

Reply: Its reply has already been given in the Commentary; and it shows that it actually means referring to the Imam.

Fifth Objection: The believers in a sinless Imam say his obedience rescues the *ummah* from darkness of strife and evil of disagreement. But evidently the

verse ordains a law related to quarrel – in spite of the existence of Imam and obedience of the *ummah*. It points to disagreement among the *ulul-amr* themselves in reaching at a decision about some event or occurrence. But according to those who believe so, it is not possible to quarrel or dispute in presence of a sinless Imam, because in their views he is like the Messenger ﷺ. Accordingly, this sentence would without any purpose or benefit.

Reply: Its reply too is clear from the preceding Commentary. The quarrel mentioned in the verse refers to the believers' disagreement concerning rules of the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, not concerning executive orders issued by the Imam in various events and happenings. It was mentioned earlier that no one has any right to legislate a law other than Allah and His Messenger. If the quarreling parties are capable of inferring its law from the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, they have the right to do so, or they could ask the Imam about it, because he is free from error in his opinion. But if they are unable to infer it, then the only way is to ask the Imam. It is just the days of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when his contemporaries had the option of inferring the law from the Qur'an (if they could) or asking the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about it; but in case they could not infer it, the only remedy was to ask him ﷺ.

All this proves that the word, *ulul-amr*, in this verse refers to some men from among the *ummah*, each of whom is similar to the Messenger in two aspects: He too is free from sin and mistake, and his obedience too is obligatory and compulsory. However, we do not say the phrase, *ulul-amr*, does not have a wider connotation according to language, or that it may not be used in a more general way if one wants to. But meaning of a word is one thing, and applying it to appropriate objects is another. For example, meaning of messenger is general, and it is used in the same meaning in this verse; yet the intended personality is of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad ﷺ.

Ibn Babawayh has narrated through his chain from Jabir b. Abdillah al-Ansari that he said:

“When Allah, the Mighty, the Great, sent to His Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the verse, *O you who believe! obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you*, I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah!

We know Allah and His Messenger; but who are those vested with authority whose obedience Allah has conjoined to your obedience?’

(The Prophet) said: They are my caliphs, O Jabir! And the Imams of the Muslims after me.

The first of them is Ali son of Abu Talib; then al-Hasan; then al-Husayn; then Ali son of al-Husayn; then Muhammad son of Ali who is mentioned as al-Baqir in the Torah; you will surely meet him, O Jabir! When you see him convey my *salaam* (greetings) to him. Then as-Sadiq Ja’far son of Muhammad; then Musa son of Ja’far; then Ali son of Musa; then Muhammad son of Ali; then Ali son of Muhammad; then al-Hasan son of Ali; then Muhammad (whose name and patronymic will be the same as mine) son of al-Hasan son of Ali, the proof of Allah on His earth and *Baqiyatullah* (the one kept safe by Allah) among His servants; he is the one by whose hands Allah, Sublime is His remembrance, will conquer the whole world from the east to the west; he it is who will remain hidden from his followers and friends for such a long period that no one will remain firm on the belief of his *imamah* except he whose heart has been tested by Allah for faith.

Jabir says: I said:

O Messenger of Allah! Will his followers get any benefit from him during his occultation?

The Prophet ﷺ said:

Certainly, by Him Who has sent me with prophethood! They will be guided by his light and benefit from his *wilayah* (love, mastership) during his occultation as people benefit from the sun when it is hidden in cloud. O Jabir! This is part of the hidden secrets of Allah and the treasured knowledge of Allah. So keep it hidden except from the people who deserve to know.¹²⁵

Jabir al-Ju’fi has said: “I asked Abu Ja’far عليه السلام about the verse, *obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you*. He said:

The Imams.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Tafsir al-Burhan

¹²⁶ at-Tafsir, al-Ayyashi

Ibn Shahrashub narrates: al-Hasan b. Salih asked as-Sadiq عليه السلام about it and the Imam replied:

The Imams from the Ahlul Bayt of the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وآله.

Abdullah b. Ajilan has narrated from Abu Ja'far عليه السلام that he said about this verse of obedience:

It is about Ali and the Imams; Allah has put them in places of prophets except that they do not make anything lawful or unlawful.¹²⁷

Burayd b. Mu'awiyah has narrated that Abu Ja'far عليه السلام recited: "*Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you*; then if you fear a dispute about anything, refer it back to Allah and the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you." Then he said: 'How can it be that He orders their obedience and then allows disputing with them? He (Allah) has said it to the rebellious ones who were told, *obey Allah and obey the Messenger.*"

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Abu Basir has narrated from Abu Ja'far عليه السلام that he said: "It (i.e. the verse of obedience) was revealed about Ali b. Abi Talib عليه السلام." "I said to him: 'People say to us, "What was to prevent Him from naming 'Ali and his Ahlul Bayt in His Book?"' ' Abu Ja'far عليه السلام said:

Tell them:

Verily Allah revealed (the order of) prayer to His Messenger; but he did not name three (*rak'ah*) or four, until it was the Messenger of Allah who explained it;

and He revealed (the order of) *Hajj* and did not reveal 'circumambulate seven times', until the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وآله explained it.

[Likewise] Allah revealed: '*obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you*'; and it was revealed about Ali and al-Hasan and al-Husayn عليه السلام; and he (the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وآله) said about Ali:

'Whoever's master am I, Ali is his master.'

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ al-Kafi

Also the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'I admonish you concerning the Book of Allah and my Ahlul Bayt; verily I have asked Allah not to let them be separated from each other until He brings them to the *hawdh* (reservoir [of al-Kawthar]), and He has granted it to me.'

And he said: 'Do not teach them because they are more knowledgeable than you; verily they shall never take you away from the gate of guidance and shall never let you enter the gate of misguidance.'

If the Messenger of Allah had remained silent and not identified the people (of his Ahlul Bayt), surely the progeny of Abbas, and the progeny of Aqil and someone else's progeny would have claimed (to be among them); but Allah revealed in His Book: *Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! And to purify you a (thorough) purification.*¹²⁹

And Ali and al-Hasan and al-Husayn and Fatimah عليها السلام were the interpretation of this verse; so the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took the hands of Ali and Fatimah and al-Hasan and al-Husayn عليهم السلام and entered them under the mantle in the house of Umm Salamah and said: 'O Allah! Every prophet had had his precious things and his people; and these are my precious things and my people.' Umm Salamah said: 'Am I not from your people?' He said: 'Verily you are (proceeding) to good but these are my precious things and people of my (house).'¹³⁰

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

The command to obey is infinite-total obedience in all material, religious and spiritual matters, therefore, as this verse clearly signifies, the *ulil amr* must also be as just, wise and merciful as Allah and the Holy Prophet are, and he who - administers the affairs of mankind should be the *khalifatullah* (vicegerent of Allah) and the *wali-Allah* (representative of Allah whom He chooses after equipping him with His wisdom). Please refer to the commentary of Suratul Baqarah: 30 to 39 and 124; and Suratul Ma'idah: 55 and 56 and 3 and 67 with reference to the event at Ghadir Khum; and Suratul Rad: 43; and Surat Hud: 17.

¹²⁹ Al-Quran, 33:33

¹³⁰ at-Tafsir, al-Ayyashi

A careful study of the above references discloses that Ali, and after him, the remaining eleven Imams, in the progeny of the Holy Prophet, Ali and Fatima, are the true successors of the Holy Prophet who have been referred to as ulil amr in this verse. So the Shias obey and follow the Holy Prophet and the twelve Imams.

It is irrational and senseless to accept any ruler as ulil-amr, otherwise men like Yazid b. Mu'awiya will have to be included in the category of ulil-amr; and no sane person would say that Allah has enjoined to obey men like Yazid (prototypes of whom were and are many and in abundance since the departure of the Holy Prophet till today) just as one obeys Allah and the Holy Prophet.

From the event of Ashira (feast of the near relatives to carry out the divine command of “warn your tribe of near relatives”) to the day at Ghadir-Khum, the Holy Prophet repeatedly announced the successorship of Ali, therefore, the first step a true Muslim must take to obey the messenger of Allah is to obey and follow Ali b. Abi Talib. Also refer to the *Right Path and Peshawar Nights*, published by the Peermohammed Ebrahim Trust or Zahra Publications, because the issue of ulil-amr and wali has been discussed in depth in these books with authentic references from the well-known books of tafsir (exegesis) and hadith (traditions) written by the Muslim scholars.

Today the Muslim ummah (from Indonesia to Morocco) is in a quandary, because the theoreticians who directly or indirectly served the interests of the despotic rulers, have presented “the obedience to ruler” (even if he is an usurper, a rogue or a ruffian) as a fundamental of religion (known as the theory of ghlu and ghalba-violence and conquest) by misinterpreting this verse. Such theoreticians are their Imams. There is no way leading to emancipation from terror and exploitation if this theory is not rightly rejected once and for all. It is not possible unless the sincere Muslims submit to the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

This verse, together with a few verses next to it, discuss about one of the most important matters of Islam, that is, the subject of leadership. They determine

the true source of imitation of Muslims for the different social and religious affairs that they may have. At first, it commands those who have faith, saying:

“O’ you who have Faith! obey Allah...”

It is obvious that, for a believing person, all obediences must be led to the obedience of Allah. Then, any form of leadership must originate from His pure Essence and be adopted to His command, because it is He Who is the Ruler and the genetic Owner of the world of existence, and every sovereignty and ownership should be under His command.

For the second stage it says:

“...and obey the Messenger ...”

Obey the Prophet who is immaculate and never speaks out of desire (Suratul Najm, No. 53, Verse 3), an Apostle appointed from the side of Allah amongst people, whose word is the word of Allah, and whose rank and position have been bestowed to him by Allah.

And, for the third stage, it says:

“...and those charged with authority among you...”

Obey such ones who are from the inside of the Islamic society and protect both the divine religion and worldly affairs of people.

After that, it says:

“...Then, if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. This is better and very good in the end.”

Who are ‘ Those Charged with Authority’?

All the Shi’ite commentators have the same attitude on this matter that the purpose of the phrase /ulil- amr /, mentioned in this verse, is the immaculate Imams to whom the physical and spiritual leadership of the Islamic society, consisting of all affairs of life, have been given from the side of Allah and His Apostle ﷺ, and it does not conclude any other than them. This meaning is said according to the contents of 33 authentic traditions cited in Tafsirul Burhan, vol.1, pp. 381-386 (second edition).

Of course, under some conditions, the obedience of those who are appointed to a rank and charge a position in the society, is necessary. This obedience is not for that they themselves are ‘those charged with authority’, but for that they are agents of ‘those charged with authority’.

Explanations:

1. Absolute obedience from the Messenger of Allah and ‘those charged with authority’ is a token for inerrancy of those magnanimous ones. Thus, any denotation expansion which is stated for ‘those charged with authority’ is not valid, if the one is not infallible.

2. The repetition of the word /’ati’u / ‘obey’ is the secret of the kind of orders. The holy Prophet ﷺ sometimes stated the ordinances of Allah, and sometimes gave the governmental commands, since he had both offices of ‘prophecy’ and government. (Allah addresses the Prophet ﷺ in the Qur’an both for the rank of statement (Suratul Nahl (16), verse 44) and for the rank of government (Suratul Nisa’ (4), verse 105)

3. The name of ‘those charged with authority’ is mentioned next to the names of Allah and the Apostle, accompanied with an absolute obedience. This is a sign to show that the one in charge of Islamic government should be qualified with a high saintliness. Based on many traditions, as was mentioned in the commentary of the verse, the purpose of the phrase ‘those charged with authority’ is Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام.

4. People ought to accept the Islamic system and support its godly leaders by their words and deeds.

“...Obey Allah and obey, the Messenger and those charged with authority among you ...”

5. In obedience, hierarchical order should be observed, that is: Allah, the Messenger, and those charged with authority.

6. One of the ways of: acknowledgement is comparison with opposites and contraries.

7. When speaking of mischief-makers, the extravagant, the misguided, the ignorants, the tyrants and so on, the Qur’an’s command is: “Do not Yield...”

and “Do not follow ...” The conclusion is that the aspects of the word /’ati’u/ ‘obey’ must be those whose obedience have not been prohibited of.

8. To obey false deities is forbidden.

9. If all groups assume the Qur’an and the practice of the Prophet ﷺ as reliable testimonies, discords will be removed and unity will govern.

10. A complete religion must have a solution for discords. The Qur’an says:

“...refer it to Allah and the Messenger...”

11. Those who are opponent to the orders of Allah, the Messenger, and ‘those charged with authority’ should doubt in their own religion, if they want to believe in truth.

“...if you believe...”

12. Farsightedness and being careful of the interests of long future time is the standard of value.

“...This is better and very good in the end.”



Verse 23

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا خُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ فَانفِرُوا تَابَاتٍ أَوْ ائْفِرُوا جَمِيعًا﴾

An-Nisa (The Women) 4:71

O You Who Believe!

- Take your precautions,
- And either go forth in parties or go forth all together.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

The preceding verse, as you may see, had prepared the ground for the central theme contained in these verses which stimulate and exhort the believers to fight in the way of Allah.

The believers spent their days under very perilous circumstances, when these verses were revealed, probably during the second spring of the Prophet's stay in Madina. Arabs had risen against them from all around in order to extinguish the light of Allah and demolish the slowly rising edifice of Islam. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was busy in fighting the Makkan idol-worshippers and Qurayshite friends, sending precautionary expeditions to various directions and raising structure of religion in the society. But that society was honeycombed with groups of hypocrites, and those internal enemies enjoyed great power and influence.

On the day of Uhud it was clearly seen that their number was not much less than half of the believers' number. Those hypocrites used to upset the plans of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and waited for him to meet with some disaster. They hindered the believers from carrying out their duties, while some of the believers too were not free from spiritual disease, and who used to give various information to their enemies.

All around, Madina was ringed with Jewish tribes who deceived and misguided the believers. From old days, Arabs of Madina respected those Jews and accorded them honor. Taking its advantage, the Jews misled them with false statement and wrong advice, in order to weaken their will and nullify all their endeavors. On the other hand, they used to instigate the polytheists against the Muslims, and encourage the idol-worshippers in their struggle, telling them to remain firm in their denial and disbelief, and to harass and torture the believers who were still in Makkah.

The order to go forth is based on the order to “take your precaution”, as the conjunctive *fā* (then) shows. Apparently it strengthens the view that ‘precaution’ refers to means of precaution. That is, it alludes to fully-fledged preparation for *jihad*. The meaning: Take your arms, make full preparation and go forth to your enemy either in separate detachments (for minor expeditions) or all together (for major battles).

Understandably, preparation and equipments would differ from one operation to another, depending on number and power of enemy. The alternatives of going forth in detachments or all together are not meant to give option or choice to the fighters; rather it looks at the strength and number of enemies – if they are few in number, go in small detachments, but if they are numerous, then go all together.

The verse, specially in the context of the next one, *And surely among you is he who would certainly hang back*, is a warning to the believers not to let down their arms, not to slacken their efforts and not to show any laxity in the conduct of *jihad*; otherwise, their morale will go down, their zeal for raising the standard of truth will be inflicted by inertia, holding back from fighting the enemies of Allah. In this way, they will lose the opportunity to cleanse the earth from uncleanness of disbelief and polytheism.

It is a comparison between the believers and the unbelievers in their respective styles of fighting; or more precisely, in the two groups’ motives of fighting. This comparison clearly shows the excellence of the believers’ way over that of the unbelievers. The way of the believers leads to, and relies on Allah, in sharp contrast to the unbelievers’ way. This provides another motivation for the believers to fight.

The unbelievers by following the Satan's way have gone out from the guardianship of Allah. Now they have no guardian or friend except the Satan who is the friend of polytheists and of those who worship other than Allah. So, he is their friend and they are his friends.

The strategy of the Satan is weak, because it is the way of *taghut* which is against the way of Allah, and all power and strength belongs to Allah alone. Now, nothing is left for the way of *taghut*, that is, for the strategy of the Satan, except weakness. Allah by exposing the weakness of the unbelievers' way. Encourages the believers to fight against them. Obviously, the statement that the Satan's strategy is weak *vis-à-vis* the power of Allah, is not a denial of its hold on those who follow their desires.

[At-Tabrisi] has written under the verse, *O you who believe! take your precaution:*

Arms have been called 'precaution', because it is the instrument with which one guards oneself from danger.

He has further written that this meaning is narrated from Abu Ja'far عليه السلام. again he writes:

It has been narrated from Abu Ja'far عليه السلام that *in detachments* means (small) expeditions, and *in a body* refers to the army.¹³¹

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Fight against your enemies to defend yourselves and your faith.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

In the previous verse, the subject was upon the obedience of Allah, the leadership of the immaculate ones, and sovereignty of the Prophet ﷺ. In this verse. The words imply of being careful of the necessity of power, intelligence and a martial preparation for the Islamic community and for the divine leadership.

The Arabic word /hizr/ means: 'being alert', 'being on the look out', and 'The means of defence'.

¹³¹ Majma'ul Bayan

The Qur'anic term /thubaat/ is the plural form of /thubat/ which means: 'separate parts of forces'.

Explanation

1. Muslims should be prepared and alert. They should be cognizant of the plans, number of forces, the sort of weapons, spirit, and internal and external co-operation of the enemy. Then they should design their affairs and act accordingly.

2. Muslims must be trained in military courses.

"O' You who have Faith Take your precautions (keep weapons with yourselves)..."

3. Muslims should be mobilized.

"...or march off all together."

4. Muslims have to utilize the different styles of challenging with enemy.

"...Then either advance in parties or march off all together."

5. Muslims must protect the bounds of their country. Acting upon the message of this verse is the secret of honour and glory, while neglecting it is the mystery of the fall and failure of Muslims.



Verse 24

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْقَى
إِلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَغَانِمٌ كَثِيرَةٌ
كَذَلِكَ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا﴾

An-Nisa (The Women) 4:94

O You Who Believe!

- When you go abroad in the cause of Allah, investigate carefully, and say not to any one who offers you a salutation: “You are not a believer!” Coveting the perishable goods of this life!
- With Allah are profits and spoils abundant.
- Even thus were you yourselves before, till Allah conferred on you His favours,
- Therefore carefully investigate,
- For Allah is well aware of all that you do.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

All the same, the verse indicates a legal prohibition in the form of a statement. That is: *Allah has never allowed, nor will He ever allow, that a believer should kill another believer.* He has made it unlawful except in the case of unintentional killing, inasmuch as the killer did not have any intention of killing a believer; therefore the unlawfulness is not applicable there. It could happen if, for example, he had no intention of killing at all, or if he thought that the victim was an unbeliever whose killing was justified.

“coveting the good of this world’s life”, indicates greed of riches and war-booty. “But with Allah there are abundant gains’: *al-maghaanim* is plural of *al-*

maghnam (gain, war-booty). What is with Allah is more excellent than this world's benefits; because, the hereafter's gains are limitless and ever-lasting; you should therefore look forward to it.

Imam as-Sadiq عليه السلام was asked - *Does a believer who intentionally killed a believer have [a chance of] repentance?* He said:

If he had killed him because of his belief, then there is no repentance for him; but if he had killed him in anger or because of some worldly matter, then his repentance is that he should undergo retaliation [i.e., he should be killed in retribution]

And if he is not recognized [i.e., if people do not know the identity of the killer,] he should himself go to the heirs of the killed believer and own his [guilt of] killing their relatives; then if they forgive him and do not kill him, he should pay them the blood-money, emancipate a [believing] slave, fast two months consecutively and feed sixty needy persons - all this for repenting [and returning] to Allah, the Mighty, the Great.¹³²

Al-Qummi has written in his *Tafsir* about the verse: *O you who believe! When you march forth (for fighting) in Allah's way:*

It was revealed when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ returned from the expedition of Khaybar and sent Usamah b. Zayd with some horsemen to some Jewish villages in vicinity of Fadak in order that might call them to Islam.

There was, in one of the villages, a man called Mirdas b. Nahik al-Fadaki. When he heard of the horsemen of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he gathered his family and property at the side of the mountain and came forward, saying: 'I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah'. Usamah ib Zayd passed by him, and speared him to death. When he came back to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ he informed him of it.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to him: 'You killed a man who was bearing witness that there was not god except Allah and I was the Messenger of Allah?' He said: 'O Messenger of Allah! He had said it only to save his life'. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'Neither did you

¹³² al-Kafi; at-Tafsir, al-Ayyashi

remove the covering from his heart [to see what was inside it], nor did you accept what he said by his tongue, nor did you know what was inside his soul!

Usamah then swore an oath that after that he would never kill any one who bore witness that there was no god except Allah and that Muhammad was the Messenger of Allah. Therefore, he did not join the Commander of the Believers in his battles. It was about this incident that the verse was revealed: and do not say to any on who offers you (salutation of) peace: ‘You are not a believer,’ coveting the goods of this world’s life...”

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

A contingent of the Muslim soldiers, appointed by the Holy Prophet, was passing through a field in which a shepherd was tending his sheep. Being a new convert to Islam, as soon as he saw the soldiers, he said: “Assalamu alaykum” but Usman b. Zayd killed him and took possession of his herd. In this verse Allah warns the Muslims to be discreet and careful when a person greets them in peace (says assalamu alaykum) and not to say: “you are not a believer’, in order to usurp the gains of earthly life.

Immediately after the departure of the Holy Prophet from this world, Khalid b. Walid, the commander of the Muslim army, mercilessly butchered a whole tribe of devout Muslims when he was sent to negotiate with Malik b. Nuwayra. After killing Malik, Khalid b. Walid raped his widow and then killed her also. After that it became a routine for the Muslim rulers and commanders to kill, loot and plunder the Muslim communities for worldly gains.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

It has been recorded that, after returning from the Battle of Khaybar, the holy Prophet ﷺ sent Asamat b. Ziyd, accompanied with some Muslims, toward the Jews who were living in a village in the region of Fadak in order that they invited them either to Islam or to submitting to the conditions of protective covenant.

One of the Jews named “Murdas” who had been informed of the movement of the forces of Islam toward that place, hastened forth to receive the Muslims

while he was shouting confessing the Unity of Allah and the prophethood of the Messenger ﷺ.

Asamat b. Ziyd thought that the Jewish man was confessing Islam for the fear of his life and for the protection of his wealth, and he was not really a Muslim. Then he attacked him and killed him.

When the news of it reached the Prophet ﷺ, he became very inconvenient of it and told Asamah that he had killed a Muslim. Asamah felt sad and said that that man confessed Islam for the fear of his life and for the protection of his wealth. The Prophet ﷺ told him that he ('Asamah) did not know his inside intention. He (the Jew) might become truly a Muslim. At that moment the verse was revealed.

There is a precautionary instruction mentioned in this verse in order to protect the life of the sinless persons who may be only accused. The verse says:

“O you who have Faith! When you go forth (to fight) in the way of Allah, make investigation, and do not say to the one who offers you peace: ‘ You are not a believer.”

Then it adds that you should be aware not to accuse some persons who express Islam as the enemies of Muslims and not to kill them for the sake of some fleeting bounties of this world and taking their properties in the form of booties. It says:

“...seeking the goods of this world's life!..”

Avoid it when the eternal worthy spoils are with Allah. It says:

“...But, with Allah are abundant spoils...”

Yes, in the past, the situation was like that and at the Age of Ignorance, they had the motive of plunder.

“...You, too, were such before...”

But, now, under the light of Islam and for that Allah has conferred His grace on you and relieved you from that status, you should be grateful for this bounty and it is to you to investigate in affairs. It says:

“...therefore make investigation...”

And do know that Allah is aware of your deeds and intentions.

“...Verily Allah is aware of what you do.”

Struggle is a general rule in the world of creation. All creatures of the world, irrespective of plants and animals, remove their barriers from their way by struggle, so that they can reach the virtues of their own ideals.

It should be noted, of course, that in addition to the defensive, and sometimes attacking, wars, ‘Jihad’ (Struggle) envelops the scientific, economical, cultural and political struggles, too.



Verse 25

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ
الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَن
تَعْدِلُوا وَإِن تَلُؤْا أَوْ تُعْرِضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا﴾

An-Nisa (The Women) 4:135

O You Who Believe!

- Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor,
- For Allah can best protect both.
- Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you swerve,
- And if you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well- acquainted with all that you do.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

To stand with justice means to enforce it, to maintain it. Maintainers of justice are who fully and perfectly establish justice without deviating from, or inclining against it, because of some low desire or sentiment, fear, or greed, or other such factors.

This verse has been revealed to describe the rule of evidence, but it has started with talk of justice, and then it proceeds to the rule of evidence. In other words, first a general ideal has been described and then it focuses on one of its aspects. It is as though it says: 'You should be bearers of witness for Allah's sake but it will be difficult for you unless you become maintainers of

justice'. So, you should be maintainers of justice in order to become bearers of witness for Allah's sake.

The words, "bearers of witness for Allah's sake", show the purpose of the action; bear witness so that your witness should be for Allah, as Allah has said: *And give testimony for Allah.*¹³³ An evidence will be for the sake of Allah when it is given in truth for the sake of demonstrating the truth and reviving it, as is clear from the sentence: therefore do not follow (your) low desires, lest you deviate.

Even if the evidence goes against your own interest or against the interest of your parents or near relatives, it should not prompt you to alter the evidence or hide it. Giving evidence against oneself or against one's parents or relatives means that the evidence, when given, will harm the testifier or his parents or relatives. It makes no difference whether the party which would suffer damage is the one against whom the evidence is given directly; for example, if there is a case between his father and someone else and he testifies against his own father; or the damage may reach them indirectly.

A rich or poor may benefit in one or two cases from an evidence which is twisted or hidden, but in the long run it makes the truth feeble and the justice dead. It gives life to oppression and strengthen a falsehood and injustice; and this is the incurable disease which destroys the humanity.

There is a danger that you will deviate from truth and justice by following your low desire and by not giving the evidence for the sake of Allah. The words, "lest you deviate", describe the reason of this order. It may also be translated as, do not follow your low desires to deviate from truth.

Abu Abdillah عليه السلام has said:

A believer has seven rights on another believer. The most obligatory of them is that the man should tell truth, even if it goes against his own self or against his parents, he should not deviate from truth for their sake.

¹³³ Al-Quran, 63:2

Then the Imam ﷺ recited: therefore do not follow (your) low desires, lest you deviate, and if you swerve or turn aside, from the truth.¹³⁴

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

The translation of this verse contains the clear guidance of maintaining justice without fear or favour.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

Social Justice:

Following to the instructions that were pointed out through previous verses about the execution of justice upon orphans and wives, here in this verse, the statement is upon a basic principle and a general law. It is about the execution of Justice in all aspects and without any exception. It says:

“O’ you who have Faith! be maintainers of justice...”

That is, you should accomplish justice so that you might not have the least inclination toward any side.

Then, to emphasize the matter, the verse refers to the subject of bearing witness. It recommends upon affairs concerning the witnesses, in particular, and that you should put aside all circumspctions and bear witness rightfully for the sake of Allah, even if it is against you or your parents or your near relatives. It says:

“...(and) witnesses for Allah’s sake, though it be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives.”

It can be understood from this holy phrase that it is possible for relatives to bear witness for or against each other when they observe the principles of justice.

Then, it points to other factors of perversion from the principle of justice. It implies that neither the wealth of the rich nor the emotions arisen from the poverty of the poor should hinder to bear witness rightfully. It is because if the person against whom the witness will be is rich or poor, Allah is more aware of his condition. Therefore, neither the possessors of wealth and force

¹³⁴ at-Tafsir, al-Qummi

can damage the rightful witnesses when there is the support of Allah, nor the poor remain hungry when justice is executed. The verse says:

“...whether the one be rich or poor, Allah is closer to them both...”

Again, to emphasize on the matter, it instructs us not to follow our desires, because, in that case, there come forth some barriers for executing justice.

“...Therefore do not follow any passion so that you can deal justly; ...”

This sentence clearly leads us to the fact that the origine of transgressions and cruelties is carnal desires. Thus, if a group of people be not the followers of carnal desires, injustice and cruelty may not be found among them.

For the importance that there lies in the execution of justice, it emphasizes again on this commandment. It indicate that if you hinder the right from reaching the rightful person, or pervert the right, or turn aside from the right when it becomes clear to you, Allah is well aware of what you do. It says:

“...and if you swerve or decline (the right), then verily Allah is aware of what you do.”

The above verse makes completely manifest the extra ordinary attention of Islam to the subject of social justice in whatever form and in whatever case it may be. The application of different emphasis mentioned in these sentences shows how much Islam is sensitive for this important social subject among humankind.

But, unfortunately, there is a long distance between the action of Muslims and this excellent Islamic commandment! This very fact, of course, is one of the secrets of their retardation.



Verse 26

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ
وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا﴾

An-Nisa (The Women) 4:136

O You Who Believe!

- Believe in Allah and His Messenger,
- And the scripture which He has sent to His Messenger,
- And the scripture which He sent to those before (him).
- Any who denies Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messenger, and the Day of Judgment, has gone far, far astray.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

The believers have been ordered to believe again. The second belief is related to the objects detailed, that is, believing in Allah and His Messenger and the Book; and they have been threatened if they did not believe in each of these realities.

In short, the believers are told to spread their belief to include the details of these realities as they are the matters of belief which are interrelated and one leads to another. Allah, there is none to be worshipped except Him. His are the beautiful names and lofty adjectives. His Knowledge and Power was the reason that He created the creatures and guided them to their true destination and felicity; and then He will revive them for the day of recompense. This could not be effected without sending the messengers, to bring good news and warn, and sending down the Books which would decide among them in what they

had differed, and to explain to the people the realities of genesis and resurrection, as well as the fundamentals of shari'ah and laws.

Belief in any of these realities cannot be complete unless one believes in all of them without exception. To reject some of them and adhere to some others is disbelief or hypocrisy – depending on whether the partial rejection was shown to others or kept secret. It is an aspect of hypocrisy that the believer takes a path which would lead him to reject some of these realities, e.g., if he separates from the society of the believers and goes nearer to unbelievers' society and befriends them, and confirms them in some of their accusations which they direct against the belief and the believers; or the objections or mockery which they lay down against the truth. That is why Allah has described in the next verses the hypocrites' condition and threatened them with painful chastisement.

The meaning which has been given above is clear from the verse. It is more appropriate than what some other exegetes have written that the words of Allah, “*O you who believe! Believe*”, means: O you who believe apparently by acknowledging the truth of Allah and His Messenger, believe in your heart also in order that your appearance conforms with your inner self. The same is the case of another one's exegesis that the order to believe again means remain steadfast in your belief. Likewise, our exegesis is more relevant than what some others have said that the verses were addressed to the believers among the People of the Book, that is, O you who believe from among the People of the Book! Believe in Allah and His Messenger, Muhammad ﷺ, and the Book which He has revealed on His Messenger, i.e. Qur'an. These themes may be correct in themselves but the context of the speech rejects them and the last explanation is the worst.

Al-Hakim at-Tirmidhi has narrated in *Nawadirul-usul* from Zayd b. Arqam that he said: the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

Whoever sincerely says, La ilaha illallah, will enter the Garden. It was said to him, O Messenger of Allah, what is its sincerity? He said: That it prevents him from unlawful thing.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

The religion of Islam is universal, for all people, in every age. Therefore, it is necessary for every follower of Islam to believe in all the prophets and messengers of Allah and in what was revealed to them. No other religion besides Islam demands from its followers to believe equally in the sinless purity of the conduct and character of other prophets of Allah, and in the truthfulness of other sacred scriptures as the revealed words of Allah.

There is no phase of believer's life which the religion of Allah, preached through a messenger par excellence, leaves untouched. Nothing that a believer does or even thinks lies outside the authority of Allah, His messenger and his AhlulBayt. Therefore, belief in and obedience to Allah, His messenger and his successors (ulil amr-see commentary of verse 59 of this surah) has been ordained.

The religion of Allah, Islam, is a universal religion. So belief in all the messengers of Allah and the books revealed to them is also essential.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

The meaning of the verse may be such: O' you who have faith! go a step further; or, be firm in your faith forever. A believer should elevate himself to a higher degree of faith everyday, since there are degrees in faith. However, disbelief in some heavenly Books and some prophets is the same as disbelief in all.



Verse 27

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَتُرِيدُونَ
أَنْ تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا﴾

An-Nisa (The Women) 4:144

O You Who Believe!

- Take not for friends unbelievers rather than believers.
- Do you wish to offer Allah an open proof against yourselves?

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

The verse, as you see, forbids the believers to establish friendship with unbelievers in preference to the believers' friendship; and the next verse gives its reason by a severe threat which is addressed to the hypocrites. The reason is that Allah counts such friendship as hypocrisy, and warns the believers from indulging in it.

The context shows that these two verses give the sum total of the preceding speech. This makes us almost certain that the previous verses had exposed the condition of those believers whose faith was weak and hearts diseased; and therefore the verses called them hypocrites. Or at least such believers are joined with the hypocrites in those verses. Then it admonishes the believers that they should not go near that line, otherwise they would make themselves liable to displeasure of Allah. They should not give Allah any proof against themselves; otherwise He will turn them to go astray and put them in deception, leaving them oscillating in this life. Then He will join them with unbelievers in the hell and put them in the lowest stage of the fire; there will be no connection between them and anyone who could help them or intercede for them.

Leaving someone to go astray, deceiving him and any such display of Divine displeasure emanates from clear proof which the people's deeds provide against them. These humiliations and degradations are decreed as recompense of their actions. The Divine Majesty is too high to initiate any evil or misfortune for them without there being a reason for it from their side. Therefore, the sentence, "do you desire that you should give to Allah a manifest proof against yourselves?", has the same connotation as the words:

*He does not cause to err by it (any) except the transgressors.*¹³⁵

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Instead of taking unbelievers as their friends (to seek favours from them) people should prefer believers who depend on the grace and glory of Allah and seek His nearness and protection

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

The believers have not the right of accepting the mastership of the disbelievers. But it is in the case that the hypocrites have a close tie with the disbelievers. The Qur'an introduces the disbelievers as Satans of the hypocrites:

"...when they are alone with their evil ones..."

And they are as brethren of the hypocrites:

"...those who have become hypocrites? They say to those of their brethren who disbelieve ..."

The senses mentioned in Sura Nisa, No.4, Verse 139 and 141 are also indications to the quality of the connection between the hypocrites and the disbelievers.

Explanations:

1. 'Tawalla' and 'Tabarra' are parts of the religion.
2. Any communication, friendship, and agreement contraction that results to the loss of Muslims, should be avoided of.

¹³⁵ Al-Qur'an, 2:26



Verse 28

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ أُحِلَّتْ لَكُمْ بَهِيمَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرَ مُحِلِّي الصَّيْدِ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ﴾

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:1

O You Who Believe!

- Fulfil (all) obligations!
- Lawful unto you (for food) are all four-footed animals, with the exceptions named.
- But animals of the chase are forbidden while you are in the sacred precincts or in pilgrim garb -
- For Allah does command according to His will and plan.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

If we meditate on the beginning and end of this chapter and ponder on the general verses which have been revealed in it and look at the admonitions and the stories which it contains, we will find that the general theme of the chapter is to call the people to fulfill the covenants and to uphold the valid agreements whatever they might be. It warns against breach of agreement and cautions those who take the covenants lightly. It shows that Allah has made it His habit to deal with mercy and lighten the burden of those who guard themselves against evil and believe, and then again guard themselves against evil and do good work. On the contrary, He deals harshly with those who commit outrage, exceed the limit and overstep the bounds by throwing away the collar of obedience and going out of the boundary of covenants which have been made in the religion.

That is why you will see that the chapter contains many laws concerning legal punishment and retribution:

- there are stories of the dinner table;
- of questioning of the Messiah;
- the incident of the two sons of Adam;
- it also points to a lot of injustices of the Israelites and how they broke the covenants which were taken from them;
- also there are many verses in which Allah described His Grace on the people in various matters like perfecting the religion, completing His favor, making the good things lawful to man and legislating the ways of purification without putting the people into any difficulty and hardship.

This was in conformity with the time when the chapter was revealed. All reporters agree that it was the last detailed chapter which was revealed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ nearing the end of his life. It has come in both sects' traditions that it is the abrogating chapter, not the abrogated; and it was proper in this background to emphasize the admonition to fulfill and safeguard the agreements which Allah has taken from His servants, and to remain firm on it.

al-'Aqd, that is covenant, is used for all the religious covenants which Allah has taken from His servants, like monotheism and all the fundamentals cognition and perception, the acts of worship and the laws which were laid down anew or were allowed to continue from previous times, including the proposal and acceptance in trade, etc. The verse contains the word *al-'uqud* which is plural of *al-'aqd* having *al* which signifies comprehensiveness; therefore, this word in this verse encompasses all which could be called *'aqd* (tie, covenant).

The above explanation shows the weakness of what various exegetes have written in its interpretation. Some have said that the covenants refer to those agreements or contracts which people make one with another, like trade deal, marriage and promise or which man binds himself with like oath.

Likewise, some others have said that it refers to those agreements which the people of the Days of Ignorance had contracted with one another that they will help and support each other against those who would proceed against

them with evil intention or transgress against them. It means the pact or treaty which was common in those days.

Similarly, some others have said that it refers to the covenants taken from the People of the Book that they would follow what was written in the Torah and the Gospel. All these interpretations are without any support from the wording of the verse. Moreover, as we have said that a plural joined with 'al' and the common usage of the word al-'aqd for every type of covenant, renders all such explanations inappropriate. Therefore, the word should be taken in its comprehensive and general meaning.

It shows that so far as eating of meats is concerned, mankind is divided in numerous categories. The spectrum shows on one side total prohibition and on the other unrestricted indulgence. When he uses some meats he follows the dictates of nature, and when he refrains from some items, it emanates from some ideology, or is a result of his second nature.

The Buddhist system prohibited use of all animals altogether. This is one extreme, and its opposite is the excess which was prevalent among uncivilized people, in Africa and elsewhere, who had no hesitation in eating any meat, even the flesh of man.

The Arabs used to eat the meat of quadrupeds and other animals, even rats and lizards; they ate all types of dead cattle which they killed by slaughtering or which died by itself, was strangled or beaten to death; they ate what died as a result of fall, or by being gored by another animal, or which was killed by beasts of prey. They ridiculed the Muslims saying: "Why is it that you eat what you kill yourselves and do not eat what has been killed by Allah?" Many people offer similar objections even today. Some people say: "What is the difference between one flesh and the other, when the human body does not get any harm from, especially if it is hygienically prepared, because the digestive system does not differentiate between this and that?"

The Arabs also used to eat blood; they filled the intestine with blood, roasted it and offered it to the guests. During famine days, they used to wound their camels with arrows and drank the blood which came gushing out. Even today, eating of blood is common among many non-Muslims communities.

The Chinese Buddhists are more liberal than the ancient Arabs; reportedly, they eat all types of animals including dogs and cats, even the worms, sea-shells and all types of insects.

Islam has chartered a middle course, and has allowed the meats which are agreeable to the normal human nature. It has selected in quadrupeds the cattle like sheep, goats, cows and camels (also horse and donkey, although with dislike); among the birds, it disallowed the birds of prey and allowed those other birds which have crawl and those which flap their wings more often and do not have talon; in marine animals, it has allowed some categories of fish, details of which may be found in books of shari'ah.

Even while allowing the above-mentioned animals, it has prohibited its blood and that which has died of itself and on which the name of Allah has not been invoked. The purpose behind these rules is to revitalize the natural canon, inasmuch as the man naturally likes to eat meat. Together with it, Islam respects the correct thinking and normal nature as these too are repulsed from eating those things which may prove harmful to human being or which the human nature thinks odious and unclean.

How Allah Allowed Killing of Animals When Mercy Rejects it?

It may be asked: The animals has a spirit which is endowed with feelings similar to that which a man has: man hates the torture of slaughtering, the bitter taste of death and is endowed with the natural love of self. These are the feelings which incite a man to flee from every disliked and dangerous situations. This realization of our own feelings demands from us that we should look with respect and mercy on other human being, because they too feel the same pain as we do, and all souls are equal.

The same argument can be advanced for animal species. How can be inflict on animals the sufferings which we ourselves do not accept How can be exchange their sweet life with bitter death? What right do we have to deprive them of the bounty of life which is the best of the bounties? Allah is the most Merciful of all. How can His Mercy allow us to kill an animal for enjoying its meat when both of us are equally His creatures?

Reply: This question gives precedence to the feelings over realities. Legislation follows the real good of humanity and not the emotional feelings. We may expound it as follows: Look minutely all the things which you find around yourselves, you will see that all of them in their creation and continuity follow the law of continuous change. All things without exception do change to other things; and those other things in their turn do change into these things – directly or indirectly. Nothing comes into being unless another thing loses its existence in the process. Nothing continues living on this earth without something else going out of existence. This material world is the world of change and exchange; or you may say, the world of the eater and the eaten. The earthly compounds eat the earth itself by absorbing its chemicals to themselves changing them to their own images; then after sometime, the earth again eats and destroys them. Again, the vegetable world gets its nourishment from the earth and absorbs the air, then later the earth eats it and break it down to its original ingredients, the first elements; and this cycle continues.

How comes the animal world which gets its nourishment from vegetables, water and air. Some animals feed themselves on other animals, like the wild beasts which eat the meat of their preys; and likewise predatory birds eat the pigeons and sparrows. The digestive systems of these carnivorous animals and birds do not accept any other food. The small birds in their turn feed on grain, flies, fleas, insects and mosquitoes, while the mosquitoes feed on blood of man and other animals. Then, finally, the earth devours them all.

Clearly, the system of creation which has overall control on all the creatures, has ordained that man should get nourishment from meats, etc.; then it has guided the previous parts of existence towards it. It is the system which has created in human beings the ability to get sustenance from both animals and vegetables. He has in the front of his alimentary system the teeth some of which are made to cut, the others to break, some to tear and others to grind; they are called canines, molars, premolars and incisors; man is not like goat or cow which cannot cut or tear apart, nor is he like the beasts of prey which cannot grind or incise.

The faculty of taste with which his mouth is equipped finds the taste of meats pleasant; then other organs of his digestive system likewise find the meats delicious, and long for it. All this is a part of creative guidance which proves that the Creator has given him permission to use and eat various meats. How can we separate this creative guidance from lawfulness of the work which this guidance leads to.

Islam is a natural religion. Its only aim is to revive the tracks of nature which the human ignorance has obliterated. It is bound to declare lawful what the creation guides to and the nature decrees. Islamic legislation revives this natural commandment; and in the same way it restores other arrangements which the Creator has ingrained in our nature. We have already mentioned that it confirms the decree of reason that one should abstain from such meats which are harmful physically or spiritually; and it strengthens the inner feelings by prohibiting what the normal human nature dislikes or feels aversion from. These two principles ultimately are based on the Divine management of the creation; and Islam has given credence to them. It has prohibited that which harms the growth of the body and has forbidden that which is injurious to the well-being of human society; for example, that which has been slaughtered in the name of other than Allah or that which has been obtained through gambling and dividing with arrows and so on; and it has prohibited those repulsive things which the nature abhors.

As for the idea of mercy which prevents one from torturing or killing other living beings, there is no doubt that mercy is a fine gift of Allah which has been ingrained in the human nature, and in many animals as well, as we have sometimes observed. But the Creator has not given it the status that it should enjoy absolute power over all affairs, or should command unqualified obedience. The creation itself has not given the mercy free rein; otherwise, there would not have been in this world any trace of grief, disease, suffering and various types of tortures and oppressions.

Moreover, human mercy in itself is not like justice, inasmuch as it is not an absolute noble characteristic which admits no restriction. Had it been so, then it would not have been proper to punish an oppressor for his oppression or to penalize a criminal for his crime; not would we have been allowed to confront

a transgression with similar action. If mercy means this, then the earth and all that is on it would perish.

However, Islam has not neglected the demands of mercy altogether, because it is among the creation's gifts. It has ordered us to deal with the animals with mercy. It has forbidden us to torture the animal at the time of slaughter; it doesn't allow to dissect the limbs of the slaughtered animal before it has died, nor is it allowed to skin it while it is alive. The prohibition of strangling an animal or beating it to death comes under this category of rules. Also, it has forbidden to slaughter an animal with another one looking at it. At the time of slaughtering, many rules based on mercy have been laid down, as for examples, the animal should be given water before slaughtering, and so on, details of which can be seen in books of jurisprudence.

When all is said and written, the fact remains that Islam is a religion of reason, not of sentiments; it does not give precedence to the dictates of sentiments over the rules which are meant to bring reform in the human society. It accepts only that sentiment which is accepted by the reason; so in the end, that too becomes the dictate of reason.

As for the talk of divine Mercy and His being the most Merciful of all, do they think that Allah is tender-hearted being? Or that his senses are influenced and He feels pity on some things? Obviously, these are material and physical characteristics and Allah is far above such things. The Divine Mercy means that Allah bestows good on someone who deserves it as much as he deserves it. That is why sometimes what we think is punishment turns out to be the Mercy from Him, and vice versa. Consequently, according to the reason, it is not good to neglect or discard a beneficial action by listening to what is suggested by our false mercy. Nor is it allowed to be negligent in legislating the shari'ah, keeping in view the realities of the creation.

It appears from the above, that Islam follows the dictates of nature when it allows eating of meat, and enforces the conditions for that, or explains the rules which it has laid down:

*“...the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah’s creation; that is the right religion, but most people do not know.”*¹³⁶

As-Saduq narrates through his chain from Abas b. Taghlib from Abu Ja’far Muhammad b. Ali al-Baqir عليه السلام that he said:

Dead body, blood and flesh of swine is known: that on which any other name than that of Allah has been invoked, that is, what has been slaughtered on idols.

As for the strangled (animal), the fire-worshippers did not eat slaughtered animals rather they ate dead ones; they used to strangle cow and sheep, and when it dies, they ate it; and that beaten to death: they used to tie its legs and beat it until it died and then they ate it; and that killed by a fall: they used to blindfold it and throw it from a roof, when it died, they ate it; and that killed by being smitten with the horn: they made the rams fight each other and when one of them died, they ate it; and that which wild beasts have eaten, except what you slaughter: they used to eat what was killed by wolf, lion and bear.

So Allah, the Mighty, the Great, prohibited it; and what is sacrificed on stones set up (for idols): they (the Zoroastrians) used to sacrifice animals in their fire-temple; and the Qurayshites used to worship trees and stones and slaughtered animals on them; and that you divide by arrows; that is a transgression:” He said:

They used to take an animal and divide it into ten parts, then they gathered and took out the arrows (and they gave it to a man) and there were ten arrows, seven of which had got shares and three were without any share. Those with shares were: al-fadhah, at-taw’am, al-musbil, an-nafis, al-hils, ar-raqib and al-mu’alla, al-fadhah had one share, at-taw’am two, al-musbil three, an-nafis four, al-hils five, ar-raqib six and al-mu’alla had seven shares. Those without shares were as-safih, al-munih and al-waghad; and the animal’s price was paid by those who did not get any share; and it was gambling, therefore, Allah prohibited it.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Al-Qur’an, 30:30

¹³⁷ Man la yahduruhul Faqih

Muhammad b. Abdillah narrates from one of his companions that he said: I said to Abu Abdillah عليه السلام; May I be made your ransom! Why did Allah forbid the dead animal, blood and flesh of swine? He said:

Verily when Allah, the Blessed, the High, prohibited these to His servants and made the other things lawful to them, it was not because Allah liked these prohibited things for Himself, Blessed and High is He, nor did He dislike other things so allowed His servants to use it. The fact is that He created the creatures and knew what would sustain their bodies and keep them in good health.

Therefore, he made it lawful for them as a favor from Himself for their own well-being; and He knew what would be harmful to them, so He forbade it to them and made it unlawful; yet He allowed it for those facing emergencies, and made it lawful to him when his body could not be sustained otherwise, so He ordered him partake from it to that amount which would avert the emergency, but not any more.

Then the Imam عليه السلام said:

As for the dead body, nobody goes near it or eats it but his body becomes weak and thin, and his strength is lost and his generation is discontinued; and one who (habitually) eats dead body will not die but unexpectedly.

For blood, it creates burning thirst and hard-heartedness, mercilessness and unkindness; one cannot be sure that he would not kill his child or parents; he cannot be trusted about his friends or companions.

As for the flesh of swine, verily Allah had transformed some groups in various forms, resembling swine, monkey, bear and other such animals; then He prohibited (His servants) to eat the animals of similar shapes in order that they should not be polluted by it and should not take the Divine punishment lightly.

As for intoxicants, Allah has made it unlawful because of its effect and disorder.

Then he عليه السلام said:

Verily the one addicted to liquor is like the idol-worshipper; it creates in him tremor and takes away his radiance; it destroys his sense of

honor, and incites him to indulge in unlawful activities like bloodshed and fornication; when he is intoxicated, there is no guarantee that he would not assault sexually the women who are within the prohibited degree [like mother, daughter or sister] without being aware of it. The liquor does not lead the drinker except to every type of evil.¹³⁸

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Aqd literally means tying together. *Uqud* (plural) here may mean covenants, contracts agreements, promises, treaties-between man and God or (any of) His prophets, or between human beings.

For peace and harmony in this world fulfilment of *uqud* has been enjoined by Islam. Islam means complete surrender and submission to the divine will manifested through the sayings and doings of the Holy Prophet, because “*He does not speak of his own will; it is naught but revelation revealed*”¹³⁹; and verse 7 of Suratul Hashr enjoins upon the believers: “*Whatever the Holy Prophet gives you accept it; and whatever he forbids, abstain from it.*”

There are covenants which constitute the basis of the religion of Allah-belief in Allah, His prophets, His books, His guidance, His justice; and the covenant taken by the Holy Prophet on the day of Ghadir Khum (see commentary of Suratul Ma'idah: 67). The divine guidance made available to mankind (from His mercy and grace), without which the *din* of Allah would have not been found in its true and original colour, has been clearly made known by the Holy Prophet in his last pronouncement known as *hadith al thaqalayn*.

According to the Ahlul Bayt the covenants referred to in this verse are those taken by the Holy Prophet from his followers on various occasions to follow and obey the holy Imams of the Ahlul Bayt after the conclusion of his *risalat*.

The criticism of the slaughter of animals by the opponents of Islam is unreasonable. Animals have been created by the creator to provide food for the human beings. There is “life” in everything man or animal eats or drinks. Therefore saving or sparing “life” is not possible. This is the law of nature. The very existence of life depends upon the proper consuming of life. Life in the

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Al-Qur'an, 53:3

lower stages of creation has been purposely created to be sacrificed to serve the survival of the species in the higher realm.

Similarly, man has been created to sacrifice his self which is dearest to him, to reach the higher realms of divinity or spiritual bliss. It is true that purposeless slaughter of animals is a waste of Allah's bounty when it is carried out in contravention to the laws of the author of nature. Even for those who hold animals sacred, the surest way to show their concern is to slaughter them at the proper time, because one day they will be eliminated by death. So, if an animal is to die anyway, it is better to use it for sustenance of human life, rather than letting it go waste. The merciful creator, therefore, has allowed slaughter of animals for the sustenance of human life.

In the days of ignorance, man sacrificed man to please his man-made gods. Islam stopped this practice. Instead, to keep alive the spirit of the intended sacrifice of Ismail by Ibrahim, to show his obedience to his Lord, sacrifice of animals has been prescribed. On the other hand, Islam prohibits purposeless killing of animals. As long as a haji is in ihram he cannot kill even a mosquito. Hunting is not only forbidden during the hajj but also as a sport in ordinary life. Imam Ali, on his death bed, asked his children to take care of the birds he had domesticated, or else to set them free. Once a disciple of Imam Jafar al Sadiq killed some pigeons in exasperation. The Imam asked him to give one dinar in charity for every pigeon he had killed as an expiation.

The companions of Imam Hasan tried to make a dog run when the unclean animal came near them while they were having meals with the Imam. The Imam prevented them and began to eat one morsel himself and gave another to the dog. He said: "I should feel ashamed if a creature of Allah looks at my food and I turn it away."

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

Muslims should earnestly fulfil any covenant and every kind of contract that they have made, irrespective of the recorded contracts and the oral contracts, whether they are political, economical, social, and both with authoritative and weak people.

The Qur'an enjoins that the contracts with pagans should be fulfilled, too. Surahatul Taubah (9), verse 4 says: "...so fulfil their contract ...". According to a tradition from Imam as-Sadiq عليه السلام recorded in *Al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 162 even the fulfilment of agreements with the sinners is necessary.

These covenants may be with Allah ﷻ (like rows and promises), or with people who can be an individual or a group, young or old. The contracts may be with the countries in neighbourhood, or those of international formation. However, as in the same manner that breach of promise and iniquity is the secret of deprivations, (Surahatul Nisa (4), verse 160, and Suratul An'am (6), verse 146) fulfilling the promises is the cause of gains and enjoyments.

And it ought to be noted that the heavenly Books are also Allah's covenants to which should we be loyal to them, and fulfil them. The Old testament (the Turah), the New testament (the Evangel) and the present testament (the Qur'an) all are referred to in the Islamic literature. In a tradition, Imam as-Sadiq عليه السلام said: "Al-Qur'an is the covenant of Allah unto His people..."¹⁴⁰

However, faith is the basis of fulfilling the promises and vows. The holy Prophet ﷺ said:

There is no religion for the person who does not fulfil his promise.

If the agreements and promises be not kept, the basis of the society and common confidence will fail, and disorder comes forth.

"O' you who have Faith! fulfil the contracts (made by you or people)."

Then, following to the ordinance of fulfilling the promises, which involves the entire ordinances and divine covenants, the Qur'an states a number of Islamic ordinances. At first, it refers to the meat of some animals that can be lawful. It says:

"...The four-footed animals are lawful to you (for food)..."

But, in this ordinance, it has excepted the meat of two animals to be lawful. It says:

¹⁴⁰ Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 16, p. 144; & vol. 69, p. 198

“...except those which will be recited unto you, and while you are in pilgrim garb, deem not game permitted to be hunted...”

And Allah is willful to decree whatever ordinance He pleases, since He is Omniscient and Omnicompetent. This means that He decrees whatever ordinance which is good for the servants, and His Wisdom requires it.



Verse 29

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحِلُّوا شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهَدْيَ وَلَا الْقَلَائِدَ
وَلَا آمِينَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا
وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَا نُ قَوْمٍ أَنْ صَدُّوا عَنْ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَنْ تَعْتَدُوا
وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ﴾

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:2

O You Who Believe!

- Violate not the sanctity of the symbols of Allah,
- Nor of the sacred month,
- Nor of the animals brought for sacrifice,
- Nor the garlands that mark out such animals,
- Nor the people resorting to the sacred house, seeking of the bounty and good pleasure of their Lord.
- But when you are clear of the sacred precincts and of pilgrim garb, you may hunt and let not the hatred of some people in (once) shutting you out of the Sacred Mosque lead you to transgression (and hostility on your part).
- Help one another in righteousness and piety, but help not one another in sin and rancour.
- Fear Allah,
- For Allah is strict in punishment.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

The believers are addressed again in this verse to indicate importance of maintaining the respect of the things sanctified by Allah.

It was explained earlier that *al-ihlal* means to make lawful; as this idea is closely connected to indifference towards respect or honor of the thing made lawful, therefore, it is metaphorically used here in the sense of violating. Its specific meaning will be decided in the contexts of the second construct of the genitive; the signs and symbols appointed by Allah are violated if one does not pay respect to them or neglects them, a sacred month is violated if one begins fighting in it, and so on.

as-sha'air is plural of *ash-sha'irah* (sign). Probably here it refers to the guide posts of Hajj and its rites. The sacred months are those lunar months in which fighting has been prohibited by Allah; they are al-Muharram, Rajab, Dhi'l-qi'dah and Dhi'l-hijjah.

Al-Hady refers to goat, sheep, cow and camels that are taken to the pilgrimage.

Al-Qalaid is plural of *al-qaladah*; it refers to the garland of shoes, etc. which is put in the neck of a sacrificial animal to show that it is meant for sacrifice, in order that nobody should appropriate it.

al-Ammin is plural of *al-amm* which is the active participle of *amma* (he headed to); here it refers to those who are on their way to the pilgrimage of the Sacred House "Seeking the grace" is the circumstantial clause to "those going."

al-fadhl (grace) refers to property or material profit.

The same is the connotation of the Divine words: "So they returned with favor from Allah and (His) grace; no evil touched them."¹⁴¹ There are other verses too of the same meaning; also it may mean the reward of hereafter; or it may have a meaning encompassing the both senses. The exegetes have given several other meanings of the words use like *ash-sha'air* and *al-qalaid*; what we have

¹⁴¹ Al-Qur'an, 3:174

mentioned is more appropriate in the context, and no purpose will be served by mentioning other interpretations.

At-Tabrisi says, Abu Ja'far al-Baqir عليه السلام said:

This verse was revealed concerning a man from Banu Rabi'ah who was called al-Hutam.

at-Tabrisi goes on to say, as-Suddi has said:

al-Hutam b. Hind al-Bakri came until he reached the Prophet alone, and he had left his group outside Madina; then he asked, "To what do you call (us)?" - The Prophet ﷺ had already told his companions, "Today will come to you from Banu Rabi'ah (a man) who speaks with the tongue of Satan" - When the Prophet ﷺ replied, he said: "Give me some times; probably I will accept Islam; and there are people whom I should consult."

Then he went out. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

Surely he entered with a kafir face and went out with a treacherous back.

Then, al-Huram passed by some camels of Madina which were left to pasture, and he took all of them and went away; and he was singing (the following lines):

Tonight Hutam rolled up with animal drivers,
He is not a herdsman of camels nor a shepherd,
Nor is he a butcher working on a butcher's block,
They all were asleep, but the son of Hind did not sleep
The Night was passing and a young man was enduring it
who is straight like an arrow,
With well-developed legs and smooth feet.

Then, next year he came for Hajj and has put symbolic garlands on the neck of (those) camels. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was thinking of

sending some people to him. Then this verse was revealed: nor those going to the Sacred House.¹⁴²

At-Tabrisi further says:

Ibn Zayd has said that it was revealed on the day Makkah was conquered about those polytheists who were coming to the House and saying talbiyah of *Umarah*. The Muslims said: 'O Messenger of Allah! These too are polytheists like these (Makkans). Let us aid them.' Then Allah revealed this verse.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Hadya and qala'id stands for the animals chosen and reserved for sacrifice, with garlands in their necks to mark them off as sacred.

Let not hatred of any people lead to aggression in the sacred city of Makkah. There should be no hindrance at all to the pilgrims while they are proceeding to Ka'bah.

Co-operate in righteousness (tawallah) but do not assist in crime and transgression (tabarra) - these two commandments are the universal maxims of justice.

Safa and Marwa are two clusters of rocks between which the pilgrims run back and forth during hajj. They are the scene of Hajirah's running to and fro in search of water, after being left alone with Ismail in the blistering heat and wilderness of Makkah. Please see the commentary of verses 125 and 126 of this surah.

Before the Holy Prophet had purified and perfected the rituals of hajj, Usaf, an idol, was kept on Safa, and Nu-allah, another idol, was kept on Marwah, therefore, people did not like to go to these rocks. Through this verse, the said stigma has been removed and running between the two rocks has been made an obligatory function of the hajj.

Sha-a-irillah means signs of Allah, which remind a person of Allah or a representative of Allah - a prophet or an imam, whose remembrance itself would be an act of virtue or devotion to Allah. It is in this sense that the

¹⁴² Majaul-Bayan

followers of Muhammad and Ali Muhammad give respect to alams, tazias, zarihs, associated with the holy Imams.

Allah is grateful (shakir) means appreciation of good deeds and liberal rewarding in return.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

Eight Divine Ordinances in a Verse:

In this verse, several Islamic magnificent ordinances, among the latest ordinances that were revealed to the Prophet ﷺ, are referred to. All of these ordinances, or most of them are related to Hajj pilgrimage and visiting the Sacred House:

1. At first it addresses the believers and enjoins them not to violate the sanctity of the symbols of Allah and not consider their prohibition as lawful. It says:

“O’ you who have Faith! do not profane Allah’s Monuments...”

2. Keep the sanctity of the sacred months and refrain from fighting in these months.

“...nor the sacred Month ...”

3. Do not consider lawful the offering and the sacrificial animals which you bring for Hajj, whether they are with garlands or without garlands, and let them reach the place of sacrifice and then they be sacrificed there.

4. All the pilgrims to the sacred House should be enjoyed of a complete freedom in the rites of this Islamic great duty. In this work, there is not any privilege between nations, individuals, races, and languages. Therefore, you must not bring into trouble those who set out for visiting the Sacred House and seeking the grace and pleasure of Allah, or even for obtaining some commercial gains, whether they are friends or enemies of yours. When they are simply Muslims and are called as pilgrims of the Sacred House, they are in immunity.

5. The prohibition of hunting, in Hajj performances, is limited to the time of wearing pilgrim garment. Thus, when you come out of pilgrim garment while performing the rites of Hujj or *Umarah*, hunting is allowed for you.

“...And when you are free from the pilgrim garb (and acts of Umarah), then (you can) hunt.”

6. If in the course of Hudaybiyyah pagans hindered you from going into the Sacred House and did not allow you to perform the concerning sacred rites of the Pilgrimage. This happening should not cause you to renew the old hostilities after they becoming Muslims, and hinder them from going into the Sacred House.

“...And let not hatred of a people (once) hindered you from the sacred Mosque move you to commit aggression.”

A general law can be extracted from this statement. This law is that never should Muslims be malicious and revenge the incidents that happened in old times.

Then, in order to complete the former discussion, the verse continues saying:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and transgression; ...”

The Arabic term */birr/* has a vast meaning, including: having faith in: Allah, Resurrection, prophets, heavenly Books, and angels. The word also means: helping the deprived in the society, fulfilling the contracts properly, being patient in affairs, and helping in righteousness.

For example, if the act of studying and learning is a work of righteousness, its facilities, such as: building schools, libraries, laboratories, providing books, vehicles, training teachers, encouraging both teachers and students, etc, all are the examples of ‘helping in righteousness’. There are many traditions in Islamic literature in which we have instructed to helping in goodness and assisting the oppressed and the deprived, and we have also been prohibited from assisting the oppressors. Here we mention only a few of them as a blessing:

Helping a Muslim believer, in comparison, is better than performing one month recommendable fast and spiritual retreat.¹⁴³

Imam as-Sadiq عليه السلام said:

Whoever steps forth for helping others, has the reward equal to a striver in the Holy War.¹⁴⁴

He عليه السلام also said:

And who ever assists a transgressor, he himself is as a transgressor.¹⁴⁵

We have also been enjoined even not to help a transgressor in building a mosque.¹⁴⁶

We ought not to sell grapes to the maker of wine, not to give weapon to a tyrant, not to allow a plotter to act, not to give vehicles to Taghuts (tyrants) to go to Makkah, not to tell the secrets to the persons with little capacity, and not to smile to a sinner.

¹⁴³ Wasa'ilush Shi'a, vol. 11, p. 345

¹⁴⁴ Wasa'ilush Shi'a, vol. 8, p. 586

¹⁴⁵ Wasa'ilush Shi'a, vol. 11, p. 345

¹⁴⁶ Wasa'ilush Shi'a, vol. 12, p. 130



Verse 30

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ مِنْهُ مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ﴾

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:6

O You Who Believe!

- When you prepare for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands (and arms) as far as the elbows;
- Rub your heads (with water);
- And (wash) your feet to the ankles.
- If you are in a state of ceremonial impurity, bathe your whole body;
- But if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes from offices of nature, or you have been in contact with women, and you find no water, then take for yourselves clean sand or earth, and rub therewith your faces and hands.
- Allah does not wish to place you in a difficulty, but to make you clean, and to complete his favour to you, that you may be grateful.

Commentary

Explanation of Allamah Taba'taba'i

The first verse contains rules of all three types of *at-taharah* (cleanliness): *wudhu*, *wajib ghusl* and *tayammum*; and the second verse emphasizes or complements this order. There is another verse already mentioned in the chapter of “Women” which deals with these three modes of cleanness:

*O you who believe! Do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated until you know (well) what you say, nor when you are in a state of major ritual impurity, unless (you are) traveling on the road - until you have washed yourselves; and if you are sick or on a journey or one of you comes from the privy or you have touched the women, and you cannot find water, betake yourselves to clean earth, then wipe a part of your faces and (a part of) your hand. Surely Allah is Pardoning, Forgiving.*¹⁴⁷

al-Qiyam (to stand up, to rise up), when followed by preposition *ila* (to) generally connotes the intention of doing that thing; because when one intends to do a thing one usually moves towards it. Let us suppose a man is sitting and he intends to perform an act, usually he would rise to do it. In other words, rising up for a work is inseparable from its intention. There is a similar example in the words of Allah: “*And when you are among them and establish the prayer for them,*”¹⁴⁸ that is, you intend to establish the prayers. Conversely, there is a verse which uses the word *wish* or intention to allude to the actual deed: “*And if you wish to have (one) wife in place of another and you have given one of them a heap of gold, then take not from it anything*”¹⁴⁹; it means when you divorce a wife and marry another; so the verse uses the word “*wish*” for the actual deed.

In short, the verse shows that prayer must be preceded by bath and *wudhu*. If it had been unrestricted it would have meant necessity of *wudhu* before every prayer irrespective of the words: *and if you are under obligation to perform a total ablution, then wash* (yourselves). However, legislative verses are seldom unrestricted in all aspects. Moreover, it is possible to say that the coming

¹⁴⁷ Al-Qur'an, 4:43

¹⁴⁸ Al-Qur'an, 4:102

¹⁴⁹ Al-Qur'an, 4:20

words: *but He wishes to purify you*, explain this obligatoriness of bath, as will be explained later. It is only this much explanation that can be given here for this verse; the exegetes have written at length about it but it is all related to the matter of *fiqh* and not *tafsir*.

al-Ghasl (pouring water on something); it is usually done for cleaning, removal of dirt and filth. *Al-Wajh* (the side of a thing that faces you); but mostly it is used for the front side of man's head, that is, the side which has eyes, nose and mouth in it; when somebody faces you his features become manifest to you. The traditions narrated from the Imams of *Ahlul Bayt* ﷺ interpret it as the area from the beginning of the hairline in the forehead up to the tip of the chin length wise and that which is covered by the thumb and middle finger breadth wise. There are some other delineation mentioned by the exegetes and jurists.

Al-Aydi (plural of *al-yad*); it is the organ which is used for folding and unfolding, catching and releasing, attacking someone, etc.. It begins from shoulder ending at fingertips. Because most of these activities like catching and releasing are done through that part which begins from elbow downwards, that section is also called hand; and for this very reason the section from wrist to fingertips is also called hand. In this way, the word becomes common between the whole and its' parts.

It is this commonality which makes it necessary to mention some association to point to the intended meaning; and it is for this reason that Allah has added: "*as far as the elbows*" to show that the area of the hand to be washed is that which ends at the elbows; also it shows that the whole area up to the finger tips is covered. The traditions also support this meaning. The preposition *ila* (to, as far as) indicates the limit of action and it connotes continuation of movement.

This preposition does not show whether or not the elbows are included in the order of washing; the order to wash the elbows is derived from the traditions, not from this preposition.

Moreover, the *ummah* unanimously agrees that the *wudhu* of those who begin washing from the elbows coming to the fingertips is correct (vide *Majmaul-bayan*). And this unanimity emanates from the fact that the verse gives this

meaning and it could only be correct if the clause: “as far as the elbows”, is connected with the “hands” and not with the washing.

This sentence is in conjunction with the clause: *wash your faces*, as the verse is meant to show the necessary stipulation of cleanliness for prayer. The sentence means: perform a total ablution if you are in *al-janabah*. This condition alludes to an unspoken condition in *wudhu*. The verse then will mean: *wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows, and wipe a part of your heads and your feet to the ankles, if you are not junub; and if you are junub, then perform a total ablution*. It may be inferred from it that *wudu'* is prescribed if there is no *janabah*, but with *janabah* the *ghusl* is enough as the traditions show.

Allah has mentioned sickness and journey and in these two conditions one is generally unable to get or use water whenever he wishes; and He has mentioned coming from toilet and touching the women – an unavailability of water in these two conditions is matter of chance. Conversely, it may be said that looking at the physical structure of man, his being sick or on a journey is a matter of chance while going to toilet or touching of the women are physical necessities. The first causes small *hadath*, which is removed by *wudu* and the second brings on big *hadath* which is removed by *ghusl*. In all the four situation with which man becomes involved sometimes by chance and at other times by nature, he is obliged to do *tayammum* when he cannot get water.

The phrase: “*and wipe a part of your faces and (part of) your hands therewith*”, shows that one has to wipe those organs in *tayammum* which one is required to wash in *wudhu*. We may say that *tayammum* is a shortened alternative of *wudhu* from which the two wipings (of head and feet) have been omitted and the two washings (of face and hands) substituted with the wiping; and water has given way to soil – to remove hardships.

This shows that the two organs of *tayammum* are the same two which were washed in *wudhu*. As Allah has used the preposition “*bi*” with the verb of wiping, it indicates that the wiping in *tayammum* should apply to only some parts of the two organs, that is a part of face and a part of hands. It totally fits on the explanations narrated from the Imams of *Ahlul Bayt* عليه السلام that the part

of face to be wiped in *tayammum* is the forehead only and the part of hand to be wiped is from wrist downwards.

This explanation shows invalidity of some people's opinion that the hand to be wiped in *tayammum* covers from armpit to finger tips; or what has been said by others that the whole part of hand washed in *wudhu* should be wiped in *tayammum*. Clearly, the verb *al-mash* (to wipe) followed by preposition "bi" indicates that only a part of the organ is to be wiped.

"Min" in "*minhu*" translated here as "therewith" shows that wiping of face and hands should begin with earth; and *ahadith* have explained that *tayammum* should start with hitting the hands on earth and then wiping the face and hands with it.

The phrase: "but He wishes to purify you" after preceding clause: "Allah does not desire to put on you any difficulty", shows that Allah has not laid down any rule with the aim of creating difficulties for human beings. The verse means: Our aim in these laid down rules is to purify you and the main purpose is to complete our favors on you; not that We want to put you in trouble and difficulty. That is why when We found that *wudhu* or *ghusl* was difficult for you in the absence of water, We changed that order to *tayammum* which you can easily do; we have not totally waived the order of *taharah* because we want to purify you and complete our favors on you, so that you may be grateful.

It may be inferred from these words that if a person continued in *taharah* and does not get any *hadath*, then he is not required to repeat his *taharah* for the next prayer. Although the opening phrase: *when you rise up to prayer*, is unrestricted, it does not mean that one has to do *wudhu*, *ghusl* or *tayammum* before every prayer because not every order is obligatory. [In the situation mentioned above, one is only recommended to renew one's *taharah*.]

The verse gives two reasons for this order:

- I. To purify the believers;
- II. To complete His favor on them.

These two are different from one another. The first reason gives the purpose of legislating the three modes of purification while completion of favor is the

purpose of legislating the whole *shari'ah*, and the three modes of *taharah* are a small part of it. In other words, the two reasons are particular and general. Accordingly, the clauses would mean as follows. We have laid down the three purifications so that you could purify yourselves with them. They are a part of the religion. When the whole *shari'ah* will be legislated, Allah's favor on you will be completed in order that you may be grateful to Allah, so that He may choose you for Himself. Ponder on it.

At-Tusi narrates with his *asnad* from as-Sadiq عليه السلام about the words of Allah: *when you rise up for prayers*, that he said: "When you rise up from sleep." The narrator (Ibn Bakir) said, "I said 'Does sleep break *wudhu*'? He (the Imam) said: 'Yes, when it overwhelms hearing and he doesn't hear voices.'" (Tahdhibul-ahkam).

Also al-Kulayni narrates through his chain of narrators from Zurarah and Bakir that both of them asked Abu Ja'far عليه السلام about the *wudhu of the Messenger of Allah* ﷺ.

- He (the Imam) asked for a wash-bowl with water;
- he dipped his right hand,
- scooped a handful of water and
- pouring it on his face
- washed the face with it;
- then he dipped his left hand and
- scooped a handful of water and
- pouring it on his right arm
- washed the arm from the elbow to the palm without returning the hand to the elbow;
- then he dipped his right palm (in the water) and
- poured it on his left arm and did as he had done with the right arm;
- then he wiped his head and feet with wetness of his palms without adding new water to them.

Then he said: “One should not insert his fingers under the shoelace.” Then (the Imam) said: ‘Surely Allah, the Mighty, the Great, says: *When you rise up to prayers, wash your faces and your hands*, it is therefore not proper to leave any part of one’s face without washing and Allah has ordered to wash the hands to the elbows. It is therefore not proper for him to leave any part of his hands up to the elbows without washing, because Allah says: *wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows*. Then Allah has said: *and wipe a part of your heads and your feet to the ankles*. So, if he wiped a part of his head or a part of his feet between the ankles and toe-tips, his *wudhu* will be completed.”

The narrators said: “We asked, ‘Where are the ankles?’ (The Imam) said: ‘Here (pointing to the joint of feet with bone of leg).’ We said: ‘What is this?’ (The Imam) said: ‘This is the bone of leg, and ankle is below it.’ Then we asked, ‘May Allah make your affairs good! One handful (of water) is enough for the face and one handful for the arm?’ (The Imam) said: ‘Yes, if you use it properly and two handfuls cover the whole *wudhu*.’” (ibid)

The author says: This tradition is well known; al-Ayyashi has narrated it from Bakir and Zurarah from Abu Ja’far عليه السلام and has narrated a similar tradition through Abdullah b. Sulayman from Abu Ja’far عليه السلام; also there are other traditions having similar connotation as well as of the preceding tradition in other books.

Al-Ayyashi has narrated from Zurarah b. A’yan; and Abu Hnifah has narrated from Abu Bakir b. Hazm that they said:

A man did *wudhu* and did *mash* on his socks and entering the mosque performed his prayer. Then came there Ali عليه السلام and trampled his neck under foot and said: ‘Woe unto you! You are praying without *wudhu*!’ He said: ‘Umar b. al-Khattab has ordered me (to do *wudhu* like this).’

So, Ali عليه السلام caught his hand, brought him to Umar and said: ‘Look what this (man) is narrating from you (and his voice was raised).’ Umar said: ‘Yes. I have ordered him (to do like it). Verily, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had done *mas-h* (in similar way).’

Ali عليه السلام said: ‘Was it before the revelation of (the chapter of) “The Table” or after it?’ He said: ‘I don’t know.’ Ali عليه السلام said: ‘Then why do

you give *fatwa* when you don't know. The Book (of Allah) has left socks behind.”¹⁵⁰

Al-Ayyashi narrates from Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Khurasani (and the *hadith* is *marfu'*) that he said:

A man came to the Leader of the Faithful عليه السلام, and asked him about the *mas-h* on socks. The Imam bowed his head for sometime; then he raised the head and said: ‘Verily Allah, the Blessed, the High, has ordered His servants to do *taharah* and divided it among the organs; so He gave a share of it to the face and a share of it to the head and a share of it to the feet and a share of it to the hands. Now, if your socks are among these organs you may do *mas-h* on them.’¹⁵¹

Again, he narrates from al-Hasan b. Zayd from Ja'far b. Muhammad عليه السلام that he said:

Verily Ali opposed the people in the reign of Umar b. al-Khattab regarding the *mas-h* on socks. They said: ‘We had seen the Prophet ﷺ doing *mas-h* on socks.’

Ali عليه السلام said: ‘Was it before the revelation of “The Table” or after it?’ They said: ‘We don't know.’ Ali عليه السلام said: ‘But I know that the Prophet ﷺ left wiping on the socks when “The Table” was revealed. And that I do *ma-sh* on a donkey's back is preferable to me than doing *mas-h* on the socks.’ Then he recited the verse: *O you who believe! When you rise up to prayer wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows, and wipe a part of your heads and your feet to the ankles.*”¹⁵²

Al-Ayyashi narrates from Zurarah that he said:

I asked Abu Ja'far عليه السلام, about *tayammum*. He said: ‘Verily, Ammar b. Yasir came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: “I was in condition of *janabah* and I had no water with me.” The Prophet ﷺ asked. “What did you do? O ‘Ammar!” He said: “I removed my clothes and then I turned round over the earth.”

¹⁵⁰ Tafsir al-Burhan

¹⁵¹ At-Tafsir, al-Ayyashi

¹⁵² Ibid.

(The Prophet) said: “The donkeys too do the same. Allah has said: *and wipe a part of your faces and (part of) your hands therewith.*”

Then (the Prophet) put his hands together on the earth and wiped them. Then, he wiped from his forehead until below the eyebrows; then rubbed on hand with the other on the back of the palm, beginning with the right hand.”¹⁵³

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Wudhu and tayammum, the two methods of cleansing for praying salat, have been prescribed in this verse.

The emission of seed, whether in waking or in sleep, makes bathing (ghusl) obligatory.

Wudhu (ablution) is done with water. If water is not available, or there is a genuine danger to health if used, then tayammum (use of dust to cleanse) has been prescribed. For details refer to fiqh. It is written in Sahih Bukhari and other books of history that the second caliph disliked this divine ordinance so much that he was prepared not to pray at all rather than observe these commands.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

Those who wipe the whole head with a wet hand and wash the feet instead of wiping them with the wet hands do not take into consideration that which the *ba* in *biru-usikum* implies.

In tayammum, again due to the possessive particle *ba* in *biwujuhikum*, only a portion of the face and the hands have to be wiped—the parts which have to be washed in wudhu are wiped in tayammum, and the parts which are wiped in wudhu are omitted in tayammum.

The intention of Allah is to purify and complete His favour. This verse is legislative. It implies that whoever submits to Allah’s command will get His blessings. The will of Allah as in Ahzab: 33 is creative which means “Be; and it becomes.”

¹⁵³ at-Tafsir, al-Ayyashi

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

In the former verses there were different statements mentioned about: 'bodily purification and some material bounties.'

This verse has pointed to the 'soul purification' and what causes the purification of the self of Man. Here, a notable amount of the ordinances upon: ablution, major ritual ablution, and dry ablution have been referred to, the which are effective in soul purification. At first, it addresses the believing people and states the ordinances of ablution as follows:

"O' you who have Faith! when you stand up for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands up to the elbows, and wipe a part of your heads and your feet up to the ankles; ..."

Thus, only that part of the hand, has been mentioned in the verse which must be washed. But its manner in the practice of the Prophet ﷺ to us by Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام denoting that the elbows must be washed down to the fingers.

Then, it pays to the ordinance of the major ritual ablution when it says:

"...and if you are polluted, then perform a total ablution; ..."

It is clear that the objective meaning of the phrase: 'then perform a total ablution' is to wash the whole body thoroughly.

The Arabic term /junub/ philologically means 'something goes away'. So, a person in a state of ritual impurity is called /junub/ for the reason that the one must avoid doing actions such as: establishing prayer, staying in a mosque and the like of them while the person is in that state.

By the way, when the Holy Qur'an in this verse enjoins the persons in the state of ritual impurity to perform a major ritual ablution for establishing prayers, it is understood that major ritual ablution substitutes ablution.

Then, the verse continues its words referring to the statement of the ordinance of 'dry ablution', for the person who gets up and intends to keep prayers. It says:

"...and if you are sick or on a journey, or one of you comes from the privy, or you have touched the women and you can find no water (for ablution or major ritual ablution) then betake yourselves to clean soil ..."

Next to this statement, the style of performing dry ablution is shortly stated. It says:

“...and wipe a part of your faces and your hands with some of it.”

And, to make it clear that there has been no restriction in the previous commandments when all of them have been legitimated for the sake of some considerable expedences, at the end of the verse, it says:

“...Allah does not intend to put on you any difficulty, but He intends to purify you, and to complete His favour upon you in order that you might be thankful.”

In deed, the statements mentioned in the holy verse once more emphasizes on this fact that all divine commandments and Islamic enjoiments are assigned for the sake of people and for the protection of their rights. There has been no aim other than that. By these instructions, Allah intends people provide both spiritual and bodily purification for themselves.

However, the final sentence of the holy verse states a general law. It denotes that the divine ordinances, in no aspect, are in the form of difficult proposals or onerous duties.



Verse 31

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ
قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:8

O You Who Believe!

- Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing,
- And let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice.
- Be just: that is next to piety.
- And fear Allah,
- For Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do.

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Taba'taba'i

The connection of the verse with the preceding ones is clear and needs no elaboration. The series of the verses is addressed to the believers, pointing to some important matters, which affect them individually and collectively in both worlds.

The verse is similar to the verse 135 of the chapter “Women”:

“O you who believe! Be maintainers of justice bearers of witness for Allah’s sake, though it may be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives; if he be rich or poor, Allah is nearer to them both in compassion; therefore do not follow (your) low desires, lest you deviate; and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allah is aware of what you do.”

However, there is a subtle difference between the two verses. The verse of the chapter of “Women” forbids deviation from justice in bearing witness because of some low desires; the person loves the man for whom he bears witness because of some relationship or friendship, etc. and therefore, gives evidence in his favor in order that he might get some undue benefits. Conversely, this verse of the chapter of “The Table” prohibits deviation from justice while bearing witness because of hatred and enmity for the person against whom evidence is tendered; he bears witness against him intending to take some revenge from him and thus tramples on his right.

This difference of theme has brought difference of stipulations in the clauses of the two verses. The verse in the chapter of “Women” says: *Be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness for Allah’s sake*; while this verse in the chapter of “The Table” turns restrictions around and says: “be upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice.”

The main purpose of this verse is to:

- restrain the believers from going against truth in bearing witness because of some enmity that the witness might be entertaining against the party concerned.

Therefore, the evidence is attached to justice:

- meaning that one should observe justice while giving evidence;
- the evidence should not contain even an iota of injustice, even if the person concerned is one’s enemy.

On the other hand:

- evidence in favor of someone because of love or relation (even if it goes against the right) is not counted such a deviation from justice although in reality it is not free from injustice and deviation.

Therefore, the verse in the chapter of “The Table” enjoins bearing witness with justice:

- and it has been based on the order of being upright for the sake of Allah;

While the order in the chapter of “Women” enjoins giving evidence for the sake of Allah:

- that is, without following base desires and it is based on the order of being upright with justice.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

The translation of this verse contains the clear guidance of maintaining justice without fear or favour.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

An Earnest Invitation unto Justice

This verse invites to establishment of justice. At first, it addresses the believers and says:

“O’ you who have Faith! be always upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice...”

After that, the verse points to one of the factors of deviation from justice, and warns Muslims as such that tribal hatreds and hostilities, or personal accounts, should not stand as a barrier in the way of the execution of justice and should not cause transgression over the rights of others, because justice is something beyond all of them. It says:

“...and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably...”

For the importance of the matter, it emphasizes on the subject of justice once more, and says:

“...Act equitably, that is nearer to piety...”

And, since justice is the most important element of piety and righteousness, for the third time, it adds as an emphasis that:

“...verily Allah is Aware of what you do.”



Verse 32

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ أَنْ يَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ
أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:11

O You Who Believe!

- Call in remembrance the favour of Allah unto you when certain men formed the design to stretch out their hands against you.
- But (Allah) held back their hands from you,
- So fear Allah,
- And on Allah let believers put (all) their trust.

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Taba'taba'i

These wordings may be applied to various incidents and events which had taken place between the infidels and the Muslims; for example, the battles of Badr, Uhud and Ahzab, etc. Apparently, it is a general description and refers to the polytheists' continuous efforts to kill the believers, erase Islam, and annihilate the religion of *tawhid*.

Some exegetes have said that it refers to the polytheists' conspiracy to kill the Prophet ﷺ or the plan of some Jews to assassinate him, but the apparent wording does not support this particularization, as may be seen clearly.

This exhortation of piety and reliance on Allah in fact points to intense warning and total prohibition of neglecting the piety and discarding reliance on Allah. We say so because this command is immediately followed by the description of making covenant with the children of Israel and also with those who said: "We are Christians." Both groups had broken the Divine covenant and

made them the target of Divine curse, and their hearts were hardened consequently; thus they neglected a portion of their religions. Consequently, Allah created enmity and hatred among them up to the Day of Resurrection.

It is seen from the above that the context of demands that the believers should be warned against neglecting the piety and discarding the reliance on God. This purpose is served by referring to that event and inviting them to ponder on it.

Also it appears from the above that:

- reliance on God should cover all legislative and creative matters or,
- may be the legislations only; in other words,
- Allah has commanded the believer to obey Allah and His Messenger in religious commandments and accept whatever the Messenger has brought and explained to them;
- they should entrust the religious affairs and Divine commandments to the Lord;
- should refrain from thinking that they were independent or that they could manipulate the Divine *shari'ah* which the Messenger has brought to them.
- Also, they should conform to the system of the cause and effect laid down by God in the universe.
- But they should not ascribe to it any independent authority.
- They should not give to it any shade of Lordship.
- They should always remain waiting for what Allah decides or chooses for them by His own management and will.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Many attempts were made by the enemies of Allah and the Holy Prophet to kill him so as to prevent the march of Islam which was uprooting the pagan society, but Allah saved him and His religion on all occasions through His wali, Ali b. Abi Talib, who is known as *yadullah* (the hand of Allah).

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

The opinions are divided that which happening this verse was revealed for. Yet, it can be considered for all the instances that Muslims have relied on Allah and have victoriously rescued when confronting the evil attempt or attack of the enemy.

Still, the remembrance of the bounties of Allah ﷻ is a kind of thanksgiving. It takes away pride and negligence from man and increases his love to the Lord.

“O’ you who have Faith! remember Allah’s favour on you when a (hostile) people were minded to stretch against you their hands, but He withheld their hands from you; and be in awe of Allah, and on Allah let the believers rely.”

Explanations

1. Repelling the harms of the enemy is among the most important favours of Allah.
2. Absorb the grace of Allah to yourself and repel the harm of the enemy through piety, Faith and relying on Him. (Similar to the condition that Allah leaves the enemy to prodominate over persons, because of their committing sins, the same is to attentive to Him that causes the harms of enemies to be removed.)



Verse 33

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:35

O You Who Believe!

- Do your duty to Allah;
- Seek the means of approach unto Him;
- And strive with might and main in his cause;
- That you may prosper.

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Taba'taba'i

It is clear from the above discourse that in the clause: “and strive hard in His way”, the word *al-jihad* (fighting, striving) has been used in its wider sense which covers both fighting the unbelievers and struggling against one’s base desires and anger. There is no reason to restrict it to the fight against unbelievers, especially as the clause is connected to the preceding order to seek means of nearness to Allah, and you have seen what it means. Moreover, the reason given in the two following verses is more appropriate to that wider connotation.

However, it is possible to restrict this *jihad* to the fight against unbelievers, keeping in view the Qur’anic style: The *jihad* in this verse is qualified with the phrase: “in His way”, and this qualification has been used in all the verses which exhort Muslims to fight the enemy; while general striving does not contain this condition, as Allah says:

“And (as for) those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them onto Our ways; and Allah is most surely with the doers of good.”¹⁵⁴

Accordingly, the order to fight in the way of Allah after the order to seek means of nearness to Him mentions a particular after the general for showing its importance; and probably the same is the case of the order of seeking means of nearness to Him coming after the order of fearing Allah.

Also, the verse clearly shows that these are the laid down punishments for waging such war and making mischief in the land; so whoever draws out a sword and strives to make mischief in the land or slays someone, he will have to be killed because he is a fighter against Allah and His Messenger and a mischief-maker; it does not come under retribution, i.e., he is not being killed because he has slayed a respectable soul; so even if the heirs of the slain person agree to take blood-money, his punishment of killing is not waived.

al-Ayyashi has narrated in his *at-Tafsir* from Muhammad b. Muslim from Abu Ja'far عليه السلام a tradition which says, *inter alia*:

Abu Ubaydah said: ‘May Allah ameliorate you! (What) do you see if the heir of the slain person pardoned him (i.e. the slayer)? Abu Ja'far عليه السلام said: ‘If they pardoned, then it is incumbent on the Imam to kill him, because he certainly had waged war, killed and stolen.’ Then Abu Ubaydah said: ‘Then if the heirs of the slain wanted to take blood-money from him and let him go free, do they have the right to do so?’ He said: ‘No. His (punishment) is to be killed.’

as-Suyuti narrates from Ibn Abi Shaybah, Abd b. Hamid, Ibn Abid-Dunya (in *Kitabul-Ashraf*), Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatik from ash-Sha'bi that he said:

Harithah b. Badr at-Tamimi, a resident of Basrah, had made mischief in the land and waged war; and he talked with some men from Quraysh to obtain from Ali a promise of security for him, but they refused. Then he came to Sa'id b. Qays al-Hamadani. So he approached Ali and said: ‘O Leader of the Faithful! What is the recompense of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive to make mischief in the land?’ He said: ‘(It is) *that they should be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides, or*

¹⁵⁴ Al-Qur'an, 29:69

they should be banished from the land.’ Then (the Imam) said: ‘*Except those who repent before you have them in your power.*’ Then Sa’id said: ‘Even if it be Harithah b. Badr.’ Thereafter, Sa’id said: ‘This is Harithah b. Badr; he has come repenting; is he then safe?’ [The Imam AS] said: ‘Yes.’ So [Sa’id] brought him to Ali, and he did his *bay’ah*; and the Imam accepted it from him and wrote for him a warrant of safety.¹⁵⁵

[al-Kulayni] narrates through his chain from Sawrah Bani Kulayb that he said that I said to Abu Abdillah عليه السلام,

A man comes out of his house, proceeding to mosque or for some other work; another man meets him and going behind him, beats him and takes away his clothes? (The Imam) said: ‘What do they say about it those who are in your place?’ I said: ‘They say that it is open immorality; and war mongering happens in the towns of polytheists.’ He said: ‘Which has more sanctity, the house of Islam or the house of polytheism?’ I said: ‘The house of Islam.’ Then (the Imam) said:

Such people are covered by this verse: The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive to make mischief in the land is only this, that they should be killed...¹⁵⁶

al-Qummi has written about the words of Allah: “*O you who believe! Fear Allah and seek means of nearness to Him...*”, that (the Imam) said: Come near Allah through the Imam.

That is, through obedience to the Imam. Thus it is based on the flow of the Qur’an, and applies the verse to its best import. A similar narrative has come from Ibn Shahrashub that he said:

The Leader of the Faithful عليه السلام, said about the divine word: *and seek means of nearness to Him*: ‘I am the means of nearness to Him.’” And nearer to it is the narration of *Basairud Darajat*, through his chains from Salman from Ali عليه السلام. Also, possibly the two narratives may be a sort of interpretation. Ponder on it.

Majma’ul Bayan quotes a tradition from the Prophet ﷺ that he said:

¹⁵⁵ Durrul Manthur

¹⁵⁶ al-Kafi

Ask from Allah for me the *wasilah*, as it is a rank in the Garden, will not get it except one servant, and I hope that I shall be him.

[as-Suduq] narrates through his chain from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri that he said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

Allah remarks, *ask for me the wasilah*. We asked the Prophet ﷺ about the *wasilah*; so he said: 'It is my rank in the Garden...' (It is a long narrative, known as the Hadith of Wasilah.)

If you meditate on this hadith and as to how the meaning of verse fits on it, you will find that *wasilah* is the position of the Prophet ﷺ in presence of his Lord, with which he gets nearer to Allah; and joins him there his pure progeny, then the good servants from among his *ummah*. And it has been narrated in some traditions narrated from them that verily the Messenger of Allah adhered to his Lord, and we adhere to him and you [the Shi'as] adhere to us.

Appended to these traditions is the narration of al-Ayyashi from Abu Basir that he said: I heard Abu Ja'far عليه السلام saying,

Enemies of Ali, they shall abide in the Fire; Allah has said: *and they shall not go forth from it*.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Wasilah is a means of access to a thing or a being.

If Allah had willed He could have guided mankind directly through inspiration, but in His infinite wisdom, He had not deemed it desirable. He selected and appointed His representatives to convey His message and laws to people and administer their affairs in every age. Please refer to pages 1 to 7, and the commentary of Suratul Baqarah: 2 to 5, 30 to 38, 48, and 124 to know that the Holy Prophet and his Ahlul Bayt are the only means of approach to Allah.

Thus *wasilah* or means of access to Allah is to faithfully follow the Holy Prophet and the holy Imams of his holy house, who have been thoroughly purified by Allah (Suratul Ahzab (33), verse 33)

The Holy Prophet said:

I and Ali are from one divine light.

I will soon be called back, so I will have to go away from you, but I leave behind, amid you, the *thaqalayn* (two weighty indispensable influential authorities), the book of Allah and my Ahlul Bayt. Should you be attached to these two, never, never shall you go astray, after me, for verily these two will never be separated from each other; and, joined together, they shall meet me at the spring of Kawthar.

My Ahlul Bayt amongst you are like the ark of Nuh. He who sails on it will be safe; but he who holds back shall be drowned and lost...”

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

Imam Amirul-Mu'mineen Ali عليه السلام has said that the *best means by which seekers of nearness to Allah, seek nearness, is the faith in Allah and His Messenger, striving in His way, (to believe) in the expression of Divine purification, the establishment of performance of Hajj (pilgrimage) of the House (i.e. Ka'bah) and Umarah (lesser pilgrimage), regard for kinship, almsgiving secretly and openly, and extending benefits (to people) .*

Therefore, in order to reach felicity, we must both stop committing sins and perform worships.

In the meantime, doing goodnesses are wholly the means toward felicity if we ourselves do not waste them through our own sins.

However, Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام are the very firm cord and means of nearness to Allah ﷻ.

In Islamic literatures, narrated from the Immaculate ones عليهم السلام, the *Nahjul-Balagha*, Sermon 110, the /wasilah/ (means), mentioned in this verse, has been rendered into Imam عليه السلام.¹⁵⁷ In this regard, it is also cited in some traditions: “They are firm the cord and the means to Allah ﷻ.”¹⁵⁸

Supplication is a subject about which there has been cited in the books of many Sunnite scholars, such as: *Sawa'iq*, by Ibn-Hajar; *Sunan-i-Bihaqi*; *Sahihi-Darmami*; and also in *Wafa'-ul-Wafa*, vol. 3, p. 1371. *Suratul Nisa'* (4), verse 64,

¹⁵⁷ Tafsir as-Safi

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

Surah Yusuf (12), verse 97, and Suratul Taubah (9), verse 114 can be taken as some authentic references for supplication, too.



Verse 34

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:51

O You Who Believe!

- Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors -
- They are but friends and protectors to each other.
- And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them.
- Verily Allah guides not a people unjust.

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Taba'taba'i

As the four verses under discussion (51-54), they speak about the Jews and the Christians. The Qur'an had not talked about them in the Makkan verses, because there was no such need at that time. It however describes their maneuvers in the verses revealed in Madina. Even then, the ones revealed in the early Madinan period are not concerned with the Christians, because Muslims in those days were involved with the Jews. They had to mingle with them, live with them, keep good relations with them, or avert their deceit and neutralize their plot. They were entangled with the Christians in the later half of the Prophet's stay in Madina. Therefore, probably these four verses were revealed in that period; and perhaps the 'victory' alludes to the conquest of Makkah.

In a nutshell, Allah warns the believers against taking the Jews and the Christians for friends, and threatens them most severely; then points in an

apocalyptic way where such friendship was to take them and how it would turn into ruins the magnificent structure of religious character; then Allah will bring on scene a people who will manage the affairs and restore the religion's structure to its original splendor.

This is what makes a lover of a group a member of that group and unites him with it. It has been said: Whoever loves a people, he is one of them; also [it is said]: A man is with whom he loves. And Allah has said forbidding to love the polytheists:

*“O you who believe! Do not take My enemy and your enemy for friends: would you offer them love while they deny what has come to you of the truth...”*¹⁵⁹

The verses go on in the same vein, until it says: *“...and whoever makes friends with them, these are the unjust.”*¹⁶⁰ Also He says: *“You shall not find a people who believe in Allah and the latter day befriending those who act in opposition to Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kinsfolk...”*¹⁶¹ Allah has also said regarding the love of the unbelievers – and the wording is general which includes the Jews, the Christians and the polytheists: *“Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends rather than the believers; and whoever does this, he shall have nothing (to do) with Allah, except (when) you guard yourselves against (them) for fear from them; and Allah cautions you of Himself...”*¹⁶² The verse clearly speaks about the *wilayah* of love and affection rather than that of covenant and pact. Remember that when the third chapter, “The House of ‘Imran”, was revealed; the Prophet ﷺ had already concluded pacts and truce with the Jews and the polytheists.

In short, the *wilayah* that makes one people attached to another people is that of love and affection, and not that of covenant and help; and it is quote clear. If the cause: *and whoever amongst you takes them as awliya’, then surely he is one of them*, is taken to mean, whoever among you entered into a pact of mutual help after this prohibition, then surely he because of his going against this prohibition would be unjust, and would be joined to those unjust people in

¹⁵⁹ Al-Qur’an, 60:1

¹⁶⁰ Al-Qur’an, 60:9

¹⁶¹ Al-Qur’an, 58:22

¹⁶² Al-Qur’an, 3:28

injustice, then it would be a vulgar meaning and would need additional conditions to be attached to the speech.

If the Qur'an prohibits something which was hitherto lawful, it always points to it being lawful until then; it does so to preserve the honor of that order which is now being changed; and to keep the sanctity of the Prophetic tradition and practice. Ponder on these verses: "*O you who believe! The idolaters are nothing but unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year...*"¹⁶³ Also: "*Wherefore now be in contact with them and seek what Allah has written for you, and eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct unto you from the black thread (of night)...*"¹⁶⁴ Also: "*It is not allowed to you to take women afterwards, nor that you should change them for other wives...*"¹⁶⁵ and many other such verses.

Now, it is clear that the language of the verse, in meanings of words and its context, does not disallow *wilayah* to be taken for lover and affection; if there is any rejection, it rejects other meanings.

Thus, the clause: "do not take the Jews and the Christians for *awliya'*," clearly forbids loving them or having any affection towards them; because such feelings pull the souls and spirits towards each other and it creates mutual moral effects on both sides; and if Muslims are influenced by un-Islamic behavior, their society will diverge from its religious way (which is based on the felicity of following the truth) to the way of unbelief (which is based on following the low desires and worshipping the Satan); and thus it will go astray from the path of the natural life.

Allah has used for them their names of Jews and Christians, instead of saying, the People of the Book; because the phrase: "People of the Book", indicates that they are somewhat nearer to the Muslims, which in its turn gives rise to some affection and love which is opposite to what this verse orders that they should not be taken as friends. However, a coming verse mentions them as being given the Book: "*O you who believe! Do not take for guardians those who take your religion for a mockery and a joke, from among those who were given the Book*

¹⁶³ Al-Qur'an, 9:28

¹⁶⁴ Al-Qur'an, 2:187

¹⁶⁵ Al-Qur'an, 33:52

*before you and the unbelievers...*¹⁶⁶ They were given the Book and yet they take the divine religion for a mockery and a joke. This mockery and joke turns the good point of their being given the Book into utmost condemnation. When the people who were given the Book which invited to the truth and made it clear, began ridiculing the religion of truth and playing with it, they certainly deserved to be shunned and avoided; they should not be taken as friends; the believers must avoid living with them, mingling with them and having any soft feeling towards them.

“They are friends of each other”: As explained earlier, *wilayah* here means friendship, because their hearts are nearer to each other and their souls have mutual attraction. Consequently, they think similar way; they join hands in following their low desires, and their haughtiness leads them to reject the truth; they strive together to extinguish the light of Allah, and help each other in fighting against the Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims. It seems, as all of them are one person of one religion. Although actually they are not of one religion, yet they have joined their forces and have become one power against the Muslims, simply because Islam calls them to truth and opposes what in their eyes is the greatest goal: To follow their low desires and licentiousness in objects of desire and enjoyment of worldly attractions.

Thus, those who love the Jews and the Christians, Allah has counted them as belonging to the Jewish and Christian communities, although apparently they were believers. It shows at least that they were proceeding, not on the path of guidance (that is, belief), but on a way used by the said communities, it leads them where they are being led and takes them where they are taken.

That is why Allah has explained the reason of their adherence to them by the clause: “surely Allah does not guide the unjust people.” The meaning: A man from amongst you who takes them as a friend, then surely he is one of them, and he is proceeding on a path other than yours, because the path of belief is the path of divine guidance; this man who befriends them is unjust like them, and Allah does not guide the unjust people.

¹⁶⁶ Al-Qur’an, 5:57

In short, heart's disease means its involvement with a sort of suspicion and doubt that pollutes the faith in Allah and removes confidence in His signs; it blends faith with polytheism. That is why such a heart experiences such conditions, and such a man commits such deeds as have affinity with disbelief in Allah and rejection of his communications.

Conversely, heart's health and freedom from disease means its being steadfast in straight nature and its adherence to the right path; it leads man to sincerity in monotheistic belief and reliance on Allah, discarding all things to which his low desires are attracted. Allah says: "*The day on which neither property will avail, nor sons, except him who comes to Allah with a heart free (from evil)...*"¹⁶⁷

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

The Jews and the Christians had much in common, and therefore readily formed an alliance against Islam. so anyone who makes them his friends must have some points of identity with them. A believer, in order to keep himself safe from the influence of falsehood, must avoid the company of disbelievers. The doctrines of tawalla (staying attached with the Ahlul Bayt) and tabarra (avoiding the enemies of Allah, the Holy Prophet and his Ahlul Bayt) are the articles of the faith of them followers of Muhammad and ali Muhammad.

The Holy Prophet said:

Do not adopt the style and mannerism of my enemies, lest you may be considered as one of them. He who appears like a certain type shall be identified as of that type.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

To Dissociate from Enemy is the Condition of Faith.

Those Islamic governments who have the relation of friendship and accepting the sovereignty of the infidels are counted among them:

"...And whoever among you takes them for friends, then surely he is one of them."

¹⁶⁷ Al-Qur'an, 26:88-89

In foreign relations and policy, mastership and domination of infidels over Muslims is forbidden, because the Holy Qur'an explicitly has absolutely prohibited any domination, of any kind, over Muslims, although it may be under the name of experienced, specialist, expert, attache and tourist. The verse says:

“O’ you who have Faith! do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends. They are friends of each other. And whoever among you takes them for friends, then surely he is one of them. Verily Allah does not guide the unjust people.”

In the meantime, mentioning the Jews and the Christians in the verse is for giving examples of this meaning, and no mastership of any infidel should be accepted.

It is understood, of course, from some other verses of the Qur'an that enjoying of the food staff produced by infidels, which are not from the animal flesh, and bargaining with them are allowed, because none of them is rendered into the sence of accepting the sovereignty of infidels.



Verse 35

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ
وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا
يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:54

O You Who Believe!

- If any from among you turn back from his Faith, soon will Allah produce a people whom He will love as they will love Him:
- Lowly with the believers;
- Mighty against the rejecters;
- Fighting in the way of Allah;
- And never afraid of the reproaches of such as find fault.
- That is the grace of Allah, which He will bestow on whom He pleases,
- And Allah encompasses all, and He knows all things.

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Taba'taba'i

al-Irtidad literally means to turn back. In Muslims' terminology, turning back from religion means apostasy, forsaking belief for disbelief, no matter whether that belief was preceded by disbelief or not. If an unbeliever accepts Islam and then apostatizes, he is called *murtad milli*; if a born Muslim turns back from Islam, he is called *murtad fitri*. This terminology is either laid down by the *shari'ah* or by the Muslims themselves.

Such a sublime position does not demand more than paying attention to the basic theme, i.e. appraising them that Allah would bring a community of believers who would not turn back from His religion. The other attributes that they shall love Allah and He shall love them, and that they will be lowly before the believers and mighty against the unbelievers, etc. are additional characteristics that have been described here keeping in view additional requirements of context and conditions.

Looking at it from another angle, we realize that the said attributes are not without some connection with the theme of the preceding verses regarding befriending the Jews and the Christians rather than the believers. Taking them as friends rather than the believers, shows a certain inclination of heart towards them, a connection of love and affinity; and how could such a polluted heart contain the love of Allah – as Allah says: *“Allah has not made for any man two hearts within him...”*¹⁶⁸

This friendship would lead the believer to become lowly before the disbelievers and mighty against the believers and show haughtiness before them, as Allah says: *“Do they seek honor from them? Then surely all honor is from Allah.”*¹⁶⁹

Another concomitant of this friendship is that they would show laxity in fighting those disbelievers and would shrink from jihad; they would not have any patience if they were deprived of any comfort in the way of Allah, nor would they be ready to cut off all social contacts with them. But Allah says: *“O you who believe! Do not take My enemy and your enemy for friends: would you offer them love while they deny what has come to you of the truth... If you go forth fighting in My path and seeking My pleasure, would you manifest love to them?”*¹⁷⁰

Further Allah says: *“Indeed, there is for you a good example in Ibrahim and those with him when they said to their people: “Surely we dissociate from you and from what you worship other than Allah; we renounce you, and enmity and hatred have appeared between us and you for ever until you believe in Allah alone.”*¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Al-Qur'an, 33:4

¹⁶⁹ Al-Qur'an, 4:139

¹⁷⁰ Al-Qur'an, 60:1

¹⁷¹ Al-Qur'an, 60:4

The above discussion shows that the verse has some connection with the preceding ones; and it makes it clear that Allah's religion does not need such people who are prone to fall into the pit of disobedience and befriend the Jews and the Christians, because hypocrisy crept into their community and now it contains a lot of people with diseased hearts. They sell religion for worldly benefits, and covet the fallacious honor and transient influence rather than the honor and power, which are reserved for Allah, His Messenger, and the believers. They do not care for the real felicity, which covers life of this world as well as that of the next.

The verse expounds it by giving information about a future upheaval: If religion suffers from unsteady capricious behavior of the people of weak faith who prefer love of other than Allah over that of Allah, seek honor near enemies of Allah, show laxity in fighting in His way and fear blames and admonition of His enemies, then certainly soon Allah will bring a people who shall love Him and He shall love them; who shall be lowly before the believers, mighty before the unbelievers, and who shall fight in the way of Allah and shall not fear the censure of any censurer.

Although many exegetes were aware that the verse contains information of a future cataclysm, and spent much time on deciding whom the verse should be applied to; yet they did not take trouble to properly explain its wordings. As a result, they failed to correctly interpret the attributes mentioned in it. Consequently, they treated the divine speech just like a human talk which includes many a loop-holes and inaccuracies.

“O you who believe! Whoever of you turns back from his religions”

As explained earlier, turning back from religion here means taking the Jews and the Christians for a friend. The verse, like the preceding one, is addressed to the believers. The main theme is to declare that the true religion does not need such people's belief, which is polluted with love of the enemies of Allah. Allah has counted such friendship as disbelief and polytheism, as He has said: *and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them.* It is because Allah is the Guardian and Helper of His religion, and as an aspect of His help to His religion, He will certainly bring a people who will renounce the enemies of Allah, and love His friends and will not love any except Him.

“then soon Allah will bring a people”

Allah has ascribed the bringing to Himself to confirm the meaning of His help to His religion. The context makes it clear that this religion has got a Helper, besides Whom it does not need any helper – and that is Allah Himself.

Bringing of these people is attributed to Allah. It does not mean that He will create them, because there is no creator except Allah. He has said: *“Allah is the Creator of everything...”*¹⁷² Rather this bringing connotes that it is He Who shall arouse them to take the opportunity to help the religion; and shall enhance their honor by loving them and being loved by them; He will help them in being lowly before His friends and mighty against His enemies, and in fighting His way and ignoring every censurer’s comments. Therefore, their help to the religion is Allah’s help to it through them and by means of them. Whether this promise is implemented at once or after sometime is all the same for Allah, also because its limitation differentiates between nearness and farness.

“He shall love them and they shall love Him”

Love is unrestricted with any attribute or adjective; thus this mutual love is for ‘person’ only without any condition. They love Allah; it follows that they give preference to their Lord over anything else, be it wealth, honor, family, or other such things. They do not love anyone among the enemies of Allah; if they love anyone, it is reserved for the friends of Allah because of the love of Allah.

As for His love to them, it means that they are free from every injustice, clean of every spiritual uncleanness, be it disbelief or sin. They attain this cleanness through divine protection, or through divine forgiveness resulting from repentance. It is because Allah does not love any injustice or sin as He says: *“...then surely Allah does not love the unbelievers”*¹⁷³; *“And Allah does not love the unjust...”*¹⁷⁴; *“...surely He does not love extravagant...”*¹⁷⁵; *“...and Allah does not love the mischief-makers...”*¹⁷⁶; *“Surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits...”*¹⁷⁷;

¹⁷² Al-Qur’an, 39:62

¹⁷³ Al-Qur’an, 3:32

¹⁷⁴ Al-Qur’an, 3:57

¹⁷⁵ Al-Qur’an, 6:141

¹⁷⁶ Al-Qur’an, 5:64

“Surely He does not love the proud...”¹⁷⁸; “...surely Allah does not love the treacherous...”¹⁷⁹ apart from other such verses.

In short, they are the true believers whose belief is not tainted with injustice, and Allah has said: *“Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice, those are they who shall have the security and they are those who go aright.”¹⁸⁰* So, they are protected from going astray; and Allah has said: *“...surely Allah does not guide him who leads astray...”¹⁸¹* Thus they are under divine protection against every straying and are led by divine guidance onto His straight path. They because of their faith – confirmed by Allah – are guided to following the Messenger and total submission to him, as they surrendered totally to Allah. Allah says: *“But no! By your Lord! They do not believe until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find any straitness in their hearts as to what you have decided and submit with total submission.”¹⁸²*

The book ad-Durrul-manathur says: Ibn Abi Shaybah and Ibn Jarir have narrated from Aiyah b. Sa’d that he said: *“Ubadah b. as-Samit (from Banul-Harith b. al-Khazraj) came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and said: ‘O Messenger of Allah! I have numerous friends among the Jews and I adhere to Allah and His Messenger getting clear of the friendship of the Jews, and I love Allah and His Messenger.’*

Then Abdullah b. Ubayy said: *‘I am a man who fears lest a calamity should befall me. I shall not renounce the friendship of my guardians.’* So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to Abdullah b. Ubayy,

O Abul-Hubab! Do you think that what you have spoken of the Jews’ friendship is for you against Ubadah?’ He said: *‘Then I’ll accept.’* So Allah revealed [the

¹⁷⁷ Al-Qur’an, 2:190

¹⁷⁸ Al-Qur’an, 16:23

¹⁷⁹ Al-Qur’an, 8:58

¹⁸⁰ Al-Qur’an, 6:82

¹⁸¹ Al-Qur’an, 16:37

¹⁸² Al-Qur’an, 4:65

following] verses: “O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and ... and Allah will protect you from the people.”¹⁸³

As-Suyuti narrates, through Ibne Jarir and Ibnul-Mundhir, from Ikrimah that [he said],

The verse: *O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and the Christian for friends; they are friends of each*, was revealed about Banu Qurayzah; when they committed treachery and broke the pact they had with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, by writing to Abu Sufyan b. Harb, calling them and the Quraysh to enter into their fortresses. So the Prophet ﷺ sent Abu Lubabah b. Abdul-Mundhir to them in order that he might urge them to come down from their fortresses.

When they agreed to come down, he pointed to his throat – meaning slaughter. At the same time, Talhah and az-Zubayr were corresponding with the Christians and the Syrians. And I have been told that some companions of the Prophet ﷺ were afraid of being afflicted with poverty and indigence, so they corresponded with the Jews of Banu Qurayzah and Banun-Nadir, giving them news about the Prophet ﷺ, [expecting] to seek from them loan and (other) benefits [afterwards]. So they were forbidden it.¹⁸⁴

Maj’maul Bayan writes under the verse: *O you who believe! Whoever of you turns back from his religion, then soon Allah will bring a people He shall love them and they shall love Him*. And it has been said: ‘They are: the Leader of the faithful Ali عليه السلام and his companions, when he fought those who fought against him – the *nakithin* (pledge-breakers), the *qasitin* (deviators from the truth), the *mariqin* (heretics) [in the battles of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan, respectively.] It has been narrated from Ammar, Hudhayfah and Ibn Abbas; and it is also narrated from Abu Ja’far and Abu Abdillah عليه السلام.

As for the attributes of being gentle with the believers and hard against the unbelievers, and waging war in the way of Allah, without being afraid of a censure of any censurer, nobody can that Ali عليه السلام, fully deserved these virtues. His *jihad* against polytheists and unbelievers is well known, and everyone is aware of his strivings in

¹⁸³ Al-Qur’an, 5:51-67

¹⁸⁴ Durrul Manthur

strengthening of Islam and helping the religion, as well as his gentleness before the believers.

Of course ath-Tha'labi has written in his at-Tafsir that it was revealed about Ali عليه السلام. Also it is narrated in Nahjul-bayan (of al-Shaybani) from al-Baqir and as-Sadiq عليه السلام that it was revealed about Ali عليه السلام. But looking at them in conjunction with other traditions, it becomes clear that these too mean Ali and his companions who stood with him to help the religion in the battles of the Camel, Siffin and the Khawarij.

Apart from that, there are a lot of traditions narrated through Sunni chains that the verse: *Only Allah is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep prayers...*, was revealed for Ali عليه السلام although it uses plurals.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

A careful study of verses 54 and 55 indicates that they have no relation with the preceding verses prohibiting friendship with infidels. The subject matter of verse 54 is quite different. It is in praise of Ali, about his nomination to political and religious leadership; and wherein the renegades have been warned of his might and valour, and frightened of his great overwhelming influence.

The Holy Prophet said:

The resolute co-operation among the Quraysh will not dissipate unless Allah appoints over you a man whose heart Allah has tested through severe trial of faith. He will strike your necks and you will be as afraid of him as frightened sheep.

Whereupon Abu Bakr inquired if he was that man and Umar inquired if he was that man. The Holy Prophet replied: "No. But the person who is mending shoes inside the room is that man." And Ali turned up with shoes in his hand which he was repairing for the Holy Prophet.

Many traditionists have recorded it with slight variations-Ahmad b. Hanbal in his Musnad, Hakim in his Mustadrak, Abu Yala in his Musnad, and Muttaqi in his Kanz al-Ummal.

It is a warning about Ali's might, as explained by himself on the day of the battle of Jamal. Tha-labi has mentioned it in his Tafsir and the compiler of

Majma al-Bayan has reproduced it as related by Ammar, Hudhayfah and Ibn Abbas. This becomes clearer when we notice the fact that verse 55 (innama waliyukum) follows this verse, wherein Allah has suggested His superior authority and hinted at the necessity of Ali's leadership (imamat). Verse 55 explains and clarifies the reference in verse 54.

In the battle of Khaybar the second caliph (like other companions) tried to conquer the fort, but took to flight when the Jew soldiers overpowered his contingent. Before the Holy Prophet they blamed each other for showing cowardice in the battlefield.¹⁸⁵

The Holy Prophet said:

“Certainly (the next morning) I will send the man whom Allah will never put to shame, who loves Allah and His messenger and is equally loved by Allah and His messenger.”

Utter disappointment was the lot of many a companion who yearned for this distinction - “Allah shall bring a people whom He shall love and who shall love Him”, as has been clearly pointed out in this verse. Ahmad b. Hanbal in his Musnad, vol. 1, p. 330; Nisa-i in Khasa-is al Alawiyyah, p. 6; Hakim in his Mustadrak, vol. 3, p. 123; and Dhahabi in his Talkhis have recorded this tradition in the “ten excellent merits” of Ali, not possessed by anybody else.

“*Striving hard in the way of Allah*”, refers to no one but Ali, who, in all the battles fought by the Holy Prophet (Badr, Uhad, Khandaq, Khaybar and others-refer to authentic books of history written by well-known Muslim scholars), not only defeated and destroyed the enemies of Allah but demolished their power base beyond recovery.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

The qualities, mentioned in this verse and verse 29 of Suratul Fath (according to well-known traditions written in Sahihs, Musnads and Tafsirs), were owned by no one but Ali. In all the battles fought by the Holy Prophet against the enemies of Allah, the Shaykhayn (the first caliph and the second caliph) never played a decisive role in any battle, nor won victory in single combats or general confrontations;

¹⁸⁵ Tarikh Tabari Vol. 2; page 300

on the contrary they were always either overpowered or ran away from the scene of action. More often they did not carry out the orders given to them by the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet knew that Dhith-Thadiyyah was an apostate, so he asked the Shaykhayn to kill him, but they disobeyed and spared his life; and it was this renegade who, according to Sahih Bukhari and others, became the leader of the Khawarij, and was finally killed by Ali in the battle of Nahrawan.

No doubt the Shaykhan and their adherents were severe and hard against the Ahlul Bayt and their followers.

“Allah shall bring a people”, refers to those who, later on, gathered under the banner of Ali (whose qualities have been clearly described in this verse and verse 29 of Suratul Fath), in the battles of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan. When Ammar b. Yasir was asked as to how could he fight against the people who professed Islam, he replied: “We fight under the banner of Ali against those who are under the banner of Mu-awiyah, in keeping with the Quran. They professed Islam but concealed infidelity in their hearts, and have now come out in their true colour of apostasy.”

The followers of Ali strive hard in the way of Allah, not fearing the criticism of the apostates. The devotees of the other Imams of Ahlul Bayt also come in this category, and according to many commentators of all schools of thought in Islam (Majma ul Bayan) at the time of the reappearance of Imam al Mahdi the world will witness the true interpretation of these phrases of the Quran.

The Muslims did not oppose the actions taken against the apostates in the times of the Shaykhayn, but they criticised Ali b. abi Talib for fighting against A'isha and Mu-awiyah; therefore, this verse refers only to Ali and his devotees.

There is no historical evidence to prove that the Holy Prophet ever referred to any fight by Abu Bakr, Umar or Uthman against the apostates, but he had predicted Ali's fight against three types of apostates-nakithin (oath-breakers), qasitin (wrong-doers), maraqin (strayed ones). It was also foretold by him that Ammar Yasir would be killed by a group of insurgents.

All the commentators unanimously hold, as Qushaji admits in the *Sharh al-Tajrid* on the subject of imamat, that this verse refers to Ali when he gave his ring to a beggar while bowing down in the course of his prayers. Nasa-i has also recorded this tradition in his *Sahihah al-Nasa-i*, and so has the author of *Al-Jama Bayn al-Sihah al-Sittah* (corroboration of the six authentic books) in discussion of the commentary on *al Ma-idah*, and so does Tha-labi in his *Tafsir Kabir*, and al Balakhi in his *Yanabi* has copied it from Ahmad b. Hanbal's *Musnad*, vol. 5, margin of p. 38.

Please refer to the commentary on this verse in Wahidi's book *Asbab al-Nuzul* (the circumstances of descent) which contains the tradition related by Ibn Abbas. Al Khatib has recorded the tradition in *Al Muttafiq*, and Ibn Marduwayh and Abu Shaykh in their *Musnads*. It is mentioned in *Kanz al-Ummal*, vol. 6, p. 391, tradition no. 5991. In *Ghayah al-Maram*, chapter 18, there are twenty four traditions from sources other than the *Ahlul Bayt*, all supporting the above statement about the descent of this verse.

When Abi Ishaq Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Ibrahim Naysaburi al Tha-labi reached this verse he recorded the following in his *Tafsir al Kabir* on the authority of Abu Dharr al Ghifari, who said:

Both of my ears may turn deaf and both my eyes may become blind if I speak a lie. I heard the Holy Prophet saying, Ali is the guide of the righteous and the slayer of the infidels. He who has helped him is victorious and he who has abandoned him is forsaken.

One day I said my prayers in the company of the Holy Prophet; a beggar came to the masjid and begged for alms, but nobody gave him anything. Ali was in a state of ruku in the prayer. He pointed out his ring to the beggar, who approached him and removed the ring from his finger.

Thereupon the Holy Prophet implored Allah, saying: 'O Allah! My brother Musa begged You saying: My Lord, delight my heart and make my task easy and undo the knot in my tongue so that they may understand me, and appoint from among my kinsmen, Harun, my brother, as my vizier, and strengthen my back with him and make him participate in my mission so that we may glorify You and

remember You more frequently. Certainly You see us-and You inspired him: O Musa! All your requests have been granted.

(The Holy Prophet continued) Delight my heart and make my task easy and appoint from among my kinsmen Ali as my vizier and strengthen my back with him'. (Abu Dhar proceeds) By Allah, the Holy Prophet had not yet finished his supplication when the trustworthy Jibril descended to him with this verse." (Ibn Khallikan says that Al Tha-labi was unique as a commentator of the Quran and his Tafsir al-Kabir is superior to all other Tafsirs).

In this verse the word wali has been used in the meaning of guardian or master or who holds authority, superior to others. Please refer to the origin of the word wali in Sihah or Mukhtar al-Sihah or any other good dictionary. The lexicographers have explained that he who manages the affairs of and exercises authority for another person is the wali of that person. This verse, therefore, means that those who manage the affairs of the people (mankind) are superior to all men, and certainly they are Allah, His messenger, the Holy Prophet, and Ali, who possesses all the qualifications enumerated in this verse. Allah has simultaneously confirmed His wilayah (superior authority), that of His prophet and his wali (Ali) in unbroken succession. Allah's wilayah is universal, so likewise, the wilayah of the Holy Prophet and his wali (Ali) must be so.

It is not possible to assign to the word wali in this verse the meaning of a helper or a friend, etcetera, for help and friendship are not confined to these three only. All the faithful men and women, according to the holy book, are friends and helpers of one another. It is as obvious as can be that the word wali in this verse means, guardian, ruler, possessor of superior authority. It is in this sense that the word wali has been used by the Holy Prophet in the abovenoted tradition related by Al Tha-labi in his Tafsir al Kabir on the authority of Abu Dharr al Ghifari whom the Holy Prophet had given the title of siddiq (the truthful). There are other authentic traditions, given below, in which the word wali indicates its true meaning.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

After the statement upon the hypocrites, the words are about some apostates who, according to the prediction of the Qur'an, turn away from this sacred religion. As a general rule, it warns all the Muslims that: if any one of them turns away from his religion he does not harm Allah, His religion, Muslim society, and their rapid process of progression, because He will soon bring forward a group of people to support this religion. The verse itself says:

“O’ you who have faith! whoever of you turns away from his religion (he does not harm Allah, since) soon Allah will bring (forward) a people ...”

Then the Qur'an explains the qualities of those who must undertake this great mission, as the followings:

1. They love Allah and think of nothing but His pleasure.

“...whom He loves and who love Him...”

2-3 They are humble and kind unto the believers while they are mighty, stern, and forceful against the enemies and tyrants.

“...stern against infidels...”

4- Striving in the way of Allah is their constant program.

5- The last privilege that the Qur'an enumerates for them is that, in the path of performing the command of Allah and defending the right, they do not fear any reproach of any reproacher.

“...and do not fear the scorn of any blamer.”

And, at the end of the verse, it remarks that: gaining these privileges, besides their own effort, need the grace of Allah. He bestows it on whomever He desires and finds eligible. For, the extension of His grace and graciousness is very vast, and He ﷻ is aware of those who have competency.

“...This is the grace of Allah. He gives it to whom He desire; and Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.”



Verse 36

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَكُمْ هُزُوءًا وَلَعِبًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ
أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَالْكُفَّارَ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ كُنتُم مَّؤْمِنِينَ﴾

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:57

O You Who Believe!

- Take not for friends and protectors those who take your religion for a mockery or sport,
- Whether among those who received the Scripture before you, or among those who reject Faith.
- But you fear Allah, if you have faith (indeed).

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Taba'taba'i

The verses forbid taking those who make mockery of Allah and His communications as friends from among the People of the Book and unbelievers, and enumerate some of their evil characteristics including their breaking the covenants of Allah and so on – the matters related to the theme of this chapter, i.e. exhorting people to keep their promises and covenants and showing the demerit of going against promises, etc..

It appears from the above that:

First: Those, whose friendship is forbidden, are described as “those who take your religion for a mockery and a joke” ; this description points to the reason of this prohibition. As described earlier, friendship entails spiritual mingling and management of personal and sociological affairs. Obviously, a *waliyy* (friend) will not treat as a joke or a mockery those things, which his friend respects and pays honor to, and considers it more distinguished and honorable than everything, even his own self. It is therefore necessary not to

take such a person as a friend and not to let him interfere in one's spiritual and physical affairs.

Second: The verse is very appropriately addressed to: "you who believe", as it stands parallel to: "those who take your religion for a mockery and a joke" ; also there is the fine point of the genetic construction: "your religion", [as it emphasizes their strong connection with the religion of Islam, and puts them on guard against the enemies' manipulation].

Third: The clause: "and fear Allah if you are believers," puts a sort of emphasis to the preceding wordings: "Do not take for friends those who take your religion for a mockery and a joke," by repeating it in a more inclusive and comprehensive wording. Obviously, a believer who adheres to the cord of true faith cannot be pleased if the matters he believes in were to be taken as a mockery or joke. Therefore, these people, if they are truly associated with belief and are attached to the religion, are bound to fear Allah regarding those inimical persons and not to take them as friends.

Another possibility: The clause: "and fear Allah if you are believers", may point to the verses which were revealed a little earlier, e.g. and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them. The meaning then will be as follows: Be afraid of Allah in taking them for a friend if you are not one of them. But the first meaning is more manifest.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

The Jews and the Christians had much in common, and therefore readily formed an alliance against Islam. So, anyone who makes them his friends must have some points of identity with them. A believer, in order to keep himself safe from the influence of falsehood, must avoid the company of disbelievers. The doctrines of tawalla (staying attached with the Ahlul Bayt) and tabarra (avoiding the enemies of Allah, the Holy Prophet and his Ahlul Bayt) are the articles of the faith of them followers of Muhammad and ali Muhammad.

The Holy Prophet said:

Do not adopt the style and mannerism of my enemies, lest you may be considered as one of them. He who appears like a certain type shall be identified as of that type.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

The worldly retribution of the act of mockery and sacrilege unto the religion of Allah and profanity, is rupture of relations. Mocking the religion is a job of disbelievers. So, the condition of having Faith is having the religious zeal and dissociating from the vicious.

Never be afraid of the rupture of relation with pagans, the profaners of the religion. If you have Faith, be in awe of Allah.

“O’ you who have Faith! do not take those who take your religion in mockery and play, from among those who were given the Book before you and the infidels as guardians; and be in awe of Allah if you are believers.”



Verse 37

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُحَرِّمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ﴾

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:87

O You Who Believe!

- Make not unlawful the good things which Allah has made lawful for you,
- But commit no excess,
- For Allah loves not those given to excess.

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Tabataba'i

These three verses together with the following ones [up to the verse 108] give details of various commandments related to branches of religion. This whole group is inserted between the verses describing the story of the Messiah عليه السلام and the Christians. These verses consist of various groups laying down diverse orders, each being independent and complete in its theme. As such, it is difficult to decide whether a given group was revealed separately or had accompanied other verses, because context supports neither alternative. As for the traditions showing reasons of revelation, important ones shall be quoted under Traditions.

ar-Raghib says in al-Mufradat:

al-Haram denotes the forbidden things, be it by divine subjugation or forcible obstruction; whether this prohibition is by reason or shari'ah or by one whose orders are followed.

Apparently the contraposition between *hill* (lawfulness) and *hurmah* (unlawfulness), and opposition between *hill* (area beyond a sanctuary) and *haram* (sanctuary) or *ihram* (the robe worn when entering *haram*) is based on imaginary tying of knot when forbidding something, i.e. unlawfulness; then it (*hurmah*) is put opposite *hill* (which is metaphorically used for lawfulness). The two words *hill* and *hurmah* were generally used for lawfulness and unlawfulness respectively, even before Islam; it is not that shari'ah or its followers have coined them.

The verse: *“O you who believe! Do not forbid (yourselves) the good things which Allah has made lawful for you.”* prohibits to the believers forbidding themselves what Allah has made lawful for them. This forbidding what has been made lawful by Allah can be done either by laying down a legislation contrary to divine legislation, or by forbidding others or abstention, i.e. one leaves out a lawful thing by abstaining from it or prohibiting it to oneself or others. All this behavior is tantamount to forbidding what Allah has made lawful, and it is equal to fighting Allah and His Power; this transgression against Him is contrary to the belief in Allah and His communication. That is why the verse begins with the phrase: *“O you who believe!”* it implies that you are believers in Allah and have submitted to His commandments; therefore you should not forbid yourself what Allah has made lawful. This explanation is further supported by the end clause of the next verse: *and fear Allah in Whom you believe.*

“the good things which Allah has made lawful for your” : The addition of the word *“good”*, -- although the sentence would be complete even without it -- aims at completing the cause of prohibition: If the believers forbid themselves the things which Allah has made lawful for them, then it is not only that they commit transgression against Allah in His authority and defy the demands of their belief in, and submission to, Allah, but also go against the law of nature, which takes these lawful things as good without reservation. Allah has pointed to it where He says about His prophet ﷺ and the shari'ah which he has brought: *“Those who follow the Messenger Prophet, the ummi, whom they find written down with them in the Tawrat and the Injil (who) enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and makes unlawful to them impure things, and removes from them their burden and the shackles which were*

upon them; so (as for) those who believe in him and honor him and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him, these it is that are the successful."¹⁸⁶

The above description supports the following:

First

Forbidding the good things what Allah has made lawful means abstaining, and making others desist, from lawful things.

Second

Lawful, as opposite of unlawful, includes the permissible and the commendable, even the obligatory things.

Third

Addition of "the good things" to that "which Allah has made lawful for you" aims at further elaboration of the same idea.

Fourth

Exceeding the limits (in "do not exceed the limits") means transgression against Allah in His legislative authority; or overstepping the limits laid down by Allah by revolting against His obedience, refusing to submit to Him, and forbidding what He has made lawful. As Allah says, inter alia, describing the laws of divorce:

*"These are the limits of Allah, so do not exceed them, and whoever exceeds the limits of Allah then these it is that are the unjust."*¹⁸⁷

Likewise He says at the end of the verses of inheritance: *"These are Allah's limits; and whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will cause him to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them; and this is the great achievement. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses His limits, He will cause him to enter Fire to abide in it, and he shall have an abasing chastisement."*¹⁸⁸

In short, the verse prohibits one from forbidding oneself what Allah has made lawful, by keeping away from it and avoiding it, because it goes contrary to

¹⁸⁶ Al-Qur'an, 7:157

¹⁸⁷ Al-Qur'an, 2:229

¹⁸⁸ Al-Qur'an, 4:13-14

the belief in Allah and his signs. Also, it opposes the fact of their being lawful and good, and of their being free of impurity; otherwise, why should one abstain from them? It is nothing but exceeding the limits, and Allah does not love those who exceed the limits.

Some people have said: Exceeding the limits means over-stepping the line of moderation regarding the lawful things, by throwing oneself down to enjoying them without restraint, contrary to discarding them abstemiously. So, the verse would mean: *“Do not forbid yourselves the good and tasteful things that Allah has made lawful for you. Do not intentionally avoid enjoying them abstemiously believing that it would bring you nearer to Allah. And do not exceed the limits by transgressing the line of moderation, going to extravagance and excess which would be harmful for your bodies or souls.”*

Or, exceeding the limits may mean overstepping the good and lawful things, indulging in bad and unlawful things. Then the connotation will be as follows: Do not avoid lawful things and do not use unlawful things. In other words, do not forbid yourselves what Allah has made lawful for you and do not indulge in what Allah has forbidden you.

Although these two meanings are correct in themselves and the Qur’an clearly supports both themes, but neither fits the verse under discussion as its context and that of the following verse shown. Obviously, not every correct theme can be applied to every word without looking at its context and position.

Al-Qummi narrates under the verse: *O you who believe! Do not forbid (yourselves) the good things which Allah has made lawful for you.* Narrated to me my father, from Ibn Abi Umayr, from some of his men, from Abu Abdillah عليه السلام that he said:

This verse was revealed about the Leader of the Faithful عليه السلام, Bilal and Uthman b. Maz’un. As for the Leader of the faithful عليه السلام, he had sworn that he would never sleep at night; and as for Bilal, he had sworn that that would never eat during day-time [i.e. would always keep fast]; and as for Uthman b. Maz’un, he had sworn that he would never indulge in sexual relation.

Then Uthman's wife came to Aishah – and she was a beautiful woman. Aishah said to her - *Why do I see you without make-up?* She said - *For whom should I make myself up? By Allah! My husband has not come near me since a long time, because he has become a monastic, wears coarse clothes, and has become an ascetic.*

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ entered (the house) Aishah informed him of it. So, he came out, and call was given for congregational prayer. People assembled and (the Prophet ﷺ ascended the pulpit. He thanked Allah and praised Him; then said: 'What has happened to (some) people that they have forbidden themselves good things? Well, surely I sleep at night, and establish sexual relation and eat during day-time; so whoever disliked my sunnah, he is not from me.'

Then people stood up and said: 'But O Messenger of Allah! We have sworn to it. Then Allah revealed to him: Allah does not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths, but He calls you to account for the making of deliberate oaths; so its expiation is... this is the expiation of your oaths when you swear.'¹⁸⁹

Imam al-Hasan b. Ali عليه السلام said to Mu'awiyah and his companions inter alia, in a hadith:

I adjure you by Allah, do you know that Ali was the first among the companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to forbid the desires to himself; then Allah revealed: *O you who believe! Do not forbid (yourselves) the good things which Allah has made lawful for you.*¹⁹⁰

[at-Tabrisi] writes under the above-mentioned verse: The exegetes have said:

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sat one day and reminded the people and described the resurrection. The people were overwhelmed and cried; and ten companions gathered in the house of 'Uthman b. Maz'un al-Jumahi, and they were: Ali, Abu Bakr, Abdullah b. Mas'ud, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Salim mawla Abu Hudhayfah, Abdullah b. Umar, al-Miqdad b. al-Aswad al-Kindi, Salman al-Farisi and Mu'qil b. Muqrin.

They agreed among themselves that they would fast in the day and stand (for worship) in the night, would not sleep on bedding; would

¹⁸⁹ at-Tafsir

¹⁹⁰ al-Ihtijaj

not partake of meat or fat, nor would near women or perfume. (They decided) to wear coarse fabrics, discard the world and roam into the earth; some of them even intended to cut off their genitals.

This news reached the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He went to the house of Uthman (b. Maz'un) but did not find him there. So he said to his wife – her name was Hawla and she was a perfume vendor – ‘Is it true what I have been informed about your husband and his companions?’ She did not like to tell lie to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ nor did she like to speak against her husband; so she said: ‘O Messenger of Allah! If Uthman has told you so then he has told you the truth.’ So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ returned.

When Uthman entered (his house) she informed him about it. So, he and his companions came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to them, ‘Have not I been informed that you have agreed on such and such?’ They said: ‘Certainly, O Messenger of Allah! And we did not intend except good.’ The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “I have not been ordered this.” Then he said: ‘Surely your souls have rights on you; so keep fast and eat, stand (at nights) and sleep. Certainly, I stand (at nights) and sleep, and keep fast and eat, and I partake meat and fat, and I go to women; and whoever dislikes my sunnah, is not from me.’

Then he gathered the people and spoke to them; and said:

What has happened to some people that they have forbidden themselves women, food and perfume, as well as sleep and desirable things of the world? Well, certainly I have not ordered you to become monks, because it is not in my religion to abstain from meat or women, nor (to live in) hermitages; and surely the wandering of my ummah is fast, and their monasticism is jihad.

Worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him; perform hajj and *Umarah*, establish prayer, pay zakat and keep fast of Ramadan; and remain straight, it will be right for you. Those who were before you fell in perdition only because of zealotry. They put heavy burdens on themselves, so Allah intensified their load. So, these are their

remnants in hermitages and monasteries. Then Allah revealed this verse.¹⁹¹

As for those numerous narrations, none of them mentions names of those companions together. The most comprehensive of them says, Uthman b. Maz'un and his companions; some other say, a group of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ; still others say, some people among the companions of the Prophet ﷺ.

Likewise, the different sentences of the Prophet's talk and his detailed sermon are found scattered in various traditions. In the same way, the narratives do not say clearly that each of those companions had intended to avoid all those good things. Rather some traditions clearly show that various companions had wanted to leave out various things.

Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrate from Aishah that some companions had asked the wives of the Prophet ﷺ about his life in secret. Then some of them said: "I'll not eat meat" ; some said: "I'll not go to women" ; and some others said: "I'll not sleep in bedding." This news reached the Prophet ﷺ, so he said:

What is the matter with the people, that some of them say this and this? But as for me, I keep fast and eat, sleep and stand (in prayer), and eat meat and to the women; so whoever dislikes my sunnah is not from me.

Probably, when at-Tabrisi says that "they agreed among themselves that they would fast...", he does not mean that each of them had intended to do all those things; he only means that those people among themselves had decided to do one or the other of those things.

Although the traditions vary in their themes and they are weak, mursal and reliable ones among them, yet meditation on all of them creates a certainty that a group of the companions had decided to adopt that type of abstinence and asceticism, and Ali عليه السلام and Uthman b. Maz'un were among them, and that the Prophet ﷺ had said to them, "Whoever dislikes my sunnah is not from me." And Allah knows better. You should refer to the books of exegeses which

¹⁹¹ Majma'ul Bayan

explain the Qur'an with the help of traditions, like *at-Tafsir* of at-Tabari, *al-Dur al-Manthur*, *Fathul-qadir* and so on.

It has been narrated by at-Tirmidhi (who said that it was good), Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn 'Udayy (in *al-Kamil*), at-Tabarani and Ibn Marduwayh, from Ibn Abbas that he said:

A man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: 'O Messenger of Allah! Whenever I eat meat I become roused and overcome by sexual desire; and I have forbidden meat to myself.' Then the verse was revealed: *O you who believe! Do not forbid (yourselves) the good things which Allah has made lawful for you.*¹⁹²

Abdullah b. Sinan said:

I asked him [the Imam] about a man who said that his wife would be divorced, or his slaves would be free, if he drank any unlawful or lawful (drink). (The Imam) said:

As for the unlawful he should not go near it, whether he swore the oath or did not swear; and as for the lawful he should not leave it, because he has no right to forbid what Allah has made lawful, because Allah says: *O you who believe! Do not forbid (yourselves) the good things which Allah has made lawful for you; therefore, there is nothing on him regarding his oath concerning lawful things.*¹⁹³

Ibn Jarir has narrated from Ibn Abbas that he said:

When the verse: *O you who believe! Do not forbid (yourselves) the good things which Allah has made lawful for you*, was revealed regarding those who had forbidden women and meat to themselves, they said: 'O Messenger of Allah! What should we do with the oaths which we have made?' Then Allah revealed: Allah does not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Durrul Manthur

¹⁹³ at-Tafsir, al-Ayyashi

¹⁹⁴ Durrul Manthur

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Islam does not allow to forbid the good things Allah has made lawful, as the self-denying Christians do.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

Some well meaning Muslims, imitating certain self-denying Christians, had vowed not to partake of delicious foods and to abstain from going in to their wives. This the Holy Prophet strongly disapproved, declaring in the assembly of his companions that there is no place for monks and ascetics in Islam because due to asceticism and severity many nations had been destroyed.

Verse 93 of this surah, verse 2 of Ta Ha and verse 1 of Tahrim also discourage asceticism. So forbidding anything allowed by Allah and His Prophet is transgression, because either forbidding the lawful or allowing the forbidden (as had been done by many Muslim rulers) amounts to breaking the bounds of the divine law.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

It happened that one day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was speaking for people about the Hereafter and the scenes of the gatheringplace of Resurrection. The audience were so touched at heart and wept that some of them decided, from then on, not to consume any good food, to prohibit comfort unto themselves, to observe a fast, to abandon their wives, and to sleep at nights less than before. They swore over that decision to be loyal to it.

When the Prophet ﷺ was informed of it, he mustered people in the mosque and told them:

“I eat food, I sleep at nights and do not abandon my wives. Our religion is not the creed of retreat and monasticism. The monasticism of my ummah is the holy struggle. Whoever goes a direction other than my style is not a Muslim.”

Some of them asked what they would do for the oaths they had taken. The subsequent verses were revealed saying that Allah does not call them to account for their vain (unintentional) oaths.

Imam as-Sadiq عليه السلام said:

“Whoever makes a lawful thing unlawful for himself (through a vow), the one must accomplish it, and there is nothing upon him.”¹⁹⁵

Explanations

1. Islam is the religion of ‘Fitrah’ (nature), wherein retreat and monasticism, or excess and defect is forbidden.

2. A Muslim submits to the command of Allah. He neither turns a lawful thing into an unlawful one, nor vice versa.

The holy Prophet ﷺ said: *“O’ people! what I have made lawful is lawful until the day of Judgement, and what I have forbidden is forbidden until the day of Judgement.”*

3. Edible things, clothings, and the whole lawful pleasures have been created for the usage of humankind.

4. When using the lawful things, be careful of avoiding extravagance.

“...do not transgress ...”

5. The vows, covenants and oaths which are against the explicit prohibitions of the text of the Qur’an, are worthless and invalid.

¹⁹⁵ Mustadrak-ul-Wasa’il, vol. 3, p. 52



Verse 38

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ
الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:90

O You Who Believe!

- Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination of Satan's handwork,
- Eschew such (abomination),
- That you may prosper.

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Taba'taba'i

It has been mentioned earlier in volume two of the book (al-Mizan [Eng], vol.3, pp.279-80 [tr.]) under the verse:

"They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: "In both of them there is a great sin and (some) profit for men; and their sin is greater than their profit."¹⁹⁶

And in volume four (al-Mizan [Eng], vol.8, pp.233-4 [tr.]) under the verse:

"O you who believe! Do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated until you know (well) what you say..."¹⁹⁷

That these two verses together with the verse:

Say: "My Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed, and sin..."¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Al-Qur'an, 2:219

¹⁹⁷ Al-Qur'an, 4:43

¹⁹⁸ Al-Qur'an, 7:33

and the verses under discussion, i.e.:

“O you who believe! Intoxicants and games of chance and (sacrificing to) stones set up and (dividing by) arrows are only an abomination of the Satan’s handiwork; shun it therefore that you may be successful.”

The Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. Will you then desist? If these verses are studied together, their diverse context shows that the Legislator had adopted a course of gradual progression in prohibition of intoxicants.

The meanings of intoxicant, games of chance, sacrificing to set up stones and dividing by arrows have been explained earlier.

Al-Khamr is every intoxicating fermented liquid, which covers the reason. *Al-Maysir* is gambling of any type.

Al-Ansab means the idols or stones which were set up for slaughtering the sacrificial animals upon, and which were held in esteem and considered a source of blessings.

Al-Azlam were the arrows used for division of a camel’s shares; often this name was given to the arrows used for omen before beginning an important work like journey, etc..

But this word has been used in the chapter’s beginning for the former meaning (because it is included among the things unlawful to eat); therefore, it has the same meaning in this verse too.

A Note on *Istikharah*

What is *istikharah*? When man intends to embark on an important, work, it is possible for him to know its appropriateness, by using the power of thought which Allah has given him, or by seeking the advice of those who have the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. However, if these two methods fail to make him recognize the correct way, and he is still bewildered, then he should choose his course of action after paying some attention to his Lord and seeking His help.

When man chooses what he chooses through this type of seeking good, or istikharah, he cannot be accused of claiming to know the unseen; nor does he meddle with the divine affairs, which are exclusively reserved with Allah. It does not involve allowing someone other than Allah to join with Him in management of affairs, nor it entails any other religious problem because the only function of istikharah is to decide positively or negatively about a course of action without making it obligatory or unlawful or giving it any other shade of religious responsibility. Also, it does not claim to unveil the good or the evil that is hidden behind the curtains of the unseen. It only shows what is better for the man concerned whether he should or should not do that work; in this way he comes out of bewilderment and hesitation [with a firm resolve.]

As for what follows that action or non-action, it may turn out to be good and it may equally result in evil – in the same way as it happens when a man opts for a course of action by his own thinking or by someone’s advice. Thus, istikharah, like one’s own thinking or well-wishers’ advice, is merely a way to remove hesitation or confusion while taking a practical step; and the result of acting upon it is not different from that of an action done by one’s own meditation or by someone’s advice.

Of course, someone may think looking at the traditions about seeking good omens from the Qur’an, etc., that it entails a sort of a claim of the knowledge of the unseen; because often the soul expects from it good or bad result, or benefit or harm. But it has been narrated in correction hadith, through the chains of both sects that the Prophet ﷺ sought good omen by good things and ordered it, and forbade (to believe in) ill omen and ordered to pass over it and rely on Allah.

Therefore, there is nothing to prevent seeking omen from the Qur’an, etc.; if the result of that omen seeking is good, it is OK. Otherwise, he should proceed ahead in that affair relying on Allah, the High. Its ultimate effect is to create satisfaction in mind about the affairs and actions, which he believes, would bring happiness and benefit to him. We shall write on this topic in detail in a place devoted to it particularly.

Now, it is clear that some exegetes are totally wrong when they have taken the 'arrows' as referring to their practice of oracle seeking; and then arriving at a conclusion that istikharah was unlawful.

All this shows that when intoxicants and other items are called abominations of the Satan's handiwork, it is because these items are ultimately based on the Satan's action which is exclusively related to him; and his modus operandi is creating ideas in man's heart – the Satanic whispering that calls him to error. That is why it is called abomination or uncleanness; Allah has called error as uncleanness, as He says:

*"...and (for) whomsoever He intends that He should leave him to err, He makes his breast strait and narrow as though he were ascending into the sky; thus does Allah lay uncleanness on those who do not believe."*¹⁹⁹

What is the connotation of intoxicants and other items being an abomination of the Satan's handiwork? The next verse clarifies it: The Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. That is, the Satan's motive in calling you to intoxicants and games of chance is nothing except evil; thus it is an abomination of his handiwork.

Az-Zamakhshari has written:

Three verses were revealed on the subject of intoxicants:

They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance.²⁰⁰ Some Muslims then left it and some continued to drink; until a man drank it, began his prayers, and talked nonsense.

Then was revealed:

*"O you who believe! Do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated until you know (well) what you say..."*²⁰¹

Still some Muslims continued drinking it; until Umar drank it; then he took a jaw-bone of a camel and bashed with it the skull of Abdur-Rahman b. Awf, and

¹⁹⁹ Al-Qur'an, 6:126

²⁰⁰ Al-Qur'an, 2:219

²⁰¹ Al-Qur'an, 4:43

then sat lamenting those (unbelievers) who were killed in the battle of Badr, reciting the poem of al-Aswad b. Yaghfur:

How many spears (i.e. braves) and noble drinkers are (thrown)
In the well – the well of Badr?
How many nobles and feeders of humps are (here)
In the well – the well of Badr?
Does Ibn Abi Kabshah* threaten us that we shall be made alive again?
And how can (happen) the life of ghosts and skulls?
Is he helpless in averting death from me?
And will raise me (again) when my bones become rotten?
Well, who will convey my message to the Beneficent (God)
That I am abandoning the month of fast;
So tell Allah to stop my drink from me,
And tell Allah to stop my food from me.

The Polytheists of Quraysh used this nickname for the Prophet ﷺ in a sneering manner.

This (news) reached the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and he came out enraged, dragging his cloak along; he raised something that was in his hand to strike him (Umar). So he (Umar) said: “I seek refuge in Allah from the wrath of Allah and the wrath of His Messenger.” Then Allah, the Glorified, the Sublime, sent down (the verse): The Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred... Will you then desist? So Umar said: “We desist.”²⁰²

Ibn Jarir, Ibnul-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Abu ‘sh-Shaykh, Ibn Marduwayh, and an-Nahas (in his *an-Nasikh*) have narrated from Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas that he said:

Regarding me was revealed the prohibition of intoxicants.

A man from the Helpers prepared a feast, and he invited us. People came to him, ate, and drank until they became intoxicated with liquor

²⁰² Rabi-u-abrar

– and it was before the intoxicants were prohibited. So they began boasting.

The Helpers said: ‘The Helpers are superior;’ and the Quraysh said: ‘The Quraysh are superior.’

Then a man came down with a jaw-bone of a camel and hit at my nose tearing it – and Sa’d’s nose was torn.” He said: “Then I came to the Prophet ﷺ and mentioned it to him. So this verse was revealed: O you who believe! Intoxicants and games of chance...”²⁰³

The traditions about the stories, which resulted in prohibition of intoxicants are numerous, through the Sunni chains, with great discrepancies among them. As for those traditions which mention some companions who had been drinking, we have no concern to go into them analyzing and sifting, because our purpose is to explain the Qur’anic verse. However these narratives support what we have written in the Commentary that these verses imply, nay, rather clearly say, that a group of Muslims had not left drinking liquor since the verse, 2:219 was revealed until these verses of chapter vie came down.

Of course, some traditions say that Ali عليه السلام and Uthman b. Maz’un had forbidden intoxicants to themselves before the verse of prohibition was revealed; and it has been mentioned in *al-Milal wan-Nihal*, that a few Arabs in the era of Ignorance had forbidden intoxicants to themselves, and Allah helped some of them to find Islam and enter into its fold.

Among them were Amir b. az-Zarib al-Udwani and Qays b. Amir at-Tamimi (who attained Islam). Also, among them were Safwan b. Umayyah b. Muhrith al-Kanani, Afif b. Ma’di Karb al-Kindi, al-Uslum al-Yami (who forbade to himself broth intoxicants and fornication). These few individuals were those on whose tongue the word of truth had appeared. Otherwise, generally the Arabs of that era like all other people of the world (except the Jews) were habituated to drink freely, until Allah forbade it in His Book.

It appears from the verses of the mighty Book that intoxicants were forbidden in Makkah before the hijrah, as is shown by the verse:

²⁰³ Durrul Manthur

Say: "My Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed, and sin and rebellion without justice..."²⁰⁴

It is a Makkan verse; and when it is joined to the divine words:

"They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: "In both of them there is a great sin and (some) profit for men, and their sin is greater than their profit."²⁰⁵

which is Madinite verse revealed in early days of hijrah, there does not remain room for any doubt that at that time its prohibition was clear to the Muslims.

And if we meditate on the context of the verses of the chapter 5, "The Table", and especially on the implications of the words: *Will you then desist?* And the verse: There is no blame on those who believe and do good deeds for what they have eaten, when they fear Allah and believe... it will be clear that the indulgence of a group among them in drinking liquor between the revelation of chapter 2 and 5, was a residue of the previous bad habits. It was like some people's continuing to sinfully cohabit in the nights of Ramadan until Allah revealed: It is made lawful to you on the night of the fast to go in unto your wives; they are an apparel to you and you are an apparel for them; Allah knew that you were acting unfaithfully to yourselves, so He has turned to you (mercifully) and forgave you... (2:187)

al-Kulayni and ash-Shaykh have narrated through their chains from Abu Ja'far عليه السلام that he said:

Allah did never raise any prophet but it was in Allah's knowledge that when He would perfect his religion it would include prohibition of intoxicants; and intoxicants were always unlawful, but they are only carried away from [one] trait to [another] trait; and if it were imposed on them all together, it would have cut them off short of religion.

The narrator said: Abu Ja'far عليه السلام said:

There is no one more kind than Allah, the Sublime; and it is from His kindness (the Blessed, the Sublime) that He transfers them from (one)

²⁰⁴ Al-Qur'an, 7:33

²⁰⁵ Al-Qur'an, 2:219

trait to (another) trait; and if He had imposed on them all together, they would have perished.²⁰⁶

Abus-Sabah narrates that he asked Abu Abdillah عليه السلام about *nabidh* and intoxicants, Do they have the same position? (The Imam a.s.) said:

No. Surely *nabidh* is not of the rank of intoxicants. Certainly, Allah has prohibited intoxicants a little of it and more of it, as He has prohibited dead body, blood and flesh of swine; and the Prophet ﷺ has prohibited the intoxicant from among the drinks, and what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has prohibited, Allah has prohibited it.²⁰⁷

al-Kulayni and ash-Shaykh have narrated through their chains from Musa b. Ja'far عليه السلام that he said:

Verily, Allah has not prohibited the liquor because of its name; but He has prohibited it because of its effect. Therefore, anything, which has the effect of liquor, is liquor. (In another version, the last sentence is, 'Therefore, anything which the action of liquor is liquor.'²⁰⁸

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Intoxicating agents and gambling have been prohibited through al Baqarah: 219 (see commentary). Many scholars (Abu Hanifa, Hakim Ibn Sad, Suyuti, Shibli, Ibn Hajar) have mentioned in their books about the *nabidh* (barley malt) held lawful and taken by some of the Holy Prophet 's companions.

In Shi'a fiqh all intoxicating agents are held unlawful.

The Holy Prophet said:

Do not visit a sick person if he drinks wine (or any intoxicating drink), if he dies do not attend his funeral prayers, if he is in distress do not give him alms; and it is like throwing your daughter into hell if you marry her to a drunkard.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

²⁰⁶ al-Kafi; at-Tahdhib

²⁰⁷ at-Tafsir, al-Ayyashi

²⁰⁸ al-Kafi, at-Tahdhib

According to the Ahlul Bayt all the prophets of Allah were strict abstainers from intoxicating drinks. Hashim, Abdul Muttalib, Abdullah, Abu Talib, Jafar, Ali and the Holy Prophet, followers of the creed of Ibrahim, never touched any intoxicating drink. Some new converts continued wine-drinking till verse 219 of al Baqarah was revealed. Yet, not satisfied with the manner of its revelation, they did not altogether abandon their old habit. Then verse 43 of al Nisa was revealed. Still drinking parties were held in secret. Once, in such a gathering, where some of his prominent companions were enjoying wholeheartedly, the Holy Prophet came and recited these verses.

“We will keep away from it. We will keep away from it! O Messenger of Allah!” said the companions.

After that total prohibition prevailed. According to Iqdul Farid even after the total prohibition, a renowned companion of the Holy Prophet used to drink the nabidh on the plea that without it he could not digest camel’s meat, because of which some Muslim jurists think that use of nabidh is permissible .

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

At the time of the advent of Islam, the Arabs customarily were intensively interested in poetry, wine, and fighting. The Divine revelations concerning the prohibition of wine were gradually conveyed.

At first, there revealed a verse stating that provision is supplied from date and grapes either, from which you can obtain intoxication, too, (Suratul Nahl (16), verse 67). This indication of intoxication implies the statement of its badness.

The Qur’an, then, has referred to the benefits of gambling and wine and also that their containing sin is greater than their benefits, (Suratul Baqarah (2), verse 219). After that the Divine verse was revealed enjoining not to establish prayer at the state of being intoxicated, (Suratul Nisa’ (4), verse 43). And, finally, the above verse was revealed which considered wine as an abomination, a Satanic action, and ordained that it is unlawful.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ Musnad Ahmad-i-Hanbal, Sunan Abi Dawood, Nisa’i, and Tirmidhi

The Arabic term /khamr/ (wine) is derived from the same root as the Arabic word /khumur/ (cover) is. In Arabic, the veil of a woman is called /khimar/; since it covers the hairs. Similarly, wine covers the wisdom.

The Arabic term /maysir/ is derived from /yusr/ with the meaning of easiness, since, in gambling, players sometimes earn money by that play without tolerating any trouble.

The Qur'anic term /'azlam/ means a kind of lottery done with some sticks of arrows. It used to be performed before Islam, at the Age of Ignorance.

Explanations:

1. In Islam, having Faith and drinking wine do not agree with each other.

2. Drinking wine and gambling are in the same row with idolatry.

“...verily wine, gambling, idols and ...”

3. The Islamic commandments and prohibitions have been ordained reasonably and wisely.

“...and (dividing by) arrows are an abomination of the Satan's work, so avoid it ...”

4. The verse enjoins to avoid not only drinking wine, but also approaching it. The reason of this ordinance is that a sound nutrition is effective in the prosperity of human beings. Therefore, it enjoins to avoid intoxication, so that you may be prosperous. The verse says:

“...So avoid it, that you may be prosperous.”

Any kind of cooperation concerning wine, including its production, distribution and consumption, is prohibited.

Imam al-Baqir عليه السلام has narrated from the holy Prophet ﷺ that he cursed ten groups of people who are concerned somehow with drinking wine. They are as follows:

Its planter, its guardian, its maker, its drinker, its cupbearer, its bearer, its receiver, its seller, its purchaser, and anyone who, in a way, devours from its income.



Verse 39

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِيَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ اللَّهُ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الصَّيْدِ تَنَالَهُ أَيْدِيكُمْ
وَمَا حُسْبُكُمْ لِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَخَافُهُ بِالْغَيْبِ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:94

O You Who Believe!

- Allah does but make a trial of you in a little matter of game well within reach of your hands and your lances,
- That He may test who fears Him unseen.
- Any who transgress thereafter, will have a grievous penalty.

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Taba'taba'i

The verses describe the law regarding the game of land sea when a man is in the state of sanctity, wearing the robe of pilgrims.

al-Bala (test, trial); *layabluwannakum* (will certainly try you); *la* is for oath, which together with the doubling of *n* connotes emphasis and intensity. The word “some game”, indicates insignificance, in order that it would help the audience to comply with the coming prohibition. The clause: ‘which your hands and your lances can reach’, indicates in its ambit game which can be caught easily by hand, like young birds, cubs of wild animals and eggs; or with difficulty like big game that usually cannot be hunted except with arms.

This verse apparently aims at paving the way for the severe law which follows in the next one; and that is the reason that this clause is followed by the words: that Allah might know who fears Him in secret; as it indicates that the ensuing law would be prohibitive; then comes the concluding statement; but whoever exceeds the limit after this he shall have a painful punishment.

It is not unlikely that the divine words: *“Allah will certainly try you... that He might know”*, allude to the fact that He will certainly foreordain it in order to distinguish those of you who fear Allah in secret from those who do not fear Him. Obviously, Allah is not afflicted by ignorance, which should be removed by knowledge! A full explanation of the meaning of test has been given under the verse: *“Do you think that you will enter the garden...”*²¹⁰, in the fourth volume of this book; and also another meaning of knowledge was given earlier.

As for the clause: “who fears Him in secret”, the adverb: “in secret”, is related to: “fears” ; fearing in secret indicates that man fears his Lord and is cautious of the next world’s punishment and its sufferings which the Lord has warned him of; all those aspects are unseen for man, and he does not perceive any part of it with his five senses. Allah says: *“You can only warn him who follows the reminder and fears the Beneficent God in secret...”*²¹¹; Also: *“And the garden shall be brought near to those who guard (against evil), not far off: This is what you were promised, for every one who turns frequently (to Allah), keeps (his limits); who fears the Beneficent God in secret and comes with a patient heart.”*²¹² Also: *“Those who fear their Lord in secret and they are fearful of the hour.”*²¹³

The clause: “but whoever exceeds the limit after this”, means: Whoever exceeds the limit which Allah fixes for him after the said test and trial, shall have a painful chastisement.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

To inculcate restraint, perseverance, sincerity and purity of intention, submission, and dedication to the service of Allah, a thorough discipline has been prescribed for performing hajj and *Umarah*. [Please study “Hajj and *Umarah* guide” and “Supplications for Hajj and *Umarah*”, published by the Peermahomed Ebrahim Trust, or any such publication published by the Shia publishing houses.

Hajj is a week of total loyalty. The body is denied all kinds of comforts. The mind and the heart are tuned to bask in the light of devotion. It enables man

²¹⁰ Al-Qur’an, 3:142

²¹¹ Al-Qur’an, 36:11

²¹² Al-Qur’an, 50:31-33

²¹³ Al-Qur’an, 21:49

to rise to the glorious heights of spiritual bliss. The proud, rich and the egotistic celebrities are made to know and realise their true insignificance, otherwise, in any other situation, they would prefer to spend any amount to avoid association with the ordinary people and being brought to the level of the meek. No distinction of wealth, fame, birth, colour or nationality are of any use when the hajj begins. All are in the service of the Lord. It is a training ground to put the idea of the brotherhood of man into practice. Whoso fails to do in day-to-day life what he has experienced during the hajj, is not a true believer. There is no other religion which has such an institution to inspire effective voluntary control to curb brutality and pride, so easily acquired by the men of the world. Islam would have been labelled as an imperfect code of life if hajj has not been prescribed as an obligatory duty.

The criticism of the slaughter of animals by the opponents of Islam is unreasonable. Animals have been created by the creator to provide food for the human beings. There is “life” in everything man or animal eats or drinks. Therefore saving or sparing “life” is not possible. This is the law of nature. The very existence of life depends upon the proper consuming of life. Life in the lower stages of creation has been purposely created to be sacrificed to serve the survival of the species in the higher realm.

Similarly, man has been created to sacrifice his self which is dearest to him, to reach the higher realms of divinity or spiritual bliss. It is true that purposeless slaughter of animals is a waste of Allah’s bounty when it is carried out in contravention to the laws of the author of nature. Even for those who hold animals sacred, the surest way to show their concern is to slaughter them at the proper time, because one day they will be eliminated by death. So, if an animal is to die anyway, it is better to use it for sustenance of human life, rather than letting it go waste. The merciful creator, therefore, has allowed slaughter of animals for the sustenance of human life.

In the days of ignorance, man sacrificed man to please his man-made gods. Islam stopped this practice. Instead, to keep alive the spirit of the intended sacrifice of Ismail by Ibrahim, to show his obedience to his Lord, sacrifice of animals has been prescribed. On the other hand, Islam prohibits purposeless killing of animals. As long as a haji is in ihram he cannot kill even a mosquito.

Hunting is not only forbidden during the hajj but also as a sport in ordinary life. Imam Ali, on his death bed, asked his children to take care of the birds he had domesticated, or else to set them free. Once a disciple of Imam Jafar al Sadiq killed some pigeons in exasperation. The Imam asked him to give one dinar in charity for every pigeon he had killed as an expiation.

The companions of Imam Hasan tried to make a dog run when the unclean animal came near them while they were having meals with the Imam. The Imam prevented them and began to eat one morsel himself and gave another to the dog. He said:

I should feel ashamed if a creature of Allah looks at my food and I turn it away.

At the call of duty a true believer must be ready to act as commanded, therefore, the impracticable and imaginary tenderness, which actually is not so, should not be allowed to take root. One must kill even a human being if proved guilty of murder and lawfully condemned to death. The misconceived feeling of tenderness is a moral weakness which can be removed by proper training.

If the holy Kabah is held in reverence, it is not idolatry. The spirit of holding in veneration things dedicated to Allah (or godliness) without any intention of worshipping them, even if it is the psyche of the idol-worshippers, is not idolatry. The holy edifice was built by Ibrahim and Ismail, the two distinguished friends of Allah, for the exclusive remembrance of the true Lord. The pagans appropriated it and used it as their temple. The two other friends of Allah, the Holy Prophet and Imam Ali, cleared the sacred house of the idols and restored it to its original purpose. They destroyed the false gods but retained the really venerable black stone used by Ibrahim in construction of the holy house, because this stone was sent down by Allah. Likewise the respect paid to Safa and Marwa, on account of its association with Ibrahim and Ismail, has been preserved.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

Whoever profits by combining *Umarah* with hajj means that after performing *Umarah*, the pilgrim casts off ihram and puts it on again at the time of hajj, but by combining *Umarah* with hajj he does not have

to journey again for hajj after *Umarah*, and also does not have to be in ihram all the time during the intervening period. The second caliph, nominated by the first caliph, who opposed this in the life time of the holy Prophet, issued orders to discontinue it and *muta ul nisa*, and *hayya ala khayril amal* from the *azan*. However, the later jurists did not follow his order for discontinuation of the *muta ul hajj* but the *muta ul nisa* and *hayya ala khayril amal* had been discontinued by the ignorant people in contravention of the divine commandments. (Nisa: 24)

The pilgrimage is (performed in) the well-known months; so whoever determines the performance of the pilgrimage therein, there shall be no intercourse nor fornication nor quarrelling amongst one another; and whatever good you do, Allah knows it; and make provision, for surely the provision is the guarding of oneself, and be careful (of your duty) to Me, O men of understanding.

Shawwal, Dhilqad and Dhilhajj are the well known months. One can start the pilgrimage in these months but the principal performance of hajj has been prescribed in the month of Dhilhajj. During these days the pilgrim enters the state of purity in which he is entirely absorbed with Allah. Taqwa is the best provision, because by resigning oneself to Allah and abstaining from all that which connects with worldly matters, devotion to Allah becomes total. Everything which pertains to rafas (sexual intercourse), fasaq (fornication), jidal (quarrelling with one another) are forbidden.

“Take provision” means to plan and carry sufficient provisions for the journey so as not to be a burden on others. Some people used to go for pilgrimage to Makkah without sufficient provisions, on the pretence that they trust in Allah’s help, thus becoming a burden on their fellow travellers. Making provision may also mean making provision for the journey of life with piety and righteousness. Surely the best provision is taqwa - guarding against evil or safeguarding with full awareness of divine laws. If the men of understanding desire increase in provision, here and in the hereafter, then they should know the boundaries and fortify them.

Mathabatan and *amnan*, with reference to bayt, means a place of refuge, rest and peace where one earns ample recompense from Allah.

Ahdina (We took a promise or We enjoined) refers to Allah's covenant that the eternally blessed descendants of Ibrahim should keep the holy Kabah pure, and should remove the false gods whenever installed in it. In 7 Hijra the Holy Prophet, the promised prophet, for whose advent Ibrahim prays in verses 128 and 129 of this surah, after the fall of Makkah, visited the holy Kabah. There, Ali stood on the shoulders of the Holy Prophet and pulled down all the idols, firmly fixed in the walls, in order to purify the sacred house of Allah

Tahhira (to purify) implies that a house for the worship of Allah already existed there before Ibrahim, which like the Kabah in the times of the Holy Prophet, was despoiled with idols. It was in ruins. Ibrahim rebuilt it. As verse 127 of this surah suggests, after purification, the place was reserved for worship of Allah only. According to verse 96 of Surah A'le Imran, the first house made for the worship of Allah was the Kabah in Makka, and in verse 29 of Suratul Hajj it has been referred to as bayt ul atiq (the ancient house).

Muir, Burton, Rodwel and Fretyag have tried to mislead the Christians by stating that Ibrahim had never gone to Arabia to build the Holy Kabah.

These are the names of the sons of Ishmael named in order of their birth; Nebaioth, Ishmael's eldest son, then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam." (Genesis 25: 13)

It is a fact that Kedar has been connected with Arabia in the Old Testament.

Hard is my lot, exiled in Meshech, dwelling by the tents of Kedar.²¹⁴

Also refer to Isaiah 42: 11 and 60: 7. In Genesis 21: 14 to 21 Hajirah's wandering in the wilderness of Beersheba with her son Ismail, the appearance of the well (Zamzam) and Allah's promise to make of Ismail a great nation have been clearly mentioned.

The events concerning Ibrahim, Hajirah and Ismail, which actually took place, are given below:

- Ibrahim's wife Sarah had borne him no children.
- She had a handmaid whose name was Hajirah.
- She gave her to Ibrahim as a wife.
- Hajirah bore Ibrahim a son.

²¹⁴ PSALMS 120:5

- Ibrahim named the child Ismail.
- After his birth, the peace and harmony of the family was disturbed.
- Sarah ill-treated Hajirah.
- Ibrahim was vexed on Ismail's account.
- He sought Allah's help.
- Allah, in view of Sarah's past goodness, directed Ibrahim to send away Hajirah and Ismail to a place now called Makkah.
- Ibrahim, with the help of Jibrail, took Hajirah and Ismail out of the native land and reached Arabia.
- They stopped at the place where *Hajar Aswad* or the black stone is stationed.
- Jibrail informed Ibrahim that it was a land full of Allah's blessings and bounties, and there used to be a house (known as *Baytul Mamur*) in that place, which was held sacred and venerated by mankind in ancient times, and that it was Allah's will that Ibrahim and Ismail should rebuild the ruined house again.
- A shelter was made for Hajirah and Ismail so that they could live there in Ibrahim's absence because Allah had commanded Ibrahim to go back to his native land. At the time of his departure Hajirah said:

O Ibrahim, the devotee of Allah, in whose care are you leaving us here?

Ibrahim said: I leave you in the care of Allah who saved me from the fire in which Namrud threw me, and gave me all that which I needed and desired.

Hajirah said: I rely upon Allah. He is sufficient for me and my child.

When Ibrahim reached the mount Zi-Tavi, he stopped and turned towards the place where he left Hajirah and Ismail and prayed:

Our Lord! Verily I have settled a part of my progeny in a barren valley near to Your holy house, our Lord. so that they may establish prayer;

so incline some hearts of men that they yearn towards them, and provide them with fruits in order that they may be grateful.²¹⁵

- When the water in the waterskin, Ibrahim left for them, was finished, there was no water any where near them to quench their thirst.
- There was no milk in her breasts.
- The heat in the desert had dried it.
- The scorching sun brought the situation from bad to worse.
- The child was restless.
- He cried, cried and cried.
- The mother ran hither and thither, between Safa and Marwa.
- From Safa to Marwa and Marwa to Safa she ran seven times because when she was on the mount of Safa she heard a voice from the mount of Marwa, and when she reached Marwa she heard a voice from Safa.
- There was no one in sight.
- Unable to see her son dying, she left him where he was lying and stood alone on the mount of Marwa.
- Dejected, helpless, yet worried for her son she came back.
- There she saw a spring of fresh and sweet water gushing forth from the earth under the feet of Ismail.
- In her absence Jibrail, under the command of Allah, came and produced a well full of water (known as Zamzam) - also recorded in Genesis 21: 14 to 21. She heard a voice (saying):
- *Fear not. The Lord has produced this well for you and your son, but it will also serve the pilgrims who will visit His holy house which your husband and son shall build.*
- The flow of water increased day by day and the surrounding land became fertile.
- People began to come and settle there. Soon it became a flourishing town.
- Trade and commerce developed. When Ibrahim returned he found the wasteland in the desert a busy trade centre.

²¹⁵ Al-Qur'an, 14:37

- The running of Hajirah between Safa and Marwa has been prescribed as one of the essential rites of hajj.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

During the time when a pilgrim to Mecca is in pilgrim garment and is performing the pilgrimage rites, the one has not the right of hunting. During the same time, occasionally it happens that a hunt approaches a person so nigh that he can catch it by a simple jump, but the trial of Allah is in this fact that we should not touch the hunt. So, if we hunt it, the punishment of Allah includes us.

Hunting itself brings forth no painful chastisement, but chastisement is for the breaking law. In the land where Abraham overlooked Ishmael, you would overlook the hunts either.

The verse says:

“O you who have Faith! Allah will surely try you with something of the game which your hands and your spears can reach, so that Allah may ascertain who fears Him in secret. So whoever transgresses after that for him there is a painful punishment.”



Verse 40

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ وَمَنْ قَتَلَهُ مِنْكُمْ مُتَعَمِّدًا
فَجَزَاءٌ مِّثْلُ مَا قَتَلَ مِنَ النَّعْمِ يَحْكُمُ بِهِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ هَدِيًّا بِالِغَايَةِ
أَوْ كَفَّارَةٌ طَعَامُ مَسَاكِينَ أَوْ عَدْلٌ ذَلِكَ صِيَامًا لِيَذُوقَ وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِ عَفَا اللَّهُ
عَمَّا سَلَفَ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَيَنْتَقِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انتِقَامٍ﴾

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:95

O You Who Believe!

- Kill not game while in the sacred precincts or in pilgrim garb.
- If any of you does so intentionally, the compensation is an offering, brought to the Ka'bah, of a domestic animal equivalent to the one he killed, as adjudged by two just men among you,
- Or by way of atonement, the feeding of the indigent,
- Or its equivalent in fasts, that he may taste of the penalty of his deed.
- Allah forgives what is past: for repetition Allah will exact from him the penalty,
- For Allah is Exalted, and Lord of Retribution.

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Taba'taba'i

al-hurum (in the pilgrim garb). It is a *sifah mushabbahah* (adjective which resembles a verb). [at-Tabrisi] writes *Haram* and *muhrim* both have the same meaning; likewise the opposite *halal* and *muhil* have the same meaning: *ahrama 'r-rajul* ('The man entered into sacred month.'). also it means: 'He entered into the Sanctuary.' Also, *ahrama* means: 'He entered into hajj (by saying *talbiyyah*).'

Al-Harm means the pilgrim garb; this is the meaning of the hadith, ‘I was applying perfume to the Prophet for his *ihram*.’ The basic meaning of the root-word (h-r-m) is to protect, to prohibit; the women are called *haram* because they are protected; and *al-mahrum* is the one who is deprived of sustenance.”

The words: “Do not kill game while you are in the pilgrim garb,” forbid the killing of game. But it is partially elaborated by the next verse: Lawful to you is the game of the sea - this explains the kind of game; and the nature of killing is elaborated by the next sentence: “and whoever among you shall kill it intentionally...” The word: ‘intentionally’ is the circumstantial clause related to: “whoever among you shall kill it.”

Apparently, intentional killing is opposite of unintentional one, i.e. killing without intention, e.g. one shoots arrow to a certain target, and it missing the target hits a game. The verse makes it clear that he must pay the compensation if he did have the intention of killing the game, no matter whether he remembered that he was in the pilgrim garb, or had forgotten it or was oblivious to it.

The sentence: “the compensation (of it) is the like of what he killed, from the cattle, as two just persons among you shall judge, as an offering to be brought to the Ka’bah.” Its meaning is clear: He has to offer a compensation, which should be like the game he has killed; it should be from a kind of cattle which is like the killed game; that similar cattle will be decided by two just religious persons among you; that offering should be brought to the Ka’bah and slaughtered in the sanctuary in Makkah or Mina, as explained by the Prophetic sunnah.

Pardon is bestowed to what is gone by. It shows that “what is gone by” refers to those game killings, which had occurred before the verse was revealed giving this law. Obviously, if pardon was to apply to the game killed when it was being revealed or after its revelation, it would contradict the law. This sentence was revealed to remove the possible misunderstanding that the law of compensation was retroactively applicable to the incidents preceding the time of revelation.

The verse proves that pardon may be applied to such deeds too which are not sins, provided those deeds contain evil, which by their nature would be liable to attract legislative prohibition. The clauses: “and whoever returns (to it),

Allah will inflict retribution on him; and Allah is Mighty, Lord of Retribution.” Apparently, returning to it means repeating the sin, and the clause: “Allah will inflict retribution on him,” speaks about future recurrence, not to a present order. It shows that the returning means repeating the deed that had attracted compensation, and the divine retribution refers to something other than the imposed compensation.

In this backdrop, the verse, together with the preceding and the following ones, deals with various aspects of the law of killing the game. Allah has pardoned those who had done so before revelation of the law; but he who would kill a game after the law was promulgated, would have to offer in compensation cattle like of what he had killed – this is for the first offence. However, if he repeats the sin, Allah will inflict retribution on him, and there is no compensation on him. This is seen in most of the traditions of the Imams of Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام which deal with the explanation of this verse.

Had not this explanation been given in traditions, we would have to say that the retribution, mentioned in the clause: “Allah will inflict retribution”, covered general laws including expiation; and the returning connoted killing a game again; it would then mean: Whoever indulged in killing a game as they were doing before promulgation of this law – i.e. whoever would kill a game – Allah would inflict retribution on him – i.e. would make him liable to pay the compensation/expiation. But, as you see, this meaning is far from the wording of the verse.

(al-Kulayni) narrates through his chains from Hammad b. Isa and Ibn Abi Umair, from Mu’awiyah b. Ammar, from Abu Abdillah عليه السلام that he said in explanation of the words of Allah, the Mighty, the Great: Allah will certainly try you in respect of some game which your hands and your lances can reach,

Wild animals were crowded for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, in the *Umarah* of Hodaybiyyah until their hands and their lances could reach them.²¹⁶

al-Suyuti says: Ibn Abi Hatim has narrated from Muqatil b. Hayyan that he said:

²¹⁶ al-Kafi

This verse was revealed in the *Umarah* of Hudaybiyyah; wild animals, birds and games used to come to them in their stations like of which they had never seen in the past; so Allah forbade them to kill it while they were in the condition of *ihram*; so that He might know who fears Him in secret.²¹⁷

Ash-Shaykh narrates through his chains from Ibn Abi Umayr, from Hammad, from al-Halabi, from Abu Abdillah عليه السلام that he said:

When a *muhrim* kills a game, then its compensation is (incumbent) on him, and the (killed) game will be given to a poor as *sadaqah*; then if he repeats and kills another game, there is no compensation on him, and Allah will inflict retribution on him, and (that) retribution (will be) in the next world.²¹⁸

(as-Shaykh) narrates from al-Kulayni, from some of his companions, from Abu Abdillah عليه السلام, that he said:

If a *muhrim* kills a game by mistake, then compensation is incumbent on him; then if he kills it again intentionally, then he is from those on whom Allah will inflict retribution, and he is not liable to pay expiation.²¹⁹

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Please refer to the commentary of al Baqarah: 196 and 197. Killing of even the smallest living being has been prohibited while performing *hajj* in the sacred house of Allah, the holy Ka'bah (refer to the commentary of al Baqarah; 125).

“Allah shall surely try you” shows the utmost importance of the command, yet Yazid not only desecrated the holy Ka'bah but planned to kill Imam Husayn, the grandson of the Holy Prophet, in it. Having come to know his wicked scheme in advance Imam Husayn, in order to save the sanctity of the holy sanctuary, substituted *hajj* with *Umarah* and left Makka.

²¹⁷ Durrul Manthur

²¹⁸ at-Tahdhib

²¹⁹ Ibid.

Allah is very strict in enforcing His commands and in punishing those who violate what He has sanctified. So man must hasten to ask His forgiveness, turn to Him in repentance, and make amends by following His guidance.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

In this verse, the command of the prohibition of hunting at the time of being in pilgrim garment, with a general condition, has been issued more clearly and precisely.

It says:

“O’ you who have Faith! kill no game while you are in pilgrim garb; ...”

Then, it points to the atonement of hunting in the condition of being in pilgrim garb, and says:

“...and anyone of you who kills it intentionally, its atonement is the like in cattle of what he has killed...”

That is, such a person should sacrifice that animal and give its meat to some needy ones.

Here, the purpose of ‘the like’ is the likeness of the size and the shape of the animal. It is in this sense that, for example, if a person hunts a wild big animal, such as the ostrich, he should choose an ostrich as an atonement; or if he hunts a deer, he should sacrifice a lamb with nearly the same size.

And, since some people may fall into suspicion upon the subject of likeness, in this regard, the Qur’an ordains that this matter should be fulfilled under the judgement of two just persons, possessed of some knowledge among you. It says:

“...as (to this likeness) two just persons among you judge...”

And, for the place where this animal should be sacrificed, the Qur’an commands that it must be killed as a sacrifice dedicated to the Ka’bah and in the land of Ka’bah. It says:

“...(and the animal) will be an offering reached to the Ka’bah...”

Then, the Qur’an adds that it is not necessary that the atonement should certainly be in the form of sacrifice, but each of the two other things can

substitute it. The first is that some money equivalent to it can be spent in the way of feeding the poor.

It says:

“...or the atonement (of it) is feeding the poor...”

And the second thing of substitution is as follows:

“...or the equivalent of that in fasting...”

These atonements are for that the person sees the retribution of his committing offence. It says:

“...that he may taste the effect of his action ...”

But, in view of the fact that usually no ordinance includes the past, the Qur'an stipulates that Allah has forgiven the offences that have been done in this field, saying thus:

“...Allah has pardoned whatever is a thing of the past; ...”

So, if a person does not pay attention to these frequent warnings and the ordinance of atonement and hunts at the time of being in the pilgrim garb, Allah will take vengeance of such a person and Allah is Mighty to take vengeance in the appropriate time. It says:

“...and whoever returns (to it), Allah will take vengeance on him, and Allah is Mighty, the Lord of Retribution.”



Verse 41

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَسْأَلُوا عَنَ أَشْيَاءٍ إِن تَبَدَّلَ لَكُمْ تَسْوَأٌ كُمْ وَإِن تَسْأَلُوا عَنْهَا حِينَ يُنزَلُ الْقُرْآنُ تَبَدَّلَ لَكُمْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهَا وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ﴾

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:101

O You Who Believe!

- Ask not questions about things which, if made plain to you, may cause you trouble.
- But if you ask about things when the Qur'an is being revealed, they will be made plain to you,
- Allah will forgive those,
- For Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Forbearing.

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Taba'taba'i

The verse forbids the believers to put questions about such things, which may pain and displease them if disclosed. It has left it vague who was the person asked from. But the sentence: "if you question about them while the Qur'an is being revealed", as well as the next verse: *A people before you indeed asked such questions, then became disbelievers on account of them*, clearly show that it is the Prophet ﷺ who is intended here – that the believers should not put such questions to him which would result in such and such.

However, the underlying reason of this prohibition conveys the idea that it covers also other situations; that it forbids man to enquire about, and search, the things Allah has left vague and put a veil on them which cannot be removed by normal means and usual ways. Obviously, there is a strong chance of misery and perdition if one were to acquire somehow the knowledge of such realities as, for example, the date when he would die, the cause of his

death, the life-span of his near and dear ones, the fall of his kingdom and honor; probably the very knowledge might cause his perdition or misery.

The system of life has been streamlined by Allah and implemented by Him in the world. He has disclosed some things and put veil on the others. He has not made open what He has but for an underlying reason; and has not hidden what He has but for an underlying reason. Therefore, to cause hiding of what is apparent or to disclose what is hidden would disrupt the system, which covers the universe.

It is not unlike the human life based on the body-system which is made up of various powers, organs and limbs – if one of it is removed from, or added to it, a major function of life would be lost, and may be at times the life itself – or its meaning – will be ruined.

The second factor, which the verse has left vague, is the nature of things about which they are forbidden to ask. It only describes them as being such that they may pain or trouble you if they are disclosed. There is no doubt that the words: “which if declared to you, may trouble you,” are the attribute of the preceding word: “things.” It is a conditional sentence that shows that if the condition takes place, its concomitant is bound to take place. As those things were of such a nature that if disclosed they would certainly trouble them; therefore, putting questions about them and seeking to unearth their hidden affairs was tantamount to asking to be trouble and pained.

(as-Suyuti) quotes Ibn Jarir, Abu sh-Shaykh and Ibn Marduwayh who have narrated from Abu Hurayrah that he said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, delivered a sermon before us, and said:

O people! Allah has prescribed *hajj* for you.

Ukashah b. Muhsin stood up and said: *Every year? O Messenger of Allah!*

(The Prophet) said: as for it, if I had said: “Yes,” it would have become obligatory; and if it had become obligatory and then were you to leave it, you would have gone astray. Remain silent before me when I am silent before you, as those who were before you had perished only because of their questionings and their discord against their

prophets. Then Allah revealed: *O you who believe! Do not put questions about things which if declared to you may trouble you...*²²⁰

as-Suyuti quotes Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatim who have narrated from as-Suddi about the word of Allah: *O you who believe! Do not put question about things which declared to you...,* that he said:

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, became angry one day, and stood up to address the people; and he said: ‘Ask me, for you will not ask me about anything but I shall inform you about it.’ So there stood up a Qurayshite man from Banu Sahm, Abdullah b. Hadhqah by name – and people used to vilify him – and said: ‘O Messenger of Allah! Who is my father?’ He said: ‘Your father is so-and-so (and he asserted his relationship to his father).’

Umar betook himself to him, kissed his foot and said: ‘O Messenger of Allah! We are pleased with Allah as the Lord, and with you as the Prophet, and with the Qur’an as the leader; so pardon us, may Allah pardon you!’ So he continued beseeching him until his anger subsided. It was on that day that he said: ‘The child belongs to the bed and for the adulterer is the stone.’ And it was (then) revealed to him: *And people before indeed asked such questions, [and then became disbelievers on account of them].*”²²¹

Ali عليه السلام said:

Verily Allah has enjoined upon you some duties, so do not neglect them; and laid down for you some limits, so do not transgress them; and has forbidden you some things, so do not commit them; and has passed over some things, and has not left them because of forgetfulness, so do not force yourself concerning them.²²²

al-Kulayni narrates through his chains from Abul-Jarud that he said: Abu Ja’far عليه السلام said:

When I tell you anything, you should ask me for its authority from the Book of Allah. Thereafter he said in one of his talks, ‘Verily the

²²⁰ Durrul Manthur

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Majma’ul Bayan; Tafsir as-Safi

Messenger of Allah ﷺ had forbidden idle talk, squandering of wealth and excessive questioning.’

It was said to him, ‘O Son of the Messenger of Allah! Where is it from the Book of Allah?’ He said: ‘Verily Allah, the Mighty, the Great, says: *There is no good in most of their secret talks except (in his) who enjoins charity or goodness or reconciliation between people;*²²³ and He has said: *And do not give away your property which Allah has made for you a (means of) support to the weak of understanding;*²²⁴ and He has said: *do not put questions about things which if declared to you may trouble you.*^{225 and 226}

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Every companion of the Holy Prophet was not endowed with the intelligence to understand Allah, His commands, His creation and that which governs the creation. What was given to Salman was not given to Abu Dharr, and what Abu Dharr knew was out of the reach of other companions. Only the Holy Prophet and Ali were endowed with the full, complete and perfect wisdom (Surat Ya Sin: 12 and Suratul Nisa 54). One was the city of knowledge and the other was its gate.

These verses denounce frivolous questioning on the part of the ignorant companions, sometimes merely to abate their idle curiosity, sometimes arising out of a sense of inferiority, sometimes with shrewd cunning in order to obtain scope for individual discretion to be used in future in the name of “the demands of circumstances.”

The Holy Prophet said:

By Allah, I can tell you who among you will go to paradise, and who among you will burn in hell for ever. The whole universe is before my eyes. Beware! If I tell you about things and events, you will not like it. I have already told you all that which brings you near to Allah, so you must carry out those commands, and I have disclosed all that which separates you from Him and takes you to hell, so do not do what I have forbidden. Do not transgress the boundaries laid down by Allah.

²²³ Al-Qur’an, 4:114

²²⁴ Al-Qur’an, 4:5

²²⁵ Al-Qur’an, 5:101

²²⁶ al-Kafi

If you ask questions about the things He has not disclosed, because of His wisdom, you will find yourselves in deep trouble.

Aforetime people have asked questions of their prophets but they disbelieved them afterwards.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

Upon the occasion of revelation of these two verses, it has been narrated from Ali b. Abi Talib عليه السلام as follows:

It happened that one day the Prophet of Islam ﷺ preached a sermon in which he stated the command of Allah about Hajj. Then, a person by the name of Akkashah (and according to another narration Suraqah) asked whether that commandment was ordained for only that year or they should perform Hajj every year.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ delayed to answer him, but the man obstinately repeated his question two or three times. The Prophet ﷺ said:

Woe to you ! Why do you persist so much? If I answer you positively, performing Hajj will become obligatory for all of you every year. So, if it becomes obligatory every year, you will not be able to perform it and the offender of it will be a sinner. Hence, as long as I have not said a thing to you, do not urge on it. Then, the verse was revealed and dissuaded them from that action.

Improper Questions!

No doubt asking questions is the key to the recognition of facts. The verses of the Qur'an and Islamic traditions have earnestly enjoined Muslims that they ask whatever they do not know. But, in view of the fact that every rule usually has an exception, this basic educational principal has an exception, too. It is so that sometimes some affairs had better to be concealed in order that the system of the society be protected and the individuals' interests be safeguarded. In such respects, researches and frequent questions, with the purpose of unveiling some facts, not only is not a virtue, but also is blameworthy and reprobated.

In this verse, the Qur'an has referred to this subject and explicitly says:

“O you who have Faith! Do not ask about thing (and secrets) which, if they are disclosed to you, may upset you.”

But, since giving no answer to the questions that some persons sometimes urge on, asking them repeatedly may cause some doubts for others which can bring forth greater evils, the Qur’an adds:

“...Yet, if you ask about them while the Qur’an is being sent down, they will be disclosed to you.”

In this case, you will fall into trouble.

Next to that meaning, the Qur’an implies that you should not imagine that when Allah is silent about some matters, He is neglectful of them. Nay ! He desires to set you in some facilities. It says:

“...Allah pardoned as to these matters and Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing.”

We recite in a tradition narrated from Imam Ali عليه السلام who has said:

“Verily Allah has enjoined you some obligations, do not waste them; and He has assigned some limits for you, do not violate them; and He has prohibited you from some things, do not betray (secrets of) them; and He has kept silent for you about some things which He has never been concealed because of forgetfulness. Then, do not urge to disclose these things.”



Verse 42

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَنْ ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:105

O You Who Believe!

- Guard your own souls.
- If you follow (right) guidance,
- No hurt can come to you from those who stray.
- The goal of you all is to Allah,
- It is He that will show you the truth of all that you do.

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Tabataba'i

The verse enjoins the believers to take care of themselves and adhere to the path of their guidance; they should not be worried because a group of people has gone astray, everyone is to return to Allah, and He is to judge everyone according to his deed.

It is known that going astray and being on the right way – the opposites – take place when one proceeds on a way. If one adheres to the middle of the road, he reaches to the end of the road, and it is the destination that he had intended to arrive at in his life's journey. On the other hand, if he was not serious in his proceeding and deviated from the right path, then he goes astray and misses the intended goal. The verses supposes that man has got a path to tread on and a destination to arrive at; sometimes he adheres to the way and is guided aright; at other times he deviates from it and is led astray. However, there is no other destination that a man aims at except the blissful life and good end. Yet the verse declares that to Allah is the return to Whom

all have to return – those who are guided aright as well as those who go astray.

Allah has made it clear in these verses that all men are unavoidably proceeding to Him; the road for some of them is short and it leads to guidance and success, while that for the others is long and it does not end at bliss and happiness, but take the walker to destruction and perdition.

In short, the verse supposes for the believers and the disbelievers two paths, both of which end at Allah; and it directs the believers to look after their own interests and to turn away from the others, i.e. from the people of misguidance. They should not weary themselves thinking about those people; because their account is on their Lord, not on the believers; these believers will not be asked about them, so why should they involve themselves with them. Thus the verse is near in meaning to another verse:

“Say to those who believe (that) they forgive those who do not hope the days of Allah that He may reward a people for what they earn.”²²⁷

And similar is the connotation of the verse:

“This is a people that have passed away; they shall have what they earned and you shall have what you earn, and you shall not be called upon to answer for what they did.”²²⁸

Therefore, a believer must remain occupied only in that which concerns his soul by proceeding on the path of guidance; he should not be shaken by what he sees of misguidance of the people and pervasion of sins among them; he should not waste his time with involvement in their affairs. Truth is truth even if abandoned, and falsehood is falsehood even if taken up, as Allah says:

“Say: The bad and the good are not equal, though the abundance of the bad may enchant you; so fear Allah, O men of understanding, that you may be successful.”²²⁹

“And not alike are the good and the evil...”²³⁰

²²⁷ Al-Qur’an, 45:14

²²⁸ Al-Qur’an, 2:134

²²⁹ Al-Qur’an, 5:100

²³⁰ Al-Qur’an, 41:34

In the light of the above discourse, the words of Allah: “he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way,” are a sort of illusion which aims at forbidding the believers to be influenced by misguidance of those who are misled; as it may encourage them to leave the way of guidance, and to think that the present world does not support religion and does not allow them to be involved in spiritual affairs; as these things are remnants of the ancient simple customs whose time has passed away. Allah says:

“And they say: If we follow the guidance with you, we shall be carried off from our country.”²³¹

It forbids them also to fear the others’ misguidance and neglect their own guidance; in this way they would remain engaged in the others’ affairs and would forget their own selves; thus they would become like the others.

- Actually, what is incumbent on a believer is only to call towards his Lord, enjoin the good, and forbid the evil.
- In short he is to arrange the normal causes, and then he should leave the affairs of the effects in the hands of Allah, because to Him belong all the affairs.
- He has not been told to put himself in perdition in trying to rescue others from peril;
- And he shall not be called upon to account for what others had done;
- He is not an overseer to check others’ activities.

Thus, the verse is similar in meaning to what the Qur’an says in other places:

“Then, may be, you will kill yourself with grief, sorrowing over them, if they do not believe in this announcement. Surely We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment for it, so that We may try them (as to) which of them is best in deed. And most surely We will make what is on it bare ground without herbage.”²³²

“And even if there were a Qur’an with which the mountains were made to pass away, or the earth were traveled over with it, or the dead were made to speak thereby; nay! The commandment is wholly Allah’s. Have not yet those

²³¹ Al-Qur’an, 28:57

²³² Al-Qur’an, 18:6-8

who believe known that if Allah had willed He would certainly guide all the people?”²³³

More over, calling the others to Allah, and enjoining good and forbidding evil are a part of a believer’s involvement with the affairs of his own self, and of his advancing on the path of his Lord. How can this verse be considered as going against the verses of the Call or those of enjoining good and forbidding evil, or taken to be abrogating them, while Allah has counted these factors as the designation of this religion and a foundation upon which it has been built.

Allah says:

“Say: This is my way: I invite (you) to Allah; with clear sight (are) I and he who follows me.”²³⁴

“You are the best nation raised up for (the benefit of) men; you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong...”²³⁵

The verse proposes that there is one path for the believers that leads them aright, and another one for the disbelievers that misleads them to error. Then it orders the believers to adhere to their souls (as it says, *alaykum anfusakum*, which literally means, adhere to your souls). All this shows that the soul of the believer itself is the path which he should tread on and adhere to; exhorting one to a path conforms with exhortation to adhere to it, to never leave it; it does not connote adherence to the walker of the way; as we clearly see in verses like this:

“And (know) that this is my path, the right one, therefore follow it; and follow not (other) ways, for they will lead you away from His way...”²³⁶

In this way, this verse throws brilliant light on the aim and goal to which other verses point somewhat vaguely, like the words of Allah:

“O you who believe! Fear Allah, and let every soul consider what it has sent on for tomorrow, and fear Allah, surely Allah is Aware of what you do. And be not like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget their own souls; these

²³³ Al-Qur’an, 13:31

²³⁴ Al-Qur’an, 12:108

²³⁵ Al-Qur’an, 3:110

²³⁶ Al-Qur’an, 6:153

*it is that are the transgressors. Not alike are the inmates of the fire and the dwellers of the garden; the dwellers of the garden are they that are the achievers.*²³⁷

These verses enjoin on every soul to consider what it has sent on ahead, and to vigilantly guard its good deeds, as it is its provision for tomorrow – and the best provision is piety and fear of Allah. The soul has a today and a tomorrow, and it is proceeding ahead as it has to go a long way, and its destination is Allah, and with Him is the best reward, and that is the garden. Therefore, every soul should continuously remember its Lord without forgetting Him for a single moment; because Allah is the destination, and forgetting the destination would make one forget the path; because whoever forgets his Lord forgets his soul; such a person would not gather any provision for his tomorrow and for his future journey, which he could use to preserve his life; and it would mean perdition.

This is the meaning of what both sects have narrated from the Prophet ﷺ that he said:

“Whoever knew his soul knew his Lord.”

The end goal of man, and the destination of his affairs where his final result (his felicity and infelicity; his success and failure) is established, is based by Allah’s prescription on his character and his soul’s aspects, which in their turn are based on deeds which are divided into good and evil, and piety and corruption. Allah says:

*“Any (by) the soul and Him Who made it perfect, then He inspired it to understand what is wrong for it and right for it, he will indeed be successful who purifies it, and he will indeed fail who corrupts it.”*²³⁸

Accordingly, the clause: he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way, will mean that the erroneous non-Islamic societies cannot hurt them in any way. Therefore, the Muslims are not obligated to exert most strenuously for spreading Islam among the non-Muslim nations. They should limit themselves within normal limits, as explained earlier.

²³⁷ Al-Qur’an, 59:18-20

²³⁸ Al-Qur’an, 91:7-10

Or, it may mean that they should not let the guidance they have slip out of their hands by looking at the misguided societies as to how they are engrossed in base desires and how they enjoy the forbidden fruits of life; because all of them are to return to Allah and He will inform them of what they had done. Accordingly, the verse has the same implication as the following ones: Let it not deceive you that those who disbelieve go to and fro in the cities (fearlessly). A brief enjoyment! Then their abode is hell, and evil is the resting-place;²³⁹ And do not stretch your eyes after that with which We have provided different classes of them, (of) the splendor of this world's life...²⁴⁰

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

The first and foremost duty of every individual is to save his own self, and persuade those who are closely related or associated to follow the right path. The straying of the wicked and the disobedient will not affect those who follow the right guidance. But in the matter of obligatory ordinances *amr bil ma-ruf* and *nahya anil munkar* have to be applied as mentioned in the commentary of Ali Imran: 101 to 115.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

Everybody Is Responsible of One's Own Deeds

In the previous verse, the words were about the blindly imitation of the people of the Age of Ignorance from their misguided ancestors; and the Qur'an warned them that such an imitation did not adapt to wisdom and logic. Having this meaning in mind, they might question that if they separated their account in such affairs with their ancestors, then what about the fate of their ancestors. Besides, suppose they left that imitation, what would be the fate of many people who acted under the influence of such an imitation?

In answer to these questions, the holy verse addresses the believers and implies that they are responsible of their own selves. These misguided persons from among their ancestors, friends, and relatives, contemporary with them, could not harm them if they were on the right path. It says:

²³⁹ Al-Qur'an, 3:196-7

²⁴⁰ Al-Qur'an, 20:131

“O you who have Faith! take care of your own selves. He who strays cannot harm you when you are on the right way.”

Then, the Qur’an refers to the subject of Resurrection and the reckoning of everyone’s deeds, and says:

“...To Allah is your return totally; then He will inform you of what you had been doing.”



Verse 43

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا شَهَادَةُ بَيْنِكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ حِينَ الْوَصِيَّةِ
اِثْنَانِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ أَوْ آخَرَانِ مِنْ غَيْرِكُمْ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ صَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَأَصَابَتْكُمْ مُصِيبَةُ الْمَوْتِ تَحْبِسُونَهُمَا مِنْ بَعْدِ الصَّلَاةِ فَيُقْسِمَانِ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ
ارْتَبْتُمْ لَنْ نَشْتَرِي بِهِ ثَمَنًا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ وَلَا نَكُمُ شُهَادَةَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا إِذًا لَمِنَ الْآثِمِينَ﴾

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:106

O You Who Believe!

- When death approaches any of you,
- (Take) witnesses among yourselves when making bequests - two just men of your own (brotherhood) or others from outside if you are journeying through the earth, and the chance of death befalls you (thus),
- If you doubt (their truth), detain them both after prayer, and let them both swear by Allah. “We wish not in this for any worldly gain, even though the (beneficiary) be our near relation.
- We shall hide not the evidence before Allah.
- If we do, then behold! the sin be upon us!”

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Taba'taba'i

The message of first two Ayats is that if any one of you is on a journey and death approaches him, then he should appoint two believers as witnesses. But if two Muslim witnesses are not available then appoint two from among the people of the book. If the heirs of the deceased have any suspicions about the witness of the “Will” then they should detain both the witnesses and they should swear by God that they have spoken the truth. The issue will be closed

once they have done so. But if it is later found that the first two witnesses had lied then two new witnesses will be appointed.

This ayah is connected with the previous ones because if the person had died at a place close to Muslim settlements then there would be no need for non-Muslim witnesses. If the death has occurred during the journey then the witness of the two non-Muslims will be regarded as acceptable and authentic. Non-Muslim here means the people of the book and not the polytheists. God has not given any status and respect to the polytheist. God then asks to detain the two witnesses after the prayers.

And then make them swear in the name of God when you doubt their witness about not delivering the full amount of goods that the deceased had entrusted to them according to his “will” or that they may have made change in it. Those who give witness will say, *We will not sell our evidence (or witness) for a low price when we give witness though he (the deceased) may be a relative.*

A discussion under the light of Hadith

Ali b. Ibrahim narrates a tradition In *Al-Kafi*:

A companion of the Prophet, Tamim Darimi went on a trade journey with Ibn Bandi and Ibn Abi Maria. Included among the goods that he carried were some engraved gold utensils and necklaces. He fell ill and died while on his journey. He entrusted these two Christian companions with all his goods including the gold utensil and necklaces. On returning to Madina these two returned his goods to his successors after taking away the gold utensils and necklaces. His inheritors asked them, “Was he sick for a long time that a considerable expense was made for it?” They replied, “No he was sick for a short time.”

The successors asked them, “Were his goods stolen during the journey?” They said “No” The further asked, “Was there a loss in the business?” Again they said: “No.” They then asked, “What happened then to the costly goods like the gold utensils and the necklaces?” They answered, “We have handed over the goods that he entrusted to us.”

The matter was brought before the Messenger of Allah who asked them to swear on God, which they did. The Messenger of God let them

go free after they had taken the oath. Some time later, however, the goods were recovered from these two people and the successors of Tamim Darimi came to the Messenger to tell him about it. He waited for the order of God in this context. God then revealed the verse.

God has, therefore, accepted the witness of two persons from the people of the book in such cases when there is no Muslim present or available.

In my view the Salat referred to is the Asr Prayers. The word “the earlier” means those that had given witness earlier and *Tafsir Durrul Manthur* states that there are many explanations for the word “O You Who Believe!” and Tirmizi has mentioned one such tradition while considering it to be weak. Ibn Abi Haitum has also mentioned it; Nahas has mentioned it in his book *Nasiq*.

Abu Shaykh Ibn Marduya, Hakim, and Abu Nayim, Abi Nazar has quoted Kuleni, who has quoted Kalbi, who in turn has quoted the slave of Umm Hani Bazan who quoted Ibn Abbas who quoted Tamim Darimi about the background of the words “O You Who Believe! When death approaches any of you.” Tamim Darimi explained:

This ayah exonerates everyone excepting me and A'di Ibn Huda. Both Tamim and A'di were Christians before they accepted Islam and often used to go on business trips to Syria. Once the slave of Bani Seham Badeel b. Abi Mariyam joined them for business purpose. He had a glass made of silver, which his master had given him to sell at a good price. When he fell fatally ill on the way he made a will and asked to return the goods after his death to his successors.

Tamim further adds:

We sold that particular glass made of silver for 1000 Dirhams and shared the proceeds between ourselves. We gave his successors all the goods they asked us about this particular glass. We replied, “He entrusted us with nothing else but the goods we have given.” Time passed. Tamim said: “Later when we had accepted Islam and the Holy Messenger came to Madina. I went to him and repented for my sin. I then called the man’s successors, told them the truth and handed them my share of 500 Dirhams. When I told them about my friend Adi, he was called and asked to swear. This was the moment this particular

ayah was revealed. Umaru b. Aas and another person stood witness and Adi was forced to return his share of 500 Dirhams.”

Imam as-Sadiq عليه السلام says,

If a person dies at a place where there are no Muslims then it is permissible to allow a non-Muslim to be witness.

Comment

I feel that the meaning of this tradition has been discerned or evolved from the ayah itself. The authority of Yahya b. Muhammad has been cited In *Al-Kafi* as saying, “I asked Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq عليه السلام about this ayah ‘O You Who Believe! When death approaches any of you. (Take) witnesses among yourselves when making bequests - two just men of your own (brotherhood) or others from outside if you are journeying through the earth, and the chance of death befalls you (thus).’

The Imam said: “those of you” means two Muslims from amongst you; and “those other than you” refers to persons from the people of the book; but if no one of them is available, then you can take two witnesses from the Sabaens; because the Holy Messenger used to accept Jizya from the Sabaens like he did from the people of the book.

The Imam says: When the successor of the deceased has doubts about the witness given by the two witnesses and till such time that two new witnesses do not replace the old ones, their witnesses will not be deemed obsolete.

There are many traditions that explain the abovementioned ayahs. *Usul al-Kafi* and *Tafsir Ayyashi* have quoted Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq عليه السلام and Imam Ridha عليه السلام. Some traditions have explained that the words “others” in the ayah “others from outside” to mean the polytheists because the polytheists are more common than the people of the book. Since *al-Kafi* has quoted the traditions through Abi Sabah Alkanani who has quoted Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq عليه السلام.

I am of the view that the comment of the Imam about the above ayah which has been recorded by Shaykh Suduq that: *Qur’an consists of two kinds of Ayats; one that gives good news and the other that admonishes and warns us* is not based on the sayings of this Imam because it does not correlate with the beginning that

the Prophets replied to God's query by saying that they do not know and God knows best. The idea that Qur'an is based on these two kinds of Ayats does not stand. We cannot understand it to be so if we look at the last portion of the Hadith.

The words literally mean that the Qur'an consists of both the manifest Ayats that are easy and the hidden ones that are difficult. This will create a controversy because Qur'an does not consist of only two kinds of ayah. There are Ayats that admonish, that speak of forgiveness and those that mention God's mercies. When we study the explanation given by the Imam we learn that their meaning of Taqrih here will stand in contrast to the meaning of Taqrib and that is Tabi'd.

Qur'an is the complete explanation of the meanings of truth. Since every one cannot understand it in depth, we should take it as certain Ayats of Qur'an bring us close to the God by symbolizing many meanings for one reality e.g. "soul" wherein God says, "This Qur'an is a book the Ayats of which has been revealed with proof to the learned and then explained in details."²⁴¹

In this situation the beginning of the Hadith wherein the Imam had referred to the saying of the Messenger - We do not know and you are all wise - proves that the knowledge of man is not personally attained, but the knowledge of God is entirely His Own. In other words we can say when knowledge comes into contact with any being, that being first comes into contact with God and then God gives him the knowledge that he is capable of. God has the knowledge of everything and he bestows parts of its upon his subjects when he chooses them. Qur'an says, "*They cannot comprehend any part of his knowledge except what he pleases; His chair (knowledge) extends over the heavens and the earth.*"

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Witnesses should be men of honour and integrity; they can be non-Muslims if Muslims are not available.

The object of the procedure mentioned in these verses is to eliminate the chances of false evidence. This procedure was followed in an actual case in the Holy Prophet's life-time.

²⁴¹ Al-Quran, 10:1

Tamin Dari, a companion of the Holy Prophet died abroad, having made over his goods to two Christian fellow travellers, to be delivered to his designated heirs in Madina. They, however, kept back some valuable articles. When this was found out, oaths were taken from those who knew, and justice was done by the Holy Prophet.

What one leaves behind should be clearly defined, according to the law of inheritance as well as one's own wishes. No vagueness is allowed in Islam, because the path is that of awareness, discrimination, and knowledge.

In verse 8 of *al-Adiyat* also *khayr* refers to wealth, as in this verse. *Khayr* according to most commentators means abundant wealth or large property.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

Although the Sunni school thinks that this verse has been abrogated by verse 11 of *al-Nisa*, but its proper study makes it clear that the distribution of wealth among the heirs is to be effected after taking the will (bequest) of the deceased into consideration. The Holy Prophet and Imam Ali had clearly, in many instances, advised those, who sought their guidance, to bequeath or not to bequeath according to the merits and circumstances of the seekers of guidance.

Here the word *kutiba* means "laid down." It can be compulsory or optional according to the merits and circumstances of the case.

To alter or to misinterpret the word of Allah is a major sin. Beware. He is hearing, knowing. The wishes of a departed being should not be altered. In case of disagreement, proper settlement, within shari-ah, should be made so as not to deprive the rightful heirs, nor let those, in whose favour the bequest has been made, suffer any undue loss.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

Upon the revelation of the above holy verse, as well as its two successive ones, it has been narrated that: a Muslim believer, called Ibn Abi-Mariyah, accompanied with two christian Arabs, by the names of Tamim and Uday, came out of Madina with the intention of trade. During the time they were travelling, Ibn Abi-Mariyah, who was a Muslim, became sick. He wrote his testament and hid it inside his properties. Then he trusted those properties with his Christian fellow-travellers.

Before his death, he bequeathed that those two Christians would deliver them to his family. After his death, those two fellow-travellers untied his furniture and took its worthy and interesting parts, and then they returned the rest to the inheritors of the man.

When the inheritors opened the parcel of the properties, they did not find some parts of what Ibn Abi-Mariyah had brought with him. But suddenly they saw the testament he had left. They found that the list of all the stolen things were recorded in that testament. They detailed the matter for those two Christian fellow-travellers, but they denied and said that they delivered them what he had given them. Then, they could not help complaining the Prophet ﷺ. So, the verse was revealed and stated its ordinance.

One of the most important matters which Islam emphasizes on is the subject of observing and protecting the rights and properties of people, and, in general, the execution of social justice.

At first, in order that the inheritors' rights in the properties of the deceased not to be spoilt, and that the rights of those members remained behind, including orphans and minors, not to be violated, the Qur'an instructs the believers, saying:

“O you who have Faith ! call to witness between you when death approaches any of you, while making a bequest, two just persons from among you...”

Here, the expression of bearing witness, of course, is accompanied with the accomplishment of testament. In other words, these two persons are witnesses to both the testament and the executors of the testament. Thus, the verse indicates that if you are on a journey and one of you is going to die and you cannot find any executors of testament and witnesses, then you may take two persons from non-Muslims for the purpose. The verse continues saying:

“...or two others from other than you, if you are travelling in the land and the affliction of death befalls you...”

The objective meaning of 'other than you' (non-Muslims) is only the people of the Book, viz. the Jews and the Christians, because nowhere Islam has attached importance to pagans and idolators.

Then the verse says:

“...detain the two after the prayer, then if you doubt them, they shall swear by Allah (saying): ‘ We will not sell it for any gain, even if it were a relative...”

And also they should add:

“...and we will not conceal the testimony of Allah; for then we would indeed be among the sinners’.”

It is cited in *Ghurar al-Hikam*, vol. 1, p. 185 that Hadhrat Imam Amirul Mu'mineen Ali عليه السلام said:

“The quickest retribution is the retribution of a false oath.”



Verse 44

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا زَحْفًا فَلَا تُوَلُّوهُمُ الْأَدْبَارَ﴾

Al-Anfal (The Spoils of War) 8:15

O You Who Believe!

- When you meet the unbelievers in hostile array, never turn your backs to them.

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Tabataba'i

These verses are about the commandments and admonishments that are related to the battle of Badr. They ask the Muslims to be God fearing and never to oppose God and His Messenger so that they may never be the subject of God's anger or wrath. They record the incident of Badr and the help and obligation that God bestowed upon the believers.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

To turn one's back to the enemy in the battlefield is a shameful sin. Refer to the commentary of Surah Al'i Imran: 121, 122, 128, 140 to 142, 144, 151 to 156 and 166 to 168 and Suratul Baraat: 25 to 27 to know about those who either used to watch the fighting from a safe distance or run away from the scene of battle when defeat appeared to them as a certainty.

Immediately after the conquest of Makkah, the pagan idolaters, under the command of Malik b. Awf, organised a great gathering of 4000 soldiers near Hunayn which is on the road to Tayf from Makkah to make plans for attacking the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet, with a force of 12000, marched towards Hunayn. For the first time the Muslims had tremendous odds in their favour. On leaving the narrow oasis of Hunayn the road enters winding gorges, suitable for ambushes. As soon as the Muslim vanguard entered the hilly country, the enemy fell upon them with full fury and caused havoc with their

arrows from their places of concealment. Many were slain, and many ran away from the battle as they had done in the battle of Uhad. Those who were acclaimed as the heroes of Islam, after the departure of the Holy Prophet from this world, were among the deserters.

Abu Qatada says:

The Muslims took to flight. I was also among them. Suddenly I saw Umar b. Khattab among those who were running away. I asked him: 'What has happened?' He said: *It is the will of Allah.*²⁴²

According to some traditions Ali b. abi Talib, Abbas b. Abd al Muttalib, Abu Sufyan b. Harith and Abdullah b. Masud were the only four persons who stayed with the Holy Prophet. Some say there were ten persons who did not run away. Ali stood in front of the Holy Prophet and stopped every attack made by the enemy to slay him. The Holy Prophet called those who were deserting to come back. Some of them returned and joined Ali to launch a counter attack on the enemy. When Ali killed Abu Jarul, the standard bearer of the enemy army, a general retreat began to take place among the invaders, which soon turned into chaos and then flight. In this way a most crushing defeat was inflicted on the enemy.

After the battle, on the instructions of the Holy Prophet, the spoils of war taken by the Muslims, were returned to those who embraced Islam. Some refused to comply with his orders. In such cases the Holy Prophet compensated them.

When one companion protested that the Holy Prophet had not done justice in the matter of distributing the spoils of war, some people wanted to kill him, but the Holy Prophet stopped them and said: *Wait. Such people, on their own, one day will go out of the true faith, then the best of men among you will kill him.* And that man was killed by Ali in the battle of Nahrawan.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

The believers who stayed with the Holy Prophet on the day of Hunayn also received the divine tranquillity (sakinah), along with the Holy

²⁴² Sahih Bukhari Vol. 3, p. 45.

Prophet. In verse 40 of this surah it is said that the companion of the Holy Prophet in the cave was deprived of this tranquillity.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

The Arabic word /zahf/ means: ‘ to crawl, creep ‘ and ‘ to dig on the ground ‘. Since the movement and advance of a large army from the distance seems that it crawls and proceeds, it is called such.

The abundance of the forces of the enemy cannot be taken as an allowance to flee from the battle-field.

The verse says:

“O you who have Faith! when you meet those who disbelieve (to attack) in battle, then do not turn your backs to them.”

Imam Ridha عليه السلام, upon the philosophy of the banning of escape (from the battle-field), in a tradition has said:

Flight is the weakness of religion, contempt of the leader of the Truth, encouraging the enemy, and wiping out the school of law.²⁴³

Among the advantages that Ali b. Abi Talib عليه السلام had, and to which as an example he himself sometimes referred, was the very matter of flight from the battle-field. He has said:

“Verily I have never fled from (the abundance of enemy in) any battle (although I have participated in many battle-fields), and none combated me save that I satiated the earth from his blood.”

²⁴³ Nur-uth-Thaqalayn



Verse 45

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا عَنَّهُ وَ أَنْتُمْ تَسْمَعُونَ﴾

Al-Anfal (The Spoils of War) 8:20

O You Who Believe!

- Obey Allah,
- And His Messenger,
- And turn not away from him when you hear (him speak).

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Tabataba'i

The words “Do not oppose the Messenger when you hear the revelation of truth.” The orders and restrictions are all beneficial for your worldly as well as religious life. Indeed the orders and the restrictions seemingly refer to the day of Badr but they are general for all times.

The meaning of this sentence is very clear but the thing to note is that there is an insult of the disbelieving polytheists, in it says, “They said we heard it when they do not listen.” The words “We heard it” has been connected with some Ayats that come later when God says, “When Our Signs are rehearsed to them, they say: “We have heard this (before): if we wished, we could say (words) like these” and we can recite something like the same.”²⁴⁴

When God says that they do not hear means that they would have accepted if they had heard as He has said in Surtul Aaraf (Verse 179) “and ears wherewith they hear not.” and then refers to them when he spoke about the residents of Hell in Sura Mulk ayah-10. “And they will say “Had we but listened or used our intelligence we would not have been among the dwellers of the blazing fire.”

²⁴⁴ Al-Qur'an, 31:8

The words to listen to the words of truth with one's ears and in the next ayah it means to accept the revealed and heard message.

As you are now aware both these Ayats are addressed to the Muminin and both are attached to the preceding Ayats, which are addressed to the polytheists. God declares the polytheists fit for admonishment and ridicules their plea for victory when He says, "The dominance is given to the words of truth over the words of disbelief and to the invitation to truth over the invitation to evil." God then addresses the Muminin and orders them to obey Him and His Messenger. If they do not pay heed even after hearing the revelations then He gives them respite (to become faithful) but he admonishes them that they should not try to emulate the polytheists and say "We have heard when they have not paid heed."

It is possible that the ayah may be referring to those selected few individuals of Makkah who initially declared their belief in Islam but their hearts were still in doubts and so they sided with the polytheists in the battle. When the torment of God overtook the polytheists at Badr these people also suffered the same fate. When they reached Khybar, some of them had already become believers but their parents would not let them go, fearing that they will side with the Messenger once they reached Madina. They reluctantly came with their parents to join in the battle of Badr. When they saw the strength of the Muslims at Badr they reneged from their allegiance to Islam saying, "These poor people have been misled by their religion"

These selected few individuals were, Qais b. Waleed b. Mughira, Ali b. Ummaya b. Khalaf, Aas b. Hajjaj, Haris b. Zama'a and Qais b. Fakih b. Mughira.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Verse 46 of Believers

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

In the Qur'an thoroughly, the commandment of the obedience from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has occurred next to the obedience from Allah. In eleven occurrences the term /ati'un/ (do obey) has been mentioned after the Qur'anic phrase: "Be in awe of Allah."

In this verse, although both the obedience from Allah and the obedience from the Messenger are referred to, the objective is the disobedience from the Messenger, (not from Allah), specially in the Battle of Badr and his commands concerning the military affairs.

Therefore, for the continuation of the order of the truth, people should always be recommended to be obedient unto the Divine leader. The verse says:

“O you who have Faith! Obey Allah and His Messenger...”

It should also be known that leaving the obedience from the Prophet ﷺ is the disobedience from Allah. The verse continues saying:

“...and do not turn away from him while you hear (him).”

In this obedience, the obedience from the Divine leader, truthfulness is the necessary condition, and only the act of ‘ hearing ‘ is not enough. The verse says:

“And be not like those who say: ‘We heard’, but they do not hear (indeed).”



Verse 46

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا
أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ﴾

Al-Anfal (The Spoils of War) 8:24

O You Who Believe!

- Give your response to Allah and His Messenger
- When He calls you to that which will give you life.
- And know that Allah comes in between a man and his heart
- And that, it is He to Whom you shall (all) be gathered.

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Taba'taba'i

The words in the words, “Obey God and Obey the Messenger” there is an invitation to truth and the admonishment about not believing. Here the same is repeated by asking the believer to respond to the invitation to truth given by God and his Messenger. This reminder is explained through the truth and is based on it. The truth of this essential duty is what has saved mankind from obliteration and rekindled his life. The fact of the human life is that God is closer to him than his heart and soon he will have to return to Him. This is the reason why he should be alert and aware of all that he does.

Explanation

Life is something priceless and is aware of a greater existence encompassing and why should I not be when nothing else exists around him but contradictory and void. The priceless-ness of this life is because of realization and determination.

Mankind is a living creature like all other manifest beings governed by definite principles that are similar to rules that govern all other creatures and ensure their well being and existence. It ensures his well being and keeps him safe from problems and losses and it also ensures his peace and development. The guidance that teaches man to differentiate between the evil and the beneficial is inherent (from God) and a sign of his creation. It is impossible that any part of his creation and existence can be faulty and he understands this perfectly and has no doubts about it. Like other creatures, instead of falling prey to errors of omission or commission, adopts the God ordained way of life that ensures their well being and safety.

If they lose the right path, then it is because of other facts and reasons that misguide him from the path of truth and entice him to the path of sin. It is like a body that exists naturally on earth is forced by his strength to soar high above the earth against his natural traits but return to earth the moment these pressures of urges subside. If his return is not under the pressure of some other force then he attains his position but if he is forced to return due to other factors or pressures then his condition will be different.

This is the same explanation that has been oft repeated in the Qur'an. It has said: the path of well being that is glorified by the presence of knowledge and action is not hidden on any human being and he is clearly able to realize the path that he has to take and the actions that he has to perform.

It is said in the next Sura:

“Then evil was the end of those who committed evil by rejecting God’s manifest signs and mocking them.”²⁴⁵

In Sura A’la God says:

“And the most reprobate one will avoid it.”²⁴⁶

Explanation

Those who do not believe in judgment and God will be punished in a way in which they will be neither dead nor alive. At times they will wish they were

²⁴⁵ Al-Qur’an, 30:10

²⁴⁶ Al-Qur’an, 87:11

dead to escape the punishment but they won't and since they will be alive to the punishment it will be nothing but a great torment. The five ayahs earlier, God has said:

“Therefore remind them (men) in case the reminder profits them. The reminder will be received by him who fears God, but it will be avoided by the wretched.”²⁴⁷

And in Suratul Shams (91), verse 10 God says:

“And by Nafs and by Him who perfected him in proportion. Then He showed him what is wrong and what is right for him. Indeed, he succeeds who purifies his own self and indeed he who corrupts himself fails.”

It happens at times that man loses his way in faith and action and suffers doubts but his mistakes are not connected with God and His guidance at all. It is merely because he has not made the correct use of his intelligence and has fallen prey to his sexual urges and satanic doubts, thereby has lost the path of development and success.

In Suratul Najam (53), verse 23 the Qur'an says:

“They are nothing but (mere) names which you and your fathers have named. God sent no authority for them. They follow but a conjecture and what their own selves are inclined to; the right guidance has now come to them from their Lord.”

And again in Suratul Ghashiya (88), verse 23, He says:

“Have you seen one who takes as God his own vain desires while God has allowed him to go astray, knowing it, and sets a seal upon his ear and heart and put upon his eyes a veil? Who can then guide him besides God? Will you not then reflect?”

The premise of this is that all these things (knowledge and actions) invite the nature of man towards a life that may be termed the true life because they are the its ingredients. A true life is dependant on faithful deeds and belief and these actions and knowledge too desire such a life. A truly obedient and successful life is able to retrieve the lost ones back to the true path.

²⁴⁷ Al-Qur'an, Suratul A'lal 9-11

We therefore, conclude that if a person moves away from the true path that God has shown him and to which he is invited, then it means that he has reneged from a successful life. Until such time that he returns to the true path of knowledge and actions, from which he had moved away, because of reluctance to believe and obey and because of his attraction towards evil and ignorance, no living being can bring back to the right path.

This means the same as the ayah says, *“O you who believe, respond to the invitation of God and His Messenger when they invite you to the things that rejuvenate or rekindle your life.”* The word “Lam” has been used in the manner common to the Arabs. The invitation of the Messenger is the true faith and the true faith is that Islam which the Qur’an explains as the response to the invitation to truth and actions and to benefit from pious and fruitful actions.

Qur’an has another meaning for life, which is far profound from this ordinary and simple explanation. In both, the life and the worldly life from birth to death is full of meaningful and just actions that can be observed even among the animals. God, however, is hinting to a life other than this life for mankind as in Sura Ankabut (26) because the dazzle of this life can be termed as an illusion or a mirage compared to that true life, which is the embodiment of those actions that give the soul a true meaning. The business of this worldly life are like a screen that shields it from the true life that is to come.

In Surah Qaf (50) this is further explained by the words:

“You were heedless of this; now we have removed your veil from you, your sight today is sharp.”

Every one shall see the consequence of his own evils that he could not visualize in this life.

We learn:

- That there is a respect and price for man,
- and that life is the hereafter while this worldly life is but a mirage.
- The veil will soon be lifted to exhibit the life that is free from all contaminations
- and man does not discern anything but light of belief and submission (to the will of God).

- The Qur'an says, *"They are those, God has inscribed faith in their hearts and has strengthened them with a Spirit from Himself."*²⁴⁸
- And then further states in Suratul Anam (6), verse 122: *"Is he who was dead, then we raised him to life and made for him a light whereby he walks among people, like unto him that whose similitude is one who is in utter darkness, whence he cannot come forth?"*
- This life in the hereafter is more respectable and on a higher plane than this worldly life of all kinds of men and animals.
- The books then says, *"We gave clear proofs and evidence and supported him with Ruhul Quds."* (The exalted spirit or Gabriel?)
- It is the same as the meaning in Suratul Shuara (26), verse 52 that says: *"Thus did we reveal to you our guidance by Our command; you did not know what the Book (Qur'an) was, nor the faith, but We made it a light, guiding thereby whomsoever We please of our servants and verily a guide to the right path."*

The conclusion that we now draw is that there is another life over and above these two lives about which we will discuss in details later.

The conclusion we come to is that there is a true life for humans, which is superior to this inferior life. A person reaches that life when his willingness to submit himself (to God) is perfected and then he joins the likes of the ordained ones and the saints. It is in the same way that he reaches this present stage of life when the seeds that carry him develop and take the shape of a human.

The ayah being discussed says, *"O you who believe! Give your response to Allah and His Apostle, when He calls you to that which will give you life."*

This ayah invites man to respond or show the willingness to accept the doctrine (Islam) that invites him to a better life in the hereafter by obeying and practicing its commands. It prepares man to understand this promised true life just as present life also asks him to do pious deeds. The verse, *"Whosoever did good, whether male or female, being a believer, then We shall certainly make them live good and pure life. We shall certainly give them*

²⁴⁸ Al-Quran, 58:22

their (just) recompense, with the best of what they were doing.”²⁴⁹ has the same purpose and meaning.

In the verse being discussed the words “He calls you to that, which will give you life.” Refers to the Messenger’s invitation to the divine truth, which has the power to and gives us a new life so a person should have no hesitation about accepting it. This also includes the life that is closest to God and is eternal and because it includes these things. This is also the reason why that this verse should be interpreted in a narrow sense as has been done by some exegetes who says that since it includes the words “He calls you to that which will give you life.” it means that when the Messenger calls you to Jihad he invites you to an eternal and respectful life.

Some exegetes have taken the view that Jihad is the base of an eternal life from the words:

“And do not think of those slain in the way of God as dead. They are alive with their Lord, being sustained.”²⁵⁰

Others have taken the view that it means to respond and obey the invitation of God and the Messenger to the truth because belief and truth rekindle life whereas disbelief and evil destroy the possibility of a future perfect life.

Another group is of the view that knowledge is life giving and ignorance in reality is death. Qu’ran is the divine light (Noor), the actual life and the perfect knowledge.

Yet another group is of the view that this invitation given by the Messenger is about paradise because life in paradise will be eternal and without upheavals and decadence.

But all these conjectures or inferences are the ways that this verse may be interpreted so we cannot say that the explanation we give is the only explanation. We have already stated that this is a general verse and includes all, so there is no proof to make it wider than the general meaning by saying that it means this or that.

²⁴⁹ Al-Qur’an, 16:97

²⁵⁰ Al-Qur’an, 3:169

God says:

“And know that Allah comes in between a man and his heart. And that, it is He to Whom you shall (all) be gathered.”

- The heart is a well known part of the body but Qur’an has often used this word in the sense of realization of feelings and their demands within it and exposing them e.g. love and hate, hope and despair, desire and anxiety and others.
- The heart has many sides,
 - it orders,
 - it prefers,
 - it feels animosity,
 - it fears, it hopes and desires,
 - it is at times happy and at times sad.
- When the heart has all these facets then it can be termed as the real existence within the body that instigates the caravan of life.

The human being like all other creatures, which exist, is a part of this world and is composed of many facets and elements that are under his control. He is their owner and uses them for conflicting feelings. All these elements, facets, power are inherent in him and he is their master. He unites these elements and powers no matter what their numbers is. He is that embodiment of unity that despite being a single entity works, stops work, moves and even becomes static.

The special factor is that both the human being and his elements of power and resources have been created by God who is the master of every facet of man, who uses them and gives him whatever he wants but declares man to be the owner of what is given. God exists between man and the facets or elements subservient to him. He is the authority that exists between man and his heart, between man and his ears, eyes, his body and his life. He uses his powers as the creator of man to whom he has gifted these powers and who uses them as a proxy owner. He makes man the authority within limits beneficial to him but confiscates these powers and authority when He wants.

This arrangement or order is also for other creatures because there is no creation that has no individuality, its subordinates too have individuality but the special feature is that both God is the owner of both the creation’s as well

as its subordinate's individuality and it is God who has declared the humans to be the owners or possessors of the elements. He stands between him and that which he owns.

The long and short is that God stands as a screen between the human and his heart and whatever the human being has is through his knowledge that connects both. God is closer to the human being than his jugular vein. Sura Qaf (16) says, "We are closer to him than his jugular vein."

The verse being discussed also expresses the same when it says, "And know that Allah comes in between a man and his heart. "The premise of the matter is that God is the owner of all creation, including humans who are insignificant, so He is more closer to facets or features that humans possess than human themselves because whatever man has, has been endowed by God and so He stands between man and his ownership of powers. This is the reason why the verse being discussed has been ended on" it is He to Whom you shall (all) be gathered", and the reason for this is that there is a visible and valid sign for all creations in Domsday and God controls and owns all.

To be the supreme owner is His sign only, for He has no partners and it is frivolous to think of a manifestation of signs for Him as a being. Only His kingdom is eternal because He has said:

*"Whose is the kingdom this Day? It is Allah's, the One, the irresistible."*²⁵¹

In another instance He says:

*"It will be the Day when no one shall have the power (to do) anything for another, and the Decision that Day will with Allah."*²⁵²

So what this issue means to say is:

- Remember that God is the true of both your hearts and yourselves and He is closer to you than whatever you possess. You will learn this soon when you return to Him (how powerful an owner is He and how His power encompasses all).
- Remember that nothing can free you from His authority.

²⁵¹ Al-Qur'an, Momin, 16

²⁵² Al-Qur'an, Infitar 19

But the words “And know that Allah comes in between a man and his heart. And that, it is He to Whom you shall (all) be gathered”, is interlinked with the words *Give your response to Allah and His Messenger. When He calls you to that which will give you life.* The reason is that God being in between a man and his heart is in the sense that, if the man does not respond to the invitation of Messenger then none of his excuse will be held reliable, because the invitation is to something that rekindles life and the essence of the Message is the Unity of God or Tawhid.

And, when it is said that God is closer to man than his heart, which is the first power of realization, the man experiences through his soul, and through the heart he realizes the presence of the better. So, before man can discover his heart, the things that he discovers through the heart, he recognizes God to be the Sole God who has no partners. If he doubts anything then it does not mean that he has doubted upon God, the creator of things and thus he is not considered to have become wayward. So when the Messenger of God invites him towards the truth, which is a treasure, of a lifetime he should not hesitate in responding to his invitation and he has no valid reason for not doing so. He cannot say that he was unaware of the reality behind the invitation or he was worried and was perplexed about accepting the truth. The Truth is the all-encompassing God and there is no obstacle or screen between Him and His creation. He is closer to man any screen that he may think of. No matter what perplexities are there God is still present a man and his heart. Man really has no valid reason not to recognize God or to doubt His unity (Tawhid).

Now when God exists between the man and his heart it means that He is closer to that person than his heart because every intermediary is closer to both sides and since He is so close to him he knows all that is in his heart more than him. So man is helpless when he hears the Messenger’s invitation to truth (which is also his code of living) that he has to accept it both heart fully and orally. It should not be that he turns to hypocrisy by nurturing it in his heart though his tongue is unwilling to express it because God is more aware of things secreted in the man’s heart. And since he has to return to God his hypocrisy will then be exposed. The Quran says:

“The Day when they will all come out. Nothing will be hidden from Allah.”²⁵³

At another place the Qur’an says: “But they will never be able to hide a single fact from Allah.”

Even if we overlook this fact, when God is there between a man and his heart, and we know that God is the creator and owner of the man’s heart so before the man can use his heart, God can use it any way He wants. Now all the feelings, of faith or doubt, fear or hope, unease and calm or other (instinctive or natural) reactions, which a man claims to be his own, will naturally revert more to God. This is a connection related to use. God can, due to his relationship with the heart, use it without any aid or help, and without any obstructions or admonishments that may force Him. He is oblivious to such things.

The Qur’an says:

“There is none to put back His judgment and He is swift at reckoning.”²⁵⁴

And then in another chapter it says:

“He is the dominion and to Him belong all praises and thanks, and He is able to do all things.”²⁵⁵

Therefore, if a person is able to find inner peace through his good wishes and faith, or he thinks of doing some good work, or has an inclination towards piety and is proud about it, then this is the result of his ignorance. It is a person’s foolishness that makes him believe that he is the sole owner of his heart and believes himself to be all-powerful, for everything is encompassed by and obedient to God. He can turn them in any direction He pleases. He is the true owner of the hearts and souls and rules over them just as He says, “We will turn their hearts and visions aside even as they did not believe in it the first time, and We will leave them in their contumacy blindly wandering on.” (Sura Anam-110).

So it is important that instead of being vain, man should always fear him that God may not force his head down.” God can direct man anytime He feels from

²⁵³ Al-Qur’an, 40:16

²⁵⁴ Al-Qur’an, 14:41

²⁵⁵ Al-Qur’an, Taghabun, 1

well being to wretchedness and from stability to ignominy. Nothing can save him from God's ruse.

On the contrary he should not be desponded even if he sees that his heart is not inclined to the truth and to good deeds; he should take the initiative to correct himself and to accept the invitation by God and His Messenger. In this manner he should rejuvenate his heart but should not desert the battle in despondence and hopelessness. He should firmly believe that God is present between him and his heart and can return his heart to betterment whenever He so desires by installing his benevolence and his soul in it. He holds the control or the reins for all actions and He says:

*"Certainly no one despairs Allah's mercy, except the people who disbelieve."*²⁵⁶

And then He says:

*"And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord other than those who have gone astray?"*²⁵⁷

This verse as you discern is one of the most compact and important verses of the Qur'an that deals with the realization of God's truth (Like God being present between man and his heart). By addressing the hypocrites, God desires to clarify that He is aware of all that there is in their hearts more than them and this is how He is able to root out hypocrisy and vanity from them.

The true believers who traverse the path of faith with his verses have been assured that the control of the hearts is with Him. They are not free to have the control over their hearts as owners and not oblivious of God. The crux of the matter is that God has erased vanity from their hearts and the thought that they are in complete command of all that they possess. When they realize that they have attained piety and inner faith they are not vain any longer and when they find their being and their hearts surrounded by the allurements of this world they do not lose faith in God.

What we learn from the above is that no matter how we suppose the words, "God stands between the hearts and the person" it will still be connected with and explain the words, "O you who believe! Give your response to Allah and His Apostle,

²⁵⁶ Al-Qur'an, Yusuf-87

²⁵⁷ Al-Qur'an, 15:56

when He calls you to that which will give you life.” It is also clear to us that this verse has a greater connotation than the explanations related by the exegetes like one who said: In this world of human being, God is closer to their hearts. In another place he censures them strictly when He says, *“for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein.”*

A second among the exegetes is of the view that heart cannot conceal anything from God because God is closer to the heart than the man himself so whatever a person knows about his heart God knows better.

Yet another commentator is of the view that God is the intermediary between the person and his heart for all benefits. The heart cannot fulfill its desires whenever it wants. Knowing this, it is better for him that he should respond and be obedient as soon as possible and should not postpone or dilly-dally about it.

In short this verse instigates man to be obedient to God both in belief and in deeds.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Verse 20 of al-Anfal

It is a warning to those who participated in the battle of Badr that the promise made in the preceding verse (Allah is with the believers) will not save them from punishment if they ever turn away from the Holy Prophet and his commands, because as soon as any one turns away from the Holy Prophet he becomes a disbeliever or a hypocrite. (Refer to the commentary of al Baqarah: 8 to 20 and 93).

Whenever the Holy Prophet made known Ali’s special relationship with Allah and himself, all his notable companions were present, particularly in Ghadir Khum where he declared: “Of whomsoever I am mawla Ali is his mawla” (see commentary of Suratul Ma’idah, verse 67), yet they paid no attention to his last and final call which completed and perfected the religion of Allah, although verse 24 again ordains that the call of Muhammad is the call of Allah.

The call of the Holy Prophet invited the people to follow the divinely commissioned Imams among his Ahlul Bayt who alone were chosen to guide

the people unto the right path. It is the duty of every believer to answer the call of the Holy Prophet or any of the Imams of his Ahlul Bayt to strive in the way of Allah to defend the faith (Jihad).

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

Every person responds to the call of his desires, but when he submits to the call of Allah or the Holy Prophet his act of submission is due to “the coming of Allah in between a man and his desires”, and thus he is prevented from going astray on account of the dictates of his vain desires.

In verse 25 it is made clear that the consequences of social, political and religious deviation will not only harm those who have done injustice to themselves but also equally jeopardise the well-being of those who have done no wrong, therefore all the believers should safeguard themselves against evil by observing the laws made by Allah.

On several occasions the Muslims were put to test and trial (Suratul Ahzab, verse 11). Abu Ayyub Ansari narrates that once the Holy Prophet said to Ammar: “After me you will encounter many troubles. My followers will kill each other. They will sow the seeds of discord among themselves. In such events adhere to Ali, even if all of my followers form an alliance against him. Follow Ali and leave the people to follow whichever way they desire. Ali will not turn you away from the right path shown by me. To obey Ali is to obey me, and to obey me is to obey Allah.”

Hakim Abul Qasim Asqani says, when this verse was revealed, the Holy Prophet said:

To oppose Ali’s successorship after me is to deny my prophethood and the prophethood of all the prophets before me.

According to Imam Hasan b. Ali al Mujtaba verse 25 gives report of the battle of Jamal engineered by Talha, Zubayr and A’isha against Ali. *Tafsir al Kashshaf* says that once Zubayr asked the Holy Prophet as to how much he loved Ali. The Holy Prophet said:

I love him as no man has ever loved any other man, not even his own son. How evil it will be when you will go to fight against him?

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

There are different kinds of life:

1. Vegetal life: “...Allah gives life to the earth after its death...”²⁵⁸
2. Animal life: “...the giver of life to the dead...”²⁵⁹
3. Mental life: “...who was dead then We raised him to life...”²⁶⁰
4. Eternal life: “...O! would that I had sent before for (this) my life!”²⁶¹

The purpose of the life, which comes into being by the acceptance of the invitation of prophets, is not the animal life, since without the effects and affluence of prophets this sort of life exists, too. Then, the objective of this life is the mental, intellectual, and spiritual life.

The phrase: ‘Allah intervenes between a man and his heart’ indicates that Allah is aware and present everywhere, and He encompasses everything so that He is closer to us than our jugular vein is. All bounties and successes belong to Him, and the activities of intellect and soul are under His authority, too.

However, the acceptance of the Prophet’s invitation is the same as the acceptance of Allah’s invitation; and the real life of man lies in Faith and righteous deed, to which prophets have invited, too.

The verse says:

“O you have Faith! Answer Allah and the Messenger when he invites you to that which gives you life...”

The ordinances of Islam gives spiritual life to the believers, the same as some medicine or surgery can be life-giving to a sick person.

²⁵⁸ Al-Qur’an, 57:17

²⁵⁹ Al-Qur’an, 41:39

²⁶⁰ Al-Qur’an, 6:122

²⁶¹ Al-Qur’an, 89:24

Going alongside the way of Allah ﷻ and divine prophets is the real life, while abandoning it is the death of humanity.

According to the Islamic literatures, one of the aspects of goodly life is the acceptance of the call of the Prophet of Islam ﷺ to the subject of mastership of Ali b. Abi Talib عليه السلام and his Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام. (Recorded in *Tafsirul-Furqan*, by Manaqib Tarmadhy)

He who believes in Allah's omnipresence and omnipotence does not disobey the invitation of prophets. Therefore, as long as you are alive and you have respite, embrace the Truth. (According to this interpretation, the phrase '...Allah intervenes between a man and his heart', metaphorically, means death.)

"...and know that Allah intervenes between a man and his heart..."

Among the aspects of the phrase: 'Allah intervenes between a man and his heart' there are: the effacement of infidelity and confirming Faith, the effacement of negligence and doubt and confirming recollection and certainty. (This meaning is recorded in *Tafsir-ul-Furqan*, narrated from Imam as-Sadiq عليه السلام.

All of you will be gathered on the Resurrection Day, then do respond to the invitation of prophets positively. The verse ends as follows:

"... and that unto Him you shall be gathered."



Verse 47

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَخُونُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ وَتَخُونُوا أَمَانَاتِكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ
تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

Al-Anfal (The Spoils of War) 8:27

O You Who Believe!

- Betray not the trust of Allah and the Messenger,
- Nor knowingly misappropriate things entrusted to you.

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Taba'taba'i

The view of another commentator is that the meaning of this verse is that since God is the owner of the hearts he can change their condition from one to another. Since the Muslims were afraid of battle God says, “Because God has the authority to stand in between” to change their thoughts of fear to serenity by standing in between the Muslims and the thoughts that instill fear in them.

There is a tradition from the Imams of the عليه السلام that the meaning of this verse is that He does not abandon the people to let them think of truth as evil and evil as truth. This issue will be dealt very soon in our discourse.

The Imams Ali and Al-Baqir and others have explained this verse. This verse is the admonishment about mischief that is related to the Muslims and is not related to the disbelievers and the polytheists. The entire Muslims are addressed because they are also affected by this evil. We have no proof to say that the words “know that God is severe in punishment.” Is the punishment in this world due to the internecine wars among the Muslims or their disputes that result from the absence of peace? Though the mischief is related to a certain specific group of Muslims the entire community should guard against

it and through “Amr bil Maruf and Nahi Anal Munkar” restrict the spread of this mischief.

This is the reason that the aim of this verse is to scare the people who are lax in the face of internal disputes. These disputes may divide them into various groups and sects. The fact that is clear is that the victorious group will have the command but this command will not be the supremacy that is granted by God to the adherents of Islam for this gain a temporary supremacy through evil and chaos. We can say in short that the mischief is connected with a particular group who are the oppressors but the signs are prevalent in all and it is due to mischief that they fall victim to hardships. They are all held responsible in the eyes of God for He is “severe in punishment.”

Though God has not given this mischief a particular name, instead has chosen to keep in vague, but in the very next sentence in which He says, “not in particular those of you who do wrong”, and “know that God is severe in punishment.” He has also clarified that some groups have disputes with others on things about which they all know. But, there is one group which hesitates in accepting the truth and take to untruth and oppression while there is another that has accepted the truth but does not follow the rule of “Do good and keep others from doing evil.” And because of this negligence the entire Ummah is afflicted.

It is an established reality that all oppression is not of this kind because they do not have these ingredients. God has warned and admonished us about the mischief that is prevalent in society. This mischief is of the kind where a government is bent on destroying the Islamic values or when the government takes unlawful control and then destroys the practice of the Sunnah and the adherence to the Holy Qur’an. Any thing that is a mischief is discerned in the social structure of the early days of Islam and so this verse fully addresses those people.

This is the kind of mischief wherein they try to destroy the very concept of “Wahdat” or the Unity of God as preached by Islam, destroyed the social fabric of the community’s glory through schism, shed innocent blood and insulted the women and the protected ones, and they reneged from both the book and the Sunnah. The Messenger amply clarifies this when he said: *Verily my people*

deserted this Qur'an. The later Ummah who had become aware of their misgivings and evil deeds could not save themselves from the dire consequence of severe punishments. *“The angels take away the souls of those who disbelieve, they smite their faces and their backs saying, “Taste the punishment of the blazing fire.”*

Some commentators are unhappy and upset over my interpretation of this verse and they say that this verse means to admonish and warn the Islamic Ummah about the mischief that has destroyed its unity and made it a victim of schism and they will be subjected to a severe punishment if they do not heed the warning. But these commentators have taken all the pains to describe this punishment as separate from the worldly punishment and thereby restrict the vast implication of this verse, but how can it be authentic after the words “But how can they [hope to] attain [to salvation] from so far away “they are trying to interpret it with some far fetched ideas and then raise the question, “why?.”

I would like to draw the attention of those who study to the meaning of the words “those who believe” as explained by me when I said that the verse is addressed to those who lived in the early days of Islam to create a respect for the believer and to becalm him from all apprehensions. You may also remember that the climax of all mischief was advent at the Battle of Badr.

This verse admonishes those people about the mischief they create for they will be affected by the dangerous consequences even if they are not directly involved. Some linguists may argue that the Nahi in this verse is not the Nahi in the words “La Tasibun” e.g. it is often said: “Avoid so and so lest he harms you” but the real sentence would be, “Save your self from him, for if you do so then he will not be able to harm you.” It is possible as some commentators say that the word “La” is an addenda and the verse would actually mean, “Protect yourselves from these mischief that will only harm those who have resorted to injustice.”

Some other commentators say that the word “La Tasibun” was actually “Litasibun” and the ‘l’ has been changed by Alif and this is common in Arabic language. Even then the meaning of the verse reverts to the meaning as explained by the Ahlul Bayt.

You have read that the verse has a commonality that encompasses all and this reaffirms my view that the words” O you who believe, respond to the invitation of God and the Messenger”, also address the people in general. This is about that news, which rekindles their lives, that leads to unity, that adherence by all which establishes the religion and guide all to save them from disunity.

The Holy Books says, “Hold fast all of you, to the rope of God and be not divided among yourselves.”²⁶² and then reiterates, “You should establish religion and make no divisions”²⁶³. The book further says, “And verily this is My straight Path”.²⁶⁴ These verses confirm the explanation of the words I have given earlier. Therefore, continuing the verse in its actual sense related to different causes we can still say that if we widen the horizon we will see that it covers a vast spectrum. We all know that the wise and the learned are not inept in discerning the meaning of the verse for God is the guiding light.

And God says (in verse 26):

“And remember when you were few and were reckoned weak in the land, and were afraid that men might kidnap you...”

We understand that this verse refers to those days when the Muslims were weak in strength and numbers. This refers to the days before the Hijra or the exodus from Makkah when the non-believers surrounded the Muslims like prisoners. The words “al Nas” refers to the Arab idolaters or the well to do people of the Bani Quraysh. “Fawakum” means the shelter in Madina with all the help, and gave you the best amenities. And, the help given is the help at the Battle of Badr. Clean sustenance is the war booty, which God bestowed upon the Muslims and made it Halal for them.

God in this verse has recollected the conditions in which he had helped, especially the Muhajirs, though the Ansars are not directly related here. Both are included because His benevolence includes both. Both of them belong to the united Ummah and are the followers of the single religion. There is a reminder of the pure sustenance that both the groups had enjoyed. This is the

²⁶² Al-Qur’an, 3:103

²⁶³ Al-Qur’an, Shura, 13

²⁶⁴ Al-Qur’an, 7:153

interpretation when we translate and interpret according to the situation at the time of Badr and then it will include the entire Muslim Ummah, not just the Ansars and Muhajirin. Because, Islam has included all the adherents who were the fore runners in this chain. The story behind this verse refers to the early ummah and it was the time when they had no strength or numbers. They were mortally afraid that the idolaters might annihilate them in just one attack in Makkah. God gave them shelter in aedina and increased their numbers after they had started believing. God also helped them at Badr and other battles, and gave them the bounty of war so that they may be thankful.

God says:

“O you who believe! Betray not God and His Messenger, nor betray knowingly the Amanat (trust) that God has ordained for you.”

The next two verses are about the betrayal of trust, its impropriety and its destruction. The description of Amanat or the trust is that whatever is entrusted to anyone through a will or a promise should be given total protection. Raghib has recorded in his book *Al-Mufradat* that treachery and hypocrisy have the same meaning; the only difference is that the

- Amanat is so named because it is willed or entrusted in a material form by some one to someone.
- Hypocrisy is called hypocrisy due to its betrayal of religion. Both the terms are used alternatively in their meanings.

We may conclude that Khiyanat or embezzlement is the inner-opposition of truth and is the breaking of a promise e.g. “I have betrayed the trust of Mr. So and So” which means I have silently broken the trust and promise that I had been entrusted with. This was Raghib’s view about the verse and the betrayal of trust.

Betrayal of trust is condemned when the keeper of the trust is aware of the facts; but if he is unaware then he cannot be accused of anything. No order is complete or punishment implementable if you are in absence of complete knowledge about the conditions. In such a condition it was not imperative to use the words “and you have knowledge “but there is another issue at stake and that is that the knowledge was not made available and this was the

betrayal of trust. It is not as some commentators have said: “This order deals with the issue of the ill effects of betrayal of trust, and the losses in the hereafter.” Because this is not evident or proven from the words themselves or from its continuity (background). It is sure that there is something unrevealed in this sentence and the verse should actually read as “*Wa In Takhunu Amanatikum.*”

Both the verses joined together form a “refutation or a No” and is connected to a kind of betrayal that is linked to God and His Messenger. This is like a betrayal of trust of the Ummah or the muminin because some trusts are related exclusively to God.

- Some trusts are related with the Messenger in the sense that he has been entrusted with the Shariah Laws and his own personified character.
- Some trusts are related to the people when they entrust somebody with something precious for safekeeping or entrust somebody with a secret.
- There are some trusts that are related to God, His Messenger and the common people.
- Then there are those commandments that are entrusted to the Messenger who spreads them and the people obey and benefit by them like the political orders, Jihad and those secrets which if revealed will inflict the spread of religion and the efforts of the Islamic government will come to naught. The result will be the truth about God and His Messenger will be trampled and lead to the suffering of the common Muslims and Momins.

Any betrayal of trust is a betrayal with God, His Messenger and the believers. Any mumin who commits this breach knows that he has betrayed God, His Messenger, himself but also all others like himself. Normally no one is willing to betray oneself because each person within himself abhors this act and how can he do so after all the bounties that God bestows upon him?

So now we understand that the verse, “O you who believe! Betray not God and His Messenger, nor betray knowingly the Amanat (trust) that God has ordained for you”, means that when a person betrays the trust of God and His

Messenger, he actually betrays himself because the trust of God and His Messenger in reality is his own trust. Which is an intelligent person, who betrays his own trust and endangers his own morality when he knows that ultimately he will be the one to bear the losses?

After commanding the people not to betray the trusts made with them God says, “if you had knowledge” but this was just to rekindle the sense of responsibility and shame and it was not that He was explaining any divine law or its condition. What we learn here is that there were some Muslims who used to betray the political secrets of the Messenger to the idolaters. God termed this as a “betrayal of Trust”, and while asking all to desist from it has declared it to be a betrayal of God, His Messenger and the believers.

This is reaffirmed by the words, “And know you that your possessions and your progeny are but a trial”, which comes after the verse being discussed, but the appearance tells us that this verse may be connected with the verse being discussed and is not separate from it.

Here we learn that the advice about wealth and children, in this instance, is about a person, who despite having being told not to betray the trust of God and His Messenger used to betray all that he learnt to the idolaters; so as to be a person they could trust; and so that he could save his children and wealth in case of attack.

The purpose of this person was to save his wealth and children and one such person was Abi Labana who betrayed the secrets of the Messenger to the tribe of Bani Qaritha.

These words reaffirm the tradition that has occurred about the background of this verse. The tradition says, that Abu Sufi left Makkah with a great amount of goods for trading. The Archangel Gabriel informed the Messenger about the same and requested the Messenger to move in the same direction but without disclosing this to his companions. Some Muslims however, became aware of this fact and they sent a letter secretly to Abu Sufyan informing him of the Messenger’s intention to confront him. This was the reason for the revelation of the verse, “*O you that believe! Betray not the trust of Allah and the Apostle, nor misappropriate knowingly things entrusted to you.*” There is another tradition regarding the background of this verse and will be discussed shortly.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

OCCASION OF REVELATION

It is reported that after 21 days siege of Bani Qurayza they agreed to make a settlement. They would leave Madina and go to Syria. The Holy Prophet appointed Sad b. Ma-adh as an arbitrator, but the Jews wanted to consult Abu Lababa who was their old friend and relative, before accepting the arbitration of Sad b. Ma-adh.

When they sought Abu Lababa's advice, he pointed his finger to his throat, to indicate that it would be as if cutting their own throats. The Holy Prophet came to know about the treachery of Abu Lababa through Jibra-il. Abu Lababa at once realised what he had done-he had knowingly defrauded Allah and His prophet. Then he tied himself to a pillar of the masjid al nabawiyy and avowed that he would neither drink nor eat until he was forgiven by Allah and His prophet. The Holy Prophet went to him and told him that he had been forgiven.

Another narration of treachery had been reported by Jabir b. Abdullah Ansari that when Jibra-il informed the Holy Prophet that Abu Sufyan is secretly planning to attack very soon, the Holy Prophet asked his close companions to make urgent preparation for the expected confrontation. One of the hypocrites wrote a secret letter to Abu Sufyan, informing him about the defensive readiness of the Muslims.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

Occasion of Revelation

In the commentary books recorded by both great sects of Islam upon the occasion of revelation of this verse, it has been cited as follows:

When the Jewish tribe named Bani-Qurayzah were surrounded by the Muslim strivers under the command of the Prophet ﷺ, the Jews suggested peace and started moving toward Syria. But the Prophet ﷺ did not accept it, and he ordered Sa'd-b.-Ma'adh to judge over their circumstance. The Jews consulted with Abul-Babah, one of the Muslims who had the background of friendship with them, about that judgment.

When, Abul-Balbah, by pointing to his throat, signed them that they would be killed totally if they accepted the arbitration of Sa'd-b.-Ma'adh, Gabriel informed this signal to the Prophet ﷺ. Abul-Babah, who was ashamed of this treachery, roped himself to the pillar of the mosque and avoided eating anything for seven days and nights. Finally, Allah accepted his repentance.²⁶⁵

There has also been cited another occasion of revelation upon this verse as follows.

In the Battle of Badr, one of the Muslims wrote a letter to Abu-Sufyan and informed him of the Prophet's plan. Then, Abu-Sufyan asked for help from the pagans of Makkah, and they sent one thousand fighters to fight in the Battle of Badr.²⁶⁶

Commentary

Now Allah commands the believers not to approach treachery. The holy verse, addressing the believing people, implies that they should not betray Allah ﷻ by means of abandoning His ordinances and His Messenger ﷺ by leaving his rules, because whoever leaves or spoils anything of the religion, he has betrayed Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ. The verse says:

“O you who have Faith! Do not betray Allah and the Messenger...”

Also, the believers should not be treacherous to the affairs upon which Allah ﷻ has trusted them, and has given them the fulfilment of them that they accomplish them without any deficiency. Thus, he who is treacherous to Allah ﷻ and the Messenger of Islam ﷺ, has been treacherous to his own deposits.

And you know that treachery is an ugly action which incurs punishment.

The verse says:

“... and do not betray your trusts knowingly.”

Therefore, treachery is basically ugly and condemned, especially those treacheries which are performed knowingly, and the manifestation of military

²⁶⁵ Majma'ul Bayan, and Tafsirus-Safi

²⁶⁶ Al-Mizan, and Majma'ul Bayan

secrets are uglier and more dangerous, for which, of course, the sinful person must repent very soon.

However, the spoils of war, alms, Khums (one fifth levy), and all properties of others, which are with you, are deposits. Similarly, other bounties, such as: the school of religion, leadership, the Qur'an, children, and territorial of the country are the deposits of Allah. And, according to the tradition which *Shawahid-ut-Tanzil*, by Hakim Huskani, vol. 1, p. 205 has narrated from *Ihqaq-ul-Haqq*, vol. 14, p. 564 the progeny of the Prophet ﷺ are also the Divine deposits.

By obeying them and following them, we must protect these deposits.



Verse 48

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ
سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ﴾

Al-Anfal (The Spoils of War) 8:29

O You Who Believe!

- If you fear Allah,
- He will grant you a criterion (to judge between right and wrong),
- Remove from you (all) evil (that may afflict) you,
- And forgive you -
- For Allah is the Lord of grace unbounded.

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Tabataba'i

- Furqan or the criterion means to create a difference or distance between two things and in the verse being discussed,
- it stands for the difference in standard of piety and the difference between the right and the wrong.
- Whether it is the stage of faith or worship, the criterion differentiates belief from disbelief.
- In the practical field it differentiates between practices of good and done for the pleasure of God, from the deeds that are evil and the source of the punishment from God.
- The criterion differentiates between the good thoughts from evil ones.
- These are the fruits and the rewards from the tree of piety.

- Even in this verse, the word criterion's application is not limited to just a few kinds but encompasses all things.

Despite having enumerated the good and evil in the previous verse, in this verse the criterion is present in all kinds of good and evil because every one requires a criterion. The verse:

“And unto everyone who is conscious of God, He [always] grants a way out of unhappiness; and provides for him in a manner beyond all expectation; and for everyone who places his trust in God He [alone] is enough, also reiterates the same.”

The meaning of Takfir, disbelief or idolatry has already been discussed earlier. The verse actually means to simplify the pros and cons that have been mentioned in the earlier verse. “If you fear God, then God in his pleasure will not hold you accountable or punishable, and those dos and don'ts that we have mentioned will not be intertwined. God will hide your sins and forgive your sins if you fear Him. It is well established that God has the greatest benevolence.

The Decisive Discussion

The Book Usul al-Kafi on its own authority has recorded that Aqeel Khazai has quoted a tradition from Hazrat Ali عليه السلام as saying,

It is shameful in religion to be afraid to fight those with whom we should fight, those who help each other in infamy. It is also a shame and ignominy in this world, for this makes the Muslims deserving the fire of Hell because fear of an enemy makes a person flee the battlefield. God has decried this shameful action as “O you who believe! When ye meet the Unbelievers in hostile array, never turn your backs to them.”

Ibn Shazan on his own authority has recorded in the book *Kitabal Faqih* and *'Illal al-Shara'i* that replying to questions in this regard Imam Ridha عليه السلام had responded to his letters by saying that,

God has declared it Haram to desert the battle because it creates a lethargy in helping the religious leader and weakens their authority and is like helping the enemy. This is the cause of punishment, because through this action God has based the acceptance of his

supremacy, and his impeccable justice. This entails giving up oppression and trampling all mischief. If this is not done then it becomes the reason for the enemy to overpower the Muslims. This action, desertion, becomes the cause of the annihilation and the enslavement of the Muslims as well as denies the truth of God's own religion plus other weaknesses.

Compiler's comment

There are umpteen traditions from the ﷺ that explain that it is a great sin to desert the battle and it leads to (moral) death. I have raised objections against some great sins when I have commented on the verse 31 of Surah Nisa which is as follows: "If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden to do, We shall remit from you your sins, and admit you to a noble entrance." It is recorded in the fourth Arabic volume.

There are many traditions regarding this in the books of the Ahle Sunnah e.g. one that *Sahih Bukhari* has recorded on the authority of Abu Hurera that the Messenger said:

Avoid the seven sins that morally destroy you. Some one asked what they were and he answered:

- Polytheism- Do not make partners for God.
- Do not kill anyone unjustly for God has banned such an action, but if you kill for the truth of Islam it will be permitted.
- Sorcery
- Usury
- Usurping an orphan's legacy
- Desert your army on the day of battle and
- Accusing pious women of adultery.

There are umpteen other traditions quoted by Ibn Abbas that declare desertion from the battle to be a great sin.

Why does this verse:

"For the present, Allah has lightened your (task), for He knows that there is a weak spot in you: But (even so), if there are a hundred of you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred"

be revealed when we know the Muslims were fewer in numbers than the disbelievers describing desertion of the battle as Haram?

It has been recorded in the Books of the Ahle Sunnah on the authority of Umar B. Khattab, Abdullah b. Umar, Ibn Abbas, Abu Hurera and Abu Saeed Hazari that desertion from the battle has been declared haram in this verse but it has limited on the day of Badr. *Durrul Manthur* has also recorded this tradition in the same words. It may have been assumed that this verse revealed on the day of Badr and the words *yawmaizin* in the clause *If any does turn his back on such a day* points towards the day of Badr but what can the reader do if the background gives the proof that this verse was revealed after the day of Badr and the word *on such a day* refers to that particular day and not Badr. Even if we suppose that the verse was revealed on the day of Badr, the specialty of the conditions does not affect the generality of its effect. This is also the case in many other verses where the special condition or the peculiarity of the situation does not change the verse and its general or common application.

Al-Manar has written in his commentary that we can take this verse to be referring to the day of Badr under the then prevalent situation, if the majority of the commentators say that this verse was revealed before Badr because there are other conclusive proofs.

- The first is that the Battle of Badr was the first battle of the Muslims, and if they had deserted on that day despite the Messenger being present amongst them, then it would have completely weakened the growing structure of Islam forever.
- Secondly, the angels had helped the Muslims in this battle and
- Thirdly, God had clearly promised to help the Muslims and to put fear and awe in the hearts of the enemy.

When we take all the proof and specialties into account for assuming the significance of the term “Nahi” then we learn that this claim that this verse, which derides promises made for wrongdoings, is related to Badr can only be so in the eyes of such claimants. God has tested the companions of the Messenger twice for desertion from the battle.

Once it was on the day of Uhud when He said: *“Those of you who turned back on the day the two hosts met, it was Satan who caused them to backslide because of some (sins) they had earned. But God indeed, has forgiven them. Surely God is oft-forgiving most forbearing.”*²⁶⁷ and then on the day of Hunayn when He said: *“Truly, God has given you victory on many battlefields and of the day of Hunayn when you rejoiced at your great number but it availed you naught and the earth, vast as it is, was straitened for you, then you turned back in flight.”*²⁶⁸

There is no conflict here if we say that desertion of the battle is Haram and is a great sin but this does not mean that all types of retreat is haram due to the two conditions explained in the verse Anfaal. Any one who deserts the battle will be severely punished excepting for the two conditions (mentioned), and his fate will be in Hell. It is possible that we can think of situations where in there is no such severe punishment like the verse on weakness (due to injury) and the verse on possible death as in Surah Baqara which has been discussed earlier. Any tactical withdrawal to avoid possible death and destruction is justified to admonish people who endanger their lives unnecessarily. This has come in Surah Baqara and details will be discussed shortly.

Every one including Ahmad and the authors of Sanan, but excepting Nisai have quoted the words of Ibn Umar wherein he said:

I was present in one of the battles (sirya) in which the Messenger was never present when people fled the battle and I was one of them. I asked myself, *What should I do now and what was it that I have done, for I have made myself deserving of God’s wrath?*

It was then I decided to go to Madina to stay there in the night then another thought struck me, *How will it be if I tell my condition to the Messenger? If this sin is redeemable then I will repent or else will return to the battle. Then I did this and met the Messenger before the Fajr prayers.*

The Messenger came out and asked, *Are you among the deserters?* I answered, *Yes I am. I have fled the battle.* He then said:

You have returned to go back and attack the enemy with great fervor and I encompass you and all the other Muslims.

²⁶⁷ Al-Qur’an, 3:155

²⁶⁸ Al-Qur’an, 9:25

Ibn Umar then adds: “*I neared the Messenger and kissed his hands on hearing these words.*”

Abu Daud has narrated this tradition in these words:

We decided, let us go to Madina; we will pass the night there but we should be alert that no one sees us and we did the same. When we entered Madina we thought, how would it be if we presented ourselves to the Messenger and tell him about our conditions? If repentance will be accepted then we will stay back in Madina but if it is not accepted then we will return to the battle. We sat on the way to wait for the Messenger’s arrival. We met him when he came out of his house and told him that we had deserted the battle.

This is how some scholars have tried to interpret this incidence but it is incorrect in the linguistic sense or because this behavior was caused by fear.

Tirmizi too has called this tradition to be reliable or “hasan” but the authenticity of Yazid b. Abi Ziyad is disputable. The traditionists have generally regarded him as unreliable. Ibn Hayan has said that he was a truthful person but with the old age, his memory often used to fail him and his condition changed so much that he used to relate unreliable things as hadith. All the traditions heard from him before this change, are reliable.

The view of the author of *Al-Manar* in short is that this hadith is unreliable both in its text and its authenticity. This compiler has said earlier that certain facts prove that it is incorrect to say that the issue of desertion is limited to Badr, because Badr was the first battle of Islam and because the Messenger himself was present in it. This argument stands valid for Badr but also Uhud, Khandaq, Khybar and Hunayn. Moreover, all these battles took place at a time when Islam needed warriors who were steadfast in battle. The Messenger himself was present in all these battle and in all of them God had promised to aid the Muslims. He even sent the angels to help them and to put the fear of God into the hearts of the enemies.

The answer to his assumption is that separate verses have been revealed on the desertions at Uhud and Hunayn. The meaning of this verse does not prove that the desertion due to fear is not about Muslims. What is wrong if we include them too in it’s meaning, because this verse is complete, all

encompassing and nothing suggests that it should be limited. What is surprising is that the author of Al-manar has admitted that the desertion of the Muslims in Uhud and Hunayn was Haram but says that it is not necessary that the deserter can be punished and sent to Hell without these two reasons. However, it is necessary to think of reasons when desertion of the battle is not Haram and the greater sin is that sin for which God's punishment is Hell.

The thing that is stranger than this is that he says that arrangement and the leave due to weakness will be included in it and the verse of *Tihalka* which has already been discussed in Surah Baqarah will be limited in generality. The verse about retreating from the battle as a tactical measure against heavy odds while facing the enemy condones this excuse only when the enemy's numbers are more than double.

If the word (nahi) that prevents the soul from being destroyed has more general application than the verse about weakness then this assumption will stand void as admitted by the author of al-manar if the words that if we deem the words "when will this decision be" to be correct then the verse will be rendered frivolous and purposeless. There is no alternative but to let the verse be taken on its face value.

Imam Musa Kazim عليه السلام is recorded in *Tafsir Ayyashi* as saying,

It means that he should return to his companion and not that he should desert the battle, for whoever flees to this extent will be far from his friends and will be subjected to the wrath of God.

The Compiler

This tradition highlights a special feature of the verse and that is, showing one's back to the enemy, for this may also be fleeing the battle or deserting it. There are two kinds of showing one's back,

- to betray and run away and
- to retreat so that one reaches his comrades in arms.

But these two meanings are now separate so whatever other meanings are left are connected with "Nahi." Therefore, showing one's back to the enemy for any other reason, even though there numbers are less than double will be considered Haram.

Tafsir Burhan records on the authority of Shahar Ashub, Thalibi, Zahak, Akrama and Ibn Abbas that the words *and it was not you who cast [terror into them, O Prophet]*, when you did cast it, revert to when the Messenger asked Hazrat Ali to give him a fistful of pebbles, who complied. The Messenger took them and threw them at the army of the Quraysh and there was none amongst them whose eyes were not filled with pebbles.

The Compiler

Ayyashi through Muhammad b. Kalib Asadi, and he through his father who quoted Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq عليه السلام while *Durrul Manthur* has quoted, Tabrani, Abi Shaykh and Ibn Abbas, have recorded this tradition about Hazrat Ali giving the pebbles to the Messenger. In another record the narrator is Hazrat Ali himself.

Durrul Manthur records, Ibn Jarir, who records from Muhammad b. Qais and he in turn quotes Muhammad b. Ka'ab as saying:

When the two hosts of Islam and the idolaters confronted each other the Messenger took a fistful of sand and threw it at the enemy saying, May your faces be disfigured! The sand filled their eyes and the companions of the Messenger started killing them. The cause of the enemy's defeat was that fistful of sand, which the Messenger had thrown at them. God revealed the verse and it was not you who cast [terror into them, O Prophet], when you did cast it, in this context.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

Those who safeguard themselves against evil with full awareness of divine laws receive guidance from Allah to distinguish between good and evil, so that they may follow the right path-the path of deliverance. Then, even if they have sinned but turn repentant unto Allah sincerely, Allah forgives them their sins.

Explanation of Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars:

Commentary

The current criterions of recognizing right from wrong are numerous. Among them are the followings:

A) Prophets and saints of Allah are criterions. An Islamic tradition says: *“He who leaves Ali ؑ has really left Allah.”*²⁶⁹

B) The Book of Allah is a criterion. By adapting things with the Qur’an, the right can be recognized from wrong.

C) Piety is another criterion. When the storm of instincts, accompanied with love and enmity that are nourished from impiety, arrives, piety is dismissed and impiety hinders the recognition of facts:

The ability of the recognition between right and wrong is a knowledge given by Allah, and it does not merely depend on the ability of reading and writing or necessarily on the standard of knowledge.

The verse says:

“O you who have Faith! If you be in awe of Allah He will assign for you a discrimination (between right and wrong), and absolve you of your misdeeds, and forgive you, and Allah is the Lord of Mighty Grace.”

Fakhr ad-Din al-Razi has explained:

The expiation of sins is a concealment in this world, while ‘forgiveness’ is a deliverance from the punishment of Allah ﷻ in Hereafter.

According to the statements of some other commentators of the Qur’an, ‘expiation’ is to wipe out the social and psychological effects of sins, while forgiveness is a remission in respect to Hell.

Therefore, those who put aside the mental desires will recognize the truth, and their piety causes a proper insight to come forth in them and a great virtue and reward to be obtained.

²⁶⁹ The index of Ihqāqul-Haqq, vol. 4, p.26



Verse 49

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً فَاثْبُتُوا وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾

Al-Anfal (The Spoils of War) 8:45

O You Who Believe!

- When you meet a force:
- Be firm;
- And call Allah in remembrance much (and often);
- That you may prosper.

Commentary

Explanation by Allamah Taba'taba'i

This is about the war booty and the khums on it. We relate the story of those through whom God has humiliated the enemies of Islam with the help of deception. In the way the Sunnah of the liars was established between the people of the Pharaoh. The verses and signs of God are an obstacle for them.

God says, “O you who believe. When you meet [an enemy] force, be steadfast against them and remember God continuously [both with the tongue and the mind] so that you may be successful.”

Raghib says that this steadfastness is in the sense of “deserting the battle field” and in another sense it means forbearing for God has said: “God is with those who forbear [when they face adversity].

In such cases man should not be shy of his duties nor be lethargic in fulfilling them. He should not be hasty in doing things that need no haste. Steadfastness in the best sense is forbearance. The word “Riah” means strength but it also means respect and wealth.

Raghib says that this word in this verse means “the power to overcome’. It is always active as a wind uprooting trees and overcoming the enemy. So here the verse tells the Mumin not to lose his strength but to overcome the enemy like a strong wind.

Raghib says that the word “Batar” here is boastfulness that decreases the recognition of the truth and spends its strength elsewhere. God has connected this “Batar” with mankind in the sense that it hinders them from admitting the truth and this takes them closer to Tarab {waywardness} that prevents mankind from the real truth in the end.

“Waraih” here means pomposity.

God says to be firm against the enemy and the opposite is desertion.

God says,” And remember your God “both in your hearts and orally. It is also true that the inner intentions of man may be different from what he professes orally. He should therefore call out to God in the same way that a poor man calls out to Him to help him in his predicament, or a patient calls out to him to be cured.

And those who come out to fight the enemy meet them and prepare themselves to fight. This just destroys their self and it is nothing but bloodshed. It portrays the weakness of the body and the mind.

The thing that puts the fear into them changes their thoughts and takes their determination towards success in the fight that he participates. Overcoming the enemy means to scare them and this idea emanates the remembrance of God and is compatible with his trend of thoughts.

To remember God is to remember the graces bestowed upon him for they manifest His glory. Indeed He is their God, their sustainer and life and death are in His control. He is the one who has they power to help him. He is the friend and the protector. Man has promised to help him for god has said; “if you help God then God will help you and keep you steadfast. God does not waste the efforts of those who do well.” In case of ware, He says “overcome the enemy, raise the flag of Islam and create a conducive atmosphere for the spread of Islam.”

The other side of this philosophy is to merge oneself in His grace by sacrificing one's life in His path and thereby join His chosen ones. Does it not contain those meanings that takes man truly towards the truth and glory?

Continuous remembrance rejuvenates the effort to attain piety. This keeps man from destroying his self [his soul] with the love of this treacherous world and its ornate evil and from following the Satan.

Explanation of S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali and Aqa Mahdi Puya:

These verses describe the virtues the believers must cultivate and own. If they disobey Allah and His prophet there will be humiliation and failure.

Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars

Now that Allah ﷻ has commanded the Muslims to be steadfast in the battlefield, He says:

“O you who have Faith! when you encounter a host (in battle), then stand firm...”

That is, whenever you face with a group of infidels in war, stand firm for fighting against them, and do not escape. And, it is evident that believers generally do not fight save against hostile infidels.

Then the holy verse implies that, at the time of war, Muslims should seek help from Allah, the Mighty, so that not only they become victorious and successful in the present world, but also they become prosperous in the coming world. The verse continues saying:

“...and remember Allah much, that you may be prosperous.”

Some commentators say that this part of the verse means that you should remember the promises of Allah, which He has given you about triumph, in order that your steadfastness might be increased.

