



**Al Mizan an Exegesis of  
the Quran  
(Volume Seven)**

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And when you did go forth early in the morning from your family to lodge the believers in encampments for war; and Allah is Hearing, Knowing (212). When two parties from among you had determined that they should show cowardice and Allah was the guardian of them both, and in Allah should the believers trust (122). And Allah did certainly assist you at Badr when you were weak; fear Allah then that you may give thanks (123). When you said to the believers: "Does it not suffice you that your Lord should assist you with three thousand of the angels sent down? (124). Yea! if you remain patient and are on your guard (against evil), and they come upon you in a headlong manner, your Lord will assist you with five thousand of the havoc-making angels" (125). And Allah did not make it but as good news for you, and that your hearts might be at ease thereby, and help is only from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise (126). That He may cut off a portion from among those who disbelieve, or abase them so that they should return disappointed of attaining what they desired (127). You have no concern in the affair whether He turns to them (mercifully) or chastises them, for surely they are unjust (128). And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allah's; He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom He pleases; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful (129).



#### COMMENTARY

Now the discourse turns back to what the chapter had begun with: Warning the believers of the serious situation they were in; reminding them of Allah's favors bestowed on them, that is, true belief, divine help and the fact that Allah is sufficient for them; teaching them what would lead them to their noble goal; and guiding them to what would make them happy in this life and the hereafter. It describes the battle of Uhud. There are some verses referring to the battle of Badr, but they are like supplement inserted here for cross-reference, and as we shall explain later, they are not meant as main topic here.

QUR'AN: And when you did go forth early in the morning from your family to lodge the believers in encampments for war:

"When" in Arabic is adverb of time related to a deleted verb e.g. "Remember" or similar verbs; "ghadawta" translated here as "you did go forth early in the morning" is derived from al-ghadw (to come out early in the morning); attabwi'ah means to prepare a place for someone, or to put him in a place; ma-qa'id is plural (of seat; translated here as encampment). Ahl of a man, according to ar-Raghib, are those who are joined to him in genealogy or house or other such things like religion, town or handicraft.

Thus ahl of a man refers to his wife and all those who are in his house, like wife, child, servant, etc.; also it denotes all who are related to him like his family or clan; residents of a town or followers of a religion are called ahl of that town or religion; artisans and masters of a handicraft are called ahl of that art or handicraft. The word "ahl" is used for masculine and feminine both; also for singular and plural alike. Its use is exclusively reserved for human beings; ahl of a thing are the people related to it exclusively.

"Ahl" of the Messenger of Allah are therefore the people exclusively related to him. Here it refers to a group—not to a single person. It may be understood from the expression, "you did go forth early in the morning from your family", because it may be said, "You went forth from your relatives and your group "; but it cannot be said, "You went forth from your wife " or "from your mother". An exegete mistakenly has thought that ahl refers to singular only, and therefore has had to say that there was some word deleted (but understood) from the verse; according to him the verse means, "did go forth . . . from the house of your family" . But as you have seen nothing in this verse demands such interpretation.

The preceding and following verses are addressed to the believers as a group. But the verses under discussion turn from plural to singular; they are addressed not to the believers but to the Messenger of Allah alone. Apparently this diversion has some connection with the shade of displeasure found in the verses dealing with this battle: there is an undercurrent of reproach, censure and stricture running throughout for what the Muslims had done (in the battle of Uhud) where they had shown cowardice and lack of will-power and courage. Therefore, whenever a topic comes which exclusively concerns the Prophet, Allah ignores and disregards the believers and speaks to the Prophet alone. Thus Allah says: And when you did go forth early in the morning from your family; When you said to the believers: "Does it not suffice you that your Lord should assist you. . . "; You have no concern in the affair; Say: "Surely the affair is wholly (in the hands) of Allah " (3:154); Thus it is due to the mercy from Allah that you deal with them gently, and had you been rough, hardhearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you (3:159); And reckon not those who are killed in Allah's way as dead (3:169).

In all the above verses plural verbs and pronouns have been changed to singular. It seems as though the speaker is not in a mood to continue the preceding style (of speaking to the whole community) because he is very much annoyed and displeased with them.

It is unlike some other verses coming in between where effectiveness and sharpness of admonition depended on direct talk with the believers and therefore the plural was used. For example: And Muhammad is no more than a messenger, the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels? (3:144);

When you ran off precipitately and did not turn towards any one, and the Messenger was calling you from your rear (3:153) .

Also it is unlike another intervening verse, that is: Certainly Allah conferred a benefit upon the believers when He raised among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His communications (3:164). Here Allah describes His favor on the believers of sending the Prophet to them; and it could be effective and more impressive only if it was supposed as if the Prophet himself were not present there. Ponder on all these verses and you will appreciate the relevance of what we have written.

The verse under discussion means as follows: O Prophet, remember when you did go forth early in the morning from your family in order that you should place the believers in their sectors for war; and Allah is Hearing (He had heard what was said there) and Knowing (He had known what was hidden in their hearts). The expression, "you did go forth early in the morning from your family", indicates that the battleground was nearer to the Prophet's house. It clearly shows that the two verses refer to the battle of Uhud, and in this way they are related to other verses, which would follow later, and which describe the battle of Uhud. All these verses fit the events, which had taken place in Uhud.

This shows the weakness of the claim that these two verses were revealed about the battle of Badr, or, as someone else said, about the battle of the Confederates. And it is obvious (from the context).

QUR'AN: and Allah is Hearing, Knowing:

He is Hearing, He had heard what was spoken there; and Knowing, He knew what was hidden in their hearts. It indicates that some Muslims had spoken there some (undesirable) things, and there were other things, which they had not disclosed to others. Apparently the next clause, "When two parties from among you had determined that they should show cowardice", is related to these two attributes, (i.e., Allah heard and knew the conspiracy and intention of the two parties when they had determined to show cowardice). QUR'AN: When two parties from among you had determined that they should show cowardice, and Allah was the guardian of them both:

"al-Hamm" what you determine in your heart; intention); al-fashl (weakness with cowardice).

"and Allah was the guardian of them both": This is a circumstantial clause, related to the verb, "had determined ". It is meant as an admonition and reproof, as is the concluding sentence, "and in Allah should the believers trust". The connotation is as follows: The two parties had determined to show cowardice although Allah was their guardian—and a believer should not

show weakness and cowardice when he believes that Allah is his guardian and when he is supposed to entrust all his affairs to Allah, and whoever trusts in Allah then He is sufficient for him.

This explanation shows the weakness of an interpretation offered by an exegete who says: This intention of the two parties was merely a thought, a notion, not a determination, because Allah has praised them and said that He was their guardian. Had it been a firm determination and intention, they should have been blamed rather than praised.

But I do not understand what he means when he says that it was merely a thought, a notion. Does he mean merely a passing thought, a knowledge what cowardice means? If so, then everyone present there knew the meaning of cowardice, and it makes no sense to mention it in this context; nor is it called "determination" in Arabic language. Or, does he mean knowledge of cowardice coupled with some intention; a notion with determination to act upon it? (If so, then it was not merely a thought or a notion.) Also, the verse shows that the condition of the two parties was obvious to the others; had it been merely a passing thought without showing any effect on their behavior, others would not have known that they had determined to show weakness and cowardice. Moreover, the reminder that Allah was their guardian and that the believers must put their trust in Allah, dovetails with firm determination, not with a passing thought. And in any case, we have explained that in the present context, the clause, "and Allah was the guardian of them both", is not intended as a praise, it is a reproof, an admonition.

Perhaps this misunderstanding has sprung up from a tradition attributed to Jabir ibn 'Abdillah al-Ansar; in which he says: "(This verse) was revealed about us; and I would not prefer if it were not revealed, because Allah has said, and Allah was the guardian of them both." The said exegete probably thought that Jabir had taken the clause as a praise.

Even if the said tradition were accepted as correct, Jabir's theme is different from what that exegete has thought. Jabir means that Allah then accepted their belief and confirmed that they were believers, because He counted Himself as their guardian, and Allah is the guardian of those who believe, and as for that this clause implies any praise, when it has been put in this context of clear reprimand and censure. QUR'AN: And Allah did certainly assist you at Badr when you were weak; fear Allah then, that you may give thanks: The context obviously shows that this verse has been revealed here as a supporting evidence to emphasize the stricture, to complete the reproof. If so, then this too would be a circumstantial clause, like the preceding one, "and Allah was the guardian of them both." Its connotation then would be as follows: You should not have determined to show cowardice while Allah had certainly assisted you at Badr when you were weak. On the other-hand, it might be an independent sentence revealed here to remind them of the wonderful assistance provided to them at Badr, when Allah had

sent down the angels to help them when they were weak.

Allah mentions here the help sent by Him to them at Badr, and compares their present condition with that; and it is known that whoever becomes strong, does so only with Allah's help and His assistance, because man, per se, has nothing except neediness and weakness. That is why Allah says: "when you were weak".

It may be understood from the above that the statement, "when you were weak", does not disagree with such other divine words as, and to Allah belongs the might and to His Messenger and to the believers (163:8), because the believers' might springs from the might of Allah, as He says: Then surely all might is for Allah (4:139); and it proceeds from the divine help given to the believers, as Allah says: And certainly We sent before you messengers to their people, so they came to them with clear arguments, then We gave the punishment to those who were guilty; and helping the believers is ever incumbent upon Us (30:47). In this situation if we look at the condition of the believers, per se, they have got nothing except weakness.

Apart from that, if we look at the believers' condition in Badr, we shall have to admit that they were certainly weaker in comparison to the strength, might and élan the polytheists had had. And there is no difficulty in ascribing a relative weakness to otherwise mighty ones. Allah has ascribed it to a people whom He has praised very extensively, when He says: . . . then soon Allah will bring a people that He shall love them and they shall love Him, humble (adhillah, lit: weak) before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers. . . (5:54).

QUR'AN: When you said to the believers: "Does it not suffice you that your Lord should assist you ....

"al-Imdad " is derived from al-madd and signifies giving al-madad (help) continuously. QUR'AN: "Yea! if you remain patient and are on your guard (against evil), and they come upon you in a headlong manner. . .": "Bala" (Yea) is used for affirmation; al-fawr and al-fawran means to boil; they say, fara 'l-qidr (the cooking-pot boiled up); then the word was used to denote hurry and haste. Thus the phrase, min fawrihim hadha ( - translated here as, in a headlong manner) means, ' at once ', 'immediately '. Obviously, the promise refers to the battle of Badr. It is a conditional promise, and the conditions are given in these clauses, "if you remain patient and are on your guard and they come upon you in a headlong manner".

An exegete has written that it is a promise to send down the angels if they came upon the believers (not "immediately", i.e. not on the day of Badr, but) after the immediate time, i.e. after the battle of Badr. Another one has written that it is a promise to send down the angels in all the battles after the Badr, like Uhud, Hunayn and the Confederates. But the wording of

the verse does not agree with it.

As for Uhud, there is obviously nothing in the verses that might allude to coming of the angels on that day. So far as the battles of the Confederates and Hunayn are concerned, the Qur'an, of course, says (in other places) that the angels were sent on those days: It says about the battle of the Confederates: . . . when there came down upon you hosts, so We sent against them a strong wind and hosts that you saw not . . . (33:9). And it says about the day of Hunayn: ... and on the day of Hunayn ...and sent down hosts which you did not see. .. (9:25-26). Nevertheless, the wording of the verse under discussions, "Yea! if you remain patient and are on your guard (against evil) and they come upon you in a headlong manner", does not show any general promise.

There is no conflict between this verse which speaks of three thousand angels being sent down at Badr, and the statement of the chapter of al-Anfal, which says: . . . so He answered you: "I will assist you with a thousand of angels following (after others) " (8:9) . The word, "following", indicates that they would follow others—the "others" referring to the remaining two thousand who would complete the number promised in this verse. QUR'AN: And Allah did not make it but as good news for you, . . . and help is only from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise:

The pronoun "it" refers to the help. 'Ind (near) is an adverb of place, indicating presence. Initially it was used for nearness and presence in place; obviously it was reserved for physical things. Then its circle widened and it was used for nearness in time. Finally it was used for general, and even spiritual, nearness. The Qur'an has used it in various connotations.

The theme of the statement, "and help is only from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise", when seen in conjunction with the preceding words, "And Allah did not make it but as good news for you, and that your hearts might be at ease thereby ", implies that the phrase, min 'indi 'llah (= lit: from near Allah) refers to that "station" of Lordship which every affair and every order emanates from; and without which nothing can suffice, nor can any cause be independent of it. The meaning therefore is as follows: The helper angels have in fact no concern with the promised help; they are merely apparent causes — they bring to you good news and satisfaction of heart. The reality of help is from Allah, nothing can suffice from Him; He is Allah, the final destination of every thing; the Mighty Who cannot be subdued, the Wise Who is not unaware of any thing.

QUR'AN: That He may cut off a portion from among those who disbelieve, or abase them . . . and chastises whom He pleases; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful:

"That" is related to the verb, "And Allah did certainly assist you at Badr". (He assisted you so that He may cut off...). 'Cutting off a portion' metaphorically means decreasing their number



and debilitating them with slaying and imprisoning, as had happened at Badr where seventy idol worshippers were killed and seventy arrested. al-Kabt (to abase, to exasperate).

The clause, "You have no concern in the affair", is a parenthetical one. It emphasizes the proposition that the authority of cutting off a portion from, or abasing them, is entirely in the hand of Allah; the Prophet has no concern in this matter — that they should praise and acclaim him if they vanquished and defeated their enemy, and should blame him and remonstrate with him if things went against them; they should not be infirm and grieving, as they had done on the day of Uhud — as Allah has narrated.

The next clause, "whether He turns to them (mercifully) or chastises them", is in conjunction with the preceding, "That He may cut off . . .", and the sentence is continuing. The next verse, "And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allah's", is explicative clause describing why the matter of repentance and forgiveness rests exclusively in the hand of Allah. The meaning is as follows: The sound arrangement (at Badr) were made by Allah in order that He might cut off a portion of the polytheists through slaughter and imprisonment, or abase them and disappoint them of attaining what they had desired, or that He might turn to them mercifully or chastise them. As for the cutting off a portion of them and abasing them, it is because all affairs are in His hands, you have no concern in it, (so they should neither praise nor blame you in this affair); and as for repentance and forgiveness, it is because Allah is the Owner of everything, He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom He pleases. Even then, His forgiveness and mercy surpasses His chastisement and anger, because He is Forgiving, Merciful.

We have treated the sentence, "And whatever is in the heaven and whatever is in the earth is Allah's", as explaining the reason for the preceding two clauses (whether He turns to them (mercifully) or chastises them), because the concluding clauses specifically explain this matter: "He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom He pleases."

The exegetes have described other ways to show the connection of the words, "That He may cut off a portion . . .", and the significance of conjunction in the words, "whether He turns to them or chastises them"; also, they have given other justifications for the words, "You have no concern in the affair", and for the sentence, "And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allah's ". We have ignored them, as there was no use of commenting upon them, because they go against the apparent meanings and the context of the verses. Anyone wanting to see them should consult other bigger commentaries.

## **TRADITIONS**

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "The cause of the battle of Uhud was as follows: When the Quraysh

returned from Badr to Mecca - and it had befallen to them from slaughter and imprisonment what had befallen, because seventy of them were killed and seventy imprisoned - Abu Sufyan said: 'O people of Quraysh! Do not let your women weep on your dead, because if tear is shed it would remove the grief and (lessen) the hatred of Muhammad.' And when they fought the Messenger of Allah on the day of Uhud, they allowed their women to weep and lament; and they proceeded from Mecca with three thousand horse and two thousand-foot and brought their women with them.

"When the news reached the Messenger of Allah, he gathered his companions and exhorted them to fight. 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul said: 'O Messenger of Allah! Do not go out of Medina, so that we fight in its alleys; thus even a weak man, a woman, a slave-boy and a slave-girl would fight on the entrances of the lanes and on the roofs; because never did any people (who attacked us) defeat us when we were within our fortresses and homes; and never did we go out to meet an enemy of ours but they vanquished us.'

"Then Sa'd ibn Mu'adh and others from the tribe of Aws stood up and said: 'O Messenger of Allah! Never did anyone from the Arabs have any ambition against us while we were polytheist worshipping idols; how can they then be emboldened against us and you are among us? No: (we shall not rest) until we go out to them and fight them; whoever then among us will be killed shall be a martyr, and whoever among us is saved will have fought in the way of Allah.'

"So, the Messenger of Allah accepted his advice and came out with a group of his companions, fixing their places at the battle-ground; as Allah says: And when you did go forth early in the morning from your family . . . But 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul and a group of Khazraj who followed his opinion, held back from the Prophet).

"The Quraysh appeared at Uhud. The Messenger of Allah had positioned his companions— they were seven hundred men— and lodged 'Abdullah ibn Jubayr with fifty archers at the mouth of the mountain-pass; (the Prophet) was worried that the (enemy) might ambush from that side. Therefore, he said to 'Abdullah ibn Jubayr and his companions: 'If you see that we have defeated them until we have pushed them inside Mecca, you should not leave this place; and if you see that they have overcome us until they have pushed us into Medina, you should not leave (here), but stick to your posts.

"Abu Sufyan hid Khalid ibn Walid with two hundred horse with this (very idea of) ambush, and said to him: 'When you see that we (two forces) have mixed together, you come over to them from this mountain-pass, so that you will be (attacking them from) behind them.'

"The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) mobilized his companions; and gave the standard to the

Commander of the faithful ('Ali a.s.). The Helpers attacked the polytheists of the Quraysh, and (the enemy) suffered an ignominious defeat. The companions of the Messenger of Allah laid hold of the masses of the (Quraysh). Khalid ibn Walid came with his two hundred horse over 'Abdullah ibn Jubayr; but they confronted them with arrows, and Khalid retreated. The group of 'Abdullah ibn Jubayr saw the companions of the Messenger of Allah looting the masses of the enemy; they said to 'Abdullah ibn Jubayr: 'Our companions are taking away (all) the booty; should we remain without any booty?' 'Abdullah told them: 'Fear Allah, because the Messenger of Allah had indeed directed us not to leave our post.' But they did not listen to him, and began slinking away one by one, until they left their station unattended, and 'Abdullah ibn Jubayr was left there with (only) twelve men.

"The standard of the Quraysh was in the hand of Talhah ibn Abi Talhah al-'Abdi (from Banu 'Abdu 'd-Dar); 'Ali- (a.s.) killed him; then Abu Sa'id ibn Abi Talhah took the standard and 'Ali killed him. The standard fell down. Then Musafi' ibn Abi Talhah took it but 'Ali killed him too until he killed nine people from Banu 'Abdu 'd-Dar. Finally their standard was taken up by a black-slave of theirs, Sawfib by name. 'All reached him and cut off his right hand; he took the standard in his left hand; 'All struck at it and cut it off too, but he embraced it to his chest with his two amputated hands. Then he turned towards Abu Sufyfin and said: 'Have I absolved Banu 'Abdu 'd-Dar from blame?' Then 'Ali struck at his head and killed him. The standard fell down; then Ghamrah bint 'Alqamah al-Kinaniyyah took and raised it.

"Khalid ibn Walid came down to 'Abdullah ibn Jubayr — and his companions had fled leaving him with a few persons. (Khalid) killed (all of) them at the mouth of the pass, and then attacked the Muslims from behind. Quraysh were fleeing away when they saw their standard raised again, and they gathered around it, and the companions of the Messenger of Allah suffered utter defeat. They started climbing the mountains helter-skelter.

"When the Messenger of Allah saw the rout, he removed the helmet from his head and called (them, saying): 'Come to me; I am the Messenger of Allah; come to me; where are you running away from Allah and His Apostle?' Hind bint 'Utbah was in the middle of the (Quraysh's) army; whenever any Qurayshite fled, she offered him a kohl-stick and a kohl-container, telling him: 'You are but a woman, better use this kohl.'

"Hamzah ibn 'Abdi 'l-Muttalib was attacking the enemy. When they saw him, they fled; none stood against him. Hind had promised Wahshi that if he killed Muhammad or 'Ali or Hamzah, she would give him so-and-so much. (Wahshi was an Ethiopian slave of Jubayr ibn Mut'im). Wahshi said: 'As for Muhammad, I was unable (to harm) him; and as for 'Ali, I found him on his guard, always looking (all around him), so there was no hope of getting at him; therefore, I decided to ambush Hamzah. I saw him knocking the people down, destroying them. Then he passed by me, stepped on an undercut bank of a stream and fell down; I took my spear, shook

it (taking aim) and threw it to him; it pierced his waist and came out between his legs (pubic region); then I went to him, ripped his stomach open, took out his liver and brought it to Hind; I said to her, "This is Hamzah's liver." She put it into her mouth trying to chew it. But Allah made it in her mouth like a knee-cap, so she took it out and threw it.' (The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Allah sent an angel who took it and returned it to its place.') Wahshi said: 'Then I came (back) to him, and I cut his genitals, removed his ears and amputated his hands and legs.'

"There remained no one with the Messenger of Allah except Abu Dujanah Simfik ibn Kharashah and 'Ali. Whenever any group attacked the Messenger of Allah, 'Ali faced them and repulsed them; (it continued) until his sword was broken; then the Messenger of Allah gave him his sword, Dhu 'l-Fiqar. The Messenger of Allah retired to a side of Uhud and stood there; and 'Ali continued fighting them so (valiantly) that he had got seventy wounds on his head, face, body, belly and legs—as narrated by 'Ali ibn Ibrahim in his at-Tafsir. Thereupon, Jibril said: 'Verily, this is indeed the support, O Muhammad!' Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) replied; 'Surely he is from me and I am from him.' Jibril said: 'And I am from you two.' "

Abu 'Abdillah (a.s.) said: "The Messenger of Allah looked at Jibril (sitting) on a golden chair between the heaven and the earth, and he was saying: 'There is no sword except Dhul 'l-Fiqar, and there is no hero except 'Ali. ' " (Majma'u 'l-bayan )

al-Qummi narrates: "There (also) remained with the Messenger of Allah Nasibah bint Ka'b al-Maziniyyah — and she used to go with the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) in his battles to treat the wounded—and her son was with her. He wanted to retreat and go back (to Medina); but she attacked him and said: 'O my son, where are you fleeing from Allah and His Messenger?' Thus she made him come back. Then a man attacked and killed him. Thereupon, she took her son's sword and attacked that man, and striking at his thigh she killed him. The Messenger of Allah said (to her): 'May Allah bless you, O Nasibah.' She was protecting the Messenger of Allah with her chest and breasts until she was extensively wounded.

"Ibn Qami'ah attacked the Messenger of Allah; and he had said: 'Show me Muhammad. May I be damned if he gets away (from me).' Then he hit (the Messenger of Allah) on his shoulder and cried: I have killed Muhammad, by al-Lat and al-'Uzza.' " (at- Talsir )

The author say: There are some other traditions about the events of Uhud, some of them disagree with this one in some details. For example: a) This tradition gives the number of the polytheists as five thousand, while most of the traditions say three thousand. b) It says that it was 'Ali (a.s.) who killed all the nine standard-bearers of the enemy. Other traditions support it; and Ibnu 'l-Athir has narrated it in his history, al-kenil, from Abu Rafi'. But another group of narrations attributes slaying of some of them to some others. But meditation on these events

supports what the present tradition says.

c) It says that it was Hind who made a covenant with Wahshi regarding the murder of Hamzah. Some Sunni narrations say that' it was not Hind but Wahshi's master, Jubayr ibn Mut'im, who had entrusted this task to Wahshi, promising to emancipate him on his slaying Hamzah. But the fact that Wahshi had taken Hamzah's liver, not to Jubayr, but to Hind, supports the present tradition.

d) This tradition says that all Muslims had fled away, except 'Ali and Abu Dujanah. It is agreed upon by almost all traditions. But some other narrations add some more names, and if you add all the names it would appear that there had remained about thirty persons with the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.). But those traditions cancel each other. If you ponder on the events and the circumstantial evidence, the truth will become clear to you. You should not forget that these stories and traditions are a sort of witness for various tendencies — for and against — and have passed through many bright and dark strata before reaching us.

e) This tradition says that Allah sent an angel who returned Hamzah's liver to its place. This statement is not found in most of the traditions. A different version is found in some other narrations. For example, (the author of) ad-Durru'l-manthur, narrates from Ibn Abi Shaybah, Ahmad and Ibn al-Mundhir from Ibn Mas'ud, inter alia, in a hadith that he said: "Then Abu Sufyan said: 'There was some mutilation of the people (i.e.- of Muslim martyrs), although it was not done by the majority of us. Neither I ordered it nor forbade it; neither I liked it nor disliked it; neither it pleased me nor displeased me.' " (Ibn Mas'ud) said: "Then they looked, and there was Hamzah with his belly ripped open. Hind took his liver and chewed it, but she could not eat it. The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) asked: 'Did she eat any part of it?' They said: 'No.' (The Messenger of Allah) said: 'Allah could not allow any part of Hamzah to enter the Fire.' "

Traditions, both ours and others', say that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) was seriously wounded that day; there was skull fracture in his forehead, and his incisors were broken and middle incisor damaged. . .

Ibn Ishaq, 'Abd ibn Hamid, Ibn Jarir and Ibn al-Mundhir narrate from Ibn Shahab, Muhammad ibn Yahya ibn Hayyan, 'Asim ibn 'Amr ibn Qatadah and al-Hasin ibn 'Abdi 'r-Rahman ibn 'Amr ibn Sa'd ibn Mu'adh and others — all have narrated some of the events of the battle of Uhud: They have said: "When Quraysh suffered on the day of Badr, and the scattered remnants of their army reached Mecca, and Abu Sufyan too returned with his trade - caravan, then 'Abdullah ibn Abi Rabi 'ah, 'Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl and Safwan ibn Umayyah together with some other Qurayshites (whose fathers, sons and/or brothers were killed in Badr), went to him. They talked with Abu Sufyan and all those who had any trade-goods in that caravan and

suggested (as follows): 'O people of Quraysh, surely Muhammad has aggrieved you and killed your best personalities. Therefore, help us with this wealth to fight against him, in order that we may take revenge of our casualties from him.' They did so. Then the Quraysh resolved to fight the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.), and came out with the flower of their army. They also took their women with them for their protection and also in order that they would not flee (from the battle-ground). Abu Sufyan came out at the head of the army. They proceeded until they came down at 'Aynayn—a mountain in the depth of as-Sanjah on a canal in the valley adjoining Medina.

"When the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) and the Muslims heard about the polytheists that they had come down where they did, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: 'I have seen (in dream) a cow slaughtered, and saw the tip of my sword jagged, and saw that I had put my hand in an invulnerable coat of mail, and I interpreted it (to mean) Medina. Therefore, if you think (it advisable), you should stay inside Medina and leave them where they have come down; then if they stayed (there) they would be staying in the worst place, and if they entered (our City) we should fight them in it.'

"The Quraysh occupied their position at Uhud on Wednesday, and stayed there on Thursday and Friday. The Messenger of Allah proceeded after praying the Friday-prayer and reached the mountain-pass of the Uhud. The two (forces) met on Saturday, 15th Shawwal, the third year (of hijrah).

" 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy agreed with the opinion of the Messenger of Allah that they should not go out to meet the enemy; and the Messenger of Allah disliked going out of Medina. But some Muslims — some from among those whom Allah later honoured with martyrdom in Uhud, and some others who had missed the battle of Badr and were not present on that occasion — said: 'O Messenger of Allah, come out with us against our enemies, so that they should not think that we were afraid of them or felt weaker.' 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy said: 'O Messenger of Allah, stay inside Medina and do not go out to meet them. Because, by God, we never went out of it to meet an enemy of us but he bested us, and never did an enemy enter Medina to fight us but we vanquished them. Therefore, let them be, O Messenger of Allah; then if they stayed they would stay with difficulty; and if they entered (the City) even the women, children and men would fight them with stones from above (the roofs); and if they returned, they would return disappointed as they had come.'

"But the people were still urging the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) (to proceed out of Medina) — these were the people who wanted to fight against the enemy. (This continued) until the Messenger of Allah entered (his house) and wore his cuirasses — and it was on Friday after the prayer — then he came out to (the companions). In the meantime the people regretted (their persistence) and said (to the Prophet): ' We have compelled the Messenger of Allah and

it was not good of us. Therefore you may sit back if you wish.' The Messenger of Allah said: ' It is not proper for a prophet — once he has put on his cuirasses — to remove them without waging the war.'

"The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) came out with one thousand of his companions. When they were proceeding between Medina and Uhud, 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy went back with one-third of the people, (leaving the Prophet). The Messenger of Allah proceeded on. When he was passing through the story field of Banu Harithah, a horse whisked its tail which caught the sword-tip (of the rider) and pulled it out. The Messenger of Allah (who liked good omens but did not believe in bad ones) said to the owner of the sword:: 'Gather your sword, because I find that swords will surely be drawn today.' The Messenger of Allah went on until he came down at the mountain-pass of the Uhud from the run of the valley to the mountain. He kept Uhud at his back, and took position for the battle — and there were seven hundred persons with him.

"The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) gave the command of the archers — and they were fifty in number—to 'Abdullah ibn Jubayr, and said to him: 'Protect us from the mountain (side) by arrow, so that they do not come to us from our behind; you stay at your place, no matter the battle goes against us or for us; (because) we shall be attacked from your side.' The Messenger of Allah was wearing two coats of mail." (ad-Durru 'I-manthur)

Ibn Jarir narrates from as-Suddi in a hadith, enter alia: "The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) proceeded to Uhud with one thousand men. He had promised them victory if they would remain patient. Then 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy returned back with three hundred persons. Abu Jabir as-Salami persued them to call them back; but they thwarted his efforts and said to him: 'We do not know how to fight; and if you listen to us you too should come back (to Medina) with us.' " (ibid.)

as-Suddi said about the words: When two parties from among you had determined that they should show cowardice: "They were Banu Salmah and Banu Harithah who wanted to return when 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy went back, but Allah protected them; and the Messenger of Allah remained with seven hundred men." ( ibid.)

The author says: These were two clans from among the Helpers: Banu Salmah from the Khazraj and Banu Harithah from the Aws.

Ibn Abi Ishaq, as-Suddi, al-Waqidi, Ibn Jarir and others have narrated: "The polytheists reached Uhud on Wednesday in Shawwal, 3 A.H., and the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) proceeded to meet them on Friday; and the battle took place on Saturday, 15th Shawwal. The incisors of the Messenger of Allah were broken and his face was wounded. Then the

Emigrants and the Helpers returned after fleeing away; and seventy of the Muslims were martyred. The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) stood firm accompanied by those who had remained with him until he removed (the enemies). The polytheists had mutilated a group (of martyrs), but Hamzah was mutilated worst of all." (Majma 'u 'l-bayan)

The author says: There is a great number of traditions about the events of Uhud. We have narrated, and shall narrate later, only a few of them, on which depends understanding of the verses revealed on this subject. These verses throw light on its various aspects:

Some deal with the cowardice of those who retreated or disagreed with each other or wanted to return to Medina cowardly. Others admonish and censure those who had fled leaving the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) in the thick of the battle - although Allah had forbidden them to do so.

Still others praise those who were martyred before the others had fled, and those who bravely stood firm and did not leave the Prophet, and continued to fight till their last breath. Lastly, there are verses extolling those who steadfastly continued to fight till the end of the battle but were not martyred.

#### Volume 7: Surah Ale-Imran, Verses 130-138

O you who believe! Do not devour interest making it double and redouble, and fear Allah, that you may be successful (130). And guard yourself against the fire which has been prepared for the unbeliever (131). And obey Allah and the Messenger, that you may be shown mercy (132). And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord, and a Garden, the extensiveness of which is (as) the heavens and the earth; it is prepared for the pious ones (133). Those who spend (benevolently) in ease as well as in straitness, and those who restrain (their) anger and forgive men; and Allah loves the doers of good (to others) (134). And those who when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults and who forgives the faults but Allah? and (who) do not knowingly persist in what they have done (135). (As for), these their reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them, and excellent is the reward of those who act (righteously) (136). Indeed there have been examples before you; therefore travel in the earth and see what was the end of the rejecters (137). This is a clear statement for men, and a guidance and an admonition for the pious ones (138).



## COMMENTARY

The verses call to the good and restrain from the vice and evil. Yet they are not without some connection with the preceding and following verses dealing with the battle of Uhud. They describe some undesirable conditions and reprehensible traits which were found in the believers at that time and which Allah was not pleased with. It were such things which had made them vulnerable to weakness and infirmity and led them to disobedience of Allah and His Messenger. The verses thus focus on the events of Uhud from another angle.

Also, the verses guide the believers as to how they can protect themselves from these devastating entanglements and ruinous obstacles; they invite them to piety, fear of Allah and trust in Him and exhort them to be firm in obedience of the Allah's Messenger. These nine verses therefore contain exhortation and warning: they awaken in the believers longing to hasten towards good, that is, spending in the way of Allah in ease as well as in straitness, restraining their anger and forgiving the people's faults; all is joined together under the heading of spreading good in the society, patience in face of grievance and injury, and refraining from repaying evil with evil. It is the only way of preserving the society and making it strong and energetic.

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.

Allah exhorts them to these virtues. Then He encourages them to return to their Lord again and again even if they have committed sins and errors; they should not lose hope of His mercy even if they have done something which is not liked by Him; they must repent and seek pardon from Him repeatedly without indolence or negligence.

By doing good to others and returning to Allah in time and again, they would proceed on the straight path of happy life; they will never go astray nor will they stop at any dangerous point.

This Qur'anic description is the best way for guiding man to perfect himself when he finds some defects in his life; the finest means of curing spiritual ailments which sometimes creep into otherwise good souls and threaten man with downfall and ruin. QUR'AN: O you who believe! do not devour interest . . . that you may be shown mercy:

We have explained how "devouring" is used for "taking ". The phrase, "making it double and redouble ", points to overriding characteristic of interests; interest, per se, multiplies and increases the lender's wealth many-fold by depleting debtor's money adding it to the creditor's capital. 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 (2:276).

QUR'AN: And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord, and a Garden ....

"al-Musara 'ah" (to rush, to make haste); it is commendable in good deeds and reprehensible in bad ones.

The Qur'an, in most of the places, joins forgiveness with the Garden. It is because the Garden is a place of purity and cleanliness; the impurities of sins and filth of vices cannot enter it, nor can a person tarnished by them except after forgiveness and removal of that filth. The forgiveness and the Garden described in this verse run parallel to what is mentioned in the following two verses. The forgiveness corresponds with the verse, "And those who when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls . . . "; and the Garden stands face to face with the verse, "Those who spend (benevolently) in ease as well as in straitness..."

The clause, "and a Garden, the extensiveness of which is (as) the heavens and the earth ". "al-Ard " (lit: width) denotes here spaciousness, extensiveness; it is a common usage; the expression metaphorically implies that it is spacious to the utmost, or to an extent that human imagination cannot reach it. Also, it has another meaning, which we shall explain under the "Traditions ".

The clause, "it is prepared for the pious ones", paves the way for description of the characteristics of the pious ones which is given in the coming verses. The main idea is to describe those characteristics of the believers which are relevant to the present situation, i.e., after the battle of Uhud (when they had displayed, and suffered from, weakness and disobedience), because they were expected to participate in other similar battles and undergo similar situations, where they would be in great need of unity, harmony and solidarity.

QUR'AN: Those who spend (benevolently) in ease as well as in straitness, and those who restrain (their) anger, and forgive men; and Allah loves the doers of good (to others):

as-Sarra' and addarra (that which pleases man or displeases him) i.e., ease and difficulty. al-Kazm literally means to tie the mouth of water-skin after filling it; then it was metaphorically extended to a man filled with anger or sorrow who restrains or suppresses his emotions. al-Ghayz

(translated here as "anger") denotes stirring of feeling of revenge, when one faces many unpleasant things; it is different from al-ghadab (generally translated as "wrath") which refers to the intention of revenge or punishment. That is why we say "Allah afflicted them with His wrath", but do not say, "Allah was angry with them".

The sentence, "and Allah loves the doers of good (to others)", indicates that the preceding characteristics define "the doers of good", i.e., to other people. As for doing good in relation to Allah is concerned, it is defined in the following verse: . . . and as good news for the doers of good. Surely those who say, Our Lord is Allah, then they continue on the right way, they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve. These are the dwellers of the Garden, abiding therein: a reward for what they did (46:12-14).

The doing of good, mentioned in the verse under discussion, is delineated by the preceding words, "Those who spend (benevolently) in ease as well as in straitness . . . "; these good characteristics have no value in the eyes of Allah if they were not done "for Him", as has been described in many preceding verses, e.g.: The likeness of what they spend in this life of the world is as the likeness of wind . . . (3:117).

The above reality may also be inferred from ch. 29, vr. 69: And (as for) those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them onto Our way; and Allah is most surely with the doers of good. One may be said to be striving hard only if one does something against one's desires and natural instincts. It may happen only when a man firmly believes in matters, which demand such sacrifice and steadfastness in face of natural desires and longings. It requires firm faith and true belief they must say, Our Lord is Allah, and then continue steadfastly on it and demands relevant action, i.e., they must strengthen this belief by striving in sincere worship of Allah, spending benevolently in His way and living in the society with good conduct and irreproachable behavior. It appears from it that doing good, means performing all actions in proper way by remaining firm and steadfast in the divine faith, in the belief in Allah.

QUR'AN: And those who when they commit an indecency. . . and excellent is the reward of those who act (righteously):

"al Fahishah" (indecent, shameful action) it is generally used for fornication. As the word, az-zulm (injustice) has been used parallel to indecency, it should denote all other big or small sins. Alternatively, if "indecency" is taken to mean big sins, then "injustice" would mean small sins only. The clause, "remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults", indicates that the plea for forgiveness should emanate from remembrance of Allah — it should not be just a verbal repetition, based on habit. The sentence, "and who forgives the faults but Allah?", encourages man to return to Allah, and reminds him to take refuge, and seek shelter, in Him. The proviso, "and (who) do not knowingly persist in what they have done", is an essential part of asking

forgiveness from Allah.

Persistence in sins distorts the psyche to such an extent that remembrance of Allah does not bring any benefit to it; such behavior shows that the person concerned gives no importance to divine command, dishonors the sanctity of religion and behaves arrogantly against Allah; in such a situation neither servitude can survive nor remembrance can be of any use. For the same reason was added another proviso, i.e., "knowingly". This phrase indicates that "injustice" (in the preceding clause) includes small sins too; persistence in sins — whether big or small — shows disregard to the divine command, indifference towards His authority. The phrase, "what they have done", therefore covers big as well as small sins, and refers to the indecency and injustice mentioned in the beginning of the verse: but small sin is not included in indecency, therefore it is injustice to one's soul indeed.

Their great reward is described in the next verse, "(As for) these their reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and gardens . . ." It is the same things which the believers are exhorted to hasten to: "And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden. . ." Looking at this beginning and end, it may be seen clearly that they have been enjoined to hasten to spending benevolently, restraining their anger, forgiving the people and asking forgiveness for their faults.

QUR'AN: Indeed there have been examples before you; therefore travel in the earth and see what was the end of the rejecters:

"as-Sunan" is plural of as-sunnah (the way or tradition followed by the society). The believers have been told to travel in the earth, in order that they could learn lessons from archeological remains of ancient people and bygone generations. They should ponder about those pharaohs and nimrods, those kings and emperors - where did all of them go to? Their towering palaces, their accumulated treasures, their gilded thrones and their fully-equipped armies - nothing could avail them in the least; now they are just a few names to serve as examples and lesson for those who meditate, and as tourist attraction for the carefree and oblivious persons.

As for protecting their monuments, preserving their statues and endeavoring to find out how great they were in their times and how magnificent their splendor was in that era, it is a matter which the Qur'an does not care about. It is nothing but idolatry in a new disguise. We shall explain this topic, God willing, in a separate discourse in which we shall analyze the meaning of idolatry.

QUR'AN: This is a clear statement. . . for the pious ones:

The classification looks at the degrees of its effect. It is just a clear statement, a faithfully transmitted message for some people, while for others it is an admonition and guidance.

## TRADITIONS

The Prophet was asked about the words, a Garden, the extensiveness of which is (as) the heavens and the earth: "If the extensiveness of the Garden is as the heavens and the earth. then where will the Fire be?" He (s.a.w.a.) said: "Glory be to Allah! When the day comes, where does the night go?" (Majma'u 'I-bayan)

The author says: as-Suyuti has narrated in, ad-Durru 'I-manthur, from at-Tanukhi that (the Byzantine Emperor) Heraclius had written to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) a letter in which, inter alia, he had asked about this verse, and the Prophet had replied it as described above. He has also narrated through another chain from Abu Hurayrah that someone asked the Prophet this question and he replied as above.

The above reply has been interpreted as follows: The Fire is in the Knowledge of Allah as night remains in the Knowledge of Allah when day comes. COMMENT: If it means that the Fire is not away from the Divine Knowledge, then it does not solve the problem, because the question was about the place of the Fire, not about the Knowledge of Allah. If, on the other hand, it means that possibly there could be another place for the Fire beyond the heavens and the earth, then it might be tenable, but then the comparison of the Garden and the Fire with day and night would be out of place — because the night does not go out of the heavens and the earth when the day comes. Obviously this interpretation does not offer an acceptable explanation of the hadith.

I believe that the tradition points to another theme: The hereafter (with all its felicity and infelicity) is similar to this world with all its happiness and sorrow. Likewise, the man in the hereafter will be the same man who was in this world — as appears from the Qur'an and traditions. Nevertheless, the system governing the hereafter will be different from the ones permeating this world. The hereafter is the place of eternity and infinity, while this world is transitory and evanescent.

That is why man would eat and drink, marry and enjoy all comforts of the Garden but would not undergo the consequences attendant to those enjoyments in this world. In the same way, man would burn in the fire of the Hell and suffer pain and agony in food and drink, abode and companions, yet would not be affected by it in the way he would have been in this life. In the hereafter, he would live eternal life without being affected by middle or old age or becoming senile or decrepit. It is because these effects and concomitants are products of the system of this world; they are not essential parts of every system - they would not be found in the next world's system. It is this world, not the hereafter, which is the place of conflict and struggle, contrast and contradiction.

Now ponder on our own observation of the events. When we look at current happenings, we

cannot see the previous events; if we see the night, then the day is absent from us. But nothing is absent from Allah; past, present and future - all is present before Allah, and there is no contrast or contradiction between them on that level. It means that the day and the night and their concomitant events contradict and cancel each other when they are governed by material system and movement. But when the same day and night and their concomitants are put under another system, there remains no contrast and contradiction among them. It may be inferred from the words of Allah: Have you not considered (the work of) your Lord, how He extends the shade? And if He had pleased He would certainly have made it stationary; then We have made the sun an indication of it; Then We take it to Ourselves, taking little by little (25:45-46).

If it is possible in contradictory things like day and night, it may equally be possible for the heavens and the earth to house the Garden equal in size to themselves and then accommodate another thing like the Hell of the same size; it will be possible, not under this worldly system, but according to the system prevailing in the hereafter. There may be found similar expressions in traditions. For example: "Verily grave is an orchard from the orchards of the Garden, or a pit from the pits of the Fire." Or, "The grave of a believer is widened for him to the extent of his sight."

In the same way should be explained these words of the Prophet. Otherwise, if it is taken to mean that Allah is not oblivious of the night when He knows the day, it would not dovetail with the question. Likewise, if it were to mean that the night exists somewhere else when the day comes, it would invite another objection: The night cannot co-exist with the day at any place; and if we look at its reality then the night is a conic shade of the earth resulting from the sunlight — the light and shade rotating around the earth. Thus the day and the night are continuously revolving around the earth without one merging into, or canceling, the other.

There are other traditions of similar style. For example, it has been narrated about the Qur'anic words: That Allah may separate the impure from the pure. . . (8:37): "When the sun sets, where does this light, spread on the earth, go?" We shall explain it later on.

It has been narrated in, ad-Durru'l-manthur, about the words: and those who restrain (their) anger and forgive men: al-Bayhaqi has narrated from 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (a.s.) that a slave girl was pouring water on him in preparation for prayer. The pitcher fell from her hand on his face contusing it. He raised his head (looking) at her. She said: "Verily Allah says: 'and those who restrain (their) anger.' " He said: "I have restrained my anger. " She recited: "and forgive men." He said: "Allah has forgiven you." She recited: "and Allah loves doers of good (to others)." He said: "Go, you are free."

The author says: It is narrated also from the Shi'i chains. The tradition obviously shows that the Imam (a.s.) interprets "good-doing" as something more than the preceding two virtues, and in fact it is so in its general terms, although the above virtues are concomitants of good-doing, and

possibly they may be used for defining the "good-doing".

There are very numerous traditions on good manners and virtuous conduct, i.e., spending benevolently, restraining anger and forgiving faults, narrated from the Prophet and the Imams of the Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.); we shall quote them later in a more appropriate place.

It is narrated from 'Abdu 'r-Rahman ibn Ghanm ad-Dawsi that the verse, And those who when they commit an indecency . . . , was revealed about Bahlul, the grave-digger. He used to dig graves (to steal shrouds). Once he dug the grave of a girl from the Ansar, took out her body and removed her shroud. She was beautiful and of fair complexion; so the Satan tempted him and he committed fornication with her. Then he felt remorse and came to the Prophet, but he turned him out. Then the people dissociated from him; and he too secluded himself from others, spending his time in worship and repentance in some mountains of Medina - until Allah accepted his repentance and revealed this verse about him. (al-Majalis, as.-Saduq)

The author says: It is a detailed tradition, which we have abridged here. If it is a correct hadith, and then it would be a separate cause for the verse's revelation apart from the general reason, which covers all the verses of the story of Uhud.

al-Baqir (a.s.) said concerning the words, and (who) do not knowingly persist in what they have done: "Persistence is that a sinner commits a sin and does not ask Allah for forgiveness nor does he make up his mind to repent - so that is persistence." (at- Tafsir, al-'Ayyashi )

Ahmad has narrated from the Prophet that he said: 'Iblis said: 'O Lord, by Thy Honor! I shall not cease leading children of Adam astray as long as their souls shall remain within their bodies.' Allah then said: 'By My Honor! I shall go on forgiving them as long as they ask Me for forgiveness.' " (ad-Durru 'l-manthur )

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "There is no small (sin) with persistence, and there is no big (sin) after seeking (Allah's) forgiveness." (al-Kafi)

The same Imam (a.s.) said, inter alia, in a hadith: " . . . and there is in the Book of Allah a deliverance from ruin, an insight from blindness, and a healing for what is in the breasts; (found) in what Allah has enjoined you to seek (His) forgiveness and to repent. Allah says: 'And those who when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults - and who forgives the faults but Allah? — and (who) do not knowingly persist in what they have done.' And He says: 'And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his soul, then asks forgiveness of Allah, he shall find Allah Forgiving, Merciful' (4:110). So this is what Allah has enjoined about asking (His) forgiveness, and has put with it the condition of repentance and refraining from what Allah has forbidden. (It is) because He says: 'To Him do ascend the good

words and the good deed lifts them up' (35:10). This verse implies that the plea of forgiveness is not lifted up to Allah except by good deed and repentance. " (at-Tafsir, al-'Ayyashi)

The author says: The Imam (a.s.) has inferred abstinence from sin and not repeating it after repentance from the word, do not knowingly persist; likewise the fact, that repentance and plea of forgiveness require good deed afterwards, has been inferred from the generality of "good words" in the verse, To Him do ascend the good words.

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "When the verse, And those who when they commit an indecency..., was revealed, Iblis ascended a mountain in Mecca, Thawr by name, and screamed very loudly to his afreets. They all gathered near him and said: 'O our leader, why have you called us?' He said: 'This verse has been revealed; now who would deal with it?' An afreet from among the satans stood up and said: 'I will see to it with such and such means.' (The Iblis) said: 'You cannot do it.' Then another (afreet) stood up and said something similar (to the first one) and (Iblis) said:

'You are not for it.' Then the Whispering Slinking (satan) said: 'I shall deal with it. (Iblis) said: 'By what means?' He said: 'I shall promise them and tempt them until they would commit a sin; and when they have committed it, I would make them oblivious of asking for forgiveness.' (Iblis) said: 'You are (fit) for it.' Then he entrusted this task to him up to the Day of Resurrection." (al-Majalis, as-Saduq) The author says: This tradition has also been narrated through Sunni chains.

#### Volume 7: Surah Ale-Imran, Verses 139-148

And be not infirm, and be not grieving, and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers (139). If a wound has afflicted you (at Uhud), a wound like it has also afflicted the (unbelieving) people; and We bring these days to men by turns, and that Allah may know those who believe and take witnesses from among you; and Allah loves not the unjust (140). And that Allah may purge those who believe and eradicate the unbelievers (141). Do you think that you will enter the Garden while Allah has not yet known those who strive hard from among you, and (He has not) known the patient? (142). And certainly you desired death before you met it; so indeed you have seen it (even) while you look (at it) (143). And Muhammad is no more than a messenger, the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heels, he will by no means do harm to Allah in the least; and Allah will reward the grateful (144). And it is not for a soul to die but with the permission of Allah (according to) the term that is fixed; and whoever desires the reward of this



world, We shall give him of it, and whoever desires the reward of the hereafter, We shall give him of it, and We will reward the grateful (145). And how many a prophet has fought with whom were myriads of Godly men; so they did not lose heart on account of what befell them in Allah's way, nor did they weaken, nor did they abase themselves; and Allah loves the patient (146). And their saying was no other than that they said: "Our Lord! forgive us our faults and our extravagance in our affair, and make firm our feet and help us against the unbelieving people" (147). So Allah gave them the reward of this world and an excellent reward of the hereafter and Allah loves those who do good (to others) (148).

## COMMENTARY

The verses, as you see, complete the talk which had begun with the words, O you who believe! . . . (3:130), while those verses with their orders and prohibitions had paved the way for these which contain the main purpose including command, prohibition, praise and stricture. QUR'AN: And be not infirm, and be not grieving, and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers:

"al-Wahn", according to ar-Raghib (in mufradaatul Qur'an), is infirmity and weakness in body or character. Here it refers to their weakness of will-power, carelessness in establishing the religion and lack of courage in face of its enemies. al-Huzn (grief) is opposite of al-farh (joy, happiness); it afflicts a man when he loses a favorite possession, or something which he thinks belongs to him.

The words, "and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers". If a wound has afflicted you (at Uhud), a wound like it has also afflicted the (unbelieving) people;', indicate that the believers had felt infirmity and grief because they had seen themselves afflicted by wounds and found the unbelievers gaining upper hand. Although the polytheists could not get total victory over the believers, nor the battle ultimately ended with the believers' decisive defeat, yet what had afflicted them was really hard and painful - martyrdom of seventy of their brave warriors. Add to it the humiliation that they had been overwhelmed on their own ground. All these factors together had caused extreme dejection and pessimism. The clause, "and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers" (which stands as the reason of these two prohibitions), shows that the prohibition was related to actual infirmity and grief, not to some expected behavior in future.

The promise, "you shall have the upper hand", is general and unrestricted, but it is followed by the proviso, "if you are believers". It therefore gives the following meaning: You should not be weak in your will-power, nor should you grieve for the lost victory, if you are true believers. It is because belief - is bound to give you upper hand over your enemies - belief is accompanied by piety and patience, and these two are the basis of victory and triumph. As for the wound, which has afflicted you in this battle, you are not alone in it; the unbelievers too had suffered similar casualties. If you think it over, they have not gained over you in any way. Therefore, you should

not feel depressed or grieved.

The address had started with the words, O you who believe; yet their gaining upper hand has been made conditional on their being believers. It implies that although the masses were not devoid of faith and belief, they had not adhered to the concomitants and requirements of that belief, like patience and piety; otherwise it would have brought out the desired effects.

This phenomenon is found in every group which is composed of people having different grades of belief; while there are some true believers, there are some of weak faith and yet others of sick hearts. This type of talk creates enthusiasm in believing souls, admonishes and revives the weak ones and censures and reprimands the hearts ailing with hypocrisy.

QUR'AN: If a wound has afflicted you (at Uhud), a wound like it has also afflicted the (unbelieving) people:

"al-Qarh" is used for effect of an external wound, while al-qurh denotes the effect of an internal wound like pimple or pustule. This difference has been given by ar-Raghib. The word metaphorically refers to all the calamities that had befallen the Muslims on the day of Uhud; it looks at the whole Muslim community as a single body which had received a wound inflicted by the enemy - the wound referring to the martyrdom of the martyrs and injuries of the injured, and the tragedy that victory slipped through their fingers.

The sentence, "If a wound had afflicted you . . . and destroy the unbelievers", gives the reason of the command, "And be not infirm, and be not grieving"; as does the sentence, "and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers "

The difference between the two sets of reasons is as follows: The sentence, "and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers", corrects their misconception. They had become disheartened and pessimistic because they thought that the polytheists had gained upper hand. Allah points out to them that it is they, not the polytheists, who have got the essential prerequisite of victory 'if they are believers'; and Allah had already declared: and helping the believers is ever incumbent on Us (30:47).

The second reason describes the condition of the two parties — the believers and the polytheists - or explains the underlying rationale, that is, the inverting Divine practice to turn the fortunes among men.

QUR'AN: and We bring these days to men by turns:

"al-Yawm" (day) is a considerable span of time that is necessary for an occurrence - thus its

duration would differ from occurrence to occurrence. Generally it is used for the period between sunrise and sunset. Often it is used for kingdom, reign, power, etc., putting the time in place of the thing covered by it. They say, 'day of this group', 'day of such and such dynasty', i.e., their precedence and rule over others; sometimes it denotes the period itself. It is this connotation which is meant in this verse al-Mudawalah (taking of a thing by many people one after another).

The sentence thus means: It is an invariable practice of Allah that He rotates these days among men by turns; these are not restricted to any one group nor prevented from another people; this system is based on common benefits only a part of which may be comprehended by your minds.

QUR'AN: and that Allah may know those who believe and take witnesses from among you...eradicate the unbelievers:

The conjunction "and" joins it to a deleted clause; it was deleted to imply that human understanding cannot comprehend all of its aspects, it may know only a few features of it. What the believers would benefit from is mentioned in these two verses: "that Allah may know those who believe and take witnesses from among you; . . . that Allah may purge those who believe and eradicate the unbelievers."

As for the words, "that Allah may know those who believe ", they imply manifestation of their belief after its being hidden. Allah's knowledge of events and things is the same as their existence. The things are known to Allah by their very existence. His knowledge is not like ours - because our knowledge and perception come through a form abstracted from the thing concerned. To say that Allah wills to know a thing, is the same as saying that Allah wills to bring it into being. In the verse under discussion, Allah says, "that Allah may know those who believe"; the clause shows that there were believers already in existence; therefore, it would mean that He wished to make their belief manifest. As every thing in this world is governed by the system of cause and effect, it was necessary that some things should happen which would make the belief of the believers manifest after it was hidden. (Try to understand it.)

It is followed by the clause, "and take witnesses from among you " ash-Shuhada' refers to the witnesses of deeds. The Qur'an has never used this word for "martyrs". Its use in the meaning of "those who are killed while fighting in the way of Allah" is a later usage, as we had explained under the verse, And thus We have made you a medium nation that you may be witnesses for the people . . . (2:143) . Moreover, the word "take " which has been used here, is not very appropriate for the martyrs of the battlefield; it is not said 'Allah has taken Zayd as a martyr in His way'. But it is said: 'Allah has taken Ibrahim as a friend'; or 'Allah has taken Musa as one spoken to; or 'Allah has taken the Prophet as a witness for giving evidence for his ummah on the Day of Resurrection'.

Significantly, Allah has said, "and take witnesses from among you ", instead of saying, take you as

witnesses. Although verse 143 of the chapter of The Cow ascribes witnessing to the ummah (And thus We have made you a medium nation that you may be witnesses for the people...), but as we explained under that verse? it is a metaphorical use, ascribing to the whole nation what in fact belongs to a particular group of the nation—it is not the whole ummah but only a few of them who will bear witness for the nation. This interpretation may possibly be supported by the ending clause, "and Allah loves not the unjust. "

Then comes the verse, "And that Allah may purge those who believe and eradicate the unbelievers. "at-Tamhis" (to purge) denotes purifying something from extraneous pollutions. al-Mahq (to eradicate, to efface) signifies gradual depletion of a thing, eradicating it bit by bit. The said purification is one of the benefits of rotating the days among the people. It is separate from the above-mentioned benefit that Allah may know the believers. Distinguishing a believer from an unbeliever is one thing, and purifying his belief from pollutions of disbelief, hypocrisy and immorality is another. That is why it has been put side by side with eradication of the unbelievers. Allah removes the ingredients of disbelief from a believer's character little by little until nothing remains there but the belief, pure and unsullied; and likewise He eradicates ingredients of disbelief, polytheism and deceit from the unbeliever bit by bit, until all is destroyed.

These are some of the reasons why Allah brings the days to men by turn, and why power does not remain confined to a particular group forever; and all affairs belong exclusively to Allah, He does whatever He pleases; and He does not do except that which is most suitable and most beneficial (to His creatures); as He says: ...thus does Allah compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people, it remains in the earth (13:17). Also, He has said shortly before the verses under discussion: That He may cut off a portion from among those who disbelieve, or abase them so that they should return disappointed of attaining what they desired. You have no concern in the affair whether He turns to them (mercifully) or chastises them, for surely they are unjust (3:127-8). Allah has denied here that His Prophet had any authority in the affair, reserving that power exclusively to Himself; He decides about His creatures as He pleases.

Look at the matters described in these verses: The days rotate among the people; it is done for the purpose of test and trial, in order that believers may be separated from unbelievers; believers may be purged and purified and unbelievers obliterated gradually. Add to it the declaration that the Prophet had no authority in this matter. All this together shows that a majority of the believers was under the impression that there being on the true religion was the complete cause of their victory — wherever they happened to fight. They thought that just because they were on truth, they must overpower the falsehood, no matter what their own condition; to them belonged all affairs, and they could not be deprived of it. They were further encouraged in this miscalculation when angels were sent to help them in Badr and they found themselves quite unexpectedly victorious over unbelievers.

But that was a misunderstanding, which could nullify the system of test and purification; and that in its turn would negate the underlying rationale of command and prohibition, reward and punishment. That would lead to destruction of the foundation of religion. After all, divine religion is a religion of nature; it is not based on nullification of the customary procedure or of divine practice permeating the universe — the system that victory and defeat result from their normal causes.

After explaining that the days rotate among the people for their test and trial, Allah now begins admonishing them for this serious misunderstanding of theirs, and explaining the real position to them.

QUR'AN: Do you think that you will enter the Garden . . . while you look (at it):

The misconception that they would enter the Garden without being tested, was an inseparable concomitant of the previously mentioned misunderstanding. They thought that because they were on truth and truth is not overwhelmed, they would always be victorious; that they would never be defeated, would never be vanquished. Obviously, if it were true, then every one who believed in the Prophet and entered into the believers' society, would find' felicity in this world through victory and booty, and felicity in the hereafter in the form of forgiveness and the Garden. Then there would be no difference between the felicity in the hereafter in the form of forgiveness and the Garden. Then there would be no difference between the appearance of belief and its reality, no distinction between various ranks (of belief and piety); the belief of a fighter and that of a patient fighter would be of the same value; a man who intended to do a good deed and actually did it when its time came, would be equal to him who intended but turned on his heels when faced with it.

Accordingly, the words, "Do you think that you will enter . . .", have metaphorically put the effect in place of the cause. The complete meaning therefore is as follows: You thought that power is reserved for you; you would not be put to test, rather you would enter the Garden without going through a trial to separate the deserving from undeserving, to distinguish believers of higher ranks from those of lower grades.

The next verse demonstrates that that thinking was wrong. The words, "And certainly you desired death before you met it, so indeed you have seen it (even) while you look (at it) ", show that they had desired death before arriving at the battlefield; but when the desired death came to them and they looked at it, they did not come forward to get what they longed for; instead they showed cowardice and fled away. How can it be possible for them to enter into the Garden merely because of that expressed desire without being tested, without any procedure of purification? Was it not necessary to test them (to separate the truth from the falsehood)?

It shows that there is a deleted clause near the end of the verse. The complete sentence would be as follows: So indeed you have seen it, yet you did not come forward to get it even while you looked at it. Another possible interpretation: You just looked at the death, i.e. without doing any thing to meet it.

Thus "looking" would metaphorically imply not grappling with the death. It is a reproach and censure.

### **A Discourse on Test and its Realities (click here)**

QUR'AN: And Muhammad is no more than a messenger; the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heels, he will by no means do harm to Allah in the least; and Allah will reward the grateful:

Death is passing away, end of the body's life. Slaying or killing denotes death arising from extraneous cause - intentional or otherwise. When the words, 'death' and 'killing', are used separately, the 'death' signifies a general meaning which includes killing too; but when they are used side by side, then 'death' means natural death as opposed to killing. Turning back upon one's heels means returning. ar-Raghib has said: "They say, He turned back upon his heels, when he returns, 'he turns back upon his heels' is synonymous to 'it turns on its hooves'; also it is like the (Qur'anic) words: so they returned retracing their footsteps (18:64), or the idiom, 'he went back to his origin'."

Turning back on one's heels is dependent on the conditional clause, "if then he dies or is killed"; it implies their apostasy - going out of religion - not merely retreating from the fight; because fleeing from battle-ground has no connection with death or martyrdom of the Prophet, while there is a clear relation between his death or martyrdom and people's renouncement of Islam for disbelief. Moreover, it was not only in Uhud that they had fled away from the battlefield; they had done so in some other battles too like, Hunayn, Khaybar, etc.; but Allah did not address them in such a severe tone, nor did He use such expression for their retreat. For example, He says regarding the battle of Hunayn: ...and on the day of Hunayn, when your great numbers made you vain, but they availed you nothing and the earth became strait to you notwithstanding its spaciousness, then you turned back retreating (9:25). Therefore, it is clear that 'turning back upon your heels' in this verse means 'returning to your previous disbelief'

The meaning of the verse - in its context of censure and stricture is as follows: Muhammad is but a messenger of God, like other messengers sent earlier by Him; his task is to convey the message of His Lord; he has no authority in the affairs; all the affairs are in the hand of Allah, and the religion

is His religion; it will continue with Allah's authority because Allah is to preserve it. Why should then your belief depend on Muhammad' s life? Why should you behave as if your religion would not survive the Prophet? Why do you give rise to the assumption that if Muhammad were to die or be killed you would run away from Allah's religion, would return back on your heels to your previous disbelief? Will you go back to misguidance after finding the guidance?

This context provides a very strong proof that when the fighting became fierce on the day of Uhud, the Muslims thought that the Prophet was killed, and they fled away from the battlefield. It confirms the reports of the traditions and history. For example, Ibn Hisham narrates in his as-Sirah that Anas ibn an-Nadr (uncle of Anas ibn Malik) reached where 'Umar ibn al-Khattab and Talhah ibn 'Ubaydillah had gathered with other persons of the Emigrants and the Helpers — and they had given themselves up. He asked: "What is holding you back?"

They said: "The Messenger of Allah has been killed." He said: "Then what will you do with life after him? Die on what the Messenger of Allah has died on." Then he faced the (unbelieving) people, and fought them until he was martyred.

This retreat, this surrender, this giving themselves up, had only one meaning: Their belief depended on the Prophet; it would continue as long as he lived, and would disappear the moment he died. In other words, they wanted reward of this world for their belief, and it was this matter for which they were reprimanded by Allah. This connotation is supported by the concluding clause, "and Allah will reward the grateful ". Note that the same clause has been repeated in the next verse, after the words, "and whoever desires the reward of this world. We shall give him of it and whoever desires the reward of the hereafter, We shall give him of it." (Ponder on its significance.)

The clause, "and Allah will reward the grateful", is a sort of exception as the context shows; and it proves that among them there were a few who were grateful, who did not turn back on their heels nor did they retreat.

What is the reality of gratefulness? It is manifestation of the favor, display of the bounty. Its opposite is ungratefulness, which means hiding the bounty. How does one display a favor? It is done by using it in the place the donor had intended, in the way he would be pleased with, and to remember and mention the donor by tongue (and it is called praise) and heart (without forgetting him). For thanking Allah for any of His favors and bounties, you should remember Him at the time of using it, and should use it in the way He is pleased with without transgressing the limits. There is nothing in this world but it is a bounty from the bounties of Allah; and He does not want us to use any of His bounties but in the way of His worship, in His obedience. He says: And He gives you of all that you ask Him; and if you count Allah's bounties, you will not be able to compute them; most surely man is very unjust, very ungrateful (14:34).

Accordingly, His absolute thank — without any restriction — means to remember Him without forgetting Him, and to obey Him without disobeying Him. Allah says: . . . and be thankful to Me, and do not be ungrateful to Me (2:152). It means as follows: Remember Me without polluting the remembrance with forgetfulness; and obey My command without spoiling it with disobedience. (The reader should not listen to him who says that it would oblige us to do something beyond our power. Such comment arises from not paying attention to these divine realities, from being distant from the plane of servitude.)

We have explained in previous volumes the difference between verb and adjective. The verb shows the active agent (the doer) doing the work - no matter how temporary, how transitory, his relation with that work may be. But an adjective shows permanent relation between the agent and the attribute; it implies that the attribute has become an inseparable characteristic of the man. There is a word of difference between the phrases, 'those who worshipped idols', 'those who were patient', 'those who did injustice', and 'those who transgressed', on one hand, and the adjectives, 'the idol-worshippers', 'the patient ones', 'the unjust', and 'the transgressors', on the other.

Herein the verse under discussion, Allah has used the adjective, "the grateful"; it refers to those in whom the attribute of gratefulness is firmly rooted, who have inseparable connection with this virtue. Also, we have described that absolute gratitude demands that man should never remember any thing — as every thing is a divine bounty without remembering Allah; and should not use anything the divine bounty except in His obedience. It is now clear that gratitude and thank cannot be complete except with total sincerity towards Allah, with purification in knowledge and action. The grateful ones are those who are purified, sincere servants of Allah— those in whom the Satan can have no hope, who are beyond the Satanic designs and plans.

This fact is clear from the words of the Satan quoted in the Qur'an: He (Satan) said: "Then by Thy Might I will surely beguile them all, except Thy servants from among them, the purified one" (38:82-83); He said: "My Lord! because Thou hast left me to stray, I will certainly make (evil) fair-seeming to them on earth, and I will certainly cause them all to go astray, except Thy servants from among them, the freed (purified) ones" (15:39-40). Note that Allah did not refute this claim of the Satan. Again Allah quotes him as saying: "He said: 'As Thou hast caused me to go astray, I will certainly lie in wait for them in Thy straight path.

Then I will certainly come to them from before them and from behind them, and from their right-hand side and from their left-hand side; and Thou shalt not find most of them thankful" (7:16-17). The last clause is an implied exception that some of them shall be thankful. Here the adjective, "purified " has been changed to "thankful". It can only mean that it is the purified ones who shall be grateful, and on whom the Satan has got no hold. The Satan's design is to make man forget his



Lord and to call him to sin and disobedience; (but he cannot ensnare the purified and grateful servants in this trap).

This explanation is further supported by a verse, coming later, which was revealed about this very battle: (As for) those of you who turned back on the day when the two armies met only the Satan sought to cause them to make a slip on account of some deeds they had done, and certainly Allah has pardoned them; surely Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing (3:155). Read it in conjunction with the end of the verse under discussion, "and Allah will reward the grateful", and the end clause of the next verse, "and We will reward the grateful"; and keep in mind that these clauses are a sort of exceptions. Think over these verses together and you will discover sublime realities.

But someone has given a really astonishing explanation. He thinks that the verse just quoted, ((As for) those of you who turned back. . . only the Satan sought to cause them to slip . . .) refers to the story which says that the Satan cried aloud on the day of Uhud that Muhammad was killed; and this cry made the believers lose their hearts and flee from the battle ground. Looking at this explanation, in light of the one given by us, one is amazed as to how trivially they have treated the Book of Allah, bringing it down from that height of reality and knowledge to such a lowly level.

The verse shows that there were a few believers on the day of Uhud who did not show any weakness nor did they lose courage; nor did they give up the cause of Allah. It is they whom Allah calls "the grateful ones", and has confirmed that the Satan has got no power over them, nor has he any hope of ensnaring them. They have remained steadfast, grateful, not only in this battle; it is an inseparable characteristic of theirs, a deeply-rooted attribute. The Qur'an has nowhere used the adjective "the grateful" in appreciation except in these two verses, that is, "And Muhammad is no more than a messenger. . . and Allah will reward the grateful. And it is not for a soul to die. . . and We will reward the grateful." Yet, He has not mentioned in either place what their reward will be; this silence speaks a lot about its greatness and value.

QUR'AN: And it is not for a soul to die but with the permission of Allah (according to) the term that is fixed; . . . and We will reward the grateful:

It is an adverse allusion to their talk about their slain brethren which is referred to in a forthcoming verse: O you who believe! be not like those who disbelieve and say of their brethren when they travel in the earth or engage in fighting: Had they been with us, they would not have died and they would not have been slain . . . (3:156); also it refers to the talk of a group among them: "Had we any hand in the affair, we would not have been slain here " (3:154) . It should be noted here that these people were from among the believers, not the hypocrites who had already left the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) and had not participated in the fighting at all.

This talk of theirs implies that a person's death was not dependent on Allah's permission, nor was

it a decisive process emanating from firm divine decree. If such an idea were correct then it would negate the Kingdom of Allah, nullify the precise divine arrangements. (We shall explain, God willing, in the beginning of the chapter of The Cattle, what fixation of the term means.)

It necessarily follows that those who had spoken such words, had accepted Islam because they thought that all affairs were in the hands of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) and the believers. In other words when they accepted Islam, their aim was to who desisted from such thoughts; their goal was the hereafter. That is why Allah says: "and whoever desires the reward of this world, We shall give him of it, and whoever desires the reward of the hereafter, We shall give him of it." Here Allah has said, "We shall give him of it", instead of saying, "We shall give him it." It points to a fine distinction: Often man has some desires, but fails to provide total causes leading to the total desires, and consequently is not given all that he had desired. Therefore, if the causes conform with all the desires, he shall be given all desires; and if the causes agree with some of the desires, he will get only some of it.

Allah says: Whoever desires this present life, We hasten to him therein what We please for whomsoever We desire, then We assign to him the hell; he shall enter it despised, driven away And whoever desires the hereafter and strives for it as he ought to strive and he is a believer; (as for) these their striving shall surely be thanked (17:18-19). Also He says: And that there is not for man (aught) except what he strives for (53:39).

Thereafter, He has specially mentioned the grateful ones, excluding them from both groups; saying, "and We will reward the grateful". It is because they work only for the sake of Allah, without looking at any thing of this world or the hereafter - as we have explained earlier.

QUR'AN: And how many a prophet has fought. . . and Allah loves those who do good (to others):

"Ka-ayyin " (how many), indicates great number; min (from), here is an explicative particle. ar-Ribbiyyun, plural of ar-ribbi, like ar-rabbani, denotes a divine person, someone who is exclusively attached to God. Also it is said that it is plural of raba (thousand) and thus means, thousands. al-Istikanah (to submit, to abase oneself).

The verse contains advice, sermon and lesson with a shade of admonition, together with some encouragement to the believers to follow in those Godly men's footsteps, so that Allah should give them the reward of this world and an excellent reward of the hereafter (as he had given those Godly men) and should love them for their good-doing, as He had loved them for it.

Allah has described some of their words and deeds in order that the believers may learn lessons from it, and adopt it as their motto. Then they would not be afflicted with what had afflicted them on the day of Uhud (where they were involved in undesirable words and deeds, which Allah was

not pleased with). If they followed those Godly men, then Allah would join for them the rewards of both worlds and He had done for those Godly men. Allah has characterized the rewards of the hereafter as "excellent"; it point to its sublimity and high prestige in comparison to this world' reward.

#### Volume 7: Surah Ale-Imran, Verses 149-155

O you who believe! if you obey those who disbelieve, they will turn you back upon your heels, so you will turn back losers (149). Nay! Allah is your Guardian and He is the best of the helpers (150). We will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve, because they set up with Allah that for which He has sent down no authority, and their abode is the fire; and evil is the abode of the unjust (151). And certainly Allah made good to you His promise, when you were extirpating them by His permission, until when you became weak-willed and disputed about the affair and disobeyed after He had shown you that which you loved; of you were some who desired this world and of you were some who desired the hereafter; then He turned you away from them that He might try you; and He has certainly pardoned you, and Allah is Gracious to the believers (152). When you ran off precipitately and did not turn towards any one, and the Messenger was calling you from your rear, so He gave you another sorrow instead of (your) sorrow, so that you might not grieve at what had escaped you, nor (at) what befell you; and Allah is aware of what you do (153). Then after sorrow He sent down security upon you, a slumber coming upon a party of you, and (there was) another party who cared only for their own selves; they entertained about Allah thoughts of ignorance quite unjustly. They say: "Do we have any hand in the affair?" Say: "Surely the affair is wholly (in the hands) of Allah." They conceal within their souls what they would not reveal to you. They say: "Had we any hand in the affair, we would not have been slain here. " Say: "Had you remained in your houses, those for whom slaughter was ordained would certainly have gone forth to the places where they (now) lie;" and that Allah might test what was in your breasts and that He might purge what was in your hearts; and Allah knows what is in the breasts (154). (As for) those of you who turned back on the day when the two armies met, only the Satan sought to cause them to make a slip on account of some deeds they had done, and certainly Allah has pardoned them; surely Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing (155).

#### COMMENTARY

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.

QUR'AN: O you who believe! if you obey those who disbelieve . . . He is the best of the helpers:

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."

QUR'AN: We will cast terror into the hearts. . . and evil is the abode of the unjust:

It is a beautiful promise to the believers that Allah will help them through terror and scare. The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) used to mention "scare" among the special bounties which Allah had reserved for him - not giving it to any other prophet. Such traditions have been narrated by both sects.

The clause, "because they set up with Allah that for which He has sent down no authority", points to the fact that the polytheists set up such things as partners or colleagues for Allah, which have got no authority, no proof for it. The Qur'an repeatedly says that there is no authority, no proof, which could prove any partner or colleague for Allah. Among many types of polytheism is the rejection of the Creator by saying that some thing other than Allah - like time or matter - has caused the creation and goes on managing it.

QUR'AN: And certainly Allah made good to you His promise, . . . and Allah is Gracious to the

believers:

"al-Hass" (to extirpate by slaying). The traditions unanimously say, and history records, that on the day of Uhud, at first the believers overpowered the enemy and defeated them; they started slaughtering them and plundering their goods. But then most of the archers left their position at the mountain-pass, and Khalid ibn Walid with his group attacked and slaughtered 'Abdullah ibn Jubayr and the few archers who had remained with him. Now the way was clear for them to attack the believers from the rear — which they did. Seeing this, the fleeing seventy of the companions and bringing utter defeat upon them.

Accordingly, the words, "And certainly Allah made good to you His promise", affirms that Allah's promise of help — on the condition that they should remain on guard and be patient — was certainly fulfilled; the clause, "when you were extirpating them by His permission", is applicable to the victory which Allah gave to them to begin with on the day of Uhud; and the next clause, "until when you became weak-willed and disputed about the affair and disobeyed after He had shown you that which you loved", may be pointing to what the archers had done; they disputed one with the other, an overwhelming majority of them left their position and ran away to join those companions who were busy in gathering the booty.

In this way they showed their lack of will-power; they differed among themselves and disobeyed the Prophet's order not to leave their place no matter what happened to the others. Accordingly, al-fashal (generally translated as 'to lose heart', 'to be weak-hearted'), would imply here, weakness or lack of will-power; obviously the meaning of weak-heartedness or cowardice would not be appropriate in this context, because they had not left their position because of any fear; rather it was because of the avarice of war-booty. If we take al-fashal for cowardice, then it would apply to the whole 'army'; and in that case, the adverb, "then", in the clause, "then He turned you away from them", would denote ordinal sequel, not sequence of time. The word, "disputed", proves that not all of them were united in that weak-willedness and disobedience; some of them were determined to carry on the order, and to continue in the obedience. That is why Allah follows it with the comment: "of you were some who desired this world, and of you were some who desired the hereafter"

QUR'AN: then He turned you away from them that He might try you;. . . :

Allah stopped you from entangling with the idol-worshippers, after you manifested your lack of will-power, disputed one with the other and disobeyed the Prophet — in short, after you became disunited. He did so in order that He might examine you and test your faith and patience in His cause. When the hearts and minds are disunited, it provides the strongest reason to conduct an examination, so that a believer may be distinguished from a hypocrite; such a test would also separate a believer who is firmly-rooted in belief and steadfast in conviction from the one who is

inconsistent and fickle. Nevertheless, Allah has forgiven them by His grace, as He says, "and He has certainly pardoned you".

QUR'AN: When you ran off precipitately and did not turn towards any one and the Messenger was calling you from your rear:

"al Is'ad" (to go far away on the ground) is different from as-su'ud which means to rise up, to ascend. They say, As'ada fi janibi 'l -barr (he went far in the land), and Sa'ada fi 's-sullam (he climbed up the ladder). It is said that al-is'ad is, sometimes, used in the meaning of as-su'ud. The adverb, "when", is related to an implied verb, "remember" (i.e. remember when you ran off . . .); or to the verb in the preceding verse, "He turned you away "; or to the one after that, "He might try you", according to various explanations. al-Layy (to turn towards, to incline). According to Majma'u 'l -bayan, it is always used in negative (and never in affirmative), i.e. they do not say, Lawaytu 'ala kadha (I turned towards so-and-so).

The clause, "and the Messenger was calling you from your rear", the word, "rear" here is opposite of front. The fact that the Prophet was calling them from their rear, shows that they had fled away en masse from around him in such a way that the mob in forefront was far off from the Prophet and the rear group was nearer; he was calling them but nobody was turning towards him — neither those in the front nor those in the rear. They ran off precipitately to save their own skins, leaving the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be on him and his progeny), almost alone surrounded by the hordes of the bloodthirsty enemies.

Of course, the words in the verse 144, and Allah will a few among them whose determination was not shaken; they did never retreat — neither in the beginning nor after the rumor spread that the Prophet was martyred, as is clear from the words, "if then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels?"

The words under discussion, "and did not turn towards any one, and the Messenger was calling you from your rear", clearly show that the rumor of the Prophet's martyrdom spread among them after they had retreated and run away from him.

QUR'AN: so He gave you and other sorrow instead of (your) sorrow,. . . of what you do:

He changed their sorrow to another sorrow in order to divert their attention from this grief. This "another sorrow" that afflicted them was, in any case, a divine grace; because Allah says: "so that you might not grieve at what had escaped you, nor (at) what befell you;" and He has condemned such grief in His Book where He says: So that you may not grieve for what has escaped you, nor be exultant at what He has given you (57:23). Obviously, this another sorrow that would prevent them from that disliked grieving would be a grace and bounty. Accordingly, this "another sorrow"

should refer to the remorse that overwhelmed them for what they had done, to the distress they felt for the victory that had slipped from their hands because of their weak will-power. Consequently the second sorrow mentioned in the clause, "instead of (your) sorrow", would refer to that undesirable grieving; the preposition "bi" in "bi-ghammin" (instead of sorrow) indicates exchange. The meaning is therefore as follows: you were grieving at what had escaped you and what had befallen you; Allah changed it to the remorse and distress for the lost victory.

Another alternative: "athabakum" (translated here as "He gave you") may contain the connotation of change. The meaning in this case will be as follows: He changed your remorse and distress to the grief, entitling you for its reward. The meanings of the two "sorrows" will interchange, vis-à-vis, the preceding explanation.

In either case the sentence "so He gave you another sorrow", branches out from the clause, "and He has certainly pardoned you"; and the next verse, "Then after sorrow He sent down security upon you. . .", is closely related to it. The meaning: He pardoned you, then changed your sorrow to another sorrow to prevent you from that grief of yours which He was not pleased with, then He sent down upon you security in the form of slumber which overtook you.

A third alternative is apparently supported by the context, in that the sentence, "so He gave you another sorrow. . .", would branch from the immediately preceding clause, "When you ran off precipitately..."; in this case, "another sorrow" would refer to their running off and retreating from the battlefield; and the next phrase, bi-ghammin would be translated "because of the sorrow" (taking the preposition bi for the cause); it would then refer to the polytheists' attack on them from the rear which in its turn was the direct result of their disputation and disobedience.

It is a good meaning. In this case, the clause, "so that you might not grieve. . .", would mean as follows: We explain these facts to you so that you might not grieve. Thus, it would fall into line with the words of Allah: No misfortune befalls you on the earth nor in your own souls, but it is in a book before We bring it into existence; surely that is easy to Allah: So that you may not grieve for what has escaped you, nor be exultant at what He has given you; and Allah does not love any arrogant boaster (57:22-23).

(The meaning: He gave you another sorrow that you ran away from the battle-ground, because the polytheists attacked you from the rear when you disputed among yourselves and disobeyed the Prophet. We explain it to you so that you might not grieve at what had escaped you, nor at what befell you.)

These three possible grammatical structures maintain the order of the verse and keep the sentences well-connected to each other. The exegetes have written many other possibilities. For example, to which sentence does the conjunctive, "so", join the words, "so He gave you another

sorrow". What are the connotations of the first and the second "sorrow"? What is the import of the preposition "bi" in "bi-hammin" (translated here as "instead of")? What is the significance of "so that you might not"? But they are not tenable in the least, and there is no use of quoting and commenting on them.

In the light of the first two meanings given by us, "what had escaped you", (in the clause, "so that you might not grieve at what had escaped you, nor (at) what befell you") would refer to victory and war booty; and "what befell you " to their slaughter and injuries.

QUR'AN: Then after sorrow He sent down security upon you, a slumber coming upon a party of you:

al-Amanah" (security); an-nu'as (lethargy before sleep; light sleep; slumber); "slumber" is appositional substantive standing for "security". It is also possible to take al-amanah as plural of al-'amin (peaceful) like at-talib and at-talabah; in that case it will be circumstantial clause related to "you" in "upon you"; and "slumber" will become object of the verb, "sent down ". al-Ghashayan (to cover, to envelop).

The verse shows that this slumber had overtaken only some, and not all, of the believers, as the clause, "a party of you", clearly says. These were the people, who had come back to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) after retreating and running off precipitately, and felt remorse and sorrow for what they had done. Far be it from Allah to pardon them mercifully while they were still fleeing away from the jihad, and were thus engaged in one of the greatest sins. Allah says about them, "and He has certainly pardoned you, and Allah is Gracious to the believers", and it is unthinkable that Allah's grace would cover a sinner when he was actively engaged in open defiance and sin — until and unless he repented. But as explained above, Allah looked on them graciously when He changed their sorrow to another sorrow in order that they might not grieve, lest their hearts be polluted with something disliked by Allah; (and it proves that they had come back and repented before that).

So, these were some of the believers; they were those who felt remorse for what they had done, and returned to the Prophet gathering around him. Probably it was at the time when the Prophet separated himself from the hordes of the polytheists and reached the mountain-pass — although they returned to him gradually, one by one, when it was known that the Prophet was not slain.

The other group is referred to in the next sentence, "and (there was) another party who cared only for their own selves"

QUR'AN: and (there was) another party who cared only for their own selves:



This was another group of the believers. The word "believer" is used here only to distinguish them from the hypocrites who have been mentioned later on (in 3:167-168): And that He might know the hypocrites and it was said to them: "Come, fight in Allah's way, or defend yourselves." The said: "If we knew fighting, we would certainly have followed you" . . . Allah did not give this second group (that cared only for itself) the honor accorded to the first one (who were pardoned, then given another sorrow and lastly provided security and slumber). This second party, on the other hand, was left on their own; they were wholly engrossed in their own selves, oblivious of every thing else.

Allah mentioned here their two characteristics although one was a concomitant or branch of the other. First, that they cared only for themselves. It does not mean that they wanted for their own selves the happiness — in its real sense. After all, even the believers want the same thing — the happiness for themselves. Not only the man, every creature that has a little bit of will and volition thinks only about itself. What this clause connotes is that their whole attention was riveted to save their own skins — lest they lose their lives and be slain. In other words, their only aim in accepting the religion — or doing any other work — was to let their own selves have the usufruct of this world. They had professed Islam only because they thought that it was an unconquerable factor, and that Allah would not like it to be overwhelmed by His enemies—even if the enemies had all the factors in their favor. These people sought to gain benefits from the religion as long as it went on giving them something to their advantage. But if the situation changed and the tables were turned against them, they would turn back on their heels, retreating into disbelief.

QUR'AN: they entertained about Allah thoughts of ignorance . . . the affair is wholly (in the hands) of Allah:

They entertained about Allah a thought that was not correct, was actually a thought of ignorance. They ascribed to Him a characteristic that was not true, and was like that which the people of ignorance used to ascribe to Him. Whatever that thought, it was related to their words, "Do we have any hand in the affair?". It may also be inferred from the reply Allah taught His Prophet, i.e., "Say: 'Surely the affair is wholly (in the hands) of Allah.' " This reply evidently shows that according to their thinking some affairs were in their own hands. That is why as soon as they were defeated and massacred, they started having doubts about religion, and said to each other, "Do we have any hand in the affair?"

It is clear from the above that they thought that outright victory and triumph was their right. Why? Because they were Muslims! They believed that the true religion cannot be vanquished, and consequently the followers of that religion cannot be defeated — because, according to them, it was incumbent on Allah to help it unconditionally, without any restriction, because He had promised to help.

So that was the unjust thought, the thought of ignorance. The idol-worshippers of the days of ignorance believed that Allah was the Creator of every thing; that at the same time there was a separate Lord for every phenomenon, like sustenance, life, death, love, war, etc. Also, every species and every part of creation like man, earth, river, etc., had a Lord of its own; each Lord managed the affair of his subjects and none could overpower him within his jurisdiction. They worshipped those lords so that they would provide them with sustenance, give them happiness, and protect them from evil and misfortune; and Allah was like an overlord, allotting each group of His subjects and each part of His Kingdom to a lord who had full authority to do whatever he liked within his jurisdiction and in his domain.

If someone thinks that the true religion could not be over powered in its advancement, and that the Prophet — being the first to receive it from his Lord and be responsible for it—could not be defeated in his mission or could not die or be killed, then surely such a man entertains about Allah thoughts of ignorance. He has taken a partner for Allah, and idolized the Prophet as a deity who has been given domain over victory and war booty — while in fact Allah is One Who has no partner, and in Whose hand lies every power and every authority; and none else besides Him has any authority at all.

That is why when Allah said in a preceding section, "That He may cut off a portion from among those who disbelieve, or abase them so that they should return disappointed of attaining what they desired", He cut short the speech, turning towards His Prophet to tell him, "You have no concern in the affair". He did so, lest someone thought the Prophet had any concern or authority in that cutting off a portion of unbelievers or abasing them. It is Allah Himself Who has established the system of cause and effect. The stronger the cause the surer the appearance of its effect, no matter whether that effect is right or wrong, virtue or vice, good or bad, guidance or misguidance, justice or injustice. Also, it makes no difference whether the person involved is believer or unbeliever, beloved or hated, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) or Abu Sufyan.

Of course, Allah has special providence for His religion and for His friends. It is because of that concern that the system in the creation is run in such a way that it would finally lead to the victory of religion, and prepare the earth for His friends — and the end is for the pious ones (7:128).

It is a universal law and no exception has been made for prophet-hood and divine mission. That is why we find that when the normal factors and causes were present for the advancement of the religion and victory of the believers (as was the case in some battles of the Prophet), the believers triumphed; and when there was any weak link in the chain (for example, hypocrisy raised its head, or they disobeyed the Prophet, or became weak-hearted or nervous) the polytheists got the upper hand, defeating the believers. The same was true in case of other prophets, vis-à-vis, their people. The enemies were men of the world, whose only aim was to gain benefits of this life; they had overwhelming powers and gathered strength upon strength, and mobilized army after army.

Naturally, they got upper hand and crushed the prophets — some were slain like Zakariyya, others were beheaded like Yahya, yet, others had to leave their place like 'Isa and so on.

Nevertheless, if the truth of the religion could not be established without disturbing the normal casualty — in other words when it was a question of life or death for the truth — then it was necessary for Allah to strengthen the religion in an extraordinary and supernatural way, lest evidence of its truth be destroyed. Some details of this subject were given in the discourses on Miracle in volume one, and on Deeds in volume three.

However, to return to our topic: When these people (who did not care except for their own selves) asked each other whether they really had any authority in the affair, it showed that they entertained doubts about the truth of the religion, and as we have explained above, their religion had the spirit of idolatry in its body. Therefore, Allah told His Prophet to reply them in these words: "Surely the affair is wholly (in the hands) of Allah". Before that He had told the Prophet himself that he had no concern, no authority, in the affair. All this made it clear that the religion of nature, the religion of monotheism, is the one. In which all authority is reserved for Allah; the rest of the things — including the Prophet — have got no authority at all; rather they are links in the chain of cause and effect, governed by the divine system that leads to the law of test and trial.

QUR'AN: They conceal within their souls what they would not reveal to you. . . and Allah knows what is in the breasts:

It exposes their lack of belief in a much more harsher light than their words, "Do we have any hand in the affair? ", had shown. Those words had expressed their doubt in the form of a question. But the idea hidden in their hearts ("Had we any hand in the affair, we would not have been slain here"), is an argument to prove according to their thinking untruth of the religion! That is why although they had dared to utter the former question before the Prophet, they kept the later words concealed in their hearts, as it would have clearly shown that they gave preponderance to disbelief over belief.

Allah therefore told His Prophet to reply their undisclosed thought in these words: "Say: 'Had you remained in your houses, those for whom slaughter was ordained would certainly have gone forth to the places where they (now) lie;' and that Allah might test what was in your breasts and that He might purge what was in your hearts. " These words made it clear to them that:

First: When the martyrs were slain in the battlefield, it was not because you were not on truth nor because the authority was not in your hands — as you think. Rather, it had happened because the divine decree — which is enforced without fail — had ordained that those martyrs would lie in this place. If you had remained behind, those for whom martyrdom was ordained would surely have gone ahead to the place of their martyrdom. There is no way of escaping from the appointed

time of death; when it comes nobody can delay it an hour nor can he bring it on before its times.

Second: It is a divinely established system that test and purge would encompass each and every human being; it would inevitably cover one and all, you as well as them. Neither you could avoid coming out of your homes nor the battle could be put off. All this was necessary in order that the martyrs might arrive at their right positions and achieve their high ranks, and you might reach your due places. In this way, everyone would be placed in his proper place —either felicity or infelicity, happiness or unhappiness — after the testing of the thoughts and ideas hidden in your breasts, and the separation of belief and polytheism concealed in your hearts.

It is amazing to see a number of exegetes writing that the group mentioned in this verse refers to the hypocrites — when the context clearly shows that it describes the condition of some believers. As for the hypocrites (i.e., the group of 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy that had withdrawn from the battle in the very beginning even before the battle had started), their condition has been described much later. Of course, that explanation might be in place if they use the word, "hypocrites", for those of weak faith, who were so confused in their belief that it ultimately boiled down to rejection of faith (in reality) although they professed Islam (in words). It is they whom Allah describes as 'those in whose hearts was disease'.

He says: When the hypocrites and those in whose hearts was disease said: "Their religion has deceived them" (8:49); and among you there are those who hearken for their sake (9:47). Or may be they want to say that all hypocrites had not gone back to Madina with 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy.

Even more amazing is some others' assertion that these people were good believers. They say that these people thought that the affair of divine help and victory was in their hands because they were on the true religion, and they had seen how in the battle of Badr they were given victory and how angels were sent to help them. According to these exegetes, when they said, "Do we have any hand in the affair?", and thought, "Had we any hand in the affair, we would not have been slain here", it was actually their way of confessing that the affair was in the hands of Allah, not theirs, otherwise they would not have been massacred.

If we accept this interpretation then the replies (Say: "Surely the affair is wholly (in the hands) of Allah", and, Say: "Had you remained in your houses, those for whom slaughter was ordained would certainly have gone forth to the places where they (now) lie "), would be totally irrelevant. Some people have realized this defect and then have tried to explain it away in a way that has compounded the confusion. In any case, we have already explained its true meaning to you.

QUR'AN: (As for) those of you who turned back on the day when the two armies met, only the Satan sought to cause them to make slip on account of some deeds they had done:

"Istazalahumu 'sh-shaytain" (the Satan wanted them to slip); he wanted so only because they had acquired some evil traits in their psyches, and done some bad deeds; one evil leads to another, because it emanates from following the heart's desires —and the heart desires only that which has some affinity to it.

Someone has taken the preposition "bi" (on account of) as indicative of instrument, and said that "some deeds " refers to their fuming back on the day of fighting. But this interpretation is far fetched; because "some deeds they had done" manifestly shows that their deeds had preceded there turning back; the two cannot refer to the same thing.

In any case, the verse shows that some sins and evil deeds done by them had given the Satan power to mislead them by making them retreat and flee from the jihad. Consequently, there is no ground to suppose that the verse points to the Satanic cry on the day of Uhud that the Prophet was killed (as has been narrated in some traditions), because such interpretation is not supported by the wordings of the verse in any way.

QUR'AN: and certainly Allah has pardoned them; surely Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing:

This pardon was granted to those who turned back on the day of battle, as mentioned in the beginning of the verse. The verse is unrestricted, and therefore covers all those who fled on that day. In other words it includes both groups: those on whom slumber was sent down and those who cared only for their own selves. But there is a difference between the two, as the former has been honored by Allah, but not the latter. Because of that difference, this general pardon (which; covers both groups) does not mention the aspects of honor) related to the formers pardon (as mentioned earlier).

It also shows that the pardon mentioned in this verse is not the same as the one described (in 3:152) above, "and He has certainly pardoned you". That the two pardons are different may be gathered from different tones used in the two verses. Look first at the former where Allah says, "and He has certainly pardoned you, and Allah is Gracious to the believers". It clearly, shows Allah's grace and mercy on them, and mentions them as "believers"; thereafter it goes on saying that He changed their sorrow to another sorrow in order that they might not grieve then tells them that He sent down security on them in the form of slumber. How different is that tone from the one employed in this verse where it merely says: "and certainly Allah has pardoned them; surely Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing". Note that it speaks only about the pardon, but is silent about all the above-mentioned aspects of honor; then it ends with the adjective, "Forbearing" - focusing the attention on the fact that Allah does not make haste in giving punishment. A pardon accompanied by forbearance indicates that although the Master has overlooked the sin but still He is not pleased with the sinner.

Suggestion: Those who think that both groups are equal in rank do so because both have been granted pardon.

Reply: The former pardon is different from the latter in its connotation, although both denote pardoning. There is no proof to show that pardon, forgiveness and things like that have the same connotation everywhere; and we have explained how the two differ in these verses.

#### Volume 7: Ale-Imran, Verses 156-164

O you who believe! be not like those who disbelieve and say of their brethren when they travel in the earth or engage in fighting. "Had they been with us, they would not have died and they would not have been slain;" so Allah makes this to be an intense regret in their hearts; and Allah gives life and causes death; and Allah sees what you do (156). And if you are slain in the way of Allah or you die, certainly forgiveness from Allah and mercy is better than what they amass (157). And if indeed you die or you are slain, certainly to Allah shall you be gathered together (158). Thus it is due to mercy from Allah that you are lenient to them, and had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you; pardon them therefore and ask forgiveness for them, and take counsel with them in the affair; but when you have decided, then place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who trust (in him) (159). If Allah assists you, then there is none that can overcome you, and if He forsakes you, who is there then that can assist you after Him? And on Allah should the believers rely (160). And it is not attributable to a prophet that he should defraud; and he who defrauds shall bring (with him) that which he has defrauded, on the Day of Resurrection; then shall every soul be paid back fully what it has earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly (161). Is then he who follows the pleasure of Allah like him who has brought upon himself the wrath from Allah, and whose abode is hell? And it is an evil destination (162). They are of (diverse) grades with Allah, and Allah sees what they do (163). Certainly Allah conferred (His) favor upon the believers when He raised among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His signs and purifying them, and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although before that they were surely in manifest error (164).

#### **COMMENTARY**

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.

In short, these verses explain the error and mistake in sorrowing and grieving; then turn to another matter resulting from that grief, that is, their critical attitude towards the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a), thinking that it was he who had brought them to that disaster and put them into that perdition. It may be inferred from their talk alluded to herein: "Had they been with us, they would not have died and they would not have been slain." In other words, if they had listened to them and not obeyed the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a) they would have been alive today. It means that it was he who had led them to the slaughter.

The verses make it clear that it was not meet for the Prophet that he should deceive anyone; he is Allah's Messenger, noble of heart, sublime in character; he is lenient to them by mercy of Allah, pardons them and seeks Allah's forgiveness for them and takes their counsel by permission of Allah; and Allah has conferred His favor on them by sending him to them in order that he may take them out of error bringing them to the guidance.

QUR'AN: O you who believe! be not like those who disbelieve . . . and Allah sees what you do:

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-ard (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.

QUR'AN: And if you are slain in the way of Allah or you die, certainly forgiveness from Allah and mercy is better than what they amass:

Obviously, "what they amass", refers to property and wealth as well as to its concomitants, as these are the best objects of desire in this life.

This verse mentions martyrdom before normal death, because being slain in the way of Allah is nearer to divine forgiveness compared to other deaths. This fine point has caused this change of sequence. Thereafter, the next verse, "And if indeed you die or you are slain. ..", reverts to the normal pattern, putting death before slaughter, because there is no such fine point there to justify any change.

QUR'AN: Thus it is due to mercy from Allah. . . should the believers rely:

"al-Fazz" (rude, rough); hard-heartedness metaphorically means unkindness, ill-nature and intolerance; al-infidad (to disperse).

The verse turns away from the believers, addressing the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) directly, although the real import is as follows: It is due to Our mercy that Our Messenger is lenient to you; that is why We have ordered him to pardon you, ask forgiveness for you and take counsel with you in the affair, and to place his trust in Us when he has taken any decision.

In spite of that meaning, the mode of address was changed (and we have explained this reason in the beginning of this topic of Uhud) because there is a current of censure, admonition and stricture running throughout the narrative, and the Qur'an turns its face from the believers whenever a chance occurs. This situation is one of them, because it touches a condition of theirs, which tends to put blame on the Prophet.



Their grieving for the slaughter of their martyrs might sometimes lead them to find fault with the Prophet's actions and to accuse him of bringing them to the hazardous eventuality where they were killed and extirpated. That is why Allah turned away from them and addressed His Prophet directly: "Thus it is due to mercy from Allah that you are lenient to them. . ."

This talk is based on another implied one which may be understood from the context: "If they are entangled, as you see, in such undesirable condition that they resemble the unbelievers and intensely grieve for their martyrs, then it is only due to Our mercy that you are lenient to them, otherwise, they would have dispersed from around you." (And Allah knows better).

The clauses, "pardon them therefore and ask forgiveness for them, and take counsel with them in the affair", endorse the precedent established by the Prophet, as he was doing all this from the beginning, and he had taken their counsel shortly before the battle of Uhud. The verse points to the fact that the Prophet does what he is told by Allah to do, and Allah is pleased with his performance.

Allah told His Prophet to pardon them (i.e., he should not mete out to them the consequences of their disobedience), and to ask Allah to forgive them (and in that case He would certainly do so). The word, although general and unrestricted, does not include the shari'ah's penal code and things like that; otherwise it would result in discarding the whole shari'ah. Moreover, the next clause, "and take counsel with them in the affair", implies that the preceding two orders too are related to the matters of government and public affairs — in which he is required to take counsel with them.

Now we have reached the last sentences: "but when you have decided, then place your trust in Allah, surely Allah loves those who trust (in Him)." When He loves, He will be your Guardian and Helper; and will never forsake you. The next verse makes it clear and even invites the believers to have trust in Him:

"If Allah assists you, then there is none that can overcome you, and if He forsakes you, who is there then that can assist you after Him?" Then He orders the believers to have trust in Him and says: "and on Allah should the believers rely." The sentence metaphorically puts the effect in place of the cause. They should rely on Allah because they believe in Him, and there is no helper or supporter except Him.

QUR'AN: And it is not attributable to a prophet that he should defraud . . . and Allah sees what they do:

"al-Ghill " (to defraud, to act faithlessly). We have mentioned in verse 3:79 (It is not meet for a man that Allah should give him the Book and the wisdom and prophethood, then he should say to

men: "Be my servants rather than Allah's") that this mode of speech is intended to declare the purity and blamelessness of the Prophet showing that he was far removed from evil and indecency. This verse means as follows: Far be it from a prophet to defraud or be faithless to his Lord or the people (and defrauding the people too is another form of defrauding Allah); it is because he who defrauds will have to meet his Lord with that which he has defrauded and shall be paid back fully what he has earned.

Then He declares that accusing the Prophet of defrauding is an unjust and untenable idea, because he follows the pleasure of Allah, he never goes beyond His pleasure; and the man who defrauds, brings upon himself severe wrath of Allah and his abode is the hell, and it is an evil destination. The verse, "Is then he who follows the pleasure of Allah . . . ", gives the above connotation.

Then He says that the various groups (i.e., those who follow the pleasure of Allah and those who bring wrath of Allah upon themselves) are of diverse grades; and Allah sees what they do. The people should not think that Allah loses sight of even an iota of good or evil done by them; they should not be careless in following His pleasure or avoiding His wrath.

QUR'AN: Certainly Allah conferred (His) favor. . . they were surely in manifest error:

Again the mode of address has changed, taking the believers as absent. The general reason of such changes has already been explained. As for this particular verse, the reason is as follows: The verse intends to describe Allah's favor upon the believers - because of their belief. That is why it has used the adjective, "the believers", and not the verb, "those who believe", because only an adjective shows inseparable relationship, and only the adjective could show the causality (as has been said) or could show it more perfectly. The verse's meaning is clear.

There are other matters worth explaining in this verse; and, God willing, some will be given in appropriate places.

#### Volume 7: Surah Ale-Imran, Verses 165-171

What! When a misfortune befell you while you had certainly afflicted (the unbelievers) with twice as much, you began to say: "Whence is this?" Say: " It is from your own selves; surely Allah has power over all things" (165) And what befell you on the day when the two armies met (at Uhud)

was with Allah's permission, and that He might know the believers (166), And that He might know the hypocrites; and it was said to them: "Come, fight in Allah's way, or (at least) defend yourselves." They said: "If we knew fighting, we would certainly have followed you. " They were on that day much nearer to unbelief than to belief. They say with their mouths what is not in their hearts; and Allah best knows what they conceal (167). Those who said of their brethren whilst they (themselves) held back: "Had they obeyed us, they would not have been killed." Say. "Then ward off death from yourselves if you are truthful" (168). And reckon not those who are killed in Allah's way as dead; nay, they are alive (and) are provided sustenance from their Lord (169), Rejoicing in what Allah has given them out of His grace, and they rejoice for the sake of those who, (being left) behind them, have not yet joined them, that they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve (170). They rejoice on account of favor from Allah and (His) grace, and that Allah will not waste the reward of the believers (171).

## COMMENTARY

It is the conclusion of the verses about the battle of Uhud. These verses describe the position of some hypocrites who had deserted the believers when they were proceeding from Madina to Uhud, and refute what they were saying about those who were slain in the way of Allah; then the verses extol the condition of the martyrs saying that they were enjoying Allah's bounties in His presence and were happily waiting for their brothers who were left behind in this world.

QUR'AN: What! When a misfortune befell you . . . Allah has power over all things":

First they were told not to be like the unbelievers — grieving and feeling intense sorrow for their slain brethren. It was explained to them that life and death were exclusively in the hands of Allah, they had no concern in this affair; and it would have made no difference whether the martyrs were near them or far from them, or whether they had gone forth to fight or sat behind. After making all this clear, now Allah explains the immediate cause of that disaster according to the law of causality.

He tells them that debacle was caused by their disobedience which they committed on that day: the disobedience of the archers when they left their position, and then the disobedience of all those who fled away from the battlefield. In short, the disaster took place because they disobeyed the Messenger, their Commander, and showed lack of courage and disputed among themselves. All this led to their retreat according to the law of nature and custom.

The verse's meaning is therefore as follows: Do you know how this misfortune befell you? Was it not a misfortune that you had previously inflicted twice as much on your enemies, the unbelievers? This time the disaster was brought on you by your own selves. It were you who

undermined the means of victory with your own hands; it were you who did not follow the clear order of your Commander, fell into temptation and disputed one with the other.

The clause, "while you had certainly afflicted (the unbelievers) with twice as much", prompts them to compare their losses in Uhud (martyrdom of seventy believers) with those suffered by the unbelievers in Badr when they had suffered twice as many casualties — as seventy of the unbelievers were slain and seventy taken prisoners.

This description is intended to soothe the believers' feelings, making the calamity look less devastating. After all, they have suffered only half of that, which they had inflicted on their enemies; so they should not grieve, should not be distressed.

Some people have explained it differently. According to them the clause, "It is from your own selves", means that you yourselves had opted for this misfortune. It happened like this: They had chosen to release the prisoners of Badr in exchange for ransom. But the initial order was to kill them; and they were warned that if they accepted the ransom, a similar number from their side would be killed next year; but they said: "We agree to this condition. We shall take the ransom and enjoy its benefits; and if one of us is killed later on, he shall be a martyr. "

The ending clause of this verse (surely Allah has power over all things) supports, or rather proves, this latter explanation; as this clause does not connect properly with the former meaning. We shall quote in the next "Traditions" ahadith from the Imams of the Ahlu 'l-bayts (a.s.) regarding this topic.

QUR'AN: And what befell you on the day ...and Allah best knows what they conceal:

The first of these two verses supports the above theme that the clause, "Say: 'It is from you own selves' ", refers to their opting for the ransom in exchange of Badr's prisoners and agreeing to the attached condition. Only in this way, it can be said that the misfortune that befell them in Uhud was with Allah's permission. As for the former explanation, (that the immediate cause of this misfortune was your disobedience), it has no relevance with this verse; obviously, there is no sense in saying that their disobedience was by permission of Allah.

Accordingly, the statement that the misfortune that had befallen them was by Allah's permission explains the preceding declaration that it was from their own selves. It paves the way of the next clause, "and that He might know the believers", which in its turn opens the way to deal with the hypocrites, together with their talk and its refutation; and to unveil the reality of this especial death, i.e., martyrdom in the way of Allah.

The clause, "or (at least) defend yourselves", intends to persuade them to fight; if you do not fight

in the way of Allah, then at least defend your families and your own selves. "They were on that day much nearer to unbelief than to belief." The preposition "li" in "li 'l-kufr" (to unbelief) and "li 'l-iman" (to belief) has been used in meaning of "to". It shows their position vis-à-vis open disbelief; as for hypocrisy, they had certainly fallen in it.

The word, "with their mouths", in the sentence, "They say with their mouths what is not in their hearts", has been put here for emphasis and as a counter-balance to the clause, "in their hearts".

QUR'AN: Those who said of their brethren. . . if you are truthful:

The word, "brethren" refers to those with whom they had family ties from among the martyrs. Allah has mentioned here their "brotherhood", side by side with the comment, "while they (themselves) held back"; it is meant to put them to shame in a most vivid and crushing way, showing that they held back from helping their own brothers who were meanwhile massacred by the enemy. The sentence, "Say: 'Then ward off death from yourselves'", refutes their talk. ad-Dar' (to ward off; to avert) .

QUR'AN: And reckon not those who are killed in Allah's way. . . provided sustenance from their Lord:

Again the speaker turns away from the Muslims and speaks with the Prophet alone; and its reason has been mentioned several times in Commentaries of the relevant verses.

Also, it is possible to treat this address as continuation of the preceding sentence where it addresses the Prophet, "Say: Then ward off death. . .".

Death in this verse means nullity of consciousness and action. That is why Allah explains the martyrs' life by showing that they receive sustenance (and it is action) and rejoice in Allah's grace (and it shows their feeling which proves consciousness).

QUR'AN: Rejoicing in what Allah has given them. . . nor shall they grieve: "al-Farah " is opposite of "al-huzn" (sorrow). al-Bisharah and al-bushra (good news); al-istibshar (to seek happiness through a good news). The verse means: They rejoice in what they have received of Allah's grace and which is always present with them; they feel happy when they receive the good tidings regarding those who have not yet joined them - are still in this world - that they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve.

Two things are clear from the above:

First: Those who are killed in the way of Allah continue to receive the news about good believers

whom they had left alive in this world.

Second: The good news concerns the reward of the believers' deeds — that they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve. It happens that they see this reward in the abode, which they abide in. It is because their knowledge of things emanates from observation, not from arguments.

The verse therefore proves that after death man's existence continues between his death and the Day of Resurrection. We have described it in detail under "The Life of al-Barzakh" under the verse, And do not speak of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead (2:154).

QUR'AN: They rejoice on account of favor from Allah and (His) grace . . . the reward of the believers:

This rejoicing is more comprehensive and covers their joy for others as well as for themselves. It is proved from the clause, "and that Allah will not waste the reward of the believers", which being unrestricted covers all the believers. Perhaps this is the reason why the "rejoicing" and also "grace" have been repeated here. Meditate on this verse.

The words, "favor" and "grace", have been used as common nouns, and "sustenance" has been left unspecified. This style gives the hearer's imagination full rein; he is free to visualize whatever he likes. Likewise fear and grief are left vague, so that put in negative form they would signify comprehensiveness.

One finds on meditating on the verse that:

First: The verses intend to describe the believers' reward;

Second: That reward consists of their sustenance near Allah;

Third: That sustenance is a favor and grace from Allah;

Fourth: That favor and grace is mirrored in the fact that they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve.

The clause, "that they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve", is really wonderful; the more you meditate on it, the more expansive and extensive its meaning will be, with its subtlety, sublimity and graceful flow. The thing that comes before the eyes is that the fear and sorrow are removed from the martyrs. Fear takes shape when there is possibility of something occurring which would nullify an existing happiness of man; sorrow appears when that thing has already happened. Misfortune — or any undesirable phenomenon — is feared as long as it has not befallen; but once it has begun, the fear gives way to sorrow. There is no fear after a misfortune has taken shape, and no sorrow before that.

Fear, with all its aspects, may be removed from man only when there is no chance of deterioration or extinction for any bounty that he enjoys and possesses. Sorrow, with all its aspects, may be removed from him only when he is not deprived of any such bounty to begin with, nor has he lost it after finding it. When the Qur'an says that Allah has removed general fear and general sorrow from a man, it means that He has given him all possible bounties and favors for his enjoyment; and those bounties and favors will never deteriorate or be taken away from him. In other words, man will remain alive forever enjoying the everlasting happiness.

It is evident that removal of fear and sorrow means the same as man's receiving sustenance from Allah; He says: and that which is with Allah is best for the righteous (3:198); and what is with Allah is enduring (16:96). These two verses show that what is with Allah is everlasting and enduring bounty, not tainted by any affliction, not liable to extinction.

Also, it is clear that negation of fear and sorrow is one with affirmation of favor and grace that is, divine bounty. But we have explained in the beginning of the book (and further details will be given under the verse, . . . with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favors...4:69) that "favor", whenever used in the Qur'an, means divine guardianship. Therefore, this verse means that Allah is their Guardian Who manages their affairs and bestows on them exclusive grace.

Some people have supposed that "grace" means a bounty given in excess of what a man's deeds have made him eligible to; and "favor" means the bounty equal to the deeds. But it does not enmesh with the end clause, "and that Allah will not waste the reward of the believers". The word, "reward", shows that they are "eligible " for grace and favor both; and you have seen that all these clauses, "are provided sustenance from their Lord", "Rejoicing in what Allah has given", "They rejoice on account of favor from Allah and (His) grace", "and Allah will not waste the reward of the believers", lead to one and the same reality.

There are other aspects of these verses, some of which were explained under the verse, And do not speak of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead (2:154); hopefully Allah will help us to complete, according to our capacity, other related matters in other appropriate places, God willing.

Volume 7: Surah Ale-Imran, Verses 172-175

(As for) those who responded (at Ohud) to the call of Allah and the Messenger after the wound

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had befallen them, those among them who do good (to others) and guard (against evil) shall have a great reward. (172) Those to whom the people said: Surely men have gathered against you, therefore fear them, but this increased their faith, and they said: Allah is sufficient for us and most excellent is the Protector. (173) So they returned with favor from Allah and (His) grace, no evil touched them and they followed the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is the Lord of mighty grace. (174) It is only the Shaitan that causes you to fear from his friends, but do not fear them, and fear Me if you are believers. (175)

## COMMENTARY

These verses have connection with those revealed about the battle of Uhud, as may be understood from the clause, "after the wound had afflicted them", when read in conjunction with the preceding words; "If a wound has afflicted you (at Uhud), a wound like it has also afflicted the (unbelieving) people".

QUR'AN: (As for) those who responded to the call of Allah and the Messenger. . . shall have a great reward: "al-Istijabah" and "al-ijabah" both reportedly have the same meaning: You ask for something and get positive response.

Allah and His Messenger both have been mentioned here, although either word would have sufficed. Perhaps it is because the Muslims in Uhud disobeyed Allah and the Prophet both. They disobeyed Allah by fleeing and retreating from the battlefield, while Allah had ordered them to fight and forbidden them to flee. They disobeyed the Prophet when the archers violated his order not to leave their post in any case, and when the rest of the Muslims ran off precipitately and did not respond to his call although he was calling them from their rear. Now that they did respond positively on this later occasion, they were described as responding to Allah and the Messenger both, to set the matter in parallel.

The clause, "those among them who do good (to others) and guard (against evil) shall have a great reward", restricts the promise to only a group among those who had responded. It is because the response is an external action, which does not necessarily spring from the reality of doing good and guarding against evil - on which the great reward depends.

It is an amazing watchfulness of the Qur'an that one topic does not distract it from other realities. It is evident from above that not all of the responders were sincere to Allah in this matter; some of them were not true doers of good to others nor did they sincerely guard, themselves against evil - and these are the important characteristics, which make one eligible for great reward from Allah.



Some people have said that “min” (= from, among) in ‘minhum’ (among them), is not here to indicate a portion; rather it is explanatory, in the same way as it is in verse 48:29, where it says: Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those with him are severe against the unbelievers. . . Allah has promised those among them who believe and do good, forgiveness and a great reward. But it is an interpretation, which does not agree with the context.

Also, it is clear that their praise contained in later verses, “Those to whom the people said ...’, is intended for a selected band of them although in wordings it is attributed to the whole group.

QUR’AN: Those to whom the people said: “Surely men have gathered against you ... and-Allah is the Lord of mighty grace:

“an-Nas” (people, men) is used for human beings when no distinguishing factor (to separate one from another) is taken into account. The first an-nas (translated here as “people”) is different from the second (translated as “men”); the latter refers to the enemy that was gathering army to fight the believers, while the former were those who had forsaken the believers in Uhud and held back from them and were now talking with them in this way to keep them back, so that they (the believers) would not proceed forth to fight the polytheists.

In other words, the latter refers to the polytheists and the former to their agents within the Muslim camp who insidiously worked against the believers. The verse manifestly shows that they were a group not one person. It supports the report that the verses were revealed not about the events of the lesser Badr, but about the Prophet’s campaign when, after Uhud, he went forth with the remnants of his companions in pursuit of the polytheists. Both events will be narrated in the coming “Traditions”.

“Surely men have gathered against you”, that is, they have gathered to attack you again. (And Allah knows better.) “but this (only) increased their faith”: It is but natural that when a man intends to do something, and someone whom he does not trust - advises him not to do it, then that prohibition gives an impetus to do it by all means; his powers and faculties become geared to do that work, and his intention becomes firmer.

The more the said advisor persists in prohibition, the more determined the man becomes to do it. This effect is even more stronger when the man so advised believes that he is on right and that he must do what his duty requires him to do. That is why whenever someone blamed the believers regarding some divine orders or put hindrance in their way, their belief increased even more and their determination and courage became much more stronger.

Possibly one factor that helped to increase their faith was the confirmation that such news produced of the revealed information that they had had in advance that they would have to suffer

trouble, harm and damage in the divine cause until their affairs were favorably settled by Allah's permission. Allah had promised to help them, and naturally that type of help presupposes fighting and war. "and they said: 'Allah is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is (He)' ": 'hasbuna (sufficient for us); this word is derived from al-hisab (to count, to reckon), because sufficiency is reckoned, vis-à-vis, the need. The sentence portrays their total dependence on Allah, because of their faith - without caring, about external causes, which the divine system has created in the world.

al-Wakil (= agent, manager, representative) refers to one who manages the affairs on behalf of someone. The connotation of the verse is therefore similar to that of the verse 65:3: and whoever trusts in Allah, He is sufficient for him; surely Allah attains His purpose. That is why this clause (and they said: "Allah is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is (He) ") has been followed by the words, "So they returned with favor from Allah and (His) grace; no evil touched them." Therefore, when they followed His pleasure, He praised them in these words, "and they followed the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is the Lord of mighty grace".

## **TRUST IN ALLAH**

The fact is that fulfillment of desire and success of design in this material world depends on some material and other psychological causes. When man intends to do something and produces its necessary material causes, then the only thing that can prevent his realization of his wishes is some, shortcoming in its psycho-logical causes, in his mental attitude; like weakness of will-power, fear or sorrow, recklessness or covetousness, foolishness or distrust, and things like that - and they are important and common factors. But when a man relies on Allah, he is connected to the unconquerable cause that can never fail - the cause above all the causes. This connection strengthens his will to such an extent that no adverse psychological cause can overpower it - and it spells success and triumph.

There is another aspect to the trust in Allah which in effect joins it to super-natural miraculous phenomena, as is evident from the words of Allah: and whoever trusts in Allah, He is sufficient for him; surely Allah attains His purpose (65:3). Some aspects of this subject have already been described under the topic of "Miracle". (In English volume 1)

QUR'AN: That is only the Satan that frightens... and fear Me if you are believers: Evidently the demonstrative pronoun "dhaalikum" (that) refers to the people who had brought the quoted news. It is therefore one of the occasions where the Qur'an has used the word, "Satan", for man; as is apparent also from the verses: . . . from the evil of the whispering of the slinking (Satan), who whispers into the hearts of men, from among the jinn and the men. (114:4-6). This explanation is supported by the next sentence, "So do not fear them", that is, do not fear the people who have spoken to you in that manner, because they are only Satans. (We shall later on explain this

matter, unveiling the reality behind it, if Allah so wills.)

## TRADITIONS

Innumerable traditions have been, narrated concerning the battle of Uhud; but there is so much contradiction and conflict among them - about various aspects of the event - that it is difficult to trust all of them. The most glaring contradictions are seen in those traditions which try to explain the reasons of revelation of most of the verses (there are nearly sixty verses in all). One is amazed to look at those traditions; a contemplating reader finds himself bound to decide that various sectarian inclinations have filled them with their own spirits - making them to speak what would benefit narrators in their sectarian causes. That is why we have not quoted them in this discourse; whoever is interested, should consult various collections of traditions and bigger books of exegesis.

Ibn Abl Hatim narrates from Abu 'd-Duha that he said: "The verse was revealed: and take "ash-shuhadaa" witnesses from among you (3:140); so seventy of them were martyred on that day: four from the Emigrants - Hamzah ibn 'Abdi '1-Muttalib, Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr (from Banu 'Abdu'd-Dar), ash-Shammas ibn 'Uthman al-Makhzumi and 'Abdullah ibn Jahsh al-Asadi - and the rest were from the Helpers." (ad-Durru 'l-manthur)

The author says: The tradition shows that Abu 'a-Duha has taken the word ash-shuhada" for 'martyrs'; and an overwhelming majority of the exegetes has followed suit. But we have explained in the relevant Commentary that apparently no proof can be found in the Book for this meaning; evidently the word refers to the witnesses of the deeds.

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allah, Do you think that you will enter the Garden while Allah has not yet known those who strive hard from among you . . . : "Certainly Allah did know what He was going to create before He created it, when they were tiny particles; (likewise) He knew who would strive and who would not, as He knew that He would give death to His creatures (even) before He caused their death - while their death was not yet seen, (and) they were still alive." {at-Tafslr, al-'Ayyashi)

The author says: The tradition points to what has been explained earlier that there is a difference between knowledge before creation and the factual knowledge which is the same as the action. When this verse says, Allah has not yet known those who strive . . . it does not speak about the knowledge before creation.

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allah, And certainly you desired death before you met it, so indeed you have seen it (even) while you look (at it): "When Allah, the High, informed the believers what (favor) He had done to their martyrs of Badr in their abodes in the Garden, they

coveted that (honor), and said: 'O Allah, show us (i.e. provide for us) a fighting in which we should be martyred.' Therefore Allah showed it to them on the day of Uhud; but they did not remain firm except him whom Allah wished among them. So this is the word of Allah, And certainly you desired death ..." (at-Tafsir, al-Qummi)

The author says: This meaning has been narrated in ad-Durru 'l-manthur from Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah, al-Hasan and as-Suddi.

The Imam said: "Surely the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) was wounded on the day of Uhud, and observers saw him in that condition; then they started telling whomever they met, 'Certainly the Messenger of Allah has been killed; (look for) safety.' So when they returned to Medina, Allah revealed: And Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed, will you then turn back upon your heels? (He means: to the disbelief?) And whoever turns back upon his heels, he will by no means do harm to Allah in "the least." (ibid.)

Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abu Hatim have narrated from ar-Rabi' about the above verse; "It was on the day of Uhud when they were afflicted with what afflicted them of slaughter and injury, and they talked among themselves about the Prophet of Allah; they said: 'He has been killed.' Others among them said: 'Had he been a prophet he would not have been killed.' But some high-ranking Companions of the Prophet said: 'Fight for what your Prophet had fought for, until Allah gives you victory or you join him (after martyrdom).<sup>1</sup> And we have been told that an Emigrant passed by a Helper who was struggling in his blood, and said:

'O so-and-so! do you know that Muhammad has been killed?' The Helper said: 'If Muhammad has been killed, then surely he had (already) conveyed (the divine message); so fight in the cause of your religion.' Then Allah revealed: And Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed, will you then turn back upon your heels? He means: Will you then turn back to disbelief after believing?" (ad-Durru 'l-manthur)

Ibn Jarir has narrated from as-Suddi that he said: "(A rumour) spread among the people on the day of Uhud that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) was killed. Then some Companions of the rock (i.e. the people who had fled on the mountains) said: 'Would that we had a messenger to 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy so that he could obtain protection for us from Abu Sufyan. O people! Muhammad has been killed; so return back to your people (to polytheism), before they come to you and kill you.' (Hearing this) Anas ibn an-Nadr said: 'O people! If Muhammad has been killed, the Lord of Muhammad has not been killed. Fight therefore for what Muhammad had fought for. O Allah! I apologize to Thee from what these people say, and disavow before Thee what they have brought.' (Saying this) he drew his sword and fought until he was martyred. Then Allah revealed:

And Muhammad is no more than a Messenger. . ." (ibid,)

The author says: This theme has been narrated through numerous other chains of narrators.

al-Baqir (a.s.) said: "Surely 'Ali was afflicted with sixty wounds. The Prophet told Umm 'Salama and Umm 'Atiyyah .to treat him. They said: 'No sooner do we dress him (his wounds) in one place than another place is torn apart; and we are afraid about him (his life).' Then the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) entered, and the Muslims were visiting him ('Ali) - and he (his body) was one (big) wound. (The Prophet) started wiping him ('Ali's body) with his hand; and was saying:

'Certainly a man who met this (much affliction) in (the way of) Allah, has proved himself brave and is absolved (from every blame).' And no sooner did the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) touch a wound than it was healed. Then 'Ali said: 'Praise be to Allah as I did not flee and did not turn (my) back.' So Allah thanked him for it in two places in the Qur'an; and it is His word, and Allah will reward the grateful, and, We will reward the grateful." (al-Kafi)

The author says: It means that Allah thanked 'Ali's steadfastness and firmness, not his words, 'Praise be to Allah.'

as-Sadiq (a.s.) recited, "And how many a prophet has fought with whom were myriads of Godly men", and said: "Thousands and thousands." Then he said: "Yes, by Allah, they were martyred." (at-Tafsir, al-'Ayyashi) The author says: This recitation and meaning has been reported in ad-Durru 'l-manthur from Ibn Mas'ud and others; and it has been narrated that Ibn 'Abbas was asked about this word and he said: "gatherings."

'Abd ibn Hamid and Ibn Abu Hatim have narrated from Mujahid that he said about the words of Allah, after He had shown you that which you loved: "Allah helped the believers against the polytheists until the women of the polytheists rode every spirited and feeble (camel). After that the polytheists were let to triumph over them because of their (the Muslims') disobedience of the Prophet." (ad-Durru 'l-manthur)

Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Rahwayh, 'Abd ibn Hamid, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim and al-Bayhaqi (in his Dala'ilu 'n-nubuwwah) have narrated from az-Zubayr that he said: "You would have seen me with the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.); when the fear overwhelmed us, Allah sent sleep on us; then there was not a man among us but his chin was on his breast. Then, by Allah, I was hearing the talk of Mu'tab ibn Qushayr - and I heard it as if it were in a dream - 'Had we any hand in the affair, we would not have been slain here.' So I remembered it from him; and it was about it that Allah revealed: Then after sorrow He sent down security upon you, a slumber coming upon a party of you,... we would not have been slain here, because of the talk of Mu'tab ibn Qushayr." (ibid.)

The Author says: This information has been narrated from az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwam through numerous chains of narrators.

Ibn Mandah has narrated in, Ma’rifatu ‘s-sahbah, from Ibn ‘Abbas that the verse, “ (As for) those of you who turned back on the day when the two armies met. . . , was revealed about ‘Uthman, Rafi’ ibn al-Mu’alla and Harithah ibn Zayd.” (ibid.)

The author says: Nearly similar traditions have been narrated through several chains from ‘Abdu ‘r-Rahman ibn ‘Awf, ‘Ikrimah and Ibn Ishaq. In some of them the names of Abu Hudhayfah ibn ‘Aqabah, al-Walid ibn ‘Aqabah, Sa’d ibn ‘Uthman and ‘Aqabah ibn ‘Uthman, have been added.

In any case, the names of ‘Uthman and others have been mentioned in these traditions as examples only. Otherwise, the verse covers all those Companions who had fled away and disobeyed the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.). Of course, there is a reason why ‘Uthman has especially been mentioned in the traditions: He and those who fled with him continued running away until they reached al-Jal’ab (a mountain in the region of Medina near al-Aghwas), and they remained there for three days; then they came back to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.), who said to them: “You had indeed gone very far in it!”

As for the Companions of the Prophet in general, there are numerous traditions that all of them had fled; and there was none left with the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) except two persons from the Emigrants and seven from the Helpers; then the polytheists attacked the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) and all the Helpers, one after the other, gave their lives defending the Prophet; none of them survived.

It has variously been reported that eleven persons remained with the Prophet, or eighteen or even thirty - but this tradition is the weakest of all.

Perhaps, this difference emanates from different information reaching the narrators, or for some other reasons. The traditions which describe how Nasibah al-Maziniyyah defended the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) prove that at that particular time nobody was with the Prophet and that those who had remained steadfast - had not fled away - were busy in fighting the polytheists. The only person who, the traditions unanimously say, had not fled was ‘Ali; and probably Abu Dujanah al-Ansari, Simak ibn Kharashah also comes into this category; but he fought with the sword of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.), thereafter when the Companions left the Prophet alone, Abu Dujanah continued shielding him with his own body, deflecting the arrows from him with his shield until he fell down seriously wounded. May Allah be pleased with him.

As for the rest of the Companions, some returned to the Prophet when they recognized him and

realized that he was not killed; some others came back after sometime. It was these returning Companions on whom Allah had sent the slumber. However, Allah pardoned all of them. You have seen in the preceding Commentary what pardon means. Some exegetes have said that pardon in this verse means that Allah diverted the polytheists from them, so that they (the polytheists) did not exterminate them (the Muslims) completely.

Ibn 'Adiyy and al-Bayhaqi (in his *Shu'abu 'l-fmdn*) have narrated through good chain from Ibn 'Abbas that he said: "When the verse (and take counsel with them in the affair) was revealed, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: 'As for Allah and His Messenger, they are in no need of it (counsel); but Allah has made it a mercy for my ummah; therefore whoever among them shall consult (others) will not be deprived of guidance, and whoever leaves it will not avoid misguidance.' " (ibid.)

at-Tabarani has narrated in his, *al-Awsat* from Anas that he said: "the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: 'He who asks (Allah) for good, does not go wrong; and he who takes counsel does not regret.'" (ibid.)

"He who proceeds independently in his opinion is destroyed, and he who seeks advice of men becomes partner in their wisdom." (*Nahju 'l-balaghah*) "To seek advice is the guidance itself; and he who proceeds independently with his opinion incurs the danger." (ibid.)

The Prophet said: "There is no solitude more dreary than pride; and no support stronger than consultation." (at-Tafsir as-Safi) The author says: There are numerous traditions about consultation. The consultation is valid in those matters where one has the choice of doing or not doing a thing as would seem more preferable. As far as the definite divine rules and laws are concerned, there is no question of consultation about them, as no one has got any authority to change them. Otherwise, it would be as though current events and new trends would abrogate the words of Allah!

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "People's pleasure cannot be controlled, and their tongue cannot be restrained. Did not they accuse him (i.e., the Prophet) on the day of Badr that he had taken for himself a red velvet from the war booty? Until Allah informed him of (the whereabouts of) the velvet and absolved His Prophet from (embezzlement and) faithlessness; and revealed in His Book: And it is not attributable to a prophet that he should defraud.. ." (al-Majalis)

The author says: al-Qummi has reported it in his, at-Tafsir; and there it says: "Then a man came to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) and said: 'Surely so-and-so has fraudulently taken a red velvet and has buried it in that place.' So the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) ordered to dig that place; and the velvet was found out."

This and nearly similar meanings have been narrated hi ad-Durr 'l-manthur through numerous chains. Perhaps when the traditions say that this verse was revealed about that event, they mean that it points to that; otherwise, as we have already explained, the context shows that it was revealed after the battle of Uhud.

al-Baqir (a.s.) said: "He who defrauds something will see it on the Day of Resurrection in the Fire; then he will be charged to enter therein and take it out of the Fire." (at-Tafsir, al-Qummi)

The author says: It is a fine inference from the words of Allah: "and he who defrauds shall bring (with him) that which he has defrauded." as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allah, They are of (diverse) grades with Allah: "Those who follow the pleasure of Allah are the Imams, and they are, by Allah, of grades with Allah for the believers; and through their love and devotion to us, Allah increases then deeds for them, and Allah enhances (their) high grades for them; and those who have brought upon themselves the wrath from Allah are those who rejected the right of 'Ali (a.s.) and the right of the Imams from us, Ahlu 'l-bayt; so in this way they brought upon themselves Allah's wrath." (at-Tafsir, al-'Ayyashi)

The author says: It is based on the 'flow' of the Qur'an, and applies the verse to its most prominent example.

ar-Rida (a.s.) said: "The 'grade' is (the distance) between the heaven and the earth." (ibid.)

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allah, What! when a misfortunate befell you while you had certainly afflicted (the unbelievers) with twice as much .... "The Muslims had afflicted at Badr one hundred and forty (unbelievers) people - they had killed seventy men and imprisoned seventy. When there came the day of Uhud, the Muslims were afflicted with seventy men, and they were grieving for them; so (this verse) was revealed." {ibid.}

Ibn Abu Shaybah, at-Tirmidhi (who said that this tradition is good), Ibn Jarir and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from 'Ali (a.s.) that he said: "Jibreel came to the Prophet and said: 'O Muhammad! Surely Allah is displeased with what your people have done in taking the prisoners; and He has ordered you to give them option between two things:

Either they (the prisoners) are brought forward and beheaded; or they (the Muslims) take ransom (for the prisoners) on the condition that an equal number from among them (the Muslims) shall be killed (later).' So the Messenger of Allah, (s.a.w.a.) called the people and explained the matter to them. They said: 'O Messenger of Allah! (they are) our clans and our people; we shall take their ransom and shall strengthen ourselves by it for fighting against our enemy; and there shall be martyred from among us equal to their number but it is not something that we might be displeased with.' Thus were martyred seventy men from among them on the day of Uhud - the



number of the prisoners of Badr.” (ad-Durru l-manthur)

The author says: (at-Tabrisi) has narrated it in Majma’u l-bayan from ‘Ali (a.s.); and also al-Qummi has quoted it in his at-Tafsir. al-Baqir (a.s.) has said about the verse, And reckon not those who are killed in Allah’s way as dead..., that it was revealed about the martyrs of Badr and Uhud together. (Majma’u ‘l-bayan)

The author says: Numerous traditions of the same meaning have been narrated in ad-Durru ‘l-manthur and other books. But you have seen that the verses are general and cover everyone who is actually martyred in the way of Allah or is counted as a martyr.

Sometimes it is said that these verses were revealed about the martyrs of Bi’r (i.e. Well of) Ma’unah. They were seventy or forty Companions of the Prophet whom he had sent to call ‘Amir ibn at-Tufayl and his people to Islam; and they were near that water. (The Companions) sent Abu Milhan al-Ansari ahead to convey the message; but they killed him, then they attacked the rest of the Companions of the Prophet and fought them until they (the enemy) killed all of them. May Allah be pleased with them.

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about this verse our Shi’ahs. When their souls enter the Garden and they receive the honor from Allah, the Mighty, the Great, they acquire knowledge and certainty that surely they were on the truth and on the religion of Allah, the Mighty, the Great; so they rejoice on account of those who have not yet joined them, from among their brothers, who are behind them from among the believers.” (at-Tafsir, al-‘Ayyashi)

The author says: It is based on the “flow” of the Qur’an. That they would acquire knowledge and certainty of their being on the truth, means that they would perceive it by the eye of certainty, after they had known it in this world by knowledge of certainty. It does not mean that before that they had any doubt or uncertainty about it.

Ahmad, Hannad, ‘Abd ibn Hamid, Abu Dawud, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, al-Hakim (who said that this tradition is correct) and al-Bayhaqi (in his Dala’ilu ‘n-nubuwwah) have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas that he said: “The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘When your brethren were afflicted (i.e. martyred) in Uhud, Allah put their souls inside the green birds, who come to the Garden’s rivers, and eat from its fruits and lodge in golden candelabra suspended in shadow of the Throne.

‘So when they found the goodness of their food and drink, and beauty of their resting place, they said: “Would that our brothers knew what Allah has done for us.” ‘ Another narration says.: ‘They said: “(Would that our brothers knew that) we are alive in the Garden, getting sustenance, so that they would not abandon jihad and would not shrink from fighting” Thereupon, Allah said: “I shall convey to them (this message) on your behalf.” So Allah sent down these verses: And reckon not

those who are killed . . . ' " (ad-Durru 'l-manthur)

The author says: There are numerous traditions of this theme, narrated from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Abu 'l-'Aliyah, Ibn Abbas and others. Some of these traditions, like that of Abu 'l-'Aliyah, use the phrase, 'in the forms of green birds'; others like that of Abu Sa'id say, 'in the green birds'; yet others like that of Ibn Mas'ud say, 'like green birds'; but all the wordings convey almost similar meanings.

It has come to us through the chains reaching to the Imams of the Ahlu 'l-bayt that the above tradition was put before them and they denied that it was said by the Prophet; some traditions say that they interpreted that tradition in some other way; and there is no doubt that - keeping in view the confirmed and accepted principles - that tradition has to be interpreted away, if it is not rejected altogether.

In any case, those traditions do not purport to describe the martyrs' condition in the Garden of the hereafter; rather they refer to the Garden of al-Barzakh. It is proved by the tradition of Ibn Jarir from Mujahid in which he says: "They are given sustenance from the fruit of the Garden and feel its scent but they are not in it.' Also, Ibn Jarir narrates from as-Suddi in which he says: 'Surely the souls of the martyrs are inside the green birds in golden candelabra hanging from the Throne; so they pick then-food in the Garden in morning and evening, and lodge at night in the candelabra.' As you have seen in the earlier discourse on al-Barzakh that these themes may fit the Garden of this world, but not on that of the hereafter.

As regards the verses: (As for) those who responded to the call of Allah and the Messenger . . . Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Jarir and al-Bayhaqi (in his ad-Dala'il) have narrated from 'Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn Amr ibn Hazm that he said: "The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) came out (proceeding) towards Hamra'u 'l-Asad; and Abu Sufyan (and his retreating army) had unanimously decided to return to (re-attack) the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) and his Companions. They said (to each other):

'We have returned before annihilating them (i.e. the Muslims); certainly we must attack their remnants again.' Then news reached him (i.e. Abu Sufyan) that the Prophet had come out with his Companions in his pursuit. This (news) dissuaded Abu Sufyan and his army (from pursuing their plan); Some riders from the tribe of 'Abdu 'l-Qays passed them; so Abu Sufyan said to them: 'Give the news to Muhammad that we (the Quraysh) have decided to re-attack his Companions aiming at their annihilation.' The riders met the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) at Hamra'u'1-Asad, and informed him as Abu Sufyan had asked them to do. But the Messenger of Allah and the believers with him said: 'Allah is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is He/ Thereupon Allah revealed about it: (As for) those who responded to the call of Allah and the Messenger . . . (ad-Durru 'l-manthur)

The author says: al-Qummi has narrated it in his at-Tafsir in detail; he reports, inter alia, that the Prophet had taken with him to Hamra'u 'l-Asad only those of the Companions who had been wounded (at Uhud). Some other traditions say that he had taken only those who were with him at Uhud. Practically the import of both reports is the same.

Musa ibn Aqabah (in his al-Maghazi) and al-Bayhaqi (in his al-Dala'il) have narrated from Ibn Shahab that he said: "Surely the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) called the Muslims together to be at the appointed time at Badr for (fighting) Abu Sufyan (about a year after the battle of Badr). The Satan thereupon instigated his friends among the men who went to the people frightening them and saying: 'We have been informed that they (the polytheists) have gathered for fighting you an army like the (dark) night, they hope to attack you and plunder you. Therefore, beware, beware.' But Allah protected the Muslims from the frightening (campaign) of the Satan;

and they responded to the call of Allah and His Messenger, and came out with their (trade) articles; they said: 'If we meet Abu Sufyan, then it is for what we have come forth; and if we did not meet him then we would sell our articles.' (Badr was the site of an annual trade-fare.) So, they went forth until they reached the fare-ground of Badr, and they fulfilled their needs there; while Abu Sufyan failed to reach the rendezvous - neither he nor his companions did come forth. Meanwhile, Ibn Hamam passed from near them (the Muslims) and asked: 'Who are these?' People told him: '(They are)

the Messenger of Allah and his Companions (who are) waiting for Abu Sufyan and his group of the Quraysh.' He then went to the Quraysh and told them the news. This frightened Abu Sufyan who went back to Mecca. And the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) returned to Medina with Allah's favour and grace. This al-ghazwah is called the Expedition of the army of as-sawiq; and it was in Sha'ban, the third year of hijrah." (ad-Durru 'l-manthur)

The author says: (as-Suyuti) has narrated it from another chain too. (at-Tabrisi) has narrated it in Majma'u 'l-bayan, in detail, from al-Baqir (a.s.), in which he, inter alia, says that the verses were revealed about the ghazwah of lesser Badr; and that the army of sawiq refers to that of Abu Sufyan, because he had come out from Mecca with an army of the Quraysh; and they had with them loads of sawiq (as provision). They camped out of Mecca and sustained themselves with the sawiq, and then they returned to Mecca because they became frightened of meeting the Muslims at Badr. Therefore, the people called them the "army of sawiq", in mockery and derision.

an-Nasa'f, Ibn Abl Hatim and at-Tabarani have narrated through correct chain from Tkrimah from Ibn 'Abbas that he said: "When the polytheists returned from Uhud, they said (to each other): 'Neither you killed Muhammad, nor you took buxom girls with you (as captives) on the camels. Wretched is what you have done! Return (to attack the Muslims).' The Messenger of Allah

(s.a.w.a.) heard the news; so he called the Muslims and they gathered until he reached Hamra'u 'l-Asad or the Well of Abu 'Utbah. (The doubt is from Sufyan, (one of the narrators) ). Then the polytheists said: 'We shall come back next year.' Therefore, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) too returned.

So it was counted as al-ghazwah. Thereupon Allah revealed, (As for) those who responded to the call of Allah and the Messenger . . . Indeed Abu Sufyan said to the Prophet: 'Your appointed place and time is the fare of Badr where you had slain our companions. ' So as for the coward, he returned, and as for the brave, he took (his) fighting arms and trade-articles; then they came there.(i.e. Badr) but did not find anyone there; so they sold and bought (at the fare); then Allah revealed: So they returned with favor from Allah and (His) grace . . ." (ad-Durru'l-manthur)

The author says: We have quoted this tradition here although it goes against the principle of brevity and abridgement which we generally observe in the traditions. We have quoted here comprehensive examples of every theme, in order that a discerning research scholar may understand that what the scholars have written regarding the causes of revelation is - all or most of it - based on personal views; that is, generally they would describe historical events, then write after it the Qur'anic verses which would correspond with the theme; and then they would count that event as the cause of that verse's revelation. Often this results in fragmentation of a single verse, or a set of verses of a single context, and then they ascribe each part to an independent cause of revelation - even if it disturbs the verse's structure or negates its context. It is one of the causes of weakness in those traditions that are narrated about the occasions of revelation.

Add to it what we have mentioned in the beginning of this topic that sectarian differences and inclinations have greatly influenced the style and tone of these traditions as everyone has tried to pull them in the direction of his particular belief and view.

Moreover, political environment and ruling atmosphere has in every era strongly put its stamp on the realities either by hiding it completely or covering it in ambiguity. Therefore, a thinking scholar should never close his eyes from these factors which have utmost relevance to the understanding of realities. And Allah is the Guide.

Volume 7: Surah Ale-Imran, Verses 176-180

And let not those grieve you who fall into unbelief hastily; surely they can do no harm to Allah at

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all; Allah intends that He should not give them any portion on the hereafter, and they shall have a great chastisement (176). Surely those who have bought unbelief at the price of faith shall do no harm at all to Allah, and they shall have a painful chastisement (177).

And let not those who disbelieve think that Our granting them respite is good for their souls; We grant them respite only that they may increase in sins; and they shall have a disgraceful chastisement (178). On no account will Allah leave the believers in the condition which you are in until He separates the evil from the good; nor is Allah going to make you acquainted with the unseen, but Allah chooses of His messengers whom He pleases; therefore believe in Allah and His messengers; and if you believe and guard (against evil), then you shall have a great reward (179). And let not those deem, who are niggardly in giving away that which Allah has granted them out of His grace, that it is good for them; nay, it is worse for them; they shall have that whereof they were niggardly made to encircle their necks on the Resurrection Day; and Allah's is the heritage of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is aware of what you do (180).

## **COMMENTARY**

The verses have some connection with those revealed about the battle of Uhud. These and especially the first four of them are probably a sort of epilogue to the preceding ones. The most important theme of the preceding talk was the principle of test and trial, which Allah makes His servants to undergo. Therefore, these are like the sum total of the verses of Uhud.

Allah describes here that the test and trial is an established and continual system from which no one - neither a believer nor an unbeliever - can escape; Allah will certainly test both in order to expose and unveil the hidden realities of their souls; in this way the unbeliever will become totally fit for the Fire, and the evil will become separated from the good in the believer.

QUR'AN: And let not those grieve you . . . and they shall have a painful chastisement:

The verse consoles the Prophet and removes sorrow by describing the reality of the whole affair. The unbelievers compete with each other in rushing towards disbelief; they help one another to extinguish the light of Allah and sometimes even succeed in overpowering the believers. It sometimes grieves the believers, as it seems as if they (the unbelievers) have scored against Allah by thwarting His plan to make the word of truth triumphant. But if the believer ponders on the system of general and all-encompassing test, he will become sure that it is Allah Who is victorious; and that all persons are relentlessly proceeding to their destination in order that their creative and legislative guidance to their goals may be completed.

The unbeliever is driven to that goal by the health and strength, bounty and comfort that he is provided with - Allah in this way draws him nearer to his destruction in degrees and unfolds His

plan against him - enabling him to go to the furthest possible limit of transgression and disobedience. The believer on the other hand is continuously scraped through test and trial until his belief and faith is cleansed from all rust and pollution, and he becomes absolutely pure for Allah; while the unbeliever's polytheistic tendencies are purged of every shade of belief and he falls down where other friends of false deities and leaders of infidelity have gone.

The verse therefore means as follows: You should not grieve on account of those who proceed with increasing haste towards disbelief. Why should you grieve? Do you think as if they can do any harm to Allah? Certainly you cannot think so, because they cannot do any harm to Allah; they are under complete control of Allah, and He is driving them in their lives' journey to their goal where they will be left with no portion, no share, in the hereafter (and it is the final limit of their infidelity); and they shall have a painful chastisement. The prohibition, therefore, in the clause, "And let not those grieve you", is of advisory nature; the clause, "surely they can do no harm to Allah", describes the reason of that prohibition; and the next words, "Allah intends that He should not give them . . .", explains why they are unable to do any harm to Allah.

Thereafter Allah makes it clear that no unbeliever - whether he hastens to fall into disbelief or not - can do any harm to Him. The next verse thus states the general principle after mentioning a particular case. This may serve as the reason for the preceding prohibition, "And let not those grieve you", or it may be treated as the reason of the preceding reason, "surely they can do no harm" —because it has a general import which may explain the reason of a particular reason. The meaning thus will be as follows: We have said that those who fall into disbelief hastily can do no harm to Allah, because no unbeliever can do any harm to Him.

QUR'AN: And let not those who disbelieve think. . . a disgraceful chastisement:

After putting the Prophet's mind at rest regarding the unbelievers' falling into unbelief hastily, and explaining that in all this they are in fact subsequent to Allah's plan, Who is driving them to a stage where they shall have no share in the hereafter, Allah now turns to the unbelievers themselves. He tells them that they should not be happy with the respite granted to them by Allah, because Allah through this respite is giving them a chance to pile up sins over sins, and behind it all there is a disgraceful chastisement waiting for them — there is nothing for them except shame and ignominy in the hereafter. This all is based on the divinely established system of completion that every creature should bring his potentials to fruition, according to his own choice.

QUR'AN: On no account will Allah leave the believers then you shall have a great reward:

Now the Speaker turns to the believers. He explains to them that the system of test and trial covers them too, in order that they too should reach the stage of completion; and the purified believer may be distinguished from the impure, and evil and wicked ones may be separated from

the good and virtuous ones.

The next sentence aims at removing a possible misconception. It could be assumed that there was another way of distinguishing evil from good; that is, Allah could let the believers know who was wicked and evil so that they could avoid him. Thus, they could easily be saved all these troubles and turmoil which they had to suffer because of their commingling with hypocrites and those whose hearts were diseased.

Allah erases such erroneous impression by pointing out that He has exclusively reserved the knowledge of unseen to Himself, He does not reveal it to anyone except to some chosen messengers whom He might acquaint with it. This is the import of the sentence, "nor is Allah going to make you acquainted with the unseen, but, Allah chooses of His messengers whom He pleases".

Thereafter, Allah says to them: As there is no escape from test and trial, nor from turning the potentials into accomplishments, it is in your interest that you should believe in Allah and His messengers, so that you should be counted among the good ones - and not among the evil ones. But mere belief is not sufficient to preserve the blessedness of the life, it is also necessary to support it with good deeds that would raise the belief up to Allah and preserve its blessings - it is then that the reward would be complete. It was with this connotation in view that the Qur'an first said, "therefore believe in Allah and His messengers", and then completed it with the next clause, "and if you believe and guard (against evil), then you shall have a great reward".

It is evident from this verse that: -

First: Every soul has to reach its perfection, has to be brought to its goal and destination — be it felicity and happiness or infelicity and unhappiness. It is an issue, which cannot be avoided, a proposition from which there is no escape.

Second: The good and the evil are attributed to the "self" or "soul" of the persons, but at the same time and in the same context they depend on the belief and the disbelief respectively - and these two are within man's power and emanate from his will and choice. This is among the finest Qur'anic realities which opens the door to many secrets of monotheism. It may be understood from the words of Allah: And every one has a direction to which he would turn; therefore hasten to (do) good works (2:148), when read in conjunction with the words:

but that He might try you in what He gave you, therefore strive with one another to hasten to virtuous deeds (5:48). We shall write on this topic in full detail under the verse: That Allah may separate the impure from the pure, and put the impure, some of it upon the other, and pile it up together, then cast it into hell (8:37).

Third: The belief in Allah and His messengers is the essence of the goodness of life, i.e., goodness of "person" or "soul". So far as reward is concerned it depends upon piety and good deeds. That is why Allah has first mentioned the subject of separating the good from the evil; then basing on that, has given the order to believe in Allah and His messengers; thereafter when He wanted to mention the reward, He added piety (guarding against evil) to the belief; and said: "and if you believe and guard (against evil), then you shall have a great reward".

From the above, you may easily understand the connotation of the verse 97 of chapter 16: Whoever does good whether male or female and he is a believer, We will most certainly make him live a happy life, and We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did. Evidently his happy life is the result of his belief, and emanates from it; but the reward is the result of the good deeds. Therefore, belief is the soul of the good life. But its continuity - so that it may produce the desired effects - requires good deeds. It is like the natural life which depends on a soul for its coming into being but its continuity depends on the use of its powers and organs - if all become still, all will die and life will end.

The name, Allah, has been repeated several (i.e. four) times in this verse. There was a possibility of using pronouns in place of the latter three, but the proper Divine Name was used so that it might clearly guide to the Source of all greatness and beauty, because the verses were related to those affairs which are exclusively reserved to Him in His divinity, that is, test of the creatures, knowledge of the unseen, selection of the messengers and man's ability to believe in Him.

QUR'AN: And let not those deem, . . . and Allah is aware of what you do:

The preceding verse has described how Allah gives respite to the unbelievers. The case of niggardliness, of not spending the wealth in the way of Allah, is not different from that; a niggardly person rejoices in, and boasts of, the riches he has amassed. Therefore Allah now addresses them and shows that what they are proud of, is actually worse for them. The wealth is described as, "that which Allah has granted them out of His grace"; it shows how mean they are and how much they should be condemned.

The description, that the wealth, which they are so niggardly about, shall become like iron collar around their necks, shows why their niggardliness is worse for them. The clause, "and Allah's is the heritage of the heavens and the earth", is apparently a circumstantial one related to "the Resurrection Day", that is, on the Resurrection Day when to Allah will belong the said heritage. The same is the position of the last clause, "and Allah is aware of what you do".

As a remote possibility, the words, "and Allah's is the heritage...", may be treated as the circumstantial clause of the verb, "are niggardly"; while the next clause, "and Allah is aware of



what you do", may have the same position (i.e. circumstantial clause of, "are niggardly "), or may be treated as an independent sentence.

## **TRADITIONS**

al-Baqir (a.s.) was asked about the unbeliever whether death was better for him or life. He said: "Death is better for the believer and the unbeliever (both); because Allah says, and that which is with Allah is best for the righteous (3:198), and He (also) says: 'And let not those who disbelieve think that Our granting them respite is good for their souls. . .'" (at-Tafsir, al-'Ayyashi)

The author says: The argument given in this tradition does not fully conform with the style of the Imams of the Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.), because the word, "righteous", refers to only a particular group of the believers, not to all of them. Although it may be said that the word covers all the believers because each of them has got some portion of righteousness in him.

A tradition of the above meaning has been narrated in ad-Durru 'l-manthur, from Ibn Mas'ud.

### Volume 7: Surah Ale-Imran, Verses 181-189

Allah has certainly heard the saying of those who said: "Surely Allah is poor and we are rich." We shall certainly write what they say, and their killing the prophets unjustly, and We shall say: "Taste the chastisement of burning (181). This is for what your (own) hands have sent before and because Allah is not in the least unjust to the servants." (182). (Those are they) who said: "Surely Allah has enjoined us that we should not believe in any messenger until he brings us an offering, which the fire consumes." Say: "Indeed, there came to you messengers before me with clear evidences and with that which you said; why did you kill them if you are truthful?" (183). But if they reject you, so indeed were rejected before you messengers who came with clear evidences and scriptures and the illuminating Book (184).

Every soul shall taste of death, and you shall only be paid fully your reward on the Resurrection Day; then whoever is removed far away from the Fire and is made to enter the Garden, he indeed has attained the object; and the life of this world is nothing but a provision of vanities (185). You shall certainly be tried respecting your wealth and your souls, and you shall certainly hear from those who have been given the Book before you and from those who are polytheists much annoying (talk); and if you are patient and guard (against evil), surely this is one of the matters of (great) resolve (186). And when Allah made a covenant with those who were given the Book: "You

shall certainly make it known to men and you shall not hide it"; but they cast it behind their backs and took a small price for it; so evil is that which they buy (187). Do not think those who rejoice for what they have brought about and love that they should be praised for what they have not done — so by no means think them to be safe from the chastisement, and they shall have a painful chastisement (188). And Allah's is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and Allah has power above all things (189).

## COMMENTARY

The verses are connected with the preceding ones. The general import of the preceding verses was to invigorate the believers and inspire them to fight in the way of Allah with their properties and their lives, as well as to warn them against weak-heartedness, cowardice and niggardliness. This connects it to the Jews' talk that "Allah is poor and we are rich", together with their upsetting the Muslims' affairs, rejecting the evidence of messenger-ship and hiding what they had been enjoined to make known. These are the very topics, which these verses deal with. In addition, they strengthen the believers' hearts to remain firm and steadfast; urge them to be patient and courageous; and exhort them to spend in the way of Allah.

QUR'AN: Allah has certainly heard the saying of those who said: "Surely Allah is poor and we are rich":

The saying was of the Jews, as may be understood from the next clause which mentions their slaying of the prophets, apart from other indications.

They said it after they had heard such divine words as, Who is it that will lend to Allah a goodly loan . . . (2:245). This view is somewhat strengthened when it is noted that this verse comes immediately after the one, which condemns niggardly person: "And let not those deem, who are niggardly in giving away. . . ". Or may be they said it when they saw the poverty and starvation of most of the believers. They taunted them saying that had their Lord been rich, He would have taken care of them and made them rich; therefore He is but poor while we are rich.

QUR'AN: We shall certainly write . . . the chastisement of burning:

Writing here means preservation and recording; or it may refer to the writing in the scroll of their deeds - the net result is the same in both cases. Their killing the prophets unjustly means that they had killed them knowingly and intentionally - not by mistake, ignorance or misunderstanding. Allah has joined this utterance of theirs to their slaying of the prophets because this was a very grievous word; "al-hariq" (translated here as burning) refers to the Hell-fire; or flame; it has been said that it has a transitive sense, that is, that which burns something.

QUR'AN: "This is for what your (own) hands . . . to the servants":

This clause, "what your (own) hands have sent before", means 'whatever deeds you have sent before'; hands have been mentioned because usually they are instrumental in sending a thing somewhere. The clause, "and because Allah is not in the least unjust to the servants", is in conjunction with the words, "what your (own) hands have sent", and they explain the reason for writing and punishment.

If Allah had not recorded their deeds and not rewarded or punished them accordingly, it would have been tantamount to neglecting the system of the deeds; and this in its turn would have been a gross and enormous injustice because huge number of deeds would be involved - in this way Allah would become most unjust to the servants; far above is He from such things.

QUR'AN: (Those are they) who said: "Surely Allah has enjoined us. . . if you are truthful":

It is related to the preceding, "those who said". "al-Ahd" (enjoining; order); al-qurban (that which is offered, is sacrificed like sheep, etc.); "fire consumes" means the fire burns it. The clause, "indeed, there came to you messengers before me", refers to such prophets as Zakariyya and Yahya - those Israelite prophets who were slain by the Jews.

QUR'AN: But if they reject you, so indeed were rejected before you messengers. . . :

It aims at consoling the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) when they belied him. "az-Zubur" is plural of az-zabur (a book of wisdom and sermons). The phrase, "scriptures and the illuminating book", refers to such revelations as the book of Nuh, scriptures of Ibrahim, the Torah and the Injil.

QUR'AN: Every soul shall taste of death . . . a provision of vanities:

The verse contains a good promise for the believer and a threat to the rejecter. It begins with a general rule that encompasses every living being. "at-Tawfiyah" (full payment). Someone has proved the existence of al-Barzakh from this verse, because it implies some partial recompense before the Resurrection Day, when the full payment will be made. It is a good argument.

"az-Zahzahah" (to remove far), it in fact implies repeated pulling with haste; al-fawz (to attain the desired object); al-ghurur is either infinitive of gharra (he deceived; he deluded), or plural of al-gharr (deceiver).

QUR'AN: You shall certainly be tried respecting your wealth and your souls. . . :

"al-Ibla' " (to test; to try). Allah first described the tests and trials that had afflicted the believers; then He mentioned the utterances of the Jews, which could weaken the believers' will. Now He informs them that such divine tests and such annoying talks of the People of the Book and the polytheists will repeatedly affect the believers; that they will have to face such things and bear such talks. They should remain patient and pious, should guard themselves against evil, in order that Allah may protect them from mistakes and weak-heartedness; so that they should emerge as people of strong and firm determination.

This prophecy gives them advance news of what they would have to suffer in future; it aims at preparing them mentally for it before hand, so that they may reconcile themselves to it. "Adhan kathiran" (much annoyance) has been used for "annoying talk"; it is a metaphorical use of effect in place of cause.

QUR'AN: And when Allah made a covenant. . . evil is that which they buy:

"an-Nabdh" (to cast away; to throw away); "they cast it behind their backs" is an idiom meaning 'they left it', 'they neglected it'. Its opposite idiom, 'he put it before his eyes', means 'he directed his attention to it'. QUR'AN: Do not think those who rejoice . . . Allah has power over all things:

The phrase, "for what they have brought about ", means the wealth that Allah has bestowed upon them\*, which is accompanied by love of riches and niggardliness. "al-Mafazah" (deliverance; safety). These people were destroyed because their hearts were attached to the falsehood, and consequently they removed themselves from the protection of the truth.

At the end Allah mentions His Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and His power over every thing. These two attributes may explain the reason of all things described in the preceding verses.

## **TRADITIONS**

Ibn Jarir and Ibn al-Mundhir have narrated from Qatadah about the verse, Allah has certainly heard the saying of those .... that he said: "It has been reported to us that it was revealed about Huyayy ibn Akhtab; when the verse (2:245) was revealed that: Who is it that will lend to Allah, a goodly loan, so He will multiply it for him manifold, he said: 'Our Lord asks loan from us! Surely a poor (man) asks loan from a rich one.' " (ad-Durru 'l-manthur )

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said regarding this verse: "By Allah, they had not seen Allah so that they could know He was poor. But they saw the friends of Allah (who were) poor. So they said: 'Had He (Allah) been rich He would have made His friends rich. Thus, they boasted against Allah of (their) riches." (at-Tafsir, al-'Ayyashi )

al-Baqir (a.s.) said: "They are those who think that the Imam is in need of what they bring to him."  
(al-Manaqib)

The author says: As described in the Commentary, the first two meanings correspond to the verse. The third tradition is based on the "flow" of the Qur'an.

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "There was, between those who uttered (this word) and those who killed (the prophets), a gap of five hundred years; but Allah attached to them the (crime of) murder because they were pleased with what they (i.e., their ancestors) had done. " (al-Kafi) The author says: The gap mentioned in it does not agree with the current Christian Era. See the historical discourse given earlier.

It is reported in ad-Durru 'l-manthour under the verse: Every soul shall taste of death: "Bin Abu Haiti has narrated from 'Ali bins Abu Tali (as.) that he said: 'When the Prophet died and the condolence began, there came to them a comer - they heard his voice but did not see his person - and he said: "Peace be upon you, O People of the House! and mercy of Allah and His blessings. Every soul is to taste of the death, and you shall only be paid fully your reward on the Resurrection Day. Indeed, there is in Allah consolation for every misfortune, and successor of everyone who dies, and overtaking everything that is lost. Therefore, in Allah put your trust, and to Him attach your hope; because afflicted is he who is deprived of reward." ' Then 'Ali (a.s.) said: 'He was al-Khidr.' "

Ibn Marduway has narrated from Sahl ibn Sa'd that he said: "The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Verily, a place in the Garden (just sufficient) to put a whip of one of you in, is better than the world and all that is in it.' Then he recited this verse: then whoever is removed far away from the fire and is made to enter the Garden, he indeed has attained the object. " (ad-Durru 'l-manthur)

The author says: (as-Suyuti) has narrated this meaning in that book through other chains from other Companions. It should be noted here that there are numerous traditions purporting to give the reason of revelation of these verses; but we have left them out because evidently they are merely people's attempts to apply the verses to various events; they are not real reasons of revelation.

\* Evidently it is a slip of pen. The meaning given by the author could be in place if the verb had been in passive voice, that is, utu (they were given; they were brought). But it is in active voice, that is, ataw (they brought; they gave). (tr.)

Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men of understanding (190). Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: "Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! Glory be to Thee; save us then from the chastisement of the Fire (191). Our Lord! surely whomsoever Thou makest enter the Fire, him Thou hast indeed brought to disgrace, and there shall be no helpers for the unjust (192). Our Lord! surely we heard a crier calling to the faith, saying: 'Believe in your Lord '; so we did believe; Our Lord! forgive us therefore our faults, and cover our evil deeds and make us die with the righteous (193).

Our Lord! and grant us what Thou hast promised us by Thy messengers and disgrace us not on the Day of Resurrection; surely Thou cost not break the promise" (194). So their Lord accepted their prayer: "That I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other; they, therefore, who emigrated, and were turned out of their homes, and were persecuted in My way, and fought, and were slain, I will most certainly cover their evil deeds, and I will most certainly make them enter gardens beneath which rivers flow"; a reward from Allah, and with Allah is yet better reward (195). Let it not deceive you that those who disbelieve go to and from in the cities (fearlessly) (196). A brief enjoyment! then their abode is hell, and evil is the resting-place (197). But as to those who fear (the wrath of) their Lord, they shall have gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding in them; and entertainment from their Lord, and that which is with Allah is best for the righteous (198). And most surely of the followers of the Book there are those who believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to you and (in) that which has been revealed to them, humbling themselves before Allah; they do not sell the signs of Allah for a small price; these it is that have their reward with their Lord; surely Allah is quick in reckoning (199).

## **COMMENTARY**

The verses give the resume of the conditions of the believers; the polytheists and the People of the Book as represented in this chapter. They explain the characteristics of the righteous believers that they always remember Allah and reflect on His signs; they seek Allah's protection from His chastisement and beseech for His forgiveness and the Garden; and that Allah has accepted their prayers and will surely give them what they have asked for. This is the general condition of the believers. As for the unbelievers, although they fearlessly roam the earth, but it is a brief enjoyment; and soon they will abide in the Hell-fire. One should not compare the believers with them. The only exception is of those People of the Book who have left their evil ways to follow the

truth - they are with the believers.

QUR'AN: Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men of understanding:

Most probably, the word, "creation", here has a comprehensive connotation, denoting as to how these things came into being, what are their characteristics, properties and other concomitants like movement and stillness, changes and variations. In that case, the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day would encompass all the great phenomena of creation. Its explanation has been given in the chapter of The Cow; so has also the meaning of the "men of understanding"

QUR'AN: Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth:

That is, they remember Allah in every condition - whether they are standing, sitting or lying down. We have earlier explained the meaning of "remembrance" and "reflection". The gist of the two verses is as follows:

Observation of the signs of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day has made them remember Allah continuously and at all times; they never forget Him in any situation. Also that observation has led them to reflection and meditation on the creation of the heavens and the earth; through it they remember that Allah will surely raise them again for awarding the recompense; therefore, they ask from Allah His mercy and beseech Him to fulfill His promise.

QUR'AN: "Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! . . ."

The demonstrative pronoun used here is "hadha" (this) which is singular and masculine, although the things referred to are plural and feminine. It is because the speakers are not concerned with particular names or distinct identification of each and every item; they look at the whole as a single creation.

It is the same style that has been used in 6:78, where Ibrahim (a.s.) is quoted as saying: Then when he saw the sun rising, he said: "This is my Lord; this is greater!" (In this verse, where Allah describes the rising and setting of the sun, the feminine words have been used — as is normally done. But Ibrahim is reported to use masculine pronouns and words for it. Ibrahim did so) because at that time he was completely unaware of its name or its characteristics—except that it was a "thing", (and "thing" in Arabic is masculine).

"al-Batil " (untrue, futile, vain) is that which has no purpose, no aim. Allah says: then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people it remains in the earth (13:17). That is why when they realized that the creation was not in vain, they understood that Allah would surely gather the people for recompense; and that at that time Allah would mete out to the unjust people a disgraceful punishment, i.e., the Hell. They also knew that there was none who could ward off the underlying principle of chastisement; otherwise, the creation would be in vain. It is the connotation of their prayer:

"save us then from the chastisement of the Fire: Our Lord! surely whosoever Thou makest to enter the Fire, him Thou hast indeed brought to disgrace; and there shall be no helpers for the unjust".

QUR'AN: "Our Lord! surely we heard a crier calling to the faith, saying:

'Believe in your Lord ' . . . ": The crier or caller refers to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.). The clause, "saying: Believe", describes the cry or call; "an " (translated here as, saying) is explicative. They affirm before Allah that they have believed in the crier, i.e., the Messenger. He has brought to them news of many things from Allah; some of which he has warned them against, e.g., sins, faults, death in infidelity and transgression; and some others he has exhorted them to do or seek, e.g., forgiveness, mercy, details of the Garden (which Allah has promised his believing and righteous servants).

Therefore, they pray to their Lord to forgive them, to cover their faults, and to make them die with His righteous servants. Also, they ask Him to fulfill His promise to them — the Garden and the mercy — which the messengers have guaranteed to them by Allah's permission. Thus they said: "forgive us therefore our faults..."; 'ala rusulika (translated here as, by Thy messengers) literally means, 'on Thy messengers'; i.e., the promise which Thou didst give to Thy messengers, and they guaranteed it to us on Thy behalf; "and disgrace us not", i.e., by not fulfilling the promise; it is because of this implication that the verse ends on, "surely Thou cost not break the promise".

These verses clearly show that those believers acquired the belief in Allah and the hereafter and believed that Allah had been sending His messengers - they got these beliefs by reflecting on the signs of Allah. As for the details of that which the Prophet had brought, they learned them by believing in the Prophet. They, thus, follow the nature in that which may be known by reflecting on the nature and creation; and in other matters they accept and obey what they are told by the Prophet.

QUR'AN: So their Lord accepted their prayer. . . :



Using the word, 'Lord', and relating it to them ("their Lord") points to the quickening intensity of the divine mercy. Also the unrestricted sentence, "I will not waste the work of a worker among you ", points to this reality. There is no discrimination between one work and the other, nor between one worker and another.

The next sentence (that branches out from the above), i.e., "they, therefore, who emigrated, and were turned out of their homes, and were persecuted in My way, and fought, and were slain . . . ", aims at describing some good deeds for the description of their reward. The conjunctive ("and") have been used for enumeration only, not for combination; otherwise the described reward would be reserved for only those Emigrants who were martyred and combined all these attributes.

Even then, the verse mentions only those virtues and deeds which this chapter exhorts the believers to acquire and do, which it puts utmost emphasis on, i.e., giving preference to religion over one's home town or country, patiently bearing the troubles in the way of Allah and fighting in the cause of religion.

Apparently, emigration encompasses all types of fleeing, be it from polytheism, or family, or home. This may be inferred from three factors: 1) The word used, "emigrated", is unrestricted and unqualified; 2) it is followed by the phrase, "and were turned out of their homes", which denotes a particular type of emigration and it shows that the former refers to all types of "going out"; and 3) it is followed later by the clause,

"I will most certainly cover their evil deeds"; in the Qur'anic language the word, as-sayyi 'at (evils; evil deeds) is apparently used for small and minor sins; it means that they have already fled from major sins earlier through abstaining or repenting from them. All this shows that the emigration or fleeing mentioned here is more comprehensive. (Try to understand it.)

QUR'AN: "Let it not deceive you. . . in the cities (fearlessly):

It purports to remove a possible misunderstanding. The meaning: This is the condition and reward of the righteous believers. But as for the unbelievers, you should not be deceived by their affluence and opulence, their luxurious life and abundant riches (the pronoun, being singular, addresses the Prophet, but the talk is actually meant for the ears of the other people); after all, it is but a brief enjoyment which has no permanence.

QUR'AN: But as to those who fear (the wrath of) Allah. . . is best for the righteous:

"an-Nuzul" (food, drink and other things served to a guest; here it has been translated as "entertainment"). The phrase, "those who fear (the wrath of) Allah", refers to the righteous, as

may be understood from the last clause of the verse. It supports what we have written above that the verse, "Let it not deceive you... the resting place", aim at removing an unspoken but possible misunderstanding.

QUR'AN: And most surely of the followers of the Book. . . quick in reckoning:

It means that they, like other believers, will get the better reward. It purports to affirm that the next life's happiness is not reserved to any particular nation or tribe - so that the People of the Book would be debarred from it even if they believed. Rather, it depends on believing in Allah and His messengers. Therefore if they accept true belief, they will become eligible to the hereafter's reward like other believers.

This verse praises these People of the Book in a special manner. It removes from them all those evil traits for which the preceding verses had been condemning other Jews and Christians - differentiating between the messengers of Allah, hiding what they had made a covenant with Allah to make known, and selling Allah's signs and communications for a small price.

#### Volume 7: Surah Ale-Imran, Verse 200

O you who believe! be patient and help each other in patience and remain lined up; and fear (the wrath of ) Allah, that you may be successful (200).

#### **COMMENTARY**

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.

QUR'AN: O you who believe! be patient and help each other in patience:

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.

QUR'AN: and remain lined up; and fear (the wrath of) Allah, that you may be successful:

"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.

## **TRADITIONS**

as-Sadiq (a.s.) 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." (Ma'ani'l-akhbaar)

The same Imam said: "Be patient about your religion, and have patience against your enemy and be linked up to your Imam" (at-Tafsir, al-'Ayyashi) The author says: Nearly the same theme has been narrated from the Prophet through the Sunni chains.

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." (al-Kafi)

'Ali (a.s.) 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." (Majma'u'l-bayan).

The author says: The difference in the tradition springs from the generality of the orders, as we had mentioned earlier.

Ibn Jarir and Ibn Hayyan have narrated from Jabir ibn 'Abdullah al-Ansari that he said: "The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) 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: 'To perform al-wudu' 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.'" (ad-Durru'l-manthur)

The author says: (as-Suyuti) has narrated it from the Prophet, also through other chains. There are innumerable traditions about excellence of being lined up or linked up.

\* al-Murdba' tah, in post-Qur'anic era is used for troops being garrisoned, posted, stationed. Many translators have rendered it as, "be ever-garrisoned"; but the author has taken it in its literal and original sense, i.e., to be linked with each other. I have used a word "remain lined up" which may be interpreted both ways. (tr.)

#### Volume 7: Surah An-Nisaa, Verse 1

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

O people! fear your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind) and spread from these two, many men and women; and fear Allah, by Whom you demand one of another (your rights), and (be mindful of) relationship; surely Allah is vigilant over you (1)

#### **COMMENTARY**

The chapter aims - as may be seen from this opening verse - describing matrimonial laws, like the number of wives allowed, the women with whom marriage is forbidden and things like that; together with the laws of inheritance. It also touches some other matters, e.g., some rules of prayer, jihad, evidence, commerce, etc., and some comments on the People of the Book.

The subject matters indicate that it is a Medinite chapter revealed after hijrah. Apparently it was revealed piecemeal, not all at one time, although we find in most of the verses some sort of connection with one another.

This verse (as well as a few following ones which touch the subject of orphans and women) are a

sort of prologue to prepare the minds for the rules of inheritance and marriage. The permissible number of wives that comes in the third verse - although an important subject - has been mentioned here just as a side-line, taking advantage of the talk preceding it, as we shall describe in its Commentary.

QUR'AN: O people! fear your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind) and spread from these two, many men and women:

The verse calls them to the fear of their Lord, to the piety, concerning their selves, as they all are human beings, identical in their humanity; there is no difference among them in this reality; man and woman, big and small, old and young, weak and strong, all are the same in their humanity.

Therefore, man should not oppress woman, nor should a big and strong person trample on his smaller or weaker fellow, neither in their society to which Allah has guided them for completion of their happiness, nor in the laws or rules adopted by them which Allah has inspired them to. They have been given the laws in order that they may live easy life, their existence may be protected and they may continue in this world, as individuals and as members of society;

This explains why the verse is addressed to the "the people", and not only to the believers. It also shows why they have been admonished to fear their "Lord", instead of saying "fear Allah" or using some other divine name, because the condition attributed to them, "Who created you from a single being. . . many men and women", encompasses the whole mankind and is not confined to the believers; and these are the attributes more relevant to Lordship (i.e., concerned with the affairs of managing and perfecting) and not with the attributes of worship or divinity.

The words, "Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind)": "an-Nafs (translated here as "being") according to the dictionary and language denotes the thing itself. They say: "He came to me (nafsuhu - himself); or "He came to me ('aynuhu; - the self same); although the basis for use of these two words, "an-nafs" and "al-'ayn" in this meaning (self; same; quiddity of a thing) is etymologically different.

an-Nafs of a man is that because of which man is man; and it is the combination of soul and body in this life and only the soul in the life of al-Barzakh, as we have explained in the Commentary of the verse: And do not speak of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead; nay, (they are) alive, but you do not perceive (2:154).

The context obviously shows that the words, "a single being", refer to Adam (a.s.) and "its mate" to Adam's wife. These two were the progenitors of this species to which we all belong; and all the human beings return to the same root, to those two parents, as Allah says in other verses too: He has created you from a single being, then made its mate of the same (kind) (39:6); O children of

Adam! let not the Satan cause you to fall into affliction as he expelled your parents from the Garden 17:27); and the Satan is quoted as saying: If Thou shouldst respite me to the Day of Resurrection, I will most certainly cause his progeny to perish except a few (17:62).

Some exegete has opined: The words, "a single being" and "its mate", in this verse refer to human couple of male and female in general, on which human progeny depends. The verse in effect means: 'Allah has created everyone of you from a human father and mother, there is no difference among you in this respect.' Thus it goes parallel to the words of Allah:

O you people! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes that you may recognize each other; surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you who guards himself most (against evil) (49:13). Apparently, it shows that there is no distinction among individuals inasmuch as each has been born of a couple of the same species - from a male and a female.

But this interpretation is patently false. The said exegete has missed the clear difference between this verse of the Chapter of the "The Women" and that of the Chapter 49 (The Chambers). The latter intends to show that all human beings are one inasmuch as all are human beings, and there is no difference among them in this respect because everyone is born of a human father and a human mother; therefore no one should think himself as superior to the others, as there is no distinction or superiority except through piety.

On the other hand, the verse under discussion intends to show their unity in their reality, that all human beings, in spite of their great number and their division between males and females, are the branches of the same root; and although they are now numerous, all of them have sprung from the same source, as the apparent meaning of the phrase, "and spread from these two, many men and women", shows. This idea is lost if we take the words, "a single being", and "its mate", to mean human males and females in general who are the means of producing children. Moreover, this interpretation is not in keeping with the Chapter's main aim, as explained above.

The phrase, "and created its mate of the same (kind)": ar-Raghib has said: "Each member of a pair of opposite sexes in living creatures is called az-zawj (pair, couple, mate); so is a pair in animate and inanimate things, e.g., a pair of socks or shoes; also it is used for anything taken together with another, whether they are similar or opposite to each other use of az-zawjah (wife) (to denote female or the above-mentioned pairs) is bad language."

The clause, "and created its mate of the same", apparently is meant to show that its mate was of the same species - similar in humanity to the (original) "single soul"; and that all these human beings are the offspring of the original couple - the two similar human beings. The preposition min (from, of) therefore signifies origin. The verse has the same import as the others given below:

And Allah has made wives for you from among yourselves, and has given you sons and grandchildren from your wives ... (16:72);

And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion (30:21);

The Originator of the heavens and the earth; He made mates for you from among yourselves, and mates of the cattle too, multiplying you thereby (42 :11);

Of similar connotation is the verse: And of every thing We have created pairs that you may be mindful (51:49).

In spite of this clear meaning, some exegetes have written that the verse tends to show that the mate was derived from that single being and created from one of its parts. These explanation aims at making the verse conform with some traditions, which say that Allah had created Adam's wife from one of his ribs. But the fact remains that the verse does not support this view.

The clause, "and spread from these two, many men and women: "al-Bathth" (to spread, to propagate through dissemination or scattering, etc.); Allah says: So that they shall be as scattered dust (56:6). On this connotation is based the idiom, to spread the sorrow; and that is why sometimes they use the word al-bathth to denote grief and sorrow itself, because it is something which man by nature spreads (to his friends and relatives); Allah says: He said: "I only complain of (baththi) my grief and sorrow to Allah" (12:86).

The verse apparently shows that the present human race originates from Adam and his wife without anyone else having any share in it; Allah says: "and spread from these two, many men and women;" He has not said: 'and spread from these two and some others'. Proceeding from this interpretation we arrive at the following two conclusions:

First: The words, "many men and women", refer to all human beings from their progeny, be they their immediate children or children's children how low so ever. Thus the words mean: and spread you, O people! from these two.

Second: Marriage of the first generation after Adam and his wife (i.e., of their immediate children), was done between brothers and sisters (i.e., Adam's sons married his daughters), because they were the only human males and females at that time. There was no harm in this; because it is a legislative matter and it depends on the discretion of Allah; He may allow it one day and disallow it another day. Allah says:

Judgment is only Allah's (12:40);

And Allah pronounces an order - there is no repelled of His decree (13:41);

. . . and He does not make any one His associate in His judgment (18:26);

And He is Allah, there is no god but He! All praise is due to Him and this (life) and the hereafter, and His is the judgment, and to Him you shall be brought back (28:70).

QUR'AN: and fear Allah by Whom you demand one of another (your rights), and (be mindful of) relationship:

"at-Tasa'ul" (to ask one another); here it refers to people's asking one another in the name of Allah. One says to his companions: I ask you by Allah to do so and so; it is adjuration by Allah. To ask one another by Allah is an allegorical expression alluding to the reverence and love they have for Allah, because man swears by only that which he respects and loves.

As for the word, "and relationship", the conjunctive apparently joins it to the name "Allah" Thus it would mean fear Allah and (be mindful of) relationship. Another explanation joins it to the pronoun "whom" which is in position of accusative; it gets support from Hamzah's recital (wa'l-arhami) whereby the last letter "m" is recited with the vowel point "I" (instead of the "a" which is the more common recital) to make it conform with the joint pronoun "whom" — although the grammarians do not give much credence to such construction. However, in this case the meaning would be as follows: and fear Allah by whom and by the relationship you ask one of another your rights; you say to one another, I ask you by Allah, and I ask you by the relationship.

This was the explanation given by some people, but the context and the Qur'anic style in general does not agree with it: If "relationship" is treated as an independent as-silah (synthetic relative clause) of the relative pronoun al-ladhi (he who, that which), then the reconstructed sentence will be as follows: and fear Allah, He who, by relationship you ask one of another; this construction omits the pronoun "by whom", which is not correct. And if the whole phrase beginning with "Allah" is taken together as one as-silah, (fear Allah by whom and by the relationship) then it would make relationship equal to Allah in majesty and grandeur, and it is totally against the Qur'anic manners.

Of course, there is no harm if one is told to fear Allah and be mindful of relationship in the same breath, because the preceding sentence has clearly shown the relationships as a creation of Allah. Also, at-taqwa (guarding against, piety, fear) has also been attributed in divine speech to others than Allah. For example:



And fear an affliction which may not smite those of you in particular who are unjust (8:25);

And fear the day in which you shall be returned to Allah (2:281);

And guard yourselves against the fire, which has been prepared for the unbelievers (3:131).

In any case, this section of the speech coming after the first part (O people! fear. . . and women) is a sort of particularization after generalization, a restriction after liberalization. The first part in effect says: Fear Allah because He is your Lord and because He has created and made you, O people! from one root that is preserved in your being, from one substance that is preserved and propagated through your propagation; and it is the species known as humanity.

On the other hand, the second part implies as follows: Fear Allah because you believe in His majesty and Power (and it is an aspect of His Lordship, and one of its concomitants); and remain mindful of the unity of relationship which He has created in you (and relationship is a branch of unity and an aspect of the essence that permeates all the human beings).

It shows why the order to fear Allah has been repeated in the second sentence. The second sentence itself is a repetition of the first with an additional import: It throws full light on the importance of relationship.

"ar-Rihm" means uterus, womb, the internal reproductive organ of a woman, whose function is to develop the sperm into a child. Then they began using it for relationship, because of the association between a receptacle and its content, as the relatives issue forth from the same womb. ar-Rihm therefore is relative, plural "al-arham" (relatives).

The Qur'an has given full importance to relationship as it has done to the community and nation. Relationship is a small society, while nation is a big one. The Qur'an has concerned itself with the affairs of society, and has counted it as a reality having its own special characteristics and effects. Likewise, it has concerned itself with the affairs of individual man, and has counted him as a reality having its own characteristics and effects which spring from his existence. Allah says:

And He it is Who has made two seas to flow freely, the one sweet that subdues thirst by its sweetness, and the other salt that burns by its sweetness; and between the two He has made a barrier and inviolable obstruction. And He it is Who has created man from the water, then He has made for him blood-relationship and marriage-relationship, and your Lord is powerful (25:53-54);

. . . and made you nations and tribes that you may recognize each other... (49:13);

. . . and the possessors of relationship have the better claim in the ordinance of Allah to

inheritance . . . (33:6);

But if you held command, you were sure to make mischief in the land and cut off the ties of kinship (47:22);

And let those fear who, should they leave behind them weakly offspring, would fear on their account . . . (4:9).

There are many other verses of the same import.

QUR'AN: surely Allah is vigilant over you:

"ar-Raqib" (guard; preserve); al-muraqabah (to watch; to keep an eye on); may be it is derived from ar-raqabah (neck) because they used to watch the necks of their slaves. Or it may be based on the fact that a watcher or guard usually stretches his neck for looking towards the object he is watching or guarding. However, this word does not imply mere watching or guarding; it means watching over activities of the watched person - all his acts of commission and omission - in order to reform the defects and make up the deficiencies, or just to keep the record; in other words, it implies guarding a thing with special concern towards it in knowledge and observation. That is why it is used for vigilance, observation, supervision, guarding, awaiting and controlling. Allah is called ar-Raqib because He preserves the actions of the people in order to give them their recompense. He says:

. . . and your Lord is the Preserver of all things (34:21);

. . . Allah watches over them, and you have no charge over them (42:6).

Therefore your Lord let fall upon them the whip of chastisement. Most surely your Lord is on watch (89:13-14).

Look at the command of being mindful of humanity's unity (which pervades each and every human being) and of preserving its characteristics; and note that this order is followed by the reminder that Allah watches everything. Then you will appreciate the great threat it poses, and the ominous warning it gives to the transgressors. Also, if you ponder on this reality, you will realize that all the verses dealing with the topics of transgressing the limit, oppressing the people, doing mischief in the land, exceeding the bounds and things like that (and which generally have prescribed such harsh and painful chastisement for the offenders) have very strong connection with the divine purpose, i.e., protecting the humanity's unity from disorder, decline and fall.

## Volume 7: Surah An-Nisaa, Verses 2-6

And give to the orphans their property, and do not substitute worthless (things) for (their) good (ones), and do not devour their property (as an addition) to your own property; this is surely a great crime (2). And if you fear that you can not act equitable towards orphans, then marry such (other) women as seem good to you, two and three and four; but if you fear that you will not do justice (between them), then (marry) only one or what your right hands possess; this is nearer that you may not deviate from the right course (3). And give women their dowries as free gift but if they of themselves be pleased to give up to you a portion of it, then eat it with enjoyment (and with) wholesome (result) (4). And do not give away your property which Allah has made for you a (means of) support to the weak of understanding, and maintain them out of it, and clothe them and speak to them with kind words (5). And test the orphans until they reach (age of) marriage, then if you find in them maturity of intellect, make over to them their property, and do not consume it extravagantly and hastily, lest they attain to full age; and whoever is rich, let him abstain altogether, and whoever is poor, let him eat reasonably; then when you make over to them their property, call witnesses in their presence; and Allah is enough as a Reckoner (6).

### GENERAL COMMENT

The verses are part of the prologue, which began with the first verse. The aim is to pave the way for the laws of inheritance and basic rules of marriage like the number of wives allowed and the women within prohibited degree. These two are among the greatest and most important laws governing human society; and they have profound effect on its formation and continuation. Matrimony controls affinity and genealogy of society members, and deeply affects other constituent factors. Inheritance regulates the distribution of wealth existing in the world - the factor on which a society depends for its life and continuity.

As a sine qua non the chapter prohibits fornication and illicit sexual relations, and forbids devouring others' property unlawfully - except that it is a trade deal with the parties' consent. In this way two fundamental principles have been established for regulating the two most important aspects of society, i.e., the subjects of affinity and property.

We may now understand why it was necessary to prepare the minds before promulgating the laws for these subjects which concerned the whole society and which were enmeshed with the roots of the social system. It is really not an easy thing to divert the people from the social norms

which they are accustomed to and which have nurtured their ideas and ideals; to make them discard the systems which they grew up believing in, and which the generations of ancestors had sanctified by faithful adherence; to cast off the customs and traditions which had molded their character and outlook.

It was in this difficult situation that the laws revealed at the beginning of this chapter were promulgated. It may easily be appreciated if we look just briefly at the world's situation at that time, and particularly at the condition of Arabia - the place of the revelation of the Qur'an and rise of Islam. Also, it will make it clear why the Qur'an was sent down piecemeal, and why the Islamic laws were promulgated gradually.

### **COMMENTARY**

QUR'AN: And give to the orphans their property . . . a great crime:

It is an order to return to the orphans their property, and it paves the way for the next two sentences (and do not substitute. . . and do not devour. . .); or the latter two serve as explanation of the former. But as the reason given at the end (this is surely a great crime) refers to the latter two or the last one sentence, it supports the view that the first sentence is put here as a prologue to the next two.

The main prohibition that one should not use an orphan's property in a manner detrimental to his interest, in itself prepares the ground for the soon-coming laws of inheritance, and of the marriage described in the next verse.

The words, "and do not substitute worthless for good", mean: Do not substitute your worthless things for their good ones; if there is any good property belonging to them, you should not keep it for yourself returning to them some worthless property of yours in exchange. Some people have explained it as follows: Do not substitute unlawful things for lawful ones. But the former meaning is more obvious, because apparently the two sentences (do not substitute. . . , and do not devour. . .) describe a particular type of unlawful management, and the first sentence (And give the orphans. . .) paves the way for both. In the last clause, "this is surely a great crime ", al-hub (sin; crime) is infinitive verb and also verbal noun.

QUR'AN: And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such (other) women as seem good to you:

We have mentioned previously that there was always a great number of orphans among the Arabs of the era of ignorance— who were seldom free from war, fighting, murder and forays, and among whom death by killing was a very common occurrence. Usually, the leaders of tribes and

people of power and influence took the orphan girls (with properties) as wives; they devoured their (i.e., the orphans') properties with their own and then behaved with them unjustly. Often they turned them out after swallowing their property; the helpless girls became poverty stricken destitute; neither they had any money to live on, nor was there anyone willing to marry and maintain them. The Qur'an has reproached them very severely for this evil habit and disgusting injustice, and prohibited very strongly doing any injustice to orphans or devouring their property. For example, Allah says:

(As for) those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies and soon they shall enter burning fire (4:10).

And give to the orphans their property, and do not substitute worthless (things) for (their) good (ones), and do not devour their property (as an addition) to your own property; this is surely a great crime (4:2).

As a result, the Muslims reportedly became afraid for their own souls and were so panic-stricken that they turned out the orphans from their own homes in apprehension, lest they inadvertently do something wrong with those orphans' property or fail to give them their just dues. If someone kept an orphan with him, he set apart the orphan's share in food and drink; if the orphan could not finish it, nobody else would touch it — it remained as it was until it was spoiled.

It caused difficulties for the people; and they complained to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) asking for his guidance. Then Allah revealed: And they ask you concerning the orphans. Say: "To set right for them (their affairs) is good; and if you mingle with them, they are your brethren; and Allah knows the mischief-maker from the well doer; and if Allah had willed, He would certainly have made it harder for you; surely Allah is Mighty, Wise" (2:220). Thus, Allah allowed them to give shelter to orphans and to keep them with themselves for looking after their affairs, and to mingle with them because they were their brethren. In this way, their difficulties were removed and their worries dispelled.

When you ponder on this fact, and then look at the verse under discussion (And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such (other) women as seem good to you. . .) - and remember that it comes after the verse, "And give to the orphans their property. . ." - it will be clear to you that the verse raises the prohibition a degree higher. Its connotation will be as follows - and Allah knows better: Be careful regarding the orphans and do not substitute your bad or worthless property with their good ones; nor should you devour their property with your own; so much so that if you are afraid that you would not be able to treat the orphan girls equitably and therefore you do not like to take them as your wives, then better do not marry them; instead you should marry other such women as seem good to you - two, three or four.

The conditional sentence (And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such (other) women as seem good to you. . .), actually means: If you do not like to marry the orphan girls because you fear that you cannot act equitably towards them, then do not marry them, and marry such women as seem good to you. Obviously the clause, "then marry . . ." is substitute of the real al-jaza' (second construct of the conditional sentence), (i.e., then do not marry the orphans);

the clause, "such women as seem good to you ", makes further description (i.e., women other than the orphans) unnecessary. The verse does not say, those women who seem good to you; instead it says: such women as seem good to you; it is because it points to the number mentioned later: two and three and four. The verse begins with the clause, "if you fear that you cannot act equitably ", while it actually means, if you do not like to marry the orphans because of fear; thus it has allegorically put the cause in place of the effect, pointing to the deleted effect later where it says: "as seem good to you".

Many other things have been written in explanation of this verse, as may be seen in bigger exegeses. They are in short as follows:

- 1.The Arabs used to marry four, five or more wives; their thinking was as follows: Why should I not marry as has Mr. X done? When his own property was finished, he spent the property of orphans under his care. Therefore, Allah forbade them to marry more than four wives, so that they should not be compelled by circumstances to unjustly use the orphans' property.
- 2.They were strictly honest in matters affecting the orphans, but did not observe the same standard in affairs of women; so they married numerous wives without maintaining equity and justice. Therefore, Allah said: If you are afraid about orphans, you should likewise be careful about women; you should marry only one or up to four.
- 3.They were reluctant to accept guardianship of orphans or to eat their property. So Allah said: If you are reluctant of these things, you should also desist from fornication; instead you should marry such women as seem good to you.
- 4.If you fear that you cannot act equitably towards the orphans brought up under your care, then marry other lawful women from the orphans among your relatives, two and three and four.
- 5.If you are reluctant of eating together with orphans, then likewise avoid marrying more than one wife; if you are afraid of not acting equitably with them, do not marry except her whom you can treat with justice and equity.

These were the explanations given by them. But it is clear that none of them properly fits the

wordings of the verse. Therefore the only interpretation is the one we have written.

QUR'AN: two and three and four:

the paradigms, maf'al and fu'al , when applied to numbers, signify repetition of the root word; thus the clause, mathna wa thulatha wa ruba'a, means, two two and three three and four four (or twos, threes and fours). The verse is addressed to all individuals, and the numbers have been separated by "and " which implies choice; these factors together show that every believer has a right to marry two wives, or three, or four. When looked at together, they would be grouped as twos, threes and fours.

The above explanation, coupled with the next clause, but if you fear that you will not do justice (between them) then (marry) only one or what your right hands possess, together with the following verse, And all married women. . .(4:247), disproves the idea that the verse allows to marry two, three or four wives in one contract of marriage; or that it permits to marry two together, then two together and so on, and likewise three or four together, then other three or four together; or that it approves polyandry — marriage of several men with one woman. These are ideas, which the verse does not tolerate at all.

Apart from that, it is a self-evident truth that Islam does not allow a man to gather more than four wives at a time, or a woman to have more than one husband at a time.

Likewise, there is no room for the hypothesis that the word, "and", between the numbers, is for conjunction, and that the verse accordingly allows marrying nine (i.e., 2 + 3 + 4) wives at a time. Majma'u'l-bayan says as follows: Using the total in this manner is not a possibility at all. If someone says, "The people entered the town in twos, threes and fours", does not mean the total of these numbers — in other words, it does not imply that they entered in-groups of nine. Moreover, there is a proper word, "nine", to denote that number; so leaving the correct word and changing it to 'two and three and four', shows an incapability of proper expression — Too exalted and sanctified is His speech from such defects.

QUR'AN: but if you fear that you will not do justice (between them) then (marry) only one:

That is, marry only one, not more. Allah has made this order conditional on fear, not on knowledge, because knowledge in such matters is usually difficult to achieve, especially when thought is clouded by temptation; the underlying benefit would be lost if the rule were made dependent on knowledge.

QUR'AN: or what your right hands possess:

That is, slave-girls. If a man is afraid that he will not do justice between many wives, then he should marry only one; and if he wants more, then he should take slave-girls, because they are not entitled to division of nights.

Obviously, the provision of the alternative — taking the slave girls — does not mean that one may misbehave with, or do injustice to them; Allah does not like the unjust, nor is He unjust to His servants. It only means that it is easier to maintain justice with them because they are not included in the rule of division of nights. This very reason shows that this clause refers to taking, and living with them by virtue of possession, not by marriage; the matter of marrying them has been described later in the verse: And whoever among you has not within his power ample means to marry free believing women, then (he may marry) of those whom your right hands possess from among your believing maidens. . . (4:25).

QUR'AN: this is nearer, that you may not deviate from the right course:

"al-Awl" (to deviate from the right course). The law as ordained above brings you nearer to the point whence you shall not deviate from justice or transgress the women's rights.

Someone has written that al-'awl means burden; but it is a far-fetched interpretation, both in word and in meaning. This sentence — which mentions the underlying reason of this legislation - proves that the foundation of the marriage laws is laid on justice and equity as well as on rejection of oppression and usurpation of rights.

QUR'AN: And give women their dowries as a free gift. . . with enjoyment (and with) wholesome (result):

as-Saduqah, as-sadaqah, as-sadaq and as-sidaq, all mean dowry; an-nihlah (gift, a thing given freely without bargaining). The possessive construction, "their dowries", shows that the order to give dowry to woman is based on the usage prevalent among the people: it was customary in marriage to reserve for the wife some property or anything of value as her dowry. Seemingly it has the same position vis-à-vis the conjugal relationship as the price does vis-à-vis the commodity sold; and as we shall describe in the forthcoming Academic discourse, customarily it is the man who proposes and asks for marriage as a buyer brings the price to the seller and receives the purchased item. In any case, the verse endorses this prevalent custom.

It was possible to think that the husband was not allowed to use the dowry at all — even if the wife was pleased with it. Probably it was to remove that possible misunderstanding that the conditional clause was added: "but if they of themselves be pleased to give up to you a portion of it, then eat it with enjoyment (and with) wholesome (result)." The imperative, "eat it", is qualified with the words, 'with enjoyment and with wholesome result.' It puts emphasis on the previous



sentence containing basic rule and also shows that the order is elective, not compulsory.

al-Hana' (being easily digested, being agreeable); it is used for food. al-Mari, is derived from ar-riyy (quenching of thirst); it has some connotation regarding drinks as al-hand' does about food, but with one difference: al-Hana' may be used for food and drink both; but when the combined phrase, han`an mari`an is used, the former word refers exclusively to food and the latter to drink.

QUR'AN: And do not give away your property which Allah has made for you a (means of) support to the weak of understanding:

"as-Safah " (feeble-mindedness; weakness or slightness of understanding). Probably, its basic meaning was lightness of a thing which by nature should not be light; thus they say: az-Zamamu 's-saf'ih (a rein or halter that shakes too much); thawb safih (a badly-woven cloth); now it is mostly used for lightness of soul, and its implication varies with context; in worldly affairs, as-safih means feeble-minded, weak of understanding; in religious context, it means a dissolute person, one who does not follow religious commandments; and so on.

It is obvious from the verse that one should not spend too much of feeble-minded persons, should not give them more than is needed for their necessary expenses. But the context — the verse is among the ones dealing with orphans' property which is managed and looked after by guardians — provides a definite association that "the weak of understanding" refers to the orphans of immature mind; and that "your property " actually means the orphans' property, although it has been ascribed to the guardians because of a certain consideration; this explanation is further supported by the clause, "and maintain them out of it, and clothe them." If one insists on interpreting the word, "the weak of understanding", in general terms, then it should be generalized to include orphans and non-orphans both. Yet the former meaning carries more weight.

In any case, if the word refers to the orphans of feeble understanding, then "your property" means the orphans' property; it has been ascribed to the guardians — whom the verse addresses — keeping in view the fact that all the property and riches found in the world are for the whole mankind. Some individuals keep some portions of these riches, and others some other portions; it is done for general good, on which is based the principle of ownership and exclusive possessive relationship.

Accordingly, it is necessary for people to grasp this reality and appreciate that they are all members of a single society, and the whole property belongs to the whole society. Consequently, it is each one's responsibility to protect and preserve it, one should not let it be wasted or squandered by people of weak understanding, nor should it be left under the management of such persons (like minor children or insane people) as are not capable of administering it properly.

So this is the significance of the possessive case here; it is not unlike the verse: And whoever among you has not within his power ample means to marry free believing women, then (he may marry) of those whom your right hands possess from among your believing maidens (4:25), as it is known that the phrase, "your believing maidens", does not refer to the slave-girls owned by the one who wants to marry them.

The verse contains a general rule ordained for the whole society. The society is a single entity — or let us say a (legal) personality — that owns all the riches which Allah has given it for its livelihood, and with which He has strengthened it. Accordingly, it is the society's responsibility to manage it and to keep it in good order; it should invest it in profitable ventures and use the profit for one's sustenance on a medium scale; it is also obliged to protect it from waste and loss.

This basic principle gives rise to the rule that the guardians are obliged to look after, and manage, the affairs of the people of weak understanding; they should not hand over their wards' property to them, lest they waste it through mismanagement. The guardians must hold back the property, manage it profitably and let it grow through earning, trades and profit-sharing; they should maintain those feeble-minded wards with its profit and growth - not with its capital. This law has been laid down, so that the capital is not decreased little by little until a time comes when the ward is left in wretched poverty without any means of livelihood.

It appears from the above explanation that the clause, "and maintain them out of it and clothe them", implies that a feebleminded ward should be maintained from the growth and profit of the capital, not from the capital itself. He should not be allowed to start eating from the capital, keeping it idle without circulation, lest it is eaten up completely. As az-Zamakhshari has said, it was to show this fine point that Allah has said, "out of it", and not, 'from it'.

Also it is not unreasonable to infer from the verse the principle of general guardianship of the wards, that is, Allah is not pleased that the affairs of such wards be neglected; nay! the Islamic society is obliged to look after their affairs: If there is any guardian in the family, like the father and paternal grandfather, he will be his guardian and will manage his affairs; otherwise the responsibility falls on the Islamic government, and lastly on other believers, to look after his affairs - detailed rules of which are given in the books of jurisprudence.

QUR'AN: and maintain them out of it, and clothe them and speak to them with kind words:

We have fully explained the meaning of sustenance or maintenance under the verse: and Thou givest sustenance to whom Thou pleases", without measure (3:27).

The clause, "and maintain them out of it and clothe them", has the same significance here as does the one in 2:233: and their maintenance and their clothing must be borne by the father. The

maintenance refers to the food that nourishes man; and clothing is the dress that protects him from heat and cold. But the phrase, "maintenance and clothing", as used in the Qur'anic language (as in our own) metaphorically points to all the things that together fulfill man's material needs in life; it thus covers all necessities of life including house and other such things.

It is not unlike the word, eating, which has a particular meaning, yet metaphorically refers to the use (in general), as the Qur'an says: "but if they of themselves be pleased to give up to you a portion of it, then eat it with enjoyment (and with) wholesome (result). "

QUR'AN: and speak to them with kind words:

It is an ethical guidance for improving the standard of guardianship. The wards may be weak of understanding who are prevented from managing their own properties, yet they are neither dumb animals nor grazing cattle; they are human beings, and they should be treated as such; they should be spoken to in good manner, not harshly or insultingly; and dealt with, dignity.

Apparently it is possible to take this clause as a metaphorical expression for good dealing and commendable social intercourse — not objectionable one, as was explained under the verse: . . . and speak to men good (words) . . . (2:83).

QUR'AN: And test the orphans until they reach (age of) marriage; then if you find in them maturity of intellect, make over to them their property: "al-Ibtala' " (to test); reaching age of marriage, thus it contains a rational allegory; al-'inas (to see, to find); the word has a connotation of "friendliness" and "geniality" because its root is al-uns (friendly atmosphere); ar-rushd (translated here as maturity of intellect) is opposite of al-ghayy and means to find way to the goals of life. Handing over to the orphans their property means to give it back to them, into their possession; (the verb used is ad-daf (to repulse, to push away); it is as though the guardian pushes the property away from himself; thus it is in spite of its triteness, a very fine metaphor.

The clause, "until they reach (age of) marriage", is related to the verb, "test"; it thus shows that the testing should be a continuous exercise. The guardian should start testing the orphan as soon as he shows some discretion and appears ready for such tests, it should continue until he reaches marriageable age and becomes a "man". The order by nature demands this continual process, because one cannot find out whether the child has attained maturity of intellect just by testing him once or twice; the test must be repeated again and again until the guardian finds out the orphan's maturity of mind and it becomes a part of his nature until he reaches puberty and then the marriageable age.

The words, "then if you find in them maturity of intellect", branches from the imperative verb, "And test"; and the meaning is as follows: Test them, and if you find in them maturity of intellect,

hand over their property to them. The wording shows that the orphan's reaching the age of marriage is the basis of returning his property to him and of bestowing on him the power to manage his estate independently. Maturity of intellect is the necessary condition for bestowal of authority of independent management.

Islam has laid down two different standards regarding al-bulugh (majority, adulthood) for two different sets of responsibilities: As for the acts of worship and matters like penal code the majority begins on reaching a prescribed age, but for financial affairs, acknowledgements and other such dealings (details of which are given in the books of jurisprudence) mere attainment of age is not enough, he must also achieve maturity of intellect.

This differentiation throws light on the highest refinement and sophistication, which Islam has maintained in its legislative programs. Had it disregarded the maturity of intellect in financial and similar dealings, the social life would have suffered disorder and chaos—as far as orphans and other wards were concerned. Had they been given power (just on reaching a certain age) to independently manage their finance or to make agreements or acknowledgments, etc.; it would have given a chance to mischief-makers to mislead and deceive them. Cunning hoaxes could have defrauded them of all their means of livelihood, with their smooth talks, false promises and swindling deals.

Therefore, it was essential to impose the condition of maturity of intellect in such matters. But obviously there was no need to put this condition in the things like acts of worship, etc.; also it was not necessary in such affairs as penal code. One does not need sharp mind or maturity of intellect to understand and perceive the evil of these crimes and sins or to realize that one should desist from them. Man understands such things long before attaining maturity of intellect, and one finds no difference, in these matters, between the perception gained before maturity of intellect and that achieved afterwards.

QUR'AN: and do not consume it extravagantly and hastily, lest they attain to full age . . . and Allah is enough as a Reckoned:

"al-Israf" (extravagance, immoderateness) is exceeding the medium course of action. al-Badar (hurry, haste). The clause, "and hastily, lest they attain to full age ", means: and hastily fearing that they would grow up and then would not allow you to consume their property. (The phrase, "lest they attain", begins in Arabic with an (that) and has no particle of negation; thus it may also be translated, 'that they attain'). Omission of particle of negation before an or in (that) is consistent with norms of language, as grammarians have said: Allah says: Allah makes clear to you, lest you err (4:176), i.e., fearing that you would err.

The two phrases, "extravagantly" and "hastily; lest they attain. . .", have been put parallel to each

other. This setting points to their difference.

Consuming the orphans' property extravagantly refers to the situation when the guardian eats it without needing or deserving it, unjustly and carelessly. Consuming it hastily, to the condition where the guardian takes from the estate only the normal and usual fee for his services, but with an eye on the possibility that the orphan might stop it when he grows up.

All such consumption's are forbidden, except when the guardian is poor and in such a position that either he earns his livelihood somewhere else or looks after the orphan's affairs and meets his necessities of life from his ward's estate. It would be just like a worker in trade or construction, etc. taking his wages from his employer. It is this aspect which Allah mentions in the sentence: "and whoever is rich" (i.e., is not in need of taking from the orphan's property for his livelihood). "let him abstain altogether" (i.e., he should follow and adhere to the path of abstinence and continence, and should not take anything from the orphan), "and whoever is poor, let him eat reasonably".

An exegete has opined that it means that the poor guardian should eat as usual from his own property, not from that of the orphan. But if that was what Allah had intended to say, then why did He bring in the difference between rich and poor?

The words, "then when you make over to them their property, call witnesses in their presence; and Allah is enough as a Reckoned", ordain the law to call witnesses at the time of handing over the estate to the wards. It is done to affect the transition in proper way and to remove the danger of dispute and controversy (in future); lest the orphan — after attaining maturity and receiving the property — makes claims against the guardian. The verse ends on the words, "and Allah is enough as a Reckoned"; and it relates the order to its original and basic source —the fountainhead of every rule from Allah's names and attributes.

Allah is the Reckoned; He would not leave His servants' affairs without meticulously accurate reckoning — and that is His clear legislation. Also the clause completes the Islamic training, because Islam aims at training the people on the basis of monotheism. Although calling the witnesses removes strife and difference in most of the cases, yet sometimes it fails to do so, either because the witnesses deviate from justice or because of other factors. Islam reminds the parties that the spiritual reason (of this law), which is also higher and stronger, is the fear of Allah Who is enough as a Reckoned. There would never be any discord and difference, if the guardian, the witnesses and the orphan (who is receiving the property) keep this reality before their eyes.

Look at these two verses and see how singularly and marvelously they explain the subject in such a lovely style:

First, they give basic rules of guardianship over orphans' and other wards' properties; then they explain other important factors: how the property should be taken in trust and protected, how it should be managed to let it grow and bring in profits, how it should be returned to the ward; when the orphans or other wards should be put under guardianship and when should they be given independent authority to manage their affairs.

All this has been reinforced by describing its underlying common benefit, i.e.; all property belongs to Allah Who has made it a means of support for mankind — as we have explained above.

Second, they point to the basic ethical value which man is expected to attain through these laws; it is given by Allah in these words: "and speak to them with kind words".

Third, they show that all these rules are based on the foundation of monotheism. This factor affects and governs all practical laws and ethical values; and its good influence remains effective always and everywhere — even when practical laws and ethical values are enfeebled and their hold on minds and hearts loosened. This reality is described in the last clause, "and Allah is enough as a Reckoned"

## **TRADITIONS**

Ibn Abi Hatim has narrated from Sa'id ibn Jubayr (about the verse, And give to the orphans their . . .) that he said: "A man from (the tribe of) Ghatfan had with him a great wealth of an orphan nephew of his. When the orphan attained majority, he demanded his property, but (the uncle) held it back from him. So he (the orphan) sued him before the Prophet; then the verse was revealed: And give to the orphans their property. . ." (ad-Durru 'l-manthur)

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "It is not lawful for man's water to flow into more than four wombs of free women." (at-Tafsir, al-'Ayyashi ) The same Imam said: "When a man has gathered four (wives) and divorces one of them, then he should not marry the fifth until the waiting period of the woman he has divorced comes to an end." (al-Kafi ) The author says: There are many traditions on this subject.

It is narrated from Muhammad ibn Sinan that ar-Rida (a.s.) wrote to him inter alia in reply to his questions: "The reason, why man has right to marry four women and why woman is forbidden to marry more than one, is that when a man marries four women, the child would be affiliated to him; but if a woman had two or more husbands, it would not be known to whom the child belonged, because all of them (i.e., the husbands) would be sharing her marriage, and this would lead to perversion in relationship, inheritance and identification." Muhammad ibn Sinan said: "One of the reasons of free women (sic) and permission of four women to one man is that they are more (in number) than men. So when (Allah) saw it — and Allah knows more — He said: 'then

marry such (other) women as seem good to you, two and three and four.' So this is the determination which Allah has done, to give amplitude to rich and poor, so that man may marry according to his ability. . . " ( 'ilalu 'sh-shara 'i')

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said inter alia in a hadith: "And jealousy is (a characteristic) of men; and for this reason a woman is forbidden (all men) except her husband, and man is allowed four (wives); because Allah is too gracious to afflict them with jealousy and then allow the man to have three (other wives) with her." (al-kafi)

The author says: It may be explained as follows: Jealousy, in the meaning of sense of honor, is a commendable characteristic and noble instinct; it changes equilibrium of man's nature, and it is this emotional agitation that exhorts him to defend what he reveres or holds dear, be it religion, honor or dignity, and provokes him to take revenge on anybody who violates its sanctity. This trait is found — more or less — in every human being, because it is a part of human nature.

Now, Islam is a natural religion. It looks at all the natural instincts and traits and moderates them, restricting them to what is good for human life, and omitting that which is not necessary, e.g., the defective and imperfect ways of obtaining or hoarding the wealth, or matters connected with food and drink, clothes and spouses, and so on.

Now suppose that Allah allowed man to marry three more wives in addition to the one he had before — and we know that this religion pays full attention to the dictates of nature. It follows that what is seen of a woman's reaction when her husband brings another wife, and the change that occurs in her attitude towards her husband, is in fact envy, not jealousy. Further explanation will be given in the forthcoming discourse on polygamy, to show that this reaction of theirs is not a part of their nature, it is an extraneous accident.

Zurarah narrates from as-Sadiq (a.s.) that he said: "The man shall not take back whatever he gives in gift to his wife, nor shall she do so regarding whatever she gifts to her husband—whether she was compensated for it or not. Does not Allah, the Blessed, the High, say: 'and it is not lawful for you to take any part of what you have given them' (2: 229)? Again He says: 'but if they of themselves be pleased to give up to you a portion of it, then eat it with enjoyment (and with) wholesome (result)'; and it is applicable to dowry and gift (both)." (al-Kafi)

'Abdullah ibn al-Qaddah narrates from Abu 'Abdillah (a.s.) who narrates from his Father (a.s.) that he said: "A man came to the Leader of the faithful (a.s.) and said: 'O Commander of the faithful! I have got stomach pain.' The Commander of the faithful (a.s.) asked him: 'Do you have a wife? He said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Ask her to give you in gift something from her property which she be pleased to give you; then buy with it some honey; then pour on it some rainwater and drink it.

Because I have heard Allah saying in His Book: "And We send down from the cloud water abounding in good. . ." (50:9); and He has said: "There comes forth from within it (i.e., the bee) a beverage of many colors, in which there is healing for men" (16:69); and He says: "but if they of themselves be pleased to give up to you a portion of it, then eat it with enjoyment (and with) wholesome (result)". You will be cured, God willing." (The Imam, a.s.) said: "So he did it and was cured." (at-Tafsir, al-'Ayyashi)

The author says: Also as-Suyuti has narrated it in ad-Durru 'l-manthur from 'Abd ibn Humayd, Ibn al-Mundhir and Ibn Abi Hatim from the Imam (a.s.). It is a fine inference, and is based on extension of meaning. There are many traditions, based on the same principle, narrated from the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayts (a.s.), some of which shall be quoted in appropriate places.

al-Baqir (a.s.) said: "When I tell you something, ask me (where it is) in the Book of Allah." Then he said in one of his talks: "Verily the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) has forbidden idle talk, spoiling of property and asking too many questions." He was asked: "Where is it in the Book of Allah? O Son of the Messenger 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 (14:114); 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'; and He has said: 'do not put questions about things which if declared to you, may trouble you' (5:101)." (al-Kafi)

Yunus ibn Ya'qub said that he asked Abu 'Abdillah (a.s.) about the words of Allah, And do not give away your property . . . to the weak of understanding'; he said: "Whom you do not trust." (at-Tafsir, al-'Ayyashi)

Ibrahim ibn 'Abdu 'l-Hamid said that he asked the same Imam (a.s.) about the same verse, and he said: "Anyone who drinks intoxicant is weak of understanding." (ibid).

'Ali ibn Ab; Hamzah narrates from Abu 'Abdillah (a.s.). He says: "I asked him about the verse, And do not give your property... He replied: 'They are the orphans; do not give them their property until you recognize maturity of intellect in them.' So I said: 'Then how will their property become our property?' He said: 'If you are their heirs.' " (ibid).

al-Baqir (a.s.) said about this verse: "So the weak of understanding are the woman and child. When a man knows that his woman is foolish and spoils (the property), and his child is foolish and spoils (the property), he should not give any of them control of his property which Allah has made for him a support - i.e., a means of livelihood . . ." (at-Tafsir, al-Qummi).

The author says: There are many traditions on this subject, and they support what we have described earlier that as-safah has a wide range of meaning, having different grades, like the weak



of understanding who is prevented by law to administer his estate, a child before attaining maturity of intellect, a woman who is fond of amusement and fantasy, one who drinks intoxicants, and generally the one whom you do not trust. The implications of giving the property will change with change of context, and so will do the possessive case of "your property"; you should apply the meanings accordingly.

The Imam's words in the tradition of Ibn Abi Hamzah, "If you are their heirs ", point to the reality we had mentioned earlier that all the property primarily belongs to the whole society, and then it comes to individuals and particular interests secondarily; it is because the whole society primarily shares the property that it is transferred from one person to another.

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Orphan-hood of an orphan ends with nocturnal discharge and that is his maturity; and if he got nocturnal discharge, but no maturity of intellect was found in him — he was foolish or weak — then his guardian should hold back his property from him. " (Man la yahduruh 'l -faqih )

The same book narrates from the same Imam (a.s.) about the verse, And test the orphans. . . , that he said: "To find the maturity of intellect is protection of property."

The author says: We have described earlier how the verse points to this meaning.

The same Imam (a.s.) said about the verse, and whoever is poor, let him eat reasonably: "He is the man who holds back himself from (earning his) livelihood; there is no harm (for him) in eating (from his ward's property) reasonably, if he makes (things) better for them (i.e., the wards); but if the property is small then he should not eat anything from it." (Tahdhibu 'l-ahkam )

Ahmad, Abu Dawud, an-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah, Ibn Abi Hatim and an-Nahhas (in his an-Nasikh) have narrated from Ibn 'Umar that he said: "A man asked the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) and said: 'I do not have any property, and I have an orphan (under my guardianship).' (The Prophet) said: 'Eat from the property of your orphan, (but) not extravagantly nor wastefully; neither consolidating (your) property, nor protecting your property with his property.' " (ad-Durru 'l -manthur )

The author says: There are numerous traditions of this theme from the Ahlu 'l-bayts (a.s.) and others. There are relevant laws of jurisprudence, and also traditions related to them. Anyone, who wants them, should look in the collections of traditions and books of jurisprudence. Rifa'ah narrates from the Imam (a.s.) about the verse, . . . let him eat reasonably, that he said: "My father used to say that it was abrogated." (at-Tafsir, al-'Ayyashi)

Abu Dawud and an-Nahhas (both in an-Naisikh ) and Ibn al-Mundhir have narrated through the chain of 'Ata' from Ibn 'Abbas about the verse, and whoever is poor, let him eat reasonably, that

he said: "It has been abrogated by (the verse), (As for) those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies." (ad-Durru 'l-manthur)

The author says: The claim that this verse was abrogated does not agree with the criteria of abrogation. No verse in the Qur'an could stand vis-à-vis this verse in the way an abrogating verse does with the abrogated one. The verse, (As for) those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies, does not go against the theme of this verse, because the eating allowed in this verse is conditional to being "reasonable", while the eating forbidden in the other verse is conditional to being unjust; and there is no contradiction between permission to eat reasonably and prohibition to eat unjustly. Therefore, the truth is that the verse is not abrogated, and the two above-mentioned traditions are not in agreement with the Qur'an - it is apart from their weakness.

'Abdullah ibn al-Mughirah narrates from Ja'far ibn Muhammad (peace be on them both) about the words of Allah, then if you find in them maturity of intellect, make over to them their property, that he said: "If you see them loving the progeny of Muhammad, then raise them up in grade." (at-Tafsir, al-'Ayyashi)

The author says: It is based on the flow of the Qur'an, of the esoteric meaning of the Book. The Imams of the religion are the fathers of the believers; and the believers, when they are unable to reach the Imams, are orphans of the knowledge. Therefore, if their affiliation to the Ahlu 'l- bayt is established by their love, they should be raised in status and degree by teaching them true knowledge - which is the inheritance of their fathers.

#### Volume 7: Surah An-Nisaa, Verses 7-10

Men shall have a share of what the parents and the near relatives leave, and women shall have a share of what the parents and the near relatives leave, whether there is little or much of it; a decreed share (7). When there are present at the division the relatives and the orphans and the needy, give them (something) out of it and speak to them kind words (8). And let those fear who, should they leave behind them weakly offspring, would fear on their account; so let them fear Allah, and let them speak right words (9). (As for) those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies and soon they shall enter burning fire (10).

## COMMENTARY

Now begins the legislation of inheritance laws, after paving the way for it. These verses give a précis of the said laws in its basic form, to let the people know that nobody can be deprived of inheritance after the proof of his birth or relation, as they used to debar minor heirs and women. Further it warns them against depriving the orphans from inheritance, as it would result in swallowing by others heirs of the orphans' share unjustly, and Allah has very severely prohibited it. The verses also recommend giving something from the estate to relatives, orphans and poor who, although not included among the heirs, might be present at the time of dividing the property.

QUR'AN: Men shall have a share. . . a decreed share:

"an-Nasib" (share, portion) is derived from an-nasb (to make something stand, to lift up, to raise); this name points to the fact that at the time of division, every share is put separately to prevent its mixing with the others'. at-Tarikah (the heritage, the property left by the deceased); it is as though he goes away leaving it; thus initially it was an allegorical usage, then became common. al-Aqrabun (the nearer ones) refers to nearer relatives;

choice of this word (of comparative degree) in preference to al-aqriba (the near ones) and ulu 'l-qurba (relatives), etc., gives an indication that it is the essential pre-requisite of inheritance that the deceased should be nearer to the heir, as will be explained under the verse, your parents and your children, you know not which of them is nearer to you in usefulness (4:11). al-Fard originally meant to cut a hard thing and to detach its parts from one another; that is why it is used for obligatory rules, because to follow and obey it is "determined" without any doubt; "a decreed share" means a determined and fixed portion or ratio.

The verse ordains a comprehensive law and legislates a new system, which was unfamiliar to the people. The people had never known any system similar to this inheritance law, as ordained in Islam. Traditionally they used to deprive many heirs of inheritance, and it had become a second nature to them; so much so that if anything was said against it, the minds were agitated and feelings hurt.

Islam paved the way for this new system, first by strengthening the "love in Allah" and giving preference to religion among the believers. Thus it established "brotherhood" between the believers and then made one "brother" inherit the other. This wiped out the previous succession rules, and the believers abandoned the old pride and prejudice. When the religion became strong and could stand on its feet, this final system of inheritance between the relatives was introduced - at a time when they were enough believers to accept this law with open arms.

The above discussion shows that these verse aims at clear description, and removal of all possible misunderstandings, by giving a fundamental and comprehensive basis of the law. Thus it says: "Men shall have a share of what the parents and the near relatives leave." The rule is general and unrestricted; it is not qualified by any condition, attribute or other such things. Likewise the subject, i.e., "men", is general and not qualified in any way; therefore the minors shall inherit like the adults.

Then it says: "and women shall have a share of what the parents and the near relatives leave." Like the preceding sentence it is a general statement, without any shade of restriction; thus it covers all women without any qualification or condition. The clause, "of what the parents and the near relatives leave" has been repeated, although it could be replaced by a pronoun,

the reason is to make the topic as clear as possible. It is followed by the clause, "whether there is little or much of it"; it makes the matter even more clear, and shows that there is no room for any indulgence or negligence in this matter thinking that the deceased's estate was very small or the value negligible. The verse ends on words, "a decreed share"; it is a circumstantial clause, related to the preceding word, "a share", as it contains a connotation of masdar; it gives a double emphasis and makes the declaration even more clear that the shares are definitely fixed, and there is no room for any confusion or ambiguity.

It has been proved with this verse that the general law of inheritance covers the estate of the Prophet as well as of other Muslims, and that the doctrine of at-ta'sib (giving preference of agnates) is invalid.

QUR'AN: And when there are present. . . kind words:

Apparently the verse refers to these people's presence at the time when the heirs are dividing the estate among themselves, and not to their presence near the dying person when he is bequeathing his estate - as someone has written.

Accordingly, "the relatives ", would refer to the poor among them; it is also proved from the fact that they have been mentioned with the orphans and the needy. The tone of the clauses, "give them (something) out of it and speak to them kind words," obviously exhorts the hearers to mercy and kindness, and therefore it is addressed to the heirs and executors of the will.

There is a difference of opinion whether the order given in this verse (to give those people something from the estate) is obligatory or only a desirable act. It is a matter of jurisprudence beyond the scope of this book. Also there is disagreement whether the verse is decisive or has been abrogated by the verse of inheritance. But the relation between the two verses is not that of contradiction, because the verse of inheritance fixes the shares of the heirs, and this verse speaks

about the non-heirs - either as obligation or recommendation - without fixing any share; therefore there is no ground for saying that it was abrogated, and especially if the described "giving" is only a recommendation - as the verse somewhat apparently shows.

QUR'AN: And let those fear. . . speak right words:

Fear is a psychological effect caused by nearness of a somewhat great danger or evil; as-sadad and as-sadad of a talk means its being right, correct, straight, relevant.

Probably the verse has a sort of connection with the previous one, "Men shall have. . .", because that verse with its generality contains the laws of the orphans' inheritance; now this one in a way is a warning and a threat to him who wants to follow the old system of depriving small heirs of inheritance. In that case, the clause, "and let them speak right words", will be an adverse and unfavorable allusion to their habit as they did not give any share to, and swallowed the rights of, the minor orphans.

The allegorical use of "word" for "deed" is very common because of their mutual association. Allah has said: . . . and speak to men good (words). . . (2:83). This idea is also supported by the use of the adjective, "right " for "words " instead of "kind" or "gentle "; apparently a word may be called right when it can be believed and acted upon - not when it can only preserve people's dignity and honor.

In any case, the clause, "And let those fear who, should they leave behind them weakly offspring, would fear on their account", is obviously a simile to animate and stimulate mercy and compassion for small weakly children who have lost their guardian and protector (who could have looked after their welfare and saved them from humiliation and disgrace).

The implied threat and warning is not directed to only him who may at the material time be actually having some weakly offspring, it uses the conjunction law (which as a rule introduces hypothetical conditional clauses), and does not say, 'should they leave behind their weakly offspring'. It is rather a simile to present a clear image of the situation. The connotation therefore would be as follows: Let those fear who have in their hearts mercy for humanity and compassion and sympathy for those weakly small children who have lost their fathers and are orphaned — only such people are real Muslims who are imbued with divine characteristics and graced with Allah's manners.

In other words: Let those people fear and be afraid of Allah in matters of the orphans, because they are like their own orphans, small and weak; the people must fear for them and care for their welfare; these helpless children should not be oppressed nor their rights usurped. The style is the same as we say: "Let him who fears dishonor and humiliation, try his level best to earn his

livelihood" — and who does not fear it?

People have not been ordered here to show mercy and compassion, etc.; they have been told to fear and be afraid of Allah. It is a threat that whatever they do to other people's orphans by usurping their rights and swallowing their property unjustly, would befall their own orphans after them; whatever misfortunes and miseries they cause to others' orphans would return to their own orphans after their passing away.

As for the clause, 'so let them fear Allah and let them speak right words', we have already explained that apparently the "words" connotes practical behavior; also possibly it may mean views ideas and advice.

QUR'AN: (As for) those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies and soon they shall enter burning fire:

The sentences, 'He swallowed it', and, 'He swallowed it into his belly', both have the same meaning, but the latter is clearer and more emphatic. This verse too, like the preceding one, is related in theme with the opening sentence, "Men shall have a share. . ." It threatens people and deters them from swallowing the orphans' shares of inheritance.

The verse is one of those which prove embodiment of deeds, as was explained in the first volume\*, under the verse: Surely Allah is not ashamed to set forth any parable . . . (2:26) . Perhaps it is this idea which an exegete had in mind when he wrote that the words, "surely they only swallow fire into their bellies", have been used in their literal, not metaphorical, sense.

Another exegete has unjustifiably taken exception to this statement. He has said: The verb, "they only swallow", is used here as a present, not future, tense, because the future is described by the subsequent clause, "and soon they shall enter burning fire". (Note the word, "soon".) Now if swallowing the fire is taken in its literal meaning — and it is to happen on the Day of Resurrection — then this sentence too should have contained the word, "soon". Therefore, the clause is, in fact, used in allegorical sense and means that in swallowing the orphans' property they resemble someone whom swallows fire into his belly.

This is the gist of his objection; but it shows that the objector was oblivious of the import of embodiment of deeds.

The end clause, "and soon they shall enter burning fire", points to the chastisement in the hereafter. "as-Sa'ir" (burning fire) is one of the names of the fire of the hereafter; (yaslawna, translated here as "they shall enter", is derived from) saliya 'n-nar, yasla, salyan (i.e., he broiled and burned into fire; he underwent ordeal of fire).

## TRADITIONS

Majma'u 'I-bayan says about the verse, Men shall have a share of what the parents and the near relatives leave: "People have two views about this verse; one is that it is decisive and not abrogated; and this has been narrated from al-Baqir (a.s.)."

The author says: It is narrated from at-Tafsir of al-Qummi that this verse was abrogated by the verse, Allah enjoins you concerning your children . . . But there is no justification for this view. We have explained in the above Commentary that this verse gives a precis of the coming inheritance laws; and there is no contradiction at all between this and the other decisive verses of inheritance, so that it could be said to have been abrogated.

Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir and Ibn Abi Hatim have narrated from Ikrimah about this verse: "It was revealed about Umm Kulthum and daughter of Umm Kuhlah or Umm Kuhhah herself and Tha'labah ibn Aws and Suwayd (all of them from the Ansar). One was her husband and the other the paternal uncle of her child. She said: 'O Messenger of Allah! My husband died leaving me and his daughter, but we were not given anything from his inheritance.' The uncle of her child said: 'O Messenger of Allah! (How can she get his inheritance when) she neither rides a horse nor attacks an enemy, and while she needs others to earn for her and she does not earn? Then the verse was revealed: Men shall have a share . . . " (ad-Durru 'I-manthur )

The author says: Some other traditions say that it was revealed about a man from the Ansar who died leaving two daughters. Then his two cousins came and they were his agnates (to take his inheritance) . His wife told them: "Marry these two (girls)" - and they were not beautiful. So they refused. Then she brought the matter before the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.); then the verses of inheritance were revealed. As we have repeatedly said, there could be more than one reason for revelation of a verse.

Majma'u 'I-bayan says about the verse, And when there are present.... "People have two different opinions about this verse; one is that it is decisive, not abrogated, and it is narrated from al-Baqir (a.s.)."

ash-Shaybani says that the above is narrated from both al-Baqir and as.-Sadiq (peace be on them ). (Nahju 'I-bayan ) The author says: Some traditions say that it is abrogated by the verses of inheritance; but we have mentioned earlier that it is not repealable. Abu 'Abdillah and Abu 'I-Hasan (peace be on them) have said: "Allah has threatened two punishments concerning the orphan's property: One is the punishment of the hereafter, (and that is) the fire; and as for the other, it is the punishment of this world, (and it is) His words: And let those fear who, should they leave behind them weakly offspring, would fear on their account; so let them fear Allah and let

them speak right words. " (Then) he said: "He means that he should fear that Allah would requite him in his offspring as he had done with these orphans. " (at-Tafsir, al-'Ayyashi)

The author says: A similar tradition is narrated in al-Kafi from as.-Sadiq (a.s.), and in Ma'ani 'l-akhbar from al-Baqir (a.s.).

'Abdu'l-A'la, mawha (freed-slave) of Al-Sam, says: "Abu 'Abdillah (a.s.) said (without anybody asking him): 'Whoever does injustice, Allah shall give someone power over him, who will oppress him; or over his children or over his grandchildren.' So I thought and said in my heart: 'Injustice is committed by him and someone is imposed on his children and grandchildren?!'

The Imam then said to me before I could speak: 'Surely Allah says: "And let those fear who, should they leave behind them weakly offspring, would fear on their account; so let them fear Allah, and let them speak right words. " ' " (at-Tafsir, al-'Ayyashi)

'Abd ibn Hamid has narrated from Qatadah that he said: "We have been told that the Prophet of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Fear Allah regarding to weaklings: the orphan and the woman; (Allah) made him orphan, then urged (people) to take care of him; and put him to test, and put (others) to test through him.' " (ad-Durru 'l-manthur)

The author says: There are a lot of almost mutawatir traditions narrated through the chains of both sects, in condemnation of swallowing the orphan's property, showing that it is a major and mortal sin.