

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

From here we begin the fourth part of this surah which describes the events that took place at the *Battle of Uhud*. The defeat in the *Battle of Badr* was so painful for the disbelievers that they wanted to confront the Muslims again. They spent a year after the *Battle of Badr* amassing weapons and strong men and prepared an army of three thousand, including 700 in coats of mail (Zirah Posh) and 200 cavalry to fight against the Muslims. They left *Makkah* for *Madinah* in the beginning of the month of *Shawwal*, the third year of *Hijrah*, in order to avenge their defeat. When they reached the vicinity of *Madinah*, Prophet (SAW) took counsel with his Companions as how best to resist the *Quraysh*. The Prophet (SAW) was of the opinion that they should defend *Madinah* from within the walls but some young enthusiastic men who had not taken part in the *Battle of Badr* longed for martyrdom and felt aggrieved at not having had the opportunity to fight in the *Battle of Badr* and advised the Messenger of Allah (SAW) to go out and meet the enemy in the open. The Prophet (SAW) agreed and left *Madinah* along with a thousand men towards Mount *Uhud*. However, half-way through, one-third of them turned back under the influence of the head of the hypocrites, Abdullah bin Ubay. The Prophet (SAW) proceeded with the remaining men until he camped at the trail of Mount *Uhud* putting the mountain behind him and facing the *Quraysh* army. There was only a mountain pass from where the Muslims could be subjected to a surprise attack. So Prophet (SAW) posted fifty archers there as guards under the command of Abdullah ibn Jubayr, instructing him neither to let anyone approach nor to move away from that spot no matter what happens. Then the two armies confronted each other and in the first stages of the Battle the Muslims gained the upper hand and were victorious by Allah's (SWT) will. When the archers positioned by the Prophet (SAW) saw the disbelievers being defeated, some of them left their position and joined other Muslims in collecting the booty. Khalid bin Walid (RA) who was an unbeliever at that time seized this opportunity and he along with his men went around Mount *Uhud* and attacked the Muslim army from behind. Suddenly the battle turned against the Muslims and they took to their heels in confusion. Still there were some brave Muslims who fought valiantly and rallied around the Prophet (SAW) to protect him and took him to the safe side of the Mount. The disbelievers also went back to

Makkah with their injured and dying victims. Thus the Battle of *Uhud* came to an end, leaving behind seventy martyrs amongst the Muslims. The following discourse brings some good lessons learned by the Muslims after the *Battle of Uhud*.

(121) *“And remember when you left your household in the morning to post the faithful at their stations for battle. And Allah hears and knows all things.”* Allah (SWT) is reminding the day, the *Battle of Uhud* took place: when you left your family at an early hour to lead the faithful to their battle-posts. Allah is Hearing, Knowing.

(122) *“And remember when two parties of you almost fell away”* The two parties were Banu Harithah and Banu Salmah who were confused and perplexed by the desertion of Abdullah bin Ubay and his 300 men and they wanted to turn back but were persuaded afterwards not to leave the battlefield. *“And Allah (SWT) was their Protecting Friend. In Allah (SWT) should believers put their trust.”* i.e. they should not have felt weak when Allah (SWT) is their Protector and should put all their trust in Him alone.

(123) *“Allah had helped you at Badr when you were a weak little force; then fear Allah; so that you may be grateful.”* Allah (SWT) reminds the believers of His favors when He made them victorious and destroyed the polytheists in the *Battle of Badr* even though they were few and weak. Therefore, they should only fear Him and be grateful to Him.

(124) *“And remember when you said to the believers, is it not enough for you that Allah (SWT) should help you with three thousand angels sent down?”* When the Muslims saw a *Quraysh* army of 3000 men, they became disheartened as they were already reduced to 700 when Abdullah ibn Ubay along with his men left the battlefield and went back to *Madinah*, but the Prophet (SAW) gave them the good news to strengthen their hearts that Allah (SWT) will help them with three thousand angels.

(125) *“But, if you hold on to patience and Taqwa, and the enemy comes rushing at you; your Lord will help you with five thousand angels having marks.”* Allah (SWT) promised the

believers that if they have patience and obey His commandments while fighting with the enemy, then He will aid them with five thousand angels having marks of distinction.

(126) *“Allah (SWT) made it not but as a message of good news for you and as an assurance to your hearts. And there is no victory except from Allah (SWT)”* i.e. whether there is a miracle or not, all help comes only from Allah (SWT) and He is in need of no one. And He is *“the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.”*

(127) *“That He might cut off a part of those who disbelieve, or expose them to infamy, so that they retire frustrated.”* A part or fringe of the unbelievers may refer to the seventy chiefs of the *Quraysh* who were slain and seventy others that were taken as captive. They came for the purpose of killing the Prophet (SAW) and exterminate the Muslims but in utter despair of failing in their purpose, they went back frustrated. They withdrew utterly defeated.

(128) *“Not for you is the decision; whether He turns in mercy to them or punishes them. Verily, they are the wrongdoers.”* When the Holy Prophet (SAW) was wounded in the *Battle of Uhud*, he cursed the disbelievers and invoked evil upon them and said: *“How can a people achieve success after having injured their Prophet.”*¹ Afterwards Allah (SWT) revealed this *ayah* that it is only He who guides whom He wills and no one can interfere in His decisions. No doubt the disbelievers are wrongdoers.

(129) *“And to Allah (SWT) belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. He forgives whom He wills, and punishes whom He wills. And Allah (SWT) is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”* His in all that the heavens and earth contain. He pardons whom He wills and punishes whom He pleases. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

(130) *“O you who believe! Eat not usury doubled and multiplied, but fear Allah (SWT) that you may be successful.”* This subject has previously been mentioned in the *ayah* 275 of *surah Al-Baqarah* that was revealed in the ninth year of *Hijrah* but this *ayah* being revealed in the third year of *Hijrah* makes it the first injunction

concerning the prohibition of usury. In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) prohibits His servants not to deal in usury and not to multiply their capital by taking interest on it. And this is only possible if they have *Taqwa* of Him, so that they may achieve success in this world and in the Hereafter. Have fear of Allah, and you shall prosper.

(131) *"Fear the fire which is prepared for the unbelievers."* Allah (SWT) warns them of this punishment if they do not obey Him in His commandments.

(132) *"And obey Allah (SWT) and the Messenger; that you may obtain mercy."*

(133) *"And hasten to the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your Lord, and for Paradise as wide as are the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who have Taqwa."* In these *ayat* Allah (SWT) commands His servants to obey Him and His Messenger (SAW) so they might attain His mercy and forgiveness and the Paradise with unimaginable width which is prepared for such righteous persons.

(134) *"Those who spend in prosperity and in adversity, who repress anger, and who pardon men."* This *ayah* describes the characteristics of the righteous persons mentioned above. They are those who spend in the way of Allah (SWT) only to attain His pleasure, both in hard times and in prosperity and they suppress their anger and forgive peoples' faults for His sake. So for them Allah (SWT) said: *"Verily, Allah (SWT) loves the good-doers."*

(135) *"And those who, when they have committed indecency or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allah (SWT) and seek forgiveness for their sins. And none can forgive sins but Allah (SWT). And do not persist in what they have done, while they know."* Allah (SWT) further describes their qualities that when any of them does an evil thing or have wronged their souls, they earnestly remember Allah (SWT) and seek forgiveness for their sins. And they know that it is only Allah (SWT) who can forgive their sins and they do not persist in what wrong they did after they repented from it.

(136) *"For such, the reward is Forgiveness from their Lord, and Gardens with rivers flowing underneath, wherein they shall abide forever. How excellent is this reward for those who do good works."* i.e. who do righteous deeds according to Allah's (SWT) commandments.

(137) *"Many similar examples were faced by nations that have passed away before you, so travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who disbelieved."* Allah (SWT) is encouraging the believers that if you have lost then do not feel dejected or lose heart and learn from the examples of the previous nations who believed in Allah (SWT) and followed His Messengers. They also faced similar hardships and suffering but Allah (SWT) helped them and made them triumph and destroyed their enemies.

(138) *"This is a declaration to mankind, a guidance and admonition to those who have Taqwa."* This *ayah* refers to the holy *Qur'an*. Allah (SWT) states that it is a guide and admonition for all mankind and particularly for the pious.

(139) *"Do not grieve and get disheartened, for you will have the upper hand if you are indeed believers."* Allah (SWT) commands the believers to take heart and not despair because of their partial setback suffered in the *Battle of Uhud*. He heartens them by giving them the good news that ultimately they will be triumphant and victory will be theirs if they truly believe in Him and obey His commandments.

(140) *"If you have suffered from a wound be sure a similar wound has touched the others."* This means, that as you have suffered heavy losses in men and material, so did the disbelievers. So do not grieve or be sad but have patience and be firm. Seventy of the Muslim army were martyred including Prophet's Uncle Hamza (RA) which was indeed a great loss. On the other hand, the Quraysh also suffered considerable casualties not only in the *Battle of Uhud* but also in the *Battle of Badr* but still they regrouped themselves and came back to fight. So why do you O Muslims lose heart by the loss suffered in the *Battle of Uhud*. *"And we alternate these vicissitudes among mankind so that Allah (SWT) may know those who believe, and that He may take martyrs from among you."* i.e. Allah (SWT) sometimes allows the enemy to overcome the Muslims so that He may find out who are the real believers amongst them and those who give their lives as martyrs to seek His pleasure. Further Allah (SWT) says: *"And Allah (SWT) does not like the wrongdoers."* He does not love the evil-doers.

(141) *“And that Allah may test the believers and destroy the disbelievers.”* And that He may purify the faithful from sin and annihilate the infidels.

(142) *“Do you think that you will enter Paradise before Allah (SWT) tests those of you who fought (in His Cause) and tests those who are patient.”* This *ayah* emphasizes the fact that every believer will have to go through the trials and the tests of faith in order to attain victory in this world and Paradise in the Hereafter. Even the previous nations were tried and tested with calamities and oppression from the disbelievers but ultimately the believers are always victorious. Therefore, the believers should always trust Allah (SWT) and His Promise that He will surely destroy the disbelievers who commit oppression against them. But until then, the believers should persevere with patience in their trials because victory will only come after succeeding in tests and trials.

(143) *“You did indeed wish for death before you met it. Now you have seen it openly with your own eyes.”* This *ayah* refers to those Companions of the Prophet (RA) who insisted on fighting the battle with the *Quraysh* army instead of staying behind and defending *Madinah*. They felt aggrieved at not having had the opportunity to fight in the *Battle of Badr* and thus longed for martyrdom. This *ayah* addresses them that you longed for death and wished that you fight your enemy, now Allah (SWT) has given you that opportunity, so fight them and be patient.

(144) *“Muhammad (SAW) is no more than a Messenger, and indeed Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels?”* The Prophet (SAW) suffered severe injuries in the *Battle of Uhud*. At that time the Satan shouted that Muhammad (SAW) had been killed. This made the Muslims lose heart and many of them began to turn away and did not actively participate in the battle. This is why Allah (SWT) revealed this *ayah* which states that if Muhammad (SAW) is killed while delivering His message, just like all the Messengers before him then will you O believers turn your back and not convey His message or defend your religion. And Allah (SWT) said: *“And he who turns back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah (SWT)”* i.e. those who turned back to disbelief after they have believed should know that Allah’s (SWT) religion does not stand in need of you. *“and Allah (SWT) will give reward to those who are grateful.”* i.e.

those who remained steadfast and obeyed Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) whether he is dead or alive. He that recants will do no harm to Allah. But Allah will reward the thankful.

(145) *“And no person can ever die except by Allah’s (SWT) Leave and at an appointed term. And whoever desires a reward in (this) world, We shall give him of it; and whoever desires a reward in the Hereafter, We shall give him thereof. And We shall reward the grateful.”* This *ayah* encourages the Muslims to participate and engage actively in the battlefield and not abandon it in fear of death because doing so will not increase nor decrease their life term ordained by Allah (SWT). Therefore, they should spend it in Allah’s (SWT) cause and not for the sake of transitory enjoyments of this world which unfortunately is the situation regarding most of the Muslims today. Salah (prayer) which has been described as the criterion between faith and disbelief, how much does it feature in the life of the Muslims and how many are there who are punctual in it. How many adhere to the other basic requirements of Islam such as *Fasting, Zakah* and *Haji*. On the other hand, consider the prohibitions of Islam, how many Muslims indulge in these day and night and how many have adopted these as part of their lifestyle? This is because most of us struggle in life only for the enjoyments and luxuries of this earthly life and have forgotten the eternal joys of the next world. But Allah (SWT) says that those who are grateful to Him and appreciate His bounties, they will surely be rewarded for their good deeds in the Hereafter.

(146) *“And how many of the Prophets have fought (in Allah’s (SWT) Cause) and along with him (fought) large bands of religious learned men. But they never lost heart for that which did befall them in Allah’s (SWT) way, nor did they weaken nor degrade themselves. And Allah (SWT) loves the patient ones.”* This *ayah* teaches a lesson to the Muslims that as they have fought their enemies along with their Prophet (SAW), so did the Prophets before them along with their godly men. But what they suffered in Allah’s (SWT) cause did not make them lose heart by going back to disbelief, rather they obeyed Allah (SWT) and followed His Messengers. They neither weakened nor cringed abjectly. Allah loves the steadfast.

(147) *"And they said nothing but: "Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and our transgressions, establish our feet firmly, and give us victory over the disbelieving folk." This is the same prayer which Saul's army made to Allah (SWT) when they advanced towards the army of Goliath. It is mentioned in ayah 250 of surah Al-Baqarah i.e., make us firm of foot and give us victory over the unbelievers.*

(148) *"So Allah (SWT) gave them the reward of this world, and the excellent reward of the Hereafter. And Allah (SWT) loves the good-doers." Therefore, Allah gave them the reward of this life, and the glorious recompense of the life to come. Allah loves the charitable.*

(149) *"O you who believe! If you obey those who disbelieve, they will send you back on your heels, and you will turn back (from Faith) as losers." After the Battle of Uhud, some Jews and the hypocrites tried to seduce the believers to revert to disbelief. This ayah refers to them and Allah (SWT) warns the believers that these hypocrites want them to go back to disbelief after having faith, so do not obey them.*

(150) *"Nay, Allah (SWT) is your Protector and He is the Best of helpers." i.e. if you are sincere and steadfast in your faith then Allah (SWT) promises you of His help and protection from the disbelievers. Allah is your protector. He is the best of helpers.*

(151) *"Soon we shall cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve, because they joined others in worship with Allah (SWT), for which He had sent no authority; their abode will be the fire and how evil is the abode of the wrongdoers." In this ayah Allah (SWT) gives the good news to the believers that He will cast fear of Muslims into the hearts of the disbelievers. This is because the disbelievers disobey Allah's (SWT) commandments and associate partners with Him. And a very painful punishment awaits them in the Hereafter as they serve other gods for whom no sanction has been revealed. Fire shall be their home; dismal indeed in the dwelling place of the evil-doers.*

(152) *"And Allah (SWT) did indeed fulfill His Promise to you when you were killing them with His Permission" This ayah refers to the Battle of Uhud. Allah (SWT) states that He*

fulfilled His promise to the Muslims that they will surely have an upper hand if they show patience and courage, which was indeed the case initially when the Muslims were winning the battle. But some of them lost their courage as Allah (SWT) says: *"until you lost your courage and fell to disputing about the order, and disobeyed after He showed you which you love."* This refers to the archers who were commanded by the Prophet (SAW) not to leave their appointed places. He instructed them, *"Stick to your place, and don't leave it even if you see birds snatching us, till I send for you; and if you see that we have defeated the infidels and made them flee, even then you should not leave your place till I send for you."*² But when they saw the disbelievers being defeated and fleeing towards the mountain, they wanted to join their victorious brothers and collect the booty. Their commander Abdullah bin Jubair (RA) commanded them not to leave their places but they disobeyed him and they left their positions and that eventually became the cause of their defeat. It should be mentioned here that listening and obeying Allah's Messenger (SAW) and his appointed *ameer* (commander) is obligatory on a Muslim whether it is pleasing or displeasing to him. The Arabic words for obedience and discipline are *Sama'a* and *Ta'at* i.e. to listen and to obey. The success of an Islamic movement lies in exhibiting the distinctive attitude of *listen* and *obey* i.e. obedience to Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) and to the one in authority from amongst us i.e. the *Ameer*. This last type of obedience is limited with two important conditions. First, the one in authority must be a Muslim and second, his commands must always be in accordance with the *Qur'an* and *sunnah*. It has been narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (RA) that the Prophet (SAW) said: *"Who obeys me obeys Allah (SWT), and whoso disobeys me disobeys Allah (SWT). Who obeys the Ameer obeys me, and who disobeys the Ameer disobeys me."*³ Further Allah (SWT) says: *"Among you are some that desire this world and some that desire the Hereafter. Then He made you flee from them, that He might test you."* When the disbelievers attacked the Muslims from behind, in utter confusion some of the Muslims turned back and fled from the battlefield. Thus Allah (SWT) says that He made their enemies overcome them, in order to test them. *"But surely, He forgave you, and Allah (SWT) is Most Gracious to the believers."* i.e. He forgave those who fled from the battlefield. And indeed He is gracious to the faithful.

(153) *“And remember when you were climbing up, without even casting a side glance at anyone, and the Messenger (SAW) was in your rear calling you back.”* When the archers guarding the valley behind the battle front left their places, a group of disbelievers army led by Khalid bin Walid (RA) attacked the Muslims from behind which caused great confusion between them and the Muslim warriors were soon surrounded by the army of the *Quraysh*. Then a rumor spread that the Prophet (SAW) has been killed. This news weakened the morale of the Muslims, so much so that some of the Muslims abandoned fighting and started climbing up the mountain to take refuge while the Prophet (SAW) was calling them to come back but only a few of them when noticed that Prophet (SAW) is alive, came back to the field and defended their Prophet (SAW). *“There did Allah (SWT) give you one distress after another by way of requital to teach you not to grieve for that which had escaped you, nor for that which had befallen you.”* i.e. they felt grief over grief because of missing the war booty and triumph of their enemy and not because of their casualties and injuries. *“And Allah (SWT) is well aware of all that you do.”* Allah is cognizant of what you do.

(154) *“Then after the distress, He let peace fall upon you. A sleep overtook a party of you”* While the Muslims were feeling the distress of the battle Allah (SWT) sent down tranquility over them and they started to feel drowsy and because of that they felt calmness and enjoyed kindly sleep. Abu Talhah (RA) explains this strange sense of peace they had, he said: *“I was among those who were overcome by slumber during the battle of Uhud. My sword fell from my hands several times and I would pick it up, then it would fall and I would pick it up again.”*²⁴ *“While another party was thinking about themselves and thought wrongly of Allah - the thought of ignorance.”* This refers to the hypocrites. While Allah (SWT) sent down tranquility on the believers, the hypocrites were denied just sleep thus increasing their distress and anxiety. These hypocrites abandoned the battle and started to doubt the Prophethood of Muhammad (SAW) casting evil thoughts about Allah (SWT). They thought that the disbelievers will achieve victory and Islam and the Muslims would perish forever. *“They said, “Have we any say in the matter?” Say: “Indeed all matters belong wholly to Allah.”*” The hypocrites grumbled regarding their advice to remain in *Madinah* instead of coming to Mount *Uhud* where their friends and relatives had been killed. *“They hide within themselves what they dare not*

reveal to you, saying: "If we had any say in the matter, none of us would have been killed here." Say: "Even if you had remained in your homes, those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death,"" The hypocrites started to murmur things like had it been thus and thus, we would not have lost our friend and families but Allah (SWT) states that the appointed destiny is fixed for everyone and when death approaches, no one can escape it. " *but that Allah might test what is in your breasts; and to purify that which was in your hearts (sins), and Allah is All-Knower of what is in the breasts.*" Although Allah (SWT) knows even what is in your breasts but still He tests you to distinguish amongst you as who conceals hypocrisy in their hearts and who are the true believers. He has knowledge of your inmost thoughts.

(155) *"Those of you who turned back on the day the two hosts met, it was the Satan who caused them to backslide because of some (sins) they had earned."* Some of the Companions (RA) turned back from the battlefield in the hue and cry that was created when the disbeliever's army attacked the Muslims from behind. Allah (SWT) says that it was the Satan who made them slip and thus they failed to fulfill their duty. Satan made them err because of their previous faults, otherwise he could not have overcome them. One of the Companions who left the battlefield was Uthman (RA). The enemies of the Companions take this as a reason to curse and hate Uthman (RA) and other Companions of the Prophet (RA) even though Allah (SWT) said: *"But Allah (SWT), indeed, has forgiven them. Surely, Allah (SWT) is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing."* Allah has pardoned them; He is Forgiving and Merciful.

Foot Notes

- [1] Fath Al-Bari 7 : 365.
- [2] Sahih Bukhari 4 : 276.
- [3] Sahih Muslim 6 : 13.
- [4] Fath Al-Bari 7 : 22.