

(29) *“O you who believe! If you obey and fear Allah (SWT), He will grant you a criterion, and will expiate for you your sins, and forgive you, and Allah (SWT) is the Owner of the Great Bounty.”*

Allah (SWT) informs us in this noble *ayah* that those of His servants who obey Him sincerely and fear Him, will be blessed with three things viz. Criterion, removal of sins and forgiveness. Criterion here refers to the guidance to differentiate between the right and the wrong. Thus those who are blessed with Criterion are able to judge the difference between the truth and falsehood, which eventually paves the way for salvation in the Hereafter. Then Allah (SWT) said that He will remove from them their sins and forgive them, for He gives from His Infinite grace and bounty to whoever He wills.

(30) *“And (remember) when the disbelievers plotted against you to imprison you, or to kill you, or to drive you out. They were plotting and Allah (SWT) too was planning, and Allah (SWT) is the Best of the planners.”* This refers to an incident when the chiefs of the *Quraysh* gathered together in *Makkah* to consult each other on how to restrict Prophet Muhammad (SAW) from preaching his religion. They were afraid of the rising power of Islam and of the fact that one day its followers might have enough power to drive them out of their city. This was the main agenda when the chiefs met for consultation. In that meeting three alternatives were discussed viz., to imprison the Prophet (SAW), to expel him out of *Makkah* or to kill him. In the end they all agreed on the plan of Abu Jahl. He proposed that they should choose one strong man from every tribe of *Quraysh*. Then they all strike Muhammad (SAW) with their swords at the same time and kill him. This way, the Prophet's tribe will not be able to take revenge from all the tribes and they will be forced to accept the blood money. But Allah (SWT) informed the Prophet (SAW) of their evil intentions and thus He made all their plans and plots go to dust, for surely He is the best of planners.

(31) *“And when Our revelations are recited to them, they say: "We have heard this; if we wish we can say the like of this. This is nothing but the tales of the ancients.”* This also refers to their evil intentions and the wicked plans they had against Islam and its Prophet (SAW). Whenever the idolators of *Makkah* listened to the recitation of the

Holy *Qur'an*, they would utter absurd remarks such as this is nothing but stories from the past and that we can say things like that if we wish. But the fact is that whenever they were challenged to produce anything similar to the like of this *Qur'an*, they would never accept the challenge.

(32) *"And (remember) when they said: "O Allah (SWT)! If this is indeed the truth from You, then rain down stones on us from the sky or bring on us a painful torment.""* They would say such things only to prove to their followers that they are indeed following the right path and that if Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was the true Messenger of Allah (SWT) then surely they would have been punished for rejecting him. Thus they prayed to Allah (SWT) that if it is the truth i.e. the *Qur'an*, then send down on them a painful punishment.

(33) *"And Allah (SWT) would not punish them while you are amongst them, nor will He punish them while they seek Forgiveness."* This *ayah* means that the only reason that the disbelievers of *Makkah* did not receive an immediate punishment for their disbelief was because of the two shelters they had: the presence of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) among them and their asking for forgiveness from Allah (SWT). This was also the case with Prophet Noah (AS), Hud (AS), Salih (AS) and Lot (AS) that the punishment did not descend on their people until they remained with them. There were also Muslims living in *Makkah* after Prophet's migration who were not able to migrate with him. This could also be a factor in preventing the coming of mass punishment upon them, for they used to invoke Allah (SWT) for mercy and forgiveness.

(34) *"And why should not Allah (SWT) punish them while they stop (men) from the Sacred Mosque, and they are not its custodians? None can be its custodian except the pious, but most of them know not."* i.e. why should not the disbelievers be punished when they have already become entitled to it because of their disbelief and while they prevent Muslims from going to *Al-Masjid Al-Haram* (the Sacred Mosque) for a pilgrimage or to pray therein. They did this because they thought of themselves as the custodians of the Sacred Mosque, but Allah (SWT) said that the disbelievers and idolators cannot be the guardians of the Sacred Mosque while its guardians can only be the righteous Muslims, but the disbelievers will never understand.

(35) *“Their prayer at the House was nothing but whistling and clapping of hands. Therefore taste the punishment because of your disbelief.”* The *Quraysh* used to circumbulate the *Ka’bah* and considered it as a practice of Prophet Abraham (AS), but they changed the actual form of the practice and these wicked people started to circumbulate while naked. Similarly, they also made changes to the prayer of Prophet Abraham (AS) and nothing was left of the prayer except for whistling and clapping of hands. Therefore, Allah (SWT) said that they must now suffer the punishment for their disbelief, which came upon them in this world in the form of the Battle of *Badr*.

(36) *“Verily, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to hinder (men) from the Path of Allah, and so will they continue to spend it; but in the end it will become a regret for them. Then they will be overcome. And those who disbelieve will be gathered unto Hell.”* Allah (SWT) informed us in this *ayah* that the disbelievers of *Makkah* used to amass huge amount of funds in wealth and arms for their conquests against the Muslims. So, in a way it has been said that the disbelievers spend their wealth to hinder people from the path of Allah (SWT). Then Allah (SWT) said that they will continue to spend it. According to some scholars this is a prophecy which Allah (SWT) had foretold His Prophet (SAW) about the Battle of *Uhud* when the disbelievers amassed a huge amount of wealth and arms to take revenge from the Muslims of their loss of lives in the Battle of *Badr*. But the *ayah* can also be general, which would then mean that the disbelievers will continue their spending of the wealth against the Muslims and to hinder people from His path but in the end these very efforts will become the cause of their regrets and they will be overcome and disgraced in this life and in the Hereafter they will taste a painful punishment.

(37) *“In order that Allah (SWT) may distinguish the wicked from the good, and put the wicked one on another, heap them together and cast them into Hell. Those are the losers.”* This *ayah* states that through the events mentioned in the previous *ayat* Allah (SWT) separated the true believers from the disbelievers. Thus, He will place the disbelievers together one on another and cast them into Hellfire, for they are the real losers in this life and in the Hereafter.

(38) *“Say to those who have disbelieved, if they give over, their past will be forgiven. But if they repeat, then the examples of those before them have already preceded.”* This was the last chance given to the *Quraysh* of *Makkah* that they denounce their disbelief and embrace Islam. This way their past sins will be forgiven, but if they persist in their disbelief then they should reflect upon the past generations that Allah (SWT) had destroyed for their disbelief and it might be possible that a similar fate awaits them.

(39) *“And fight them until there is no more oppression and the Deen will all be for Allah (SWT) Alone. But if they cease, then certainly, Allah (SWT) is All-Seer of what they do.”* Allah (SWT) has commanded the Muslims to fight against the disbelievers until there is no more oppression, mischief or *Shirk* prevalent on the face of this earth and Allah’s *Deen* i.e. Islam, becomes dominant over all other religions. The root of evil is in polytheism. Thus the actual purpose of fighting in the way of Allah (SWT) against the idolators is to dislodge Polytheism, persecution, corruption and mischief which curtails freedom and does not leave for the people the freedom to distinguish between the truth and the falsehood. From here also began the last phase of Prophet’s revolutionary struggle i.e. the armed conflict. At this point it seems appropriate to point out the six phases of a revolutionary struggle. These are:

- (1) *Da'wah* (Calling people to Islam and *Iman*)
- (2) *Tanzeem* (Organization of those who respond)
- (3) Training
- (4) Passive Resistance
- (5) Active Resistance
- (6) Challenge and Conflict

This *ayah* points out to the sixth phase of this struggle where the Muslims are commanded to fight against the idolators and disbelievers until there is no more *Shirk* or oppression and Allah’s supremacy is established on earth. Even today if we want to achieve these goals we will have to follow the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) but for that purpose we will have to fulfill all the prerequisites that are needed for a successful revolutionary struggle. However we should also point out the fact that under present conditions there is no need for an armed struggle, for indeed such a struggle is not likely to succeed.

Today, the state and government are recognized as two different entities, and the right of the citizens to bring about a change in the government and the established system is now an accepted democratic right, as long as they do not indulge in violence or rebellion against the state. In the end of this *ayah* Allah (SWT) said that if they resist from *Shirk* and oppression then they should know that He sees all their actions. This means that if they stop committing *Shirk* and making mischief, then cease fighting with them and do not treat them unjustly.

(40) *“And if they turn away, then know that Allah (SWT) is your Protector, (what) an Excellent Protector, and (what) an Excellent Helper!”* Allah (SWT) encourages the believers that if the disbelievers persist in their disbelief and hatred for Islam and continue to fight with them, then they should know that Allah (SWT) will protect you from them, and surely He is an excellent Protector and an excellent Helper.

(41) *“And know that whatever of war-booty that you may gain, verily one-fifth of it is assigned to Allah (SWT), and to the Messenger (SAW), and to the near relatives, the orphans, the needy and the wayfarer, if you have believed in Allah (SWT) and in that which We sent down to Our slave on the Day of criterion, the Day when the two forces met. And Allah (SWT) has power over everything.”* This subject was one of the most sensitive of issues after the Battle of *Badr*, therefore it has again been dealt with in this *ayah*, which has detailed the laws and injunctions of the distribution of the spoils of the war. Allah (SWT) said that before the distribution of the spoils, one-fifth of it is reserved for Himself and His Messenger (SAW) while the remaining four parts be distributed between the Muslim army. Firstly, the one-fifth of the spoils was to be spent on the Messenger (SAW) himself and his family to whom the wealth and property coming out of charities had been declared unlawful, thus it was a grace and reward from Allah (SWT). Then it was given to the Muslim orphans, the needy and the wayfarers. However, the right of disposal within these five categories remained with the Prophet (SAW) and it was not incumbent on him to make it five equal shares for the recipients. Instead, it was all at his discretion. Sometimes he would take from it his share and divide the rest among other recipients like his relatives i.e. from *Bani Haashim* and *Bani al-Muttalib*, and the poor like *Ashab Al-Suffah* who spent most of their time in the company of

the Prophet (SAW) to acquire knowledge and had dedicated themselves wholly to serving Islam. While at other times he would even give that fifth to the Muslim army. The other four-fifths was to be shared out among the *Mujahideen* (Muslim Warriors) who took part in the fighting, by giving one share to each foot-soldier and three shares (two according to another opinion) to each horseman i.e. one share for him and two for his horse if they were used in the fighting. This wealth is permissible and good for the Muslim army, and has been prescribed by Allah (SWT). All these laws have been commanded by Allah (SWT) for His servants if they truly have believed in Him and seen the reality on the day of Battle of *Badr* when the disbelievers faced a humiliating defeat. And He separated the truth from the falsehood, for surely He has power over everything.

(42) *“(And remember) when you were on the near side of the valley, and they on the farther side, and the caravan on the ground lower than you. Even if you had made a mutual appointment to meet, you would certainly have failed in the appointment, but that Allah (SWT) might accomplish a matter already ordained; so that those who were to be destroyed might be destroyed after a clear evidence, and those who were to live might live after a clear evidence. And surely, Allah (SWT) is All-Hearer, All-Knower.”* This *ayah* gives some details of the valley of *Badr*. It is a broad valley having two narrow entrances, north and south with cliffs on either sides. The Muslims camped near the northern part of the valley which was closer to *Madinah*, while the disbelievers were in the southern part of the valley which was farther from *Madinah*. As far as the trade caravan is concerned, Abu Sufyan changed his route as soon as he heard about the plans of the Prophet (SAW) and took his caravan away from the range of Muslims and passed along with the sea shore, instead of going through the valley of *Badr*. This is what the *ayah* means when it states that the caravan was on the ground lower than the Muslims. Then Allah (SWT) said that if there would have been an arranged battle between the two sides then it might not have been fought in the first place, for they would not have reached at *Badr* on the same time or some other differences would have crept in one way or the other. But because Allah (SWT) wanted to accomplish what was destined to be done i.e. to humiliate and disgrace the enemies of Islam and give triumph to His Messenger and his followers, He made such circumstances which made it impossible to avoid the

confrontation. He (SWT) made them arrive at *Badr* on the same time, though it takes three days from *Madinah* and ten days from *Makkah* to reach there. It was all planned by Allah (SWT), so that to make it the day of Criterion i.e. distinction between the truth and the falsehood, and so that those who choose death i.e. disbelief and *Shirk* are destroyed and those who choose life i.e. Islam, might live.

(43) *“(And remember) when Allah (SWT) showed them to you as few in your dream, if He had shown them to you as many, you would surely have been discouraged, and you would surely have disputed in making a decision. But Allah saved (you). Certainly, He knows what is in the breasts.”* Though the army of the believers was more than three times the Muslim army, yet Allah (SWT) showed them much less in number to the Prophet (SAW) in a dream. He then related this incident to all of his Companions (RAA), which made their resolve and took courage to fight even more than before and Allah (SWT) said that if He had shown the disbelievers to the Prophet (SAW) and the Muslims as many, then they might have been discouraged or would have disputed among themselves whether to initiate action or not. This was because the Muslims were very few in number and ill-equipped for any type of war, for they thought that they are only going to attack a trade caravan, but Allah (SWT) had desired other plans destined for them and saved them from losing hope and courage. A question may arise here: was the dream shown to the Prophet (SAW) false as he was shown a much lesser number of the army of the disbelievers. Firstly, it should be kept in mind that the dream of a Prophet of Allah (SWT) can never be false. Secondly, the Prophet (SAW) was shown the real strength of the army of the disbelievers and not as it appeared in one’s sight. This means that the real strength of an army depends upon the courage and the will to fight of its soldiers, which can only be achieved if one knows that he is fighting for a just cause or not. Otherwise, they might appear as plenty in number with all their pomp and show, but the reality is that they are as weak as water. In the end Allah (SWT) said that He even knows what is in their breasts i.e. He knows those amongst the army of the disbelievers who were forced to come along with them, for within their hearts they had testified to the prophethood of Muhammad (SAW) but were afraid to disclose it.

(44) *“And (remember) when you met, He showed them to you as few in your eyes and He made you appear as few in their eyes, so that Allah might accomplish a matter already ordained, and to Allah return all matters.”* Allah (SWT) showed the army of the disbelievers to the Muslims as very few in number. Similarly He made it appear to the disbelievers that the Muslim army was weak and less in number. This was done because Allah (SWT) wanted the two armies to meet in the battlefield, so that He would make it a *Day of Criterion* i.e. the distinction between the truth and the falsehood, and give the disbelievers a humiliating defeat, and surely the final decision rests with Allah (SWT) alone.

(45) *“O you who believe! When you meet force, take a firm stand against them and remember the Name of Allah (SWT) much, so that you may be successful.”* This is the instruction given by Allah (SWT) to the believers when they encounter an enemy in a combat. They are being asked to be steadfast against their enemy and remember Him much.

(46) *“And obey Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW), and do not dispute lest you lose courage and your strength departs, and be patient. Surely, Allah (SWT) is with those who are patient.”* Further Allah (SWT) commands the believers to obey Him and His Messenger (SAW) and do not dispute among yourselves, for then they will lose courage and power to fight their enemies. This is what happened in the Battle of *Uhud* when the Prophet (SAW) commanded the archers 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.”*¹ 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 (RAA) commanded them not to leave their places but they disputed among themselves and left their positions, which eventually became the cause of their defeat. This was because they disobeyed the orders of an appointed *Ameer* by the Prophet (SAW), who said: *“Who obeys me obeys Allah (SWT), and who disobeys me disobeys Allah (SWT). Who obeys the Ameer obeys me, and who disobeys the Ameer disobeys me.”*² In the end Allah (SWT) instructed the Muslims to observe patience, for verily, Allah (SWT) is on the side of those who are patient in adversity.

(47) *"And be not like those who come out of their homes boastfully and with vainglory and hinder from the Path of Allah (SWT), and Allah (SWT) is encompassing all that they do."* In this ayah Allah (SWT) instructs the Muslims not to become proud of their strength and their numbers like the *Quraysh* of *Makkah* who marched from the city boasting arrogantly and with the desire for exhibitionism and suppressed people from embracing the truth. In the end Allah (SWT) warned the disbelievers that He is surrounding all that they do, i.e. He has knowledge of all their actions.

(48) *"And (remember) when Satan made their deeds seem fair to them and said, "No one of mankind can overcome you this Day and verily, I am near to you." But when the two forces came in sight of each other, he ran away and said "Verily, I have nothing to do with you. Verily! I see what you see not. Verily! I fear Allah (SWT) for Allah is Severe in punishment.""* This ayah refers to the incident when the *Satan* appeared to the *Quraysh* army in the form of *Suraqah bin Malik*, along with a group of his soldiers to help the disbelieving army. At that time the *Quraysh* were also worried about a possibility of attack from their enemies, the tribe of *Bani Bakr*. Therefore, the *Satan* appeared in the form of *Suraqah bin Malik*, an influential tribal chief from the tribe of *Bani Mudlij* and ruled out any threat of attack from their enemies. He then addressed the *Quraysh* army and made their purpose of marching towards the Muslims seem fair to them and said to them that no one can defeat you and march forward without any fear, for I am with you and I will protect you from your enemies i.e. from *Bani Bakr*. But when the two armies actually met each other at the valley of *Badr*, the *Satan* ran away proclaiming that I have nothing to do with you and I see something that you do not see. This he said because he saw the angels coming down from the sky for the help of the Muslims and he was fully aware of their strength and the power of Allah (SWT) that is why he then said that I fear Allah (SWT) and that He is severe in punishment. Also worth mentioning at this point is the creation of *Jinn* and angels and the relation between the two. As we mentioned in surah *Al-Baqarah*, the *Jinn* are created from fire whereas the angels are created from light and they are much closer to each other than the humans which are created from clay. Thus the angels and the *Jinn* are able to see each other while a human

being cannot see them in their original form except if Allah (SWT) permits them. This is why the *Satan* was able to see the thousand angels coming down for the aid of the believers at the Battle of *Badr*.

(49) *"When the hypocrites and those in whose hearts was a disease said: "These people are deceived by their religion." But whoever puts his trust in Allah (SWT), then surely, Allah (SWT) is All-Mighty, All-Wise."* This refers to the hypocrites of *Madinah* and those among them who had a disease in their hearts i.e. the disease of deception and doubt which eventually stems up into *Nifaq* (Hypocrisy).

Among them was the chief of hypocrites, Abdullah bin Ubay, who was a hypocrite from the very first day he embraced Islam and died in that state. When these hypocrites saw the Muslim army in the battlefield of *Badr*, they ridiculed them and said: look at these fools who are challenging an army much more powerful and strong than them and that their religion has deceived them i.e. for throwing them into the jaws of death. But Allah (SWT) said that they are themselves fools for they do not know that whosoever puts his total trust in Him, then he is never humiliated nor disgraced, for He is Mighty and Powerful.

(50) *"And if you could see when the angels take away the souls of those who disbelieve, they smite their faces and their backs, (saying): "Taste the punishment of the blazing Fire.""* This *ayah* mentions the punishment of the disbelievers at the time of death when the angels take their souls smiting their faces and backs and tell them to taste the punishment of the Hellfire.

(51) *"This is because of that which your hands had forwarded. And verily, Allah (SWT) is not unjust to His slaves."* i.e. the disbelievers will be punished for their own evil-deeds that they had committed in this world and certainly Allah (SWT) will not bring injustice upon His servants.

Foot Notes

[1] Sahih Bukhari 4: 276. (Kitab Al-Jihad 2812)

[2] Sahih Muslim 6: 13.