

(52) *“Similar to the behavior of the people of Pharaoh, and of those before them; they rejected the revelations of Allah (SWT), so Allah (SWT) punished them for their sins. Verily, Allah is All-Strong, Severe in punishment.”* The *Madinan* Surahs, as we have already studied, have a unique pattern to their subjects. They first address the believers, then the hypocrites and then the *Children of Israel*. Likewise, this ayah after addressing the believers and the hypocrites, gives a reference to the history of the *Children of Israel*. The *ayah* states that as the *Quraysh* of *Makkah* were punished for their evil deeds, so were the people of Pharaoh who rejected the signs and revelations of Allah (SWT) that He sent down to Prophet Moses (AS), and also those who were before them like the people of *Aad* and *Thamud*, who were punished for their misdeeds and were destroyed completely. Then in the end the ayah states that Allah (SWT) is mighty and severe in punishment i.e. no one can escape His punishment.

(53) *“That is so because Allah (SWT) will never change a grace which He has bestowed on a people until they change what is in their ownelves. And verily, Allah (SWT) is All-Hearer, All-Knower.”* This has always been the practice of Allah (SWT) that as long as people do not change their state of moral rectitude themselves, He does not change the good that He has bestowed on them. In other words Allah (SWT) keeps on sending His favors and blessings to a people until they themselves invite the punishment of Allah (SWT) by changing their condition i.e. from the good state to a bad state of being. At this point we should also highlight the fact that revolutions do not necessarily succeed through a bloody coupe or a revolt against the state, but a change in the system can be brought only by purifying the souls of the people i.e. they will have to change their own conditions first, in order to have any effect on the entire system. It is just like the revolutionary struggle put up by Prophet Muhammad (SAW), which started with *Da'wah* and training and ended with armed conflict—the last phase of a revolutionary struggle. This subject will further be elaborated (*Insh'Allah*) in surah *Ra'd* and surah *Ibrahim*.

(54) *“Similar to the behavior of the people of Pharaoh, and those before them. They belied the revelations of their Lord, so We destroyed them for their sins, and We drowned the people of*

Pharaoh for they were all wrong-doers." Again this *ayah* bears reference to the people of Pharaoh and those who were before them. They rejected the signs and revelations of Allah (SWT) and thus He destroyed them for their sins and drowned the people of Pharaoh, for they were all evil-doers.

(55) *"Verily, The worst of moving (living) creatures before Allah (SWT) are those who disbelieve, - so they shall not believe."* i.e. the worst and basest kind of creatures among living human beings are those who reject and disbelieve Allah's revelations. They are like those who do not use their intellect or reason to listen to the truth and they are like animals who have eyes to see but cannot see the truth and have ears, but cannot hear the truth. Then, at the end Allah (SWT) said that O Muslims such disbelievers will never believe no matter what you do.

(56) *"They are those with whom you made a covenant, but they break their covenant every time and they do not fear Allah."* This refers to the *Jews* of *Madinah* who had made a treaty with the Muslims when the Prophet (SAW) arrived in *Madinah*. Such was the statesmanship of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) that when he arrived in *Madinah*, he eliminated all the prejudices between the *Ansar* and the *Muhajireen* and made treaties with the neighboring *Jews* for the defense of *Madinah*. Although, they concluded the treaty but violated it in secret by sending messages to the *Quraysh* to come and attack the Muslims and they promised them their full support. This is what this *ayah* refers to that they make the covenant with the Muslims but violate it every now and then because their only concern is the life of this world, for they do not fear Allah (SWT).

(57) *"So if you meet them in war, punish them severely in order to disperse those who are behind them, so that they may learn a lesson."* In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) instructed the Muslims that whenever you encounter such people i.e. those who have violated the treaty, then give them a severe punishment which should be a lesson for others. All the punishments in Islam are used as a deterrent for others, so that it serves as an admonition for others. For example an apostate is given capital punishment, so that Islam does not become like a shop or a store which a person can enter whenever he wants and leave whenever he wants. The criminals and disbelievers may look at these punishments as cruel, but the

acts of evil and heinous crimes against a society are much more cruel and barbaric.

(58) *"If you fear treachery from any people, throw back to them (their treaty) fairly. Certainly Allah (SWT) likes not the treacherous."* In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) has instructed the Muslims that if the other party with whom you have a treaty is violating the treaty, then you do not have to continue to abide by that treaty. But at the same time you have to inform them of your severing the treaty before you take any action against them. Then Allah (SWT) says that surely He does not like those who commit breach of trust.

(59) *"And let not those who disbelieve think that they can outstrip Us. Verily, they will never have the power to do so."* i.e. do not think that the disbelievers have escaped Us, for it is not possible for them to save themselves from His punishment and they cannot frustrate Allah (SWT).

(60) *"And make ready against them all you can of power, including cavalry to threaten the enemy of Allah (SWT) and your enemy, and others besides whom you may not know but whom Allah (SWT) does know. And whatever you shall spend in the Cause of Allah (SWT) shall be repaid unto you, and you shall not be treated unjustly."* Allah (SWT) instructs the Muslims to always keep themselves prepared with whatever supplies they can gather against the enemies of Allah (SWT). This includes all the military strength, equipment, weapons and cavalry that they can afford, so that they can fill with fear the hearts of their enemies and those whom they do not know. It should also be pointed out here that the need of military equipment and weapons does not mean total dependence on them nor does it mean that you forsake them altogether for your faith and trust in Allah (SWT). It has been narrated that one day Prophet Muhammad (SAW) noticed a Bedouin leaving his camel without tying it. He asked the Bedouin, *"Why don't you tie down your camel?"* The Bedouin answered, *"I put my trust in Allah (SWT)."* The Prophet (SAW) then said, *"Tie your camel first, then put your trust in Allah (SWT)."* Thus the Muslims should spend their utmost energy to acquire strength and power needed for the defense of their homeland like Nuclear capability and other state-of-the-art weapons. But at the same time they should have total trust and faith that the

final decision rests with Allah (SWT) alone. Also worth mentioning here is the Nuclear capability of Pakistan, acquisition of which is nothing less than a miracle. Pakistan has the honors to be the first Muslim country to achieve such a feat and it is required of them to go as far as they can to make this capability as a deterrent, in order to terrorize the hearts of the enemies of Islam. However, making oneself capable to defend an Islamic country does need to be backed financially. Therefore, in the end of this ayah Allah (SWT) has encouraged the Muslims to spend in His cause, for whatever they spend for His cause in this world, it will be returned to them in full in this world and in the Hereafter and surely they will not be treated unjustly.

(61) *“But if they incline to peace, you also incline to it, and trust in Allah (SWT). Verily, He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.”* i.e. if the disbelievers at some stage are inclined towards peace then you should accept their offer of peace and conclude a treaty with them, for surely Allah (SWT) knows and hears all that they do.

(62) *“And if they intend to deceive you, then verily Allah (SWT) is All-Sufficient for you. He it is Who has supported you with His Help and with the believers.”* i.e. if they deceive you even after offering peace to you then you should not worry, for you should know that Allah (SWT) is sufficient for you as a Helper and a Protector. Then Allah (SWT) said to the Prophet (SAW) that He has strengthened you with His help and with such believers who are always ready to sacrifice their lives and their wealth in the way of Allah (SWT). They were not like the Companions of Moses (AS) who showed cowardice and refused to fight their enemy. They rebelled against Allah’s commandments and committed blasphemy to such an extent that they replied to Moses (AS) that you and your Lord fight yourself with the enemies and we are not going to join you. But unlike the *Israelites* the Companions (RAA) of the Prophet (SAW) showed the spirit of sacrifice and fidelity each time they were called upon to fight and help Allah’s Messenger (SAW).

(63) *“And He has united their hearts. If you had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have united their hearts, but Allah (SWT) has united them. Certainly He is All-Mighty, All-Wise.”* This refers to another of Allah’s favors that He bestowed upon His Prophet (SAW) and his Companions (RAA). This *ayah* states that it was Allah (SWT) Who brought

together the hearts of the believers and made them brothers to each other. Then Allah (SWT) said to the Prophet (SAW) that even if you had spent all the wealth of this world, you could not have brought them together because of the hatred and enmity that existed between them for years. They were divided into clans and groups, who were always at war and had great hatred and enmity for each other. Then when they embraced Islam, they became one *Ummah* helping each other in piety and righteousness. This was all by the grace and help of Allah (SWT), for He is Mighty and Wise.

(64) *“O Prophet! Allah (SWT) is Sufficient for you and for the believers who follow you.”* i.e. O Prophet (SAW) Allah (SWT) is sufficient for you and for your followers in His support and Help against your enemies. Some Scholars have also translated it as 'O Prophet (SAW) Allah (SWT) is sufficient for you and so are the believers who help him and support him in any adversity'.

(65) *“O Prophet (SAW)! Urge the believers to fight. If there are twenty steadfast persons amongst you, they will overcome two hundred, and if there be a hundred steadfast persons they will vanquish a thousand of those who disbelieve, because they are people who do not understand.”* This noble *ayah* urges the believers to fight against the enemies of Allah (SWT) and also gives them the good news of His blessing that even a few sincerely true Muslims will be able to overcome a large number of disbelievers' army. Allah (SWT) encourages the believers to fight and wage war against His enemies and reminds them of His Help and support. He told them that they will rout a larger force than theirs with His will. Therefore, if there will be twenty Muslims, they will be able to overcome two hundred of the disbelieving army and if they are one hundred, they will be able to gain victory against a thousand strong enemy by His grace and Help. This is because the disbelievers have not understood the truth and thus these fools have taken up arms against those who have accepted it.

(66) *“Now Allah (SWT) has lightened your (task), for He knows that there is weakness in you. So if there are of you a hundred steadfast persons, they shall overcome two hundred, and if there are a thousand of you, they shall overcome two thousand by Allah's will. And Allah (SWT) is with the patient ones.”* Soon after the previous *ayah* was revealed in which Allah (SWT)

commanded one Muslim to fight ten disbelievers, He then revealed this ayah which made the matter easier for the Muslims and stated that if there are patient and persevering Muslims then they should not leave the battle field even if they are half of the disbeliever's army, for surely they will overcome them with His will. The reason given for the lightening of their burden was because of the weakness that had developed within some of them. This refers to the hypocrites of *Madinah* who had embraced Islam to weaken it from within. After the Battle of *Badr* an Islamic state started to emerge and the people of *Madinah*, mostly *Jews* pretended to be Muslims, but in reality they had only accepted Islam to plot and plan against the believers and the Prophet (SAW). That is why Allah (SWT) said that He knows there is some weakness in the Muslims i.e. the presence of hypocrites. At the end of the *ayah* Allah (SWT) stated that He is with the patient ones i.e. those who are steadfast and firm in following Allah's commandments.

(67) *"It is not fitting for a Prophet that he should have prisoners of war until he had thoroughly subdued the land. You desire the good of this world, but Allah (SWT) desires the Hereafter. And Allah (SWT) is All-Mighty, All-Wise."* This *ayah* refers to a particular event after the Battle of *Badr*. In the Battle seventy of the *Quraysh* chiefs were killed and further seventy were taken as prisoners of war. As at that time no clear injunction was revealed regarding the prisoners of war, the Prophet (SAW) called upon his Companions (RAA) for consultation. Umar (RAA) said that they should kill these captives and not let them go for ransom, for they might return to fight against the Muslims. This was also the opinion of some other Companions like S'ad bin Muadh (RAA), while others including Abu Bakr (RAA) gave the opinion to release the captives in return for ransom, for they thought that it might be possible that at some later stage they might accept Islam. The Prophet (SAW), because of his kindness and affection towards the creation of Allah (SWT), accepted the opinion of Abu Bakr (RAA) and set the captives free in return for ransom. This became the reason for the displeasure of Allah (SWT) and He revealed this *ayah* admonishing the Muslims for the decision that they had taken ransom to release the prisoners, for it is not befitting for a Prophet of Allah (SWT) and his followers that once they overpower their enemy, they release them until they have thoroughly subdued them. Then Allah (SWT) further

admonishes them that it is not proper for the believers to desire the worldly things of this life i.e. the ransom that they got in return of the prisoners, while He wants them to seek Paradise in the Hereafter. And surely He is the Mighty and Wise.

(68) *"Had it not been a previous sanction from Allah (SWT), a severe torment would have touched you for what you took."* This refers to the *ayah* 4 of surah Muhammad (SAW), which had already been revealed much before this surah. There Allah (SWT) gave an option to the Muslims that when your enemies are thoroughly subdued then it is permissible for you to keep their captured men as prisoners. The difference of opinion that arose between the Muslims was due to their interpretation of that *ayah*, for some thought that they had broken the back of the disbelievers' army, thus they can keep their men as prisoners and release them in return of ransom. While others said that they should kill them for they have not yet routed the disbelievers. Thus Allah (SWT) said that if that *ayah* had not been revealed before, they surely would have been punished severely for their decision.

(69) *"So enjoy what you have gotten of booty in war, lawful and good, and be afraid of Allah (SWT). Certainly, Allah (SWT) is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."* Although the decision to release the captives became the cause of displeasure of Allah (SWT), yet by His grace and Mercy He gave the believers permission to enjoy the booty that they had collected from the battlefield as well as the ransom that they got in return for the prisoners. But in future they should fear Allah (SWT) and know that He is Most Forgiving and Merciful for His servants.

(70) *"O Prophet (SAW)! Say to the captives that are in your hands: "If Allah (SWT) knows any good in your hearts, He will give you something better than what has been taken from you, and He will forgive you, and Allah (SWT) is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."* The Prophet (SAW) was asked to invite the prisoners to consider that if they become righteous and accept Islam then they will be given much more than they have lost i.e. the ransom that they gave for themselves, and their previous sins will be pardoned. Also amongst the army of the disbelievers were those who were forced to come along with them but within their hearts they had testified to the prophethood of

Muhammad (SAW). They were afraid to disclose it because of the fear of their tribe and their lack of motivation to migrate and leave their land and family. Abbas (RAA), the uncle of the Prophet (SAW) was also amongst these prisoners, who ransomed himself and embraced Islam later on. And surely Allah (SWT) is Forgiving and Merciful.

(71) *“But if they intend to betray you, they have already betrayed Allah (SWT) before. So He gave (you) power over them. And Allah (SWT) is All-Knowing, All-Wise.”* i.e. if any of the prisoners falsely declare that they are Muslims and that they were forced to accompany the *Quraysh* so as to avoid punishment, then know that they have indeed shown treason against Allah (SWT) before i.e. in the Battle of Badr. Thus He gave the Muslims power over them to capture them, and surely He is Aware of their actions and Wise in His decisions.

(72) *“Verily, those who believed, and emigrated and strove hard with their property and their lives in the Cause of Allah (SWT) as well as those who gave (them) asylum and help, - these are (all) allies to one another. And as to those who believed but did not emigrate, you owe no duty of protection to them until they emigrate, but if they seek your help in religion, it is your duty to help them except against a people with whom you have a treaty of mutual alliance, and Allah (SWT) is the All-Seer of what you do.”* In the first part of this *ayah* Allah (SWT) mentions the virtues and the character of the *Muhajirin* and the *Ansar* of *Madinah* and stated that they are supporters and helpers to each other. The *Muhajirin* forsook their homes and their properties and left their relatives behind and strove hard and fought against the enemies only for the sake of Allah (SWT). Here the fighting against the enemies refers to the eight expeditions sent by the Prophet (SAW) to attack the trade caravans of the *Quraysh* of *Makkah* carrying goods and merchandise from Syria. The Prophet (SAW) only took part in four such expeditions along with the *Muhajirin* who were allowed to take part in them, while the *Ansar* of *Madinah* were not involved in these early expeditions. But they gave their *Muhajir* brothers refuge and shelter in their homes and helped them with their wealth and even divorced their wives if any of them had two, so that their *Muhajir* brothers could marry them. Such was the bond of brotherhood created between the *Muhajirin* and the *Ansar* that they were permitted to inherit from each other, having more right than even the

deceased's relatives but this practice was abrogated when Allah (SWT) ordained the fixed share of the relatives. Then Allah (SWT) mentioned those who embraced Islam but did not migrate to the Prophet (SAW) in *Madinah* and stayed behind with their disbelieving relatives and tribes. It was said to the Muslims that it is not incumbent on them to protect or help such believers until they do not leave their homes and fight in the cause of Allah (SWT). But if they ask for their support to safeguard their faith from the disbelievers then it becomes obligatory for the Muslims to aid them against their enemy except against a nation or a tribe with whom they have a treaty. And know that Allah (SWT) sees all the actions of His servants.

(73) *“And those who disbelieve are allies to one another, if you do not do so, there will be tumult and oppression on earth, and great mischief.”* Since the disbelievers are protectors and helpers to each other, therefore, O Muslims if you do not come together as one united block under one leader, then there will be much corruption and oppression in the land.

(74) *“And those who believed, and emigrated and strove hard in the Cause of Allah (SWT), as well as those who gave asylum and aid; these are the true believers, for them is forgiveness and an honorable provision.”* This *ayah* refers to the *Muhajirin* and the *Ansar*, an attestation from Allah (SWT) for their being true believers and a promise of forgiveness and generous provision made to them. At the beginning of this surah, Allah (SWT) described some traits of such true believers. It was stated that one of the qualities of a true believer is that when the Name of Allah (SWT) is mentioned before him, he feels a tremor in his heart which increases them in faith. Then it was said that they are never neglectful of performing their regular prayers and they spend in the way of Allah (SWT) from the provisions that He has provided for them. Similarly, Allah (SWT) mentioned their unique characteristics in another *ayah*: *“Only those are the believers who have believed in Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW), and afterwards doubt not but strive with their wealth and their lives for the Cause of Allah (SWT). Those! They are the truthful.”*¹

(75) *“And those who embraced the faith afterwards, and emigrated and strove hard along with you, they are of you. But kindred by blood are nearer to one another in the decree ordained by*

Allah (SWT). Verily, Allah (SWT) is the All-Knower of everything." It was declared by Allah (SWT) that from now on whosoever will believe in Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW), migrate to safeguard his religion and will strive hard for the cause of Allah (SWT) will be included in the universal brotherhood of Islam. But this does not mean that they have a right in the inheritance of their brother in Islam, for the blood relations of a Muslim have precedence over them. Indeed Allah (SWT) knows everything.

Foot Notes

[1] Surah Al-Hujurat(49): 15.