

At-Tauba

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Introduction

Surah *At-Tauba* was revealed in *Madinah* and as mentioned earlier, it forms a pair with surah *Al-Anfal*. It has 129 *ayaat* and can be divided into four parts with regard to the period of revelation of its discourses. Some of the scholars of exegesis have not been able to highlight the division of its *ayaat* with respect to its time of revelation. The first six *ayaat* and the *ayaat* from 25 to 37 were revealed near the end of 9th A.H on the occasion of the Pilgrimage, when the Prophet (SAW) dispatched his cousin Ali (RAA) to follow Abu Bakr (RAA), who had already left for *Makkah* as leader of the Pilgrims to the *Ka'bah*. The Prophet (SAW) instructed Ali (RAA) to deliver the discourse before the representatives of the different clans of Arabia so as to inform them of the new policy towards the idolaters of Arabia. The *ayaat* from 7 to 24 were revealed much earlier in 8 A.H., before the conquest of *Makkah*, while the *ayaat* from 38 to 72 were revealed in 9 A.H. in the month of *Rajab*, when the Prophet (SAW) was preparing for the battle of *Tabuk*. The last discourse of this surah from ayat 72 to ayah 129, were revealed in the same year i.e. 9 A.H, in the month of *Dhul-Qa'dah*.

Due to the peculiar nature of this surah, it would be appropriate at this point to elaborate the main aspects of the advent of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), in order to fully grasp the meaning of this noble surah. The Prophet (SAW) was sent as a Messenger to the whole of Arabia and this is one aspect of his prophethood known as *Be'sat Al-Khasa*. The other aspect of his prophethood is *Be'sat Al-'Aamah* i.e. he was sent as a Messenger for all mankind for all times to come. The first mission of his prophethood i.e. to establish Allah's *Deen* in the whole of Arabian peninsula was accomplished in the first twenty years of his prophethood. He eradicated *Shirk* from all parts of Arabia and brought about a revolution based on Islamic monotheism. During these years, he did not dispatch any of his Companions (RAA) to any place outside the Arabian peninsula to call them towards Islam. This was because of his *Be'sat Al-Khasa*, which was finally accomplished with the peace treaty of *Hudaibiyah*. By that time, one-third of Arabia had come under Islam which had established itself as a powerful, well organized and civilized Islamic state. This treaty further

created opportunities for Islam to spread its influence in the comparatively peaceful atmosphere created by it and to show the Non-Muslims that it was indeed a force to reckon with. After this treaty, some other important events also took place, that sealed his mission as a Messenger to the Arabs. This includes the conquest of *Makkah* and the victory over the *Jews* in the battle of *Khaybar* in 9th A.H, after which all resistance and provocative activities from the pagan Arabs were vanquished. This is why the disbelievers and idolaters of Arabia were then given an ultimatum to either embrace Islam or leave the Arabian peninsula, because the mission of the Prophet (SAW) as a Messenger to the Arabs had already been accomplished and now they had no other option but to accept Islam or they themselves will be responsible for the final installment of the punishment by Allah (SWT) which had initiated earlier with their humiliating defeat in the battle of *Badr*.

After these events pertaining to his *Be'sat Al-Khasa*, the second aspect of the Prophet's prophethood i.e. *Be'sat Al-Aamah* was initiated with the Prophet's sending his emissaries and letters to the emperors of Rome, Persia and Egypt, which resulted in some important battles like *Mu'tah* and *Tabuk*. Thus these are the two aspects of the prophethood of Muhammad (SAW), relatively distinct in nature. One of the distinctions that we see is that the pagan Arabs were not given any respite after the conquest of *Makkah*, for they were asked to either leave the Arabian peninsula or to accept Islam. This was because they were the original recipients of the Divine revelation and it was much easier for them to understand and comprehend it when it was being revealed in their own language and on a Prophet (SAW) who was from amongst them. But on the other hand, the Ahl-e-Kitab (people of the book) were given an option to either embrace Islam or pay *Jizyah* (tax).

At this point it seems appropriate to mention that the mission to make Allah's *Deen* dominant over all the religions of the world was no doubt initiated by the Prophet (SAW), but its accomplishment has been assigned to his *Ummah*, and thus they will be held responsible for that. Now we proceed with the translation and brief explanation of the ayaat of this surah.

(1) *"A declaration of immunity from Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) to those of the idolaters, with whom you have made a treaty."* This *ayah* announces the disavowal by

Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) unto the idolaters of Arabia. All of the treaties were abrogated except for those described in the following *ayaat*. It should also be mentioned that this surah does not start with 'Bismillah' as do all other surahs in the *Qur'an*, because 'Bismillah' is an assurance of protection and mercy and as per report of Ali (RAA) this surah was revealed with a sword in its hand, and thus could not have the assurance of peace and mercy for the disbelievers.

(2) *"So travel freely for four months throughout the land, but know that you cannot escape Allah (SWT), and Allah (SWT) will disgrace the disbelievers."* All of the disbelievers and idolaters of *Makkah* were allowed a respite of four months to leave the Arabian peninsula or embrace Islam. This refers to all those who were covered by some treaty without a fixed time limit and those whose treaties ended in less than four months. Then they were told to know that they could not escape Allah's decision, for He would surely humiliate the disbelievers.

(3) *"And a declaration from Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) to mankind on this day of the great Pilgrimage that Allah (SWT) is free from (all) obligations to the idolaters and so is His Messenger (SAW). So if you repent, it is better for you, but if you turn away, then know that you cannot escape Allah (SWT). And give tidings of a painful torment to those who disbelieve."* In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) instructs the Prophet (SAW) to publicly announce before the gathering of all tribes of Arabia on the occasion of the Pilgrimage that he and his Lord hereby declare immunity to all kinds of treaties that had been concluded with the idolaters. Further the Prophet (SAW) was asked to proclaim to the disbelievers that if they repented and mended their ways it would be better for them but if they turned away from the truth, then they should know that they cannot escape the punishment of Allah (SWT).

It should also be mentioned here that '*Hajj Al-Akbar*' as referred to here in this *ayah*, does not refer to the Pilgrimage that comes on Friday, rather the greater *Hajj* (Pilgrimage) means the day of *Arafah* and the smaller *Hajj* (*Hajj Al-Asghar*) means an *Umrah*.

(4) *"Except those of the idolaters with whom you have a treaty, and who have not subsequently failed you in aught, nor have supported anyone against you. So fulfill their treaty to them to the*

end of their term. Surely Allah (SWT) loves the pious." This is an exception regarding those idolaters who had concluded a treaty with the Muslims for a fixed period of time. Allah (SWT) stated that if such idolaters honored their treaties sincerely and did not aid any one against the Muslims, then they should abide by the treaty till the end of its time, for surely Allah (SWT) loves those who are pious and keep their promises.

(5) *"Then when the Sacred Months have passed, then kill the idolaters wherever you find them, and capture them and besiege them, and prepare for them each and every ambush. But if they repent and perform regular prayers, and give (obligatory) charity, then leave their way free. Verily, Allah (SWT) is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."* This refers to the third category of non-Muslims i.e. those with whom no treaty was concluded, and it also includes those who were given the four month grace period as mentioned earlier. Allah (SWT) commanded the Muslims not to give any respite to the idolaters that as soon as the sacred months i.e. *Muharram, Rajab, Dhul-Qa'dah* and *Dhul-Hijjah*, have passed in which fighting has been prohibited, then do not give any respite to the idolaters and fight and slay them wherever you find them. And do not show any leniency and kindness to them, for showing mercy and appeasement at this time would be like showing cowardice. This has always been the practice of Allah (SWT) that once proof is established against a people they are not shown any mercy, for they do not deserve it. Further the Muslims are commanded to execute and imprison the disbelievers and not wait for them, rather attack them in their own areas and prepare for them ambush. But there is always room for repentance, thus Allah (SWT) said that if they repent, mend their ways and keep up their regular prayers and pay *Zakah* (obligatory charity), then they should be left alone, for they should know that Allah (SWT) is Forgiving and Merciful. This *ayah* was also used as a proof by Abu Bakr Siddique (RAA) against those who refused to pay *Zakah* after the death of the Prophet (SAW). He referred to this *ayah* and convinced other Companions (RAA) of the Prophet (SAW) to wage *Jihad* against those people. At first Umar (RAA) tried to insist over giving concession to the tribes who had rebelled, because of the impending danger, but as Abu Bakr (RAA) unfolded his arguments step by step, all the Companions (RAA) came round to the view that the truth was in what Abu Bakr (RAA) said.

(6) *“And if anyone of the idolaters seeks your protection then grant him protection, so that he may hear the Word of Allah (SWT), and then escort him to where he can be secure, that is because they are men who know not.”* Allah (SWT) commanded the Muslims that if any of the idolaters come to them and seek their protection, then they should grant them protection, so that they have an opportunity to listen to the *Qur’an* and understand the veracity of Islam. This was because there were some tribes in Arabia who had not known or heard enough about Islam and *Qur’an*, thus when they were given an ultimatum by Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) to embrace Islam or leave the Arabian peninsula, some of them came to the Muslims to actually learn about their religion and the message that they were preaching. Thus the Muslims were commanded to give them asylum and then transport them to a place of safety, for these are people who do not know the truth. Then after they have come to know the truth it would be incumbent on them to accept it or to leave Arabia. In this regard it seems appropriate to mention here the tribe of *Kafiristan* living in the northern areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan. It has been reported that they claim to be the direct descendents of the *Quraysh* of *Makkah* that were exiled from the Arabian peninsula. However, Allah (SWT) knows the best.

(7) *“How can there be a covenant with Allah (SWT) and with His Messenger (SAW) for the idolaters except those with whom you made a covenant near the Sacred Mosque? So long as they are true to you, be true to them. Verily, Allah (SWT) loves the pious.”* These *ayah* from 7 to 24 were revealed before the conquest of *Makkah* as mentioned in the introduction. At that time when the Muslims were preparing for their final assault against the *Quraysh* of *Makkah*, a difference of opinion arose between on the question whether they fight against the *Quraysh* or not. Much of the debate was initiated by the hypocrites of *Madinah* who discouraged the Muslims from fighting against the *Quraysh*, for they said that the *Quraysh* were the custodians of *Makkah* and if they fight, they would be shedding blood in the Holy Sanctuary. Thus Allah (SWT) admonished them in this *ayah* and said that how can there be a treaty with the idolaters on part of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW), for they will never abide by it as they have so much hatred in their hearts for the Muslims that if given the least opportunity, they will not

even bother to honor their pledge. Thus Allah (SWT) stated that there can never be a treaty with the idolaters except for those with whom the Muslims concluded a treaty at the Sacred Mosque i.e. the peace treaty of *Hudaibiyah*. Then He commanded the Muslims to honor this treaty as long as they uphold it, for He loves those who keep their promises.

(8) *“How that when you are overpowered by them, they regard not the ties, either of kinship or of covenant with you? With their mouths they please you, but their hearts are averse to you, and most of them are transgressors.”* Allah (SWT) further encourages the Muslims not to enter into any pledge with them for they should ponder over the fact that if these idolaters get the least opportunity to overpower them then they would never even blink before disregarding the ties of kinship with you or honor the treaty that they had made with you. They just try to flatter the Muslims with their speech but their hearts are filled with venom for most of them are rebellious and wicked in nature.

(9) *“They have purchased with the revelations of Allah (SWT) a little gain, and they hindered men from His Way; evil indeed is that which they used to do.”* i.e. they have rejected and cast aside the revelations of Allah (SWT) for the things of this world that have blinded them from the truth. Thus they have turned away from the path of Allah (SWT) and also prevent others from following it, and indeed evil are the deeds that they have done.

(10) *“With regard to a believer, they respect not the ties, either of kinship or of covenant! It is they who are the transgressors.”* i.e. they do not have any regard of the ties of kinship or the sanctity of their vows with the Muslims, for they are transgressors.

(11) *“But if they repent, perform regular prayers and give Zakah, then they are your brethren in religion. We explain the revelations in detail for a people who know.”* i.e. if they repent and turn to Allah (SWT) for forgiveness and offer their regular prayers and give *Zakah*, then it becomes obligatory for the Muslims that they accept their faith and consider them as their brothers in faith. Thus in this way Allah (SWT) explains His revelations for those who understand.

(12) *“But if they violate their oaths after their covenant, and attack your Deen, then fight the leaders of disbelief, for surely their oaths are nothing to them - so that they may desist.”* Allah (SWT) commands the believers that if the disbelievers violate their oaths that they had made with the believers and insult their *Deen* i.e. taunt them for their faith, then they should fight the leaders of disbelief like Abu Jahl, Utbah and Shaybah, and execute them, for their oaths are nothing to them and they may be restrained from their evil actions.

(13) *“Will you not fight a people who have violated their oaths and intended to expel the Messenger (SWT), while they did attack you first? Do you fear them? Allah (SWT) has more right that you should fear Him, if you are believers.”* In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) admonishes the Muslims that why is it that they do not want to fight against the disbelievers, when it were the disbelievers who broke their oaths and conspired to expel Prophet Muhammad (SAW) from *Makkah*, and it was they who started fighting against the Muslims for the first time i.e. in the battle of *Badr*. Further, Allah (SWT) commanded the Muslims not to fear the idolaters but fear Him alone, for He deserves more to be feared because of His Might and Power.

(14) *“Fight against them so that Allah (SWT) will punish them by your hands and disgrace them and give you victory over them and heal the breasts of believing people.”* Allah (SWT) further persuaded the believers to fight against the disbelievers and He gave them the good news of victory over these idolaters. Further, He said that He will punish the disbelievers at the hands of the Muslims and will sooth the hearts of the believers.

(15) *“And remove the anger of their hearts. Allah (SWT) accepts the repentance of whom He wills. Allah (SWT) is All-Knowing, All-Wise.”* i.e. Allah (SWT) will heal the spirits of the believers by removing anger from their hearts caused by all those pains and sorrows inflicted by the disbelievers, for surely He accepts repentance of whom He Wills of His servants. And He knows what is best for His servants and He is All-Wise and Knowing.

(16) *“Do you think that you shall be left alone while Allah (SWT) has not seen those among you who strive hard and have not taken any trusted friends besides Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW), and the believers. Allah (SWT) is Well-Acquainted with what you do.”* 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 in the Hereafter. Then Allah (SWT) said that the sincere Muslims will be marked out from the hypocrites by testing them through *Jihad* i.e. struggle in the path of Allah (SWT). They are those who do not make as their supporters and confidants other than Allah (SWT), His Messenger (SAW) and the believers. Thus it is a test for the believers and a warning for them, so that there does not remain any sympathy in their hearts for the disbelievers, even if they be their relatives. And certainly Allah (SWT) knows all that they do.

(17) *“It is not for the idolaters to inhabit the Mosques of Allah (SWT), while they are self-confessedly unbelievers. The works of such are in vain and in Fire shall they abide.”* This *ayah* refers to the *Quraysh* of *Makkah* who were the custodians of *Ka’bah* and were responsible for its maintenance. Allah (SWT) stated that it is not for those who associate partners with Him to tend and maintain the mosques of Allah (SWT), for they are built to worship Him alone while the idolaters do nothing but false acts of *Shirk* and *Kufr* in them. Thus Allah (SWT) said that all their works i.e. the maintenance and building of the *Ka’bah* etc. will go in vain because of their *Shirk* and their final abode will be Hellfire.

(18) *“The Mosques of Allah (SWT) shall be visited only by those who believe in Allah (SWT) and the Last Day; perform regular prayers, and give Zakah and fear none but Allah (SWT). It is they who are expected to be on true guidance.”* i.e. the maintaining of the mosques of Allah (SWT) can only be done by those who believe in Allah (SWT) and in the *Last Day*, establish regular prayers in them and pay their obligatory charity and they fear Him alone. Such are the believers who shall be rightly guided.

(19) *“Do you consider the providing of drinking water to the pilgrims and the maintenance of Sacred Mosque as worthy as the acts of those who believe in Allah (SWT) and the Last Day, and strive hard and fight in the Cause of Allah (SWT)? They are not equal before Allah (SWT). And Allah (SWT) guides not those people who are the wrong-doers.”* The *Quraysh* of *Makkah* felt

proud of their status as the custodians of the *Sacred Mosque* and that they are its maintainers, but Allah (SWT) said that all these works will be of no good to them, for they can never be equal to those who believe in Him and the *Last Day* and strive in His cause. And surely Allah (SWT) does not guide such evil-doers.

(20) *“Those who believed and emigrated and strove hard and fought in Allah's Cause with their wealth and their lives are far higher in degree with Allah (SWT). They are the successful.”* i.e. those with such qualities are the ones who have the highest rank with Allah (SWT), for they believed in Him, left their homes and made *Jihad* for His cause with their wealth and their lives. Such are indeed the successful ones.

(21) *“Their Lord gives them glad tidings of a Mercy from Him, and that He is pleased, and of Gardens for them wherein are everlasting delights.”* Such are those who will receive the good news of a supreme achievement i.e. their Lord will bestow His Mercy upon them and will be pleased with them, and has prepared for them gardens of eternal bliss in the Hereafter.

(22) *“They will dwell therein forever. Verily, with Allah (SWT) is a great reward.”* i.e. they will dwell in Paradise forever and surely the supreme reward is only with Allah (SWT).

(23) *“O you who believe! Take not for friends your fathers and your brothers if they prefer disbelief to Belief. And whoever of you does so, then he is one of the wrong-doers.”* In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) prohibited the Muslims from taking the disbelievers and idolators as their supporters and helpers even if they are their fathers and brothers. This *ayah* makes it clear that a relationship or friendship depends upon the love and relationship with Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW). In the end Allah (SWT) said that whoever disobeys this commandment then surely he shall be considered of the wrong-doers.

(24) *“Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW), and striving hard in His Cause, then wait until Allah (SWT) brings about His Decision. And Allah (SWT) guides not the people who are transgressors.”* Although these *ayat* were revealed specifically for those who did not migrate from *Makkah* because of the love of their families and their property, yet they also have a general application. Allah (SWT) commands His Prophet (SAW) to warn those who prefer their relatives and families and their riches and wealth over the love of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) and to make *Jihad* in His cause. This means that if all these things become a hindrance for effort in Allah’s cause then choose which you love the most, your relatives, riches and property or Allah (SWT) and His prophet and striving hard for His *Deen* with your life and your wealth. Those whose love for Allah (SWT), His Messenger (SAW) and *Jihad* is greater than any other thing, they are the successful ones. But those whose love for their blood relations and wealth is the highest, then they are told to wait for His final decision i.e. His punishment, for He does not guide the transgressors to the right path.

(25) *“Truly Allah (SWT) has given you victory on many battle fields, and on the day of Hunayn when you rejoiced at your great number but it availed you naught and the earth, vast as it is, seemed to close in upon you, then you turned back in flight.”* In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) comforts His Prophet (SAW) and the believers and reminds them of all the blessings that He had descended upon them by giving them victories in many

battles against their enemies. Then He said that they should also remember that victory does not depend upon great numbers or one's physical strength but it comes with the grace and help of Allah (SWT) alone. This is why the great strength and the large number of the Muslims that had made them proud on the day of *Hunayn* did not benefit them in the least. They were twelve thousand strong, with ten thousand from the army that came with the Prophet (SAW) for the conquest of *Makkah* and two thousand of those who embraced Islam after the conquest. When the Muslims entered the valley of *Hunayn*, their enemies attacked them suddenly with their archers descending arrows from above. Even with such a large army they retreated and fled from the battle, except a few which remained with the Prophet (SAW). That is why Allah (SWT) said that even this earth with all its vastness narrowed on you when you fled from the battle. According to authentic traditions, there remained between eighty to hundred Companions (RAA) with the Prophet (SAW).¹

(26) *"Then Allah (SWT) did send down His tranquility on the Messenger (SAW), and on the believers, and sent down forces which you saw not, and punished the disbelievers. Such is the recompense of disbelievers."* On the day of *Hunayn*, when most of the Muslim army was fleeing the battle in utter chaos and confusion, Allah (SWT) bestowed calmness and tranquility on His Prophet (SAW) and he remained firm in his position while riding his mule. He faced the enemy and led his mule towards the enemy while Al-Abbas (RAA) and Abu Sufyan bin Harith (RAA) were holding the ropes of the mule. They tried to stop the mule and informed the Prophet (SAW) of the possible danger ahead, but he descended from his mule and ran towards the enemy proclaiming aloud that *'I am the Prophet (SAW), not lying! I am the son of Abdul Muttalib!'*, then he said aloud, *'O Companions (RAA) of Samurah'*, referring to those of his Companions (RAA), who gave the pledge of *Ridwan*. Upon hearing this call, Muslims started returning to the battlefield from all directions, rushed to the side of the Messenger (SAW) and fought against the enemy valiantly. This was when Allah (SWT) said that He bestowed calmness and tranquility on the Prophet (SAW) and the believers. Then Allah (SWT) reminded the Muslims that He sent down forces which they could not see i.e. the angels, which ran through the forces of the enemy and punished them severely by His leave. This is how Allah (SWT) punished those who disbelieved.

(27) *"Then after that Allah (SWT) will accept the repentance of whom He will. And Allah (SWT) is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."* This refers to those who fought in the battle against the Muslims but later on embraced Islam and thus Allah (SWT) said that He accepts repentance of whoever He wills, for He is Forgiving and Merciful.

(28) *"O you who believe! Verily, the idolaters are unclean. So let them not come near the Sacred Mosque after this year, and if you fear poverty, Allah (SWT) will enrich you if He wills, out of His Bounty. Surely, Allah (SWT) is All-Knowing, All-Wise."* This is one of the *ayaat* given to Ali (RAA) by the Prophet (SAW) to proclaim to the idolaters that no polytheist will be allowed to perform *Hajj* after that year, for they are filthy and unclean and thus cannot enter the Sacred Mosque. Then it was stated that O believers you should not worry about any economic blockage because of your severing ties with the disbelievers, for Allah (SWT) will compensate you with something better and will enrich you with His limitless bounties if He wills, for He knows what benefits His servants and He is Wise.

(29) *"Fight against those who believe not in Allah (SWT), nor in the Last Day, nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth among the people of the Scripture, until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued."* The idolaters of Arabia were not given any respite after the Conquest of *Makkah* for they were asked to either leave the Arabian peninsula or to embrace Islam. This was because they were the original recipients of the Divine revelation and it was much easier for them to understand and comprehend it when it was being revealed in their own language. But on the other hand, the disbelievers including the *Jews* and the *Christians* were given an option either to embrace Islam or pay *Jizyah* (tax). Thus in this *ayah* Allah (SWT) commands the believers to fight against the people of the Scripture, who do not believe in Allah (SWT) or the *Hereafter* and do not take as prohibited what He and His Messenger (SAW) had prohibited them from. Although they professed that they believe in Allah (SWT) and in the *Last Day*, but it was nothing but mere empty words of faith that they uttered for in their hearts they did not believe in Him nor in the *Hereafter*. Further the Muslims are commanded to fight them if they do not submit themselves to the religion of

truth i.e. Islam, or they pay *Jizyah* willingly to the Islamic state and feel utterly subdued. If they do so then they are allowed to live as *Christian* or *Jew* in an Islamic state but they will have to comply with and submit to the socio-politico-economic system (i.e. the public law) of that Islamic state. This is so because Islam does not force anyone to embrace it because believing depends upon faith and will of a person and it will be meaningless if it is imposed by force.

(30) *“And the Jews say: Ezra (AS) is the son of Allah (SWT), and the Christians say: Messiah (AS) is the son of Allah (SWT). That is a saying from their mouths. They imitate the saying of the disbelievers of old. Allah's Curse be on them, how they are deluded away from the truth!”* This noble *ayah* indicates that the *Jews* and the *Christians* are disbelievers and idolators. This is because some *Jews* believe that Prophet Ezra (AS) was the son of Allah (SWT), while the *Christians* say that Prophet Jesus (AS) is the son of Allah (SWT). But Allah (SWT) states that these are all lies which they have invented with their mouths and that they utter these things to imitate and resemble the previous nations who also disbelieved in Him and were idolators. Throughout the ancient world, as far back as Babylonia, the worship of pagan gods grouped in threes, or triads, was common. That influence was also prevalent in Egypt, Greece, and Rome in the centuries before, during, and after Prophet Jesus (AS). Afterwards, such pagan beliefs began to invade Christianity which further developed into the idea of the Trinity. The worship of the Egyptian triad *Isis*, *Serapis*, and the child *Horus* probably conditioned the early church theologians to the idea of a triune *God*, and was influential in the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity as set forth in the *Nicaean*² and *Athanasian*³ creeds. Likewise, as a result of the Babylonian captivity of the *Jews* by *Nabu-ked-Nazr* and their later emancipation by *Cyrus* the Great of Persia, they were influenced by the religion of *Mithraism* which is generally considered to be of Persian origins, specifically an outgrowth of *Zoroastrian* culture. *Mithraism* is also based on the concept of the son of god, thus the *Jews* borrowed this concept from them and made Prophet Ezra (AS), the son of Allah (SWT). Thus Allah (SWT) cursed them because of their deviation from the truth.

(31) *“They took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allah (SWT), and the Messiah (AS), son of Mary (AS), while they were commanded to worship none but One Allah (SWT).*

There is no God but He. Be He glorified from all that they associate with Him." " In this *ayah*, Allah (SWT) has admonished the *Jews* and the *Christians* for blindly following their rabbis and monks and giving them the right to be obeyed which is an exclusive right of Allah (SWT), thus taking them as their lords besides Him. When this *ayah* was revealed, Adi bin Hatim (RAA), who was a *Christian* before he embraced Islam and was the son of a famous *Christian* Hatim Tai, said to the Prophet (SAW) that *"They did not worship them"* The Prophet (SAW) then replied: *"Yes they did, for the rabbis and monks prohibited the allowed for the Christians and the Jews and allowed the prohibited, and they obeyed them. This is how they worshipped them."*²⁴ This way they obeyed their monks and rabbis more than they obeyed Allah (SWT), while they had already been commanded to worship only Him, besides Whom there is no deity worthy of worship, and surely He is far above and Holier than what these idolators falsely ascribe unto Him.

(32) *"They want to extinguish Allah's (SWT) Light with their mouths, but Allah will not allow except that His Light should be perfected even though the disbelievers hate (it)."* With their mouths has twofold meaning: (1) The old fashioned oil lamps were extinguished by blowing with the mouth. So the unbelievers would like to blow out Allah's light as it is offending them. (2) they try to extinguish the guidance and truth of Islam by distorting the message of Allah (SWT) through lies and false words of their mouth. This is the ground reality in the world today. The *Jews* and the *Christians* with all their power and media support want to extinguish the guidance and the religion of truth by their lies and falsehoods that they have been portraying the Muslims with. But Allah (SWT) categorically refuted such claims in this *ayah* and stated that He will never allow this to happen. Instead, He will make the light of Islam even brighter than before and will perfect it for His servants, no matter how displeasing it might be to the disbelievers.

(33) *"It is He Who has sent His Messenger (SAW) with guidance and the religion of truth, to make it triumphant superior over all religions even though the idolaters hate (it)."* This *ayah* has appeared more than once in the Holy *Qur'an* and is the key in understanding the mission of the Holy Prophet (SAW). His mission was not only to preach Allah's (SWT) Message, but a careful study of this *ayah* reveals that

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had been sent by Allah (SWT) along with two items: *Al-Huda* or The Guidance, and *Deen al-Haq* or the True Way of Life, so that to make this *Deen* supreme over all other religions of this world. The famous scholar of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, Shah Waliyullah Dehlvi (RA) (1703-1762) has made this *ayah* the subject of in-depth and extensive study in his book *Izalatul Khafa un Khilafatul Khulafa*. He has described it as the most important *ayah* in understanding the purpose and mission of Muhammad's prophethood. Similarly, Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi (RA) (1872-1944) has taken this *ayah* as the key for understanding the global revolutionary manifesto of Islam. In the end Allah (SWT) said that surely Islam will prevail over all other faiths of the world no matter how displeasing it might be to the disbelievers.

(34) *"O you who believe! Verily, there are many of the rabbis and the monks who devour the wealth of mankind in falsehood, and hinder from the Way of Allah. And those who hoard up gold and silver, and spend it not in the Way of Allah, announce unto them a painful torment."* In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) warns the believers not to be like those rabbis and monks of the *Jews* and the *Christians* who eat up wealth of their people unlawfully and turn them away from the path of Allah (SWT). This refers to their giving religious verdicts for money because of their love for this world. In giving such verdicts, they would sometimes distort Divine revelations and give verdicts according to the whims and desires of the one who offered them more money. At this point it seems appropriate to mention the hadith of the Prophet (SAW) narrated by Abu Said (RAA) who said: *"The Prophet (SAW) said: "You will follow the wrong ways, of your predecessors so completely and literally that if they should go into the hole of a lizard, you too will go there." We said, "O Allah's Apostle! Do you mean the Jews and the Christians?" He replied, "Who else?""*⁵ Thus today we see that many Muslims today have adapted the conduct of these *Jewish* rabbis and *Christian* monks. They sell their religion in return of worldly gains, using their positions and status among people to illegally devour their wealth and prevent them from seeking the path of Allah (SWT) in the hope of finding guidance. Then Allah (SWT) described another group of the *Jewish* rabbis and the *Christian* monks who used to hoard up gold and silver and not spent it in the way of Allah (SWT) and that for them is a painful punishment. The word *Kanz* in this *ayah* which had been translated as gold and silver, refers to that

wealth for which the *Zakah* has not been paid, otherwise keeping wealth which remains after taking out *Zakah* is not a sin. This *ayah* specifically refers to the people of religion like the rabbis, monks or the scholars who have amassed great wealth by making their religion as a profession and not spending in the way of Allah (SWT).

(35) *"On the Day when that will be heated in the Fire of Hell and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs. (and it will be said to them) "This is the treasure which you hoarded for yourselves. Now taste of what you used to hoard.""* This *ayah* gives the detail of the painful punishment that Allah (SWT) warned about in the previous *ayah*. It states that in the Hereafter the wealth and money that these misguided people had hoarded for themselves in this life will be heated in the fire of Hell and then their foreheads, their sides and their backs will be branded with it and it will be said to them that these are the riches they had amassed illegally in their worldly life and it has now become the very instrument of their painful torment.

(36) *"Verily, the number of months with Allah (SWT) is twelve months, so was it ordained by Allah (SWT) on the Day when He created the heavens and the earth; of them four are Sacred. That is the right religion, so wrong not yourselves therein, and fight against the idolaters collectively, as they fight against you collectively. But know that Allah (SWT) is with those who are pious."* This *ayah* refers to the false customs of the pagan Arabs regarding the calendar. In order to satisfy their self-serving motives, they would sometimes alter the number of days and months of a year or change its order and significance that was Divinely determined. Thus Allah (SWT) said that with Him the number of months is twelve, which He had ordained since the creation of the heavens and the earth and this is what has been written in the Preserved Tablet. Out of these twelve months, He has declared four as Sacred viz. *Muharram, Rajab, Dhul-Qa'dah* and *Dhul-Hijjah*. Then it was said that this is the right religion i.e. the commandments pertaining to the order of the months and the four Sacred months ordained by Allah (SWT). Thus do not wrong yourselves by acting against these injunctions regarding the sacred months. Then in the next part of this *ayah*, Allah (SWT) has given permission to the believers to defend themselves and fight against the disbelievers all together, if

they initiate the battle in any of the sacred months. But they should also know that self-restraint is recommended as far as possible, for Allah (SWT) is with those who are pious and restrain themselves.

(37) "The postponing is indeed an addition to disbelief: thereby the disbelievers are led astray, for they make it lawful one year and forbid it another year in order to adjust the number of months forbidden by Allah (SWT), and make such forbidden ones lawful. The evil of their deeds seems pleasing to them. And Allah (SWT) guides not the people, who disbelieve." This *ayah* also refers to this false custom of the pagan Arabs, who would put the sacred months back and forth in order to serve their own motives e.g. if one of the sacred months approached while they were fighting, they would say that this month is not sacred this year and that they would make the next month as sacred, so that to make up for the months that Allah (SWT) has sanctified. They thought that as the custodians of the Sacred Mosque they have the authority to change Allah's pronouncement, but this was not approved by Him, and it was said that it is nothing but an addition to their disbelief. Then Allah (SWT) stated that such customs of ignorance and misguidance have been made seem fair to the disbelievers and surely He does not guide such disbelieving people.

Foot Notes

[1] Fath Al-Bari 6: 81.

[2] Nicaea is a city in Turkey where the first council was held by the roman emperor Constantine who called up bishops to invent an early concept of Trinity which was later known as the Nicæan creed. Today this city is known by the name of Iznik.

[3] This creed is named after Athanasius (died 373 C.E) who was a clergyman and supported Constantine at Nicaea.

[4] Musnad Ahmed 4: 378.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(73) *“O Prophet! make war on the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be harsh against them, their abode is Hell, and it is an evil destination.”* From here begins the third discourse of this surah, containing stern warnings to the hypocrites. This *ayah* also appears in surah *At-Tahrim*, which was revealed a year or two earlier than this surah. It has previously been mentioned that one of the main reasons for the Battle of *Tabuk* to take place was to expose the hypocrites because it was high time that the believers be clearly distinguished from the hypocrites. The Prophet’s mission had already been accomplished in the Arabian peninsula and now it had become obligatory on the Muslims to participate in such expeditions. This was the first time that all the Muslims of *Madinah* were ordered by the Prophet (SAW) to fight in the battle, while before that he would only persuade and exhort the Muslims to fight in the cause of Allah (SWT). This was a tough test for the Muslims as well as for the hypocrites, whose true identity had not been yet exposed. Amongst the Muslims, there were those who went ahead and joined the forces for *Jihad* without any hesitation but some of them were unable to join them because of some genuine excuse. On the other hand, there were the hypocrites who, despite the fact that they had no excuse to offer, did not participate in the *Jihad* because it was very hard on them. Indeed they were the people who lacked true faith. In the end they were unable to cover up their hypocrisy and thus were exposed publicly. As it has been mentioned before that in most of the *ayaat* that describe the conduct of the hypocrites, the word *Munafiqeen* (hypocrites) has been some how bracketed with the word *Momineen* (believers), because they profess to be one of the believers. But here Allah (SWT) has mentioned them along with the disbelievers, thus exposing the true nature of these hypocrites. In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) commands His Prophet (SAW) to fight against the disbelievers as well as these hypocrites whom He has already exposed, and he has been told to deal rigorously with them and not be lenient to them, for they have made a mockery of their religion and surely their final abode is Hell, which is an evil destination.

(74) *“They swear by Allah (SWT) that they said nothing, but really they said the word of unbelief, and they disbelieved after accepting Islam, and they tried which they could not achieve, and they*

avenged not except for this that Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) had enriched them of His Bounty. Then if they repent, it will be better for them, but if they turn away, Allah (SWT) will punish them with a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter. And there is none for them on earth as a protector or a helper." Allah (SWT) states that whenever the Muslims came to know about the plots of these hypocrites, they quickly denied them and would declare an oath that they did not say anything. This refers to the sayings of the hypocrites especially Abdullah bin Ubai on the occasion of the battle of *Tabuk*. When the Muslims and the Prophet (SAW) came to know about what he had said, he swore by Allah (SWT) that he had not said anything. This will further be elaborated in detail when we read surah *Al-Munafiqun*. But Allah (SWT) states that what they had said is nothing but disbelief and surely they have returned to disbelief after accepting Islam. The sense of this *ayah* is that they had only embraced Islam from their tongues, but not with its actual spirituality i.e. with *Iman* (true faith). Thus, they just used the label of Islam as a cover to conceal the hypocrisy and disbelief within their hearts. Then Allah (SWT) said that they tried but could not achieve i.e. their plans to assassinate the Prophet (SAW). This incident occurred during the return of the Prophet (SAW) from the battle of *Tabuk*. Some of the hypocrites sat in ambush behind the mountain pass with the intention of taking the life of the Prophet (SAW), but Allah (SWT) saved him from them and thus their conspiracy was foiled. Then Allah (SWT) said about them that they had no excuse to carry out such evil plots except that He and His Messenger had made them rich by His bounties. This refers to the payment of *Zakah* to hypocrites and disbelievers in hope of making their hearts inclined towards Islam, which eventually made them very rich. The next part of the *ayah* gives a stern warning to these hypocrites and disbelievers as well as an opportunity to repent from their evil-ways, for if they do so it will be much better for them; otherwise they will suffer a painful punishment in this life and in the Hereafter and no one will be able to help them or protect them from this torment.

(75) *"And of them are some who made a covenant with Allah (SWT) (saying): "If He gives us from His Bounty, we shall give charity (and alms), and shall most certainly be among the righteous.""*

There were different kinds of hypocrites according to the level of their hypocrisy. Here and in the next two *ayaat*, Allah (SWT) describes one such kind

of hypocrites, which in my opinion also relates to the Muslims of Pakistan (Ayah 77). Allah (SWT) states that there are some who make a solemn pledge with Him that if He makes them rich and wealthy, they will certainly give charity and alms and spend money for His pleasure and live like righteous men.

(76) *“Then when He gave them of His Bounty, they became niggardly with it, and turned away, and they were averse.”* i.e. when Allah (SWT) gave these hypocrites out of His bounties and made them rich, they acted miserly with it and turned their faces away from their pledge.

(77) *“So He punished them and sowed hypocrisy into their hearts till the Day they meet Him, because they went back on that which they had promised with Allah (SWT) and because they used to lie.”* Allah (SWT) said that He punished those who turned away from the covenant that they had made with Him and they uttered nothing but lies. Thus He sowed the seeds of *Nifaq* (hypocrisy) into their hearts which will last till the *Day of Judgment*. These words should send waves of shiver through ones body, especially the Muslims of Pakistan, because in today’s definition of nations and countries, this is the only nation which gained independence in the name of Islam. We were oppressed and persecuted by the British regime before the partition and thus we prayed to Allah (SWT) and made a covenant to Him that if He delivers us from this oppression and persecution and gives us an independent state where we can practice our religion in freedom then we will surely make it a beacon of Islamic civilization and establish His *Deen* in it, which He had bestowed upon His Prophet (SAW). As a result Allah (SWT) gave us Pakistan, made us thrive in number and strength and gave us from His provisions and a safe place to live. But we unfortunately went back on our words. Instead of showing gratitude to Him and establishing His *Deen*, we went after worldly pursuits following our whims and desires. Thus, today we see hearts of most of them sowed with hypocrisy, lust and disunity and they have lost their values because of their distancing themselves from Allah’s religion i.e. the *Qur’an* and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW). May Allah (SWT) bestow upon us inner conviction in His *Deen* so that we can return to our covenant when there is still time.

(78) *“Did they not know that Allah (SWT) knows their hidden thoughts and their secret counsels, and that Allah (SWT) is the All-Knower of the unseen.”* The hypocrites lied when they pretended to fulfill the covenant even though they know that Allah (SWT) knows the secrets of their hearts and has full knowledge of their secret meetings, for He knows all that is hidden.

(79) *“Those who defame such of the believers who give charity voluntarily, and those who could not find anything to give but their hard earnings, they mock at them, Allah (SWT) will throw back their mockery on them, and they shall have a painful torment.”* This ayah describes another of the traits of the hypocrites who would try to defame and slander the believers in any way possible whether it is those who give charity and alms voluntarily or those who do not have anything to give. This refers to the collecting of alms and wealth before the expedition of Tabuk. If the believer was like Abu Bakr (RAA) would give all of his belongings for the sake of Allah (SWT), then these hypocrites would say that he is just showing off; while if the believer was poor and thus contributed a small amount, they would say ridiculing him that Allah (SWT) is not in need of your charity. For example, it was narrated by Ibn Abbas (RAA) that one day the Prophet (SAW) went out to the people and called them to bring forth their charity. Among the last of them came a man who brought only a Sa' (handful) of dates, saying: *“O Allah's Messenger (SAW)! This is the Sa' of dates. I spent the whole night bringing water and irrigating the garden of a Jew and earned two Sa' of dates for my work. I kept one Sa' and brought you the other Sa'”* The hypocrites scoffed at him that Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) are not in need of your Sa' of dates. But the Prophet (SAW) asked the person who brought the dates to spread them over the heap of the charity collected for they are much dearer to Allah (SWT) than that.¹ Allah (SWT) then answers the hypocrites that it is not they who scoff at the believers, but it is He Who will scoff at them i.e. He will punish them according to the act of evil they have committed, and theirs shall be a woeful punishment.

(80) *“Whether you ask forgiveness for them or do not ask forgiveness for them. Even if you ask forgiveness for them seventy times, Allah (SWT) will not forgive them, because they have disbelieved in Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW). And Allah (SWT) does not guide those people*

who are rebellious." In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) prohibited the Prophet (SAW) of asking for forgiveness for the hypocrites. Allah (SWT) states that O prophet (SAW) whether you ask for forgiveness or do not ask for forgiveness of the hypocrites, He is not going to forgive them because though they pretend to be Muslims, in reality they have disbelieved in Him and His Messenger (SAW). And Allah (SWT) does not guide such transgressors and evil-doers.

(81) *"Those who were left behind rejoiced in their staying behind the Messenger of Allah (SAW); they disliked to strive hard in the Cause of Allah (SWT) with their properties and their lives, and they said: "Do not go forth in the heat." Say: "The Fire of Hell is fiercer in heat", would that they understand!"* This refers to those hypocrites who stayed behind from the battle of *Tabuk* by giving lame excuses to the Prophet (SAW). They rejoiced in the thought that they had deceived the Prophet (SAW) with their lies and they are people who abhor to struggle hard with their riches and their lives for the sake of Allah (SWT). Not content with their lies and deception they also tried to hinder others from joining the expedition. They said to them not to go out with the Prophet (SAW) in that scorching heat and instead enjoy the shades in their homes. But Allah (SWT) answered them that the heat of the Fire of Hell is much more intense than that, but these hypocrites do not understand.

(82) *"So let them laugh a little and weep much as a recompense of what they have earned."* i.e. they should laugh a little for when they are returned to Allah (SWT) and see their end they will do nothing but shed tears, which will be a recompense for their own deeds.

(83) *"If Allah (SWT) brings you back to a party of them, and they ask your permission to go out, say: "Never shall you go out with me, nor shall you fight any enemy with me; you were pleased to sit back for the first time, so now sit back with those who stay behind.""* After the return of the Prophet (SAW) from the expedition of *Tabuk*, he was asked to tell the hypocrites that from now onwards Allah (SWT) has barred them from participating in *Jihad* and that if they ask his permission to join him for any future expedition, he should tell them plainly that they cannot join him. This is because when they were exhorted by the Prophet (SAW) to join the expedition of

Tabuk in the first time, they made excuses and preferred to stay back with their women. Thus, now they should also sit back with those who stay behind.

(84) *“And never pray for any of them who dies, nor stand at his grave. Certainly they disbelieved in Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW), and died while they were transgressors.”* In this ayah Allah (SWT) prohibited the Prophet (SAW) from offering funeral prayers for the hypocrites or to stand on their graves, because they are those who have rejected Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) and thus died as disbelievers and transgressors.

(85) *“And let not their wealth or their children dazzle you. Allah (SWT) intends to punish them with these things in this world, and that their souls shall depart while they are disbelievers.”* Allah (SWT) commands the Prophet (SAW) not to be impressed by the riches and the children of these hypocrites. Because of their love for this world, they spend all their energies and efforts for this worldly life, thus enjoying its riches and a high status in the society. But Allah (SWT) said that He will punish these hypocrites through these possessions in this world, for sometimes even one’s own wealth and children become the reason for worries and agonies in this life. This is so because Allah (SWT) wants them to indulge themselves in this worldly life, so much so that they die as a disbeliever.

(86) *“And when a surah is revealed, (asking the Muslims) to believe in Allah (SWT) and to strive hard along with His Messenger (SAW), the resourceful among them ask your permission and say, “Leave us, we would be with those who sit (behind).”* Whenever a surah was revealed asking the Muslims to believe in Allah (SWT) and strive hard and fight alongside His Messenger (SAW), the wealthy and affluent among the hypocrites would come to the Prophet (SAW) and beg him to leave them behind, so that they can stay in their homes with their families.

(87) *“They are pleased to be with those who remain behind. And a seal has been set upon their hearts, so they do not understand.”* i.e. these hypocrites love to stay back in their homes with their women, for whom it is not obligatory to go out with the Muslim army. Thus because of this behavior, Allah (SWT) has put a seal on their hearts, leaving them bereft, of understanding.

(88) *“But the Messenger and those who believe with him strove hard with their wealth and their lives. They are those for whom are the good things, and it is they who will prosper.”* On the contrary, Allah (SWT) described the qualities of those who followed His Messenger (SAW). They strove hard and fought for His cause with their wealth and their lives. The reward for such faithful believers is nothing but good things in the Hereafter and they are the ones who are successful and shall surely prosper.

(89) *“Allah (SWT) has prepared for them Gardens underneath which rivers flow, to stay therein forever. That is the supreme triumph.”* i.e. He has prepared for His faithful believers gardens i.e. paradise, with rivers flowing underneath it. They will stay there forever and such is indeed a great achievement and supreme triumph.

(90) *“And those who made excuses from amongst the desert Arabs came asking your permission to exempt them, and those who had lied to Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) sat at home; a painful torment will seize those of them who disbelieve.”* This *ayah* refers to the hypocrites amongst the Bedouins. When the obligation of Jihad was publicly announced, they also came to the Prophet (SAW) and gave lame excuses to exempt them from going for the expedition of *Tabuk*, thus they lied to Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) and stayed behind. Therefore, soon a punishment will seize those of them who disbelieved.

(91) *“There is no blame on the weak or the sick or those who cannot find anything to spend, if they are sincere to Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW). There is no way (blame) against the good-doers. And Allah (SWT) is Forgiving, Merciful.”* This *ayah* describes those who were exempted from joining the expedition of *Tabuk*. Allah (SWT) first mentions those who might have physical disability, which might be because of a disease or because of old age. Then He mentions those who cannot join *Jihad* because they are sick, for their illness may prevent them from fighting in the battle, and also those who do not have enough resources to spend for the preparation of *Jihad*. There is no sin on these people if they stay behind, as long as they are sincere and true to Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) i.e. do not lie about their

condition, for such good-doers will not be blamed, and surely Allah (SWT) is Forgiving and Merciful.

(92) *"Nor on those who came to you that you might mount them, and you said: "I cannot find anything on which to mount you," they turned back, while their eyes overflowing with tears of grief that they could not find anything to spend."* Likewise, there is no blame on those also who came to the Prophet (SAW) with a sincere will to join him for *Jihad*, but could not find any conveyance, because of lack of resources. Thus they turned back with their eyes full of tears over grief of not joining the Prophet (SAW) because they could not go forth into the battlefield on their own expense.

(93) *"The blame is only against those who beg for exemption, while they are rich. They preferred to be with those who sit behind and Allah (SWT) has set a seal on their hearts so they know not."* i.e. the real blame is on those people who although are rich and resourceful and can prepare for the battle, but still opt to stay behind like their women. The fate of such is that Allah (SWT) sets up a seal on their hearts, so that they do not know or understand what they are losing.

(94) *"They will present excuses to you, when you return to them. Say "Present no excuses, we shall not believe you. Allah (SWT) has already informed us your news. Allah (SWT) will observe your deeds and so will His Messenger (SAW). Then you will be brought back to the Knower of the unseen and the visible, then He will inform you of what you used to do."* Allah (SWT) informed His Prophet (SAW) and the Muslims about the state of the hypocrites in advance. When they will return to *Madinah*, these hypocrites will present their excuses to them so as to please them and assure their sincerity for Islam. But Allah (SWT) commanded the Muslims to tell them in clear terms that we are not going to believe in your baseless stories, for He had already informed us of your hypocrisy and as for the future, He certainly will see your deeds and so will His Messenger (SAW), in order to judge your sincerity. Then you will all be returned to Him Who knows the unseen and the visible, thus you will fully be informed of all your deeds.

(95) *"Soon they will swear by Allah (SWT) to you when you return to them, that you may ignore them. So ignore them. Surely, they are wicked, and their abode is Hell, a recompense for that*

which they used to earn." Allah (SWT) further informed the Muslims that when you return to *Madinah*, these hypocrites will swear to you by Allah (SWT) about their excuses being valid, so that you do not bring them to task and leave them alone. Thus, you should also ignore them, for they are a wicked and wretched people and their final abode is Hell, a punishment for their evil deeds.

(96) *"They swear to you that you may be pleased with them, but if you are pleased with them, certainly Allah (SWT) is not pleased with the people who are transgressors."* This is a warning for the Muslims that they should not become content and pleased with the lies and excuses of the hypocrites and thus not bring them to task for their evil deeds, for they should know that Allah (SWT) is not pleased with such transgressors.

(97) *"The Bedouins are the worst in disbelief and hypocrisy, and more likely not to know the limits of that which Allah (SWT) has revealed to His Messenger (SAW). And Allah (SWT) is All-Knower, All-Wise."* In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) informs us about the Bedouins i.e. the desert Arabs, that these people surpass others when it comes to disbelief and hypocrisy. This is because these people remained ignorant of the teachings of Islam and the laws of what He has sent down, because they lived far away from the towns and were not able to spend much time with the Prophet (SAW) unlike his Companions (RAA), who had been blessed with his noble company and thus they had far more access to the meanings of the injunctions sent down by Allah (SWT) to His Prophet (SAW) and were more knowledgeable and pious as compared to the Bedouins. And certainly He knows who deserve to be given knowledge and He surely is Wise in His decisions.

(98) *"And of the Bedouins there are some who take what they have to spend as a fine and wait for a turn of fortune for you, on them shall be the evil turn of fortune. And Allah (SWT) is All-Hearer, All-Knower."* There were some amongst the desert Arabs who looked upon giving *Zakah* as a fine, for they did not have real faith and thus fulfilling the obligations was hard on them. They would wait for turn of events and that some misfortune befalls upon the Muslims, so that they be relieved from this penalty i.e. *Zakah*. But Allah (SWT) said that on them will be the evil turn of fortune i.e. ill-fortune befall them. And Allah (SWT) Hears and Knows everything.

(99) *“And of the Bedouins there are some who believe in Allah (SWT) and the Last Day, and take what they spend as bringing them nearer to Allah (SWT), and prayers of His Messenger (SAW). Let it be known that these bring them near. Allah (SWT) will soon admit them to His Mercy. Verily, Allah (SWT) is Forgiving, Merciful.”* On the other hand, it is clear that all Bedouins are not alike and there are many sincere Muslims amongst them who devoutly believe in Allah (SWT) and in the Hereafter. Whatever they have to spend from their wealth and properties in the cause of Allah (SWT), they spend it willingly, for they look upon it as a means of getting nearer to Him and to receive the invocations and blessings of His Messenger (SAW). Then Allah (SWT) said that they should know that what they do i.e. spending in His way, is indeed a means of approach to Him. Thus He will admit them to His Mercy, for He is Forgiving and Merciful for His servants.

(100) *“And the first to embrace Islam of the Muhajirun and the Ansar and also those who followed them in the best of intentions. Allah (SWT) is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens underneath which rivers flow, to live therein forever. That is the greatest success.”* This *ayah* mentions the two categories of the noble Companions (RAA) of the Prophet (SAW) classified according to the degrees of their excellence, for all people are not equal in their faith and commitment. Thus some excel over other due to their commitment and religiosity. This is just like what Allah (SWT) described the four grades of those who obey Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW). He stated: *“Whosoever obeys Allah (SWT) and the Prophet (SAW) will be in the company of those whom Allah (SWT) has blessed, of the Prophets, the truthful (Siddiqeen), the martyrs (Shuhada), and the righteous (Saliheen). What excellent companions are they!”*² Allah (SWT) has categorized true Muslims in these four grades or ranks and for each He has appointed stations of precedence. All Muslims can achieve such ranks of excellence according to their efforts except for the station of prophethood, which can never be acquired with effort and struggle, rather prophets were appointed by Allah (SWT) Himself. Similarly, in the present *ayah* Allah (SWT) has classified the noble Companions (RAA) of the Prophet (SAW) under two ranks in terms of their deeds and struggle. The *Qur’an* grades them according to precedence in belief and according to conversion before the Conquest of *Makkah* and after it. The first and the

foremost of them were the *Muhajirun* and the *Ansar of Madinah*. This is the highest grade amongst the Companions (RAA) who were the first people to accept the call of Islam at a time when its followers were weak and were persecuted and tortured in all possible manner. Then the second rank amongst the Companions (RAA) is that of those who followed the first ones nobly. They were at a lesser degree as compared to the first ones, for the way had already been laid for them and they just followed the course. Nevertheless, Allah (SWT) said that He is pleased with them all and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them paradise with rivers flowing underneath it. They will live therein forever. This surely is the highest possible rank one can achieve. This is the supreme triumph.

Foot Notes

[1] At-Tabari 14:383.

[2] Surah An-Nisa(4): 69.

(101) *“And among those around you of the Bedouins, there are some hypocrites, and so are some among the people of Madinah who persist in hypocrisy, you do not know them, We know them. We shall punish them twice, then they will be returned to a great torment.”* The two highest grades of the Companions (RAA) of the Prophet (SAW), were mentioned in the previous *ayah*, this *ayah* on the other hand mentions the people worst in rank i.e. the hypocrites. Allah (SWT) states that amongst the desert Arabs, there are also those who are in fact hypocrites by their words and deeds. Similarly there are some of the hypocrites amongst those who live in *Madinah*. Allah (SWT) warned and admonished them every now and then through His Prophet (SAW) but they were such who persisted obstinately in their hypocrisy. Then Allah (SWT) said that O Prophet (SAW) you do not know them for they conceal their hypocrisy, but He knows them all and thus He will punish them twice before they are returned to the great torment i.e. in the Hereafter. Here a question arises as to what does these two punishments before the *Day of Judgment* refer to. The first punishment refers to their humiliation in this world when Allah (SWT) will expose them. They were hoping for some turn of events i.e. for the Muslims to suffer a defeat, but Allah (SWT) made them victorious and exposed the hypocrites in front of the Muslims. The second refers to the chastisement of the grave that they will suffer before the *Day of Judgment*. Some of the people especially those who reject the authority of Hadith of the Prophet (SAW) have denied the reality of the punishment of the grave, but this *ayah* with a few other references from the Holy *Qur’an* point out to the truth of the punishment in the grave.

(102) *“And others who have confessed their sins, they have mixed a deed that was righteous with another that was evil. It may be that Allah (SWT) will turn towards them (in mercy). Surely, Allah (SWT) is Forgiving, Merciful.”* There are another type of people in the middle i.e. at the border line of a hypocrite and a weak Muslim. This *ayah* mentions the lower middle amongst them who because of their weak faith and laziness sometimes stumble and deviate from the right path, even though they truly have believed. They are those who confess their errors and sins to themselves and to Allah (SWT). This is the basic difference between a staunch hypocrite who

persists in his hypocrisy as mentioned in the previous *ayah* and those weak Muslims who sometimes make errors and mistakes as long as they confess their sins sincerely before their Lord and ask for His forgiveness. They have mixed deeds with some which are good while some others are bad. Allah (SWT) then said that He may pardon them and forgive their sins, for He is Forgiving and Merciful.

(103) *“Take Sadaqah (alms) from their wealth in order to cleanse them and purify them with it, and pray for them. Verily! Your prayers are a source of solace for them, and Allah (SWT) is All-Hearer, All-Knower.”* The previous *ayah* mentioned those of the Muslims who sometimes commit sins or errors because of weakness in their faith and lack of zeal. This *ayah* mentions the anti-dote for weakness of ones faith. Allah (SWT) commands His Prophet (SAW) to take *Sadaqah* from the wealth and properties of such people to cleanse them and purify them from all kinds of weaknesses in their faith and other impurities. This is why *Sadaqah* is called *Zakah* which in literally means to purify i.e. that which purifies the souls. The main cause of the hypocrisy in one’s heart is the love for wealth and riches, thus taking *Sadaqah* from it purifies his soul from the disease of *Nifaq* (hypocrisy). Along with accepting their *Sadaqah*, Allah (SWT) asked the Prophet (SAW) to pray for them and ask Him to bestow His Mercy upon them, for his prayers are indeed a source of solace for them i.e. a source of mercy and honor for them. And surely He hears the prayers of His Prophets and knows all those who deserve them.

(104) *“Do they not Know that Allah (SWT) accepts repentance from His servants and takes the Sadaqat. And Verily, Allah (SWT) is He Who accepts repentance, the Merciful?”* This is to encourage the believers to repent after they have committed any sin or error for they should be rest assured that Allah (SWT) accepts the repentance for all those who repent to Him sincerely. Although one may have made a number of mistakes, but sincere repentance erases all kinds of sins and mistakes and purifies one’s soul. Then Allah (SWT) said that he accepts *sadaqat* from them. This means that although He is *All-Sufficient*, but He takes *sadaqat* from the wealth and riches of His servants so as to cleanse them and purify them. And surely He is the Acceptor of Repentance for all those who repent and Merciful for His servants.

(105) *"And say: "Do (as you will)! Allah (SWT) will see your deeds and His Messenger (SAW) and the believers. And soon you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the seen. Then He will inform you of what you used to do.""* The Prophet (SAW) was asked to tell them to repent and increase their good deeds that will strengthen them in virtue and blot out their past sins. Then it was said that Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) will monitor their attitude and conduct and so will the believers as to whether they mended their ways after repentance or not. Then their final return is to Allah (SWT) Who will inform them of all their deeds.

(106) *"And others who are held in suspense for Allah's Decree, whether He will punish them or will accept their repentance. And Allah (SWT) is All-Knowing, All-Wise."* This refers to the fourth category of the people i.e. the upper middle, who although have very strong faith, but sometimes they are deceived by the cursed *Satan* and thus commit some mistakes. This *ayah* specifically refers to the three Companions (RAA) of the Prophet (SAW) namely Ka'b bin Malik (RAA), Mararah bin Ar-Rabi (RAA) and Hilal bin Umayyah (RAA) were left behind from the expedition of *Tabuk* due to laziness and their preference of comfort of their homes and not because of hypocrisy. They accepted their mistake and sincerely repented afterwards but were held in suspense for a while as to know whether their repentance has been accepted or not, and until then the Prophet (SAW) ordered His Companions (RAA) not to speak to them. Then after a period of nearly fifty days of boycott, Allah (SWT) accepted their repentance and forgave them. This will further be elaborated when we discuss the *ayat* from 117 to 119 of this surah. In the end of this *ayah* Allah (SWT) said that surely He Knows all and He is Wise in His decisions.

(107) *"And those who have set up a mosque to hurt (the cause of Islam) and to promote disbelief, and to disunite the believers, and to make it as an outpost for those who are hostile against Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) aforesaid, they will indeed swear that their intentions are nothing but good. Allah (SWT) bears witness that they are certainly liars."* This was another of the conspiracies of the hypocrites of *Madinah*. They tried to build an outpost so that to gather their men together along with their weapons and supplies to be used against the Muslims. They gave the impression to the Muslims that they

are building a Mosque. They told them that due to their laziness, they are sometimes unable to reach for the regular prayers in the nearby *Quba* Mosque, but in reality they wanted it to become a center for the hypocrites where they will consult together in making plans and plots against the Prophet (SAW) and the Muslims. They finished building their Mosque just before the battle of *Tabuk* and also went to the Prophet (SAW) and requested him to pray in that Mosque, so that Allah (SWT) bestows His blessings on it. The Prophet (SWT) told them that he will pray at the Mosque after he returns from the battle of *Tabuk*. But Allah (SWT) disapproved of this and revealed this *ayah* before the Prophet (SAW) reached *Madinah* from the expedition of *Tabuk*. Allah (SWT) informed His Prophet (SAW) that those who have built this Mosque have only done so to hurt the cause of Islam and to promote disbelief and to cause division amongst the Muslims and to make an outpost for those who are hostile towards Him and His Messenger (SAW). Then the Prophet (SAW) was told that these hypocrites will swear that their intentions are good, but Allah (SWT) Himself testifies that they are liars.

(108) *“You should never stand therein. Verily, the mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety is worthier that you stand therein. In it are men who love to purify themselves. And Allah (SWT) loves those who purify themselves.”* Allah (SWT) commanded His Prophet (SAW) not to stand i.e. offer prayers, in that Mosque, for the Mosque which was founded from the very first day on piety and fear of Allah (SWT) i.e. *Quba* Mosque, is more deserving that he should stand therein and offer his prayers with the believers who love and purify themselves from all impurities and thus Allah (SWT) loves them for their cleanliness and purity.

(109) *“Is he, who has founded his building upon piety towards Allah (SWT) and His good Pleasure better, or he who founded his building on the brink of a crumbling bank, so that it crumbled with him into the Fire of Hell. And Allah (SWT) does not guide the wrong-doers.”* Allah (SWT) condemns those who built the Mosque to conceal their hypocrisy and compared them with those who laid the foundations of the blessed Mosque i.e. *Quba*, and praised them, for they laid the foundations of their Mosque on piety and His pleasure. On the other hand, the hypocrites laid the foundations of their Mosque on an undermined and shaky bank that will tumble down with

them in the fire of Hell. And surely Allah (SWT) does not guide such transgressors.

(110) *“The building which they built will never cease to be a cause of doubt in their hearts, unless their hearts are cut into pieces. And Allah (SWT) is All-Knowing, All-Wise.”* Just like cancer spreads in the body of a person if it is not treated well, so does hypocrisy in one’s soul if he does not repent and mend his ways. The meaning of this *ayah* is that those who built the Mosque to harm the Muslims have gone so far in their hypocrisy that it has become impossible to remove it from their hearts unless they are cut into pieces. And surely He knows all the actions of His servants and He is Wise.

(111) *“Verily, Allah (SWT) has purchased of the believers their lives and their properties in return for Paradise. They fight in Allah's Cause, so they kill and are killed. It is a promise in truth which is binding on Him in the Torah and the Injeel and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah (SWT)? Rejoice in the bargain which you have concluded. That is the supreme success.”* This is one of the most important verses of the Holy *Qur'an*. But, unfortunately, it no longer occupies the pivotal position in our lives, as it did in the lives of the Companions (RAA) of the Holy Prophet (SAW). This *ayah* talks about a bargain or a transaction between the believer on the one hand and Allah (SWT) on the other. In this transaction, Allah (SWT) is the purchaser and the believer is the seller. When a person has true faith it means that he has already committed himself to devote and dedicate his life, his capabilities, his energies, his resources, his possessions, and his wealth for the sake of Allah (SWT) and, in return, he is given the promise of the rewards of the Paradise in the Hereafter. It is not a cash bargain; rather it is a credit bargain. We are required to invest all that we have, including our life and property, for the cause of Allah (SWT). And what do we get in return? A promise. A word of assurance from Allah (SWT) that He will reward us in the Hereafter. This is the *baiy'ah* (pledge) between the faithful and Allah (SWT). On the basis of this *baiy'ah*, the believers are expected to fight and kill in the way of Allah (SWT) to make His *Deen* supreme and to establish the system of life as given by Him in its totality. And during the course of this conflict, when on the one hand they kill the enemies of Allah (SWT), they themselves are also killed. Then Allah (SWT) said that His promise is

true i.e. He will most certainly fulfill His promise. Thus, do not let any doubts or suspicions stop you from striving in the way of Allah (SWT) because the promise is on Him. He has made this promise thrice: in the *Torah*, in the *Injeel*, and then in the *Qur'an*. And who can be more faithful in his promise than Allah (SWT)? So rejoice and celebrate this bargain you have made with Him. What you are asked to give is so trivial and insignificant, and what you'll get is so glorious and exalted. This, indeed, is the biggest triumph, the supreme and ultimate success.

Here, we see that the verse under discussion starts with the verb *ishtra* and ends with the noun *baiy'kum*. What is the difference between the two? The first refers to simple purchasing, the second refers to the process of transaction between two parties. It was a common practice among the Arabs that in buying and selling, they would argue about the price or the quality of the merchandise, but when the deal was finally settled, they would shake hands with each other. This handshake was a symbol that the bargain has been settled, that no party can now go back on his words. This final agreement, symbolized by a handshake, is called *muba'yah*, and this, in fact, is the basis of *bai'yah*.

The important issue here is that the transaction is to take place between Allah (SWT) and the believer, but the problem is that we cannot deal directly with the Lord and Creator of the universe. It means that we need an intermediary, to mediate this transaction. Herein comes the role of the organization, of the *Ameer*, and of listening and obeying him.

Indeed it is all very simple and logical. Allah (SWT) is the buyer, and believer, the seller. In between these two was the hand of Muhammad (SAW). The real purchaser or the buyer is, of course, Allah (SWT), but the pledge of obedience and allegiance was given to Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Thus, the Holy *Qur'an* says: *“Those who swear allegiance to you (O Prophet) indeed swear allegiance to Allah (SWT); and Allah's (SWT) hand is over theirs. Then whosoever breaks the promise, breaks it to his own loss; but whosoever fulfills the promise made to Allah (SWT) will receive a great reward from Him.”*¹

But after the demise of the Prophet (SAW), this *bai'yah* or pledge was given to the *Ameer* of the Muslims i.e. the rightly guided Caliphs, then the kings and rulers etc. In all we see that the type of organization that we repeatedly come

across in the Holy *Qur'an*, and in the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as well as in the entire thirteen hundred year's history of the Muslim *Ummah* is based on the pattern of this *bai'yah* or "pledge of allegiance", and the only difference between the *bai'yah* of the Prophet (SAW) and the *bai'yah* given to any other after him is that his obedience was absolute, for a Messenger of Allah (SWT) cannot make a mistake, but as far the obedience to any other person is concerned, it will be done according within the parameters set by Allah (SWT).

It is also appropriate to mention here that *Tanzeem-e-Islami* has also been established on the basis of *bai'yah*. The oath of allegiance for joining *Tanzeem-e-Islami* is derived from an authentic tradition which gives us the details of the pledge that was given to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), by the visitors from *Yathrab*, on the occasion of the second *bai'yah* of *Aqabah*. My contention is that this tradition contains the whole method and procedure of how to establish *Hizbullah*, a revolutionary party with the exclusive purpose of making Islam dominant as a politico-socio-economic order. If you are trying to organize a party in order to perform at social level, at community level, or at welfare level, then you can have any type of loose organization. But a revolutionary party, by its very nature, requires extra-ordinary discipline and internal cohesion. This can only be achieved if the party is organized on the basis of *bai'yah*.

(112) *"Those who repent, who worship Him, who praise Him, who keep away from worldly comforts, who bow down, who prostrate themselves, who enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and those who keep Allah's bounds. And give glad tidings to the believers."* This *ayah* details the nine qualities of those from whom Allah (SWT) has purchased their souls for Paradise. The first quality described of such people is that whenever they commit an error or sin, they repent to their Lord sincerely. Then the *ayah* stated that they are those who worship Allah (SWT) alone, obey Him in total devotion and praise Him all the time. Another of their quality described here is that they keep away from worldly comforts. The Arabic word used here i.e. *Saaihoon*, was taken as an act of worship in the Christian religion before the advent of Islam. It meant leaving home for the sake of Allah (SWT) i.e. monasticism. But Islam prohibited this practice and it was replaced by fasting, since it also deprives a person of worldly enjoyments for a limited period of time. Another of their qualities is that they bow and prostrate before Allah (SWT)

i.e. offer their regular prayers, and they always enjoin others what is right i.e. what Islam has ordained, and forbid them from what is wrong i.e. what Allah (SWT) has prohibited for His servants. The ninth quality of such believers described in this *ayah* is that they observe the limits prescribed by Allah (SWT) and also stand guard to them i.e. by advising others about what He has allowed for them and what He prohibited from. In the end the believers with the above mentioned qualities were given the good news of a supreme success.

(113) *“It is not for the Prophet (SAW) and those who believe to ask Allah's (SWT) Forgiveness for the idolaters even though they be near relatives, after it has become clear to them that they are the companions of the Fire.”* In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) prohibits His Messenger (SAW) and the believers from asking forgiveness for those who associated partners with Him and died in that state even if they were their near relatives, after it had become clear to them that they will be the dwellers of Hellfire.

(114) *“And Abraham's asking forgiveness for his father was only because of a promise he had made to him. But when it became clear to him that he is an enemy to Allah (SWT), he disowned him. Verily Abraham (AS) was tender hearted, forbearing.”* In the previous *ayah* Allah (SWT) prohibited His Prophet (SAW) and the believers from asking forgiveness for the polytheists even if they be their relatives. This put some confusion among the Muslims as they thought that if Prophet Abraham (AS) was allowed to invoke Allah (SWT) for his father's forgiveness, who was an idolator, then why cannot others? The answer was given in this *ayah* that Abraham (AS) only invoked Allah (SWT) for his father's forgiveness because of the promise that he had made to him. This promise is mentioned in *ayah* 47 of surah *Maryam*, where Abraham (AS) said that he will pray for his father's forgiveness, but it was only conditioned by certain things, and as soon as it became clear to him that his father is not going to believe, he disassociated himself from him. And surely Abraham (AS) was a very tender-hearted and compassionate person.

(115) *“And Allah (SWT) will never lead a people astray after He has guided them until He makes clear to them as to what they should avoid. Verily, Allah (SWT) is the All-Knower of everything.”* In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) said that He does not leave any one in error after He had guided them to the right path until He makes clear to them what they

should be avoiding. At first it was not made clear about the believers asking Allah (SWT) for their parent's forgiveness if they are idolators, but the above *ayah* clarified for them about not seeking forgiveness for the idolators, even if they be parents. And surely He knows everything.

(116) *"Verily, to Allah (SWT) belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, He gives life and He causes to die. And besides Allah (SWT) you have neither any protector nor any helper."* i.e. The sovereignty of the heavens and the earth belongs only to Allah (SWT) and it is He Who gives life or puts someone to death, and surely there is for you no protector or helper besides Him.

(117) *"Allah (SWT) has indeed turned in Mercy to the Prophet (SAW), and the Muhajirun and the Ansar who followed him in the time of hardship, after the hearts of a party of them had nearly swerved, then He turned towards them in Mercy. Surely, to them He is Gracious, Merciful."* Allah (SWT) has declared that He had turned in Mercy and Compassion to His Prophet (SAW) and the *Muhajirun* and the *Ansar*, for they followed their Messenger (SAW) in all times of distress and hardships. This refers to the expedition of *Tabuk*, where they suffered a great hardship. There was intense heat and scarcity of water and were also short on food and supplies but they obeyed their Prophet (SAW) on every step, except for a party of them who nearly deviated from the truth because of great distress and hardship. But Allah (SWT) turned towards them in Mercy and gave them firmness in their religion. And surely, He is very Gracious and Merciful for His servants.

(118) *"And the three whose case was held in suspense, until for them the earth, vast as it is, was straitened for them and their souls became shrunk upon them, and they knew for certain that there is no refuge from Allah except in Him. Then, He accepted their repentance, that they might repent. Verily, Allah is the Acceptor of repentance, the Merciful."* This again refers to the case of the three Companions (RAA) that we already referred to in *ayah* 106. They were Ka'b bin Malik (RAA), Mararah bin Ar-Rabi (RAA) and Hilal bin Umayyah (RAA) who were left behind from the expedition of *Tabuk*. Soon afterwards they repented to Allah (SWT) and admitted their mistake when the Prophet (SAW) came back from *Tabuk*, but their case was held in suspense till this *ayah* was revealed in which Allah (SWT) forgave them and also described their state during

the period of their boycott by Muslims. The Prophet (SAW) forbade the Muslims to speak to them thus keeping away from them so much so that they were not allowed to even return their greetings. Thus it was said that the earth with all its vastness seemed constrained to them and their souls seemed to close upon them, for this very life suddenly seemed to be harsh on them and death appeared better than life. The boycott was very hard on them for no one was even prepared to talk to them e.g. Ka'b bin Malik (RAA) said that during this boycott whenever He greeted the Prophet (SAW), he did not reply and turned his face to the other side and that even the dearest of his relatives like Abu Qatadah (RAA), would not reply to his greetings. They certainly learned their lesson and came to know that there is no refuge from Allah (SWT) except in Him and thus He forgave them and turned to them in Mercy. For surely He is the Acceptor of repentance of His servants and the Most Merciful.

(119) *“O you who believe! Fear Allah (SWT), and be with the truthful ones.”* In this ayah the Muslims are being advised to fear Allah (SWT) alone and one way to achieve that is to have the company of those who are truthful i.e. in their words and in their conduct.

(120) *“It was not befitting for the people of Madinah and for those around them of the desert Arabs that they should stay behind Allah's Messenger (SAW) nor should they prefer their lives to his life. That is because there afflicts them neither thirst nor toil, nor hunger in the way of Allah (SWT), neither they take any step which angers the disbelievers nor gain from an enemy but a righteous deed is written to their credit. Surely, Allah (SWT) wastes not the reward of the good-doers.”* Here Allah (SWT) admonishes those who stayed behind the battle of *Tabuk*, that it is not proper for the people of the *Madinah* and those who are around it i.e. the Bedouins, to stay behind from taking part in *Jihad* with the Messenger (SAW) nor should they prefer their own lives over his life i.e. they sought to save their own lives by not joining him for the expedition. This is because all the hardships that they will suffer in the way of Allah (SWT) will be written to their credit as a good deed, for surely He does not let the reward of the *Muhsineen* (good-doers) go in vain.

(121) *“Nor do they spend anything, small or great nor do they cross any valley, but it is recorded for them, that Allah (SWT) may reward them with the best of what they used to do.”* All their acts and deeds during *Jihad* will be written to their credit and they will surely be rewarded much better than what they used to do.

(122) *“And the believers should not go all forth. Why does not a group of every section of them go forth, that they may obtain understanding of their Deen, and that they may warn their people when they return to them, that they may be aware.”* This *ayah* has been misinterpreted by some of the translators and commentators, for they said that it was revealed for the believers that they should not go all together for fighting, leaving the Prophet (SAW) alone, for a group should stay behind and learn knowledge from him and when others come back from the battle, they pass it on to them. But the most preferred view is that this *ayah* is not about joining *Jihad*, for at that time joining the expedition of *Tabuk* was obligatory on every one and there was no reason for leaving a party of the believers behind in *Madinah*. This view is also preferred by Abu Hayyan² (RAA) who said in his exegesis of the *Qur’an*, *Al-Bahr Al-Muhit*, that this *ayah* was revealed about the desert Arabs. This actually was a solution to the problem that arose at that time of educating the desert Arabs who as we read in the previous *ayat*, seldom got a chance to see the Prophet (SAW) or to be in the company of his Companions (RAA) because they lived far off from *Madinah* and it was not possible for them to come all together to learn and understand their *Deen*. Thus, they were commanded that a group of every tribe of theirs should come to *Madinah* and learn their *Deen* from the Prophet (SAW) and his Companions (RAA). Then they should return and educate the common people of their regions and warn them against Allah’s punishment.

(123) *“O you who believe! Fight those of the disbelievers who are close to you, and let them find harshness in you, and know that Allah (SWT) is with those who fear Him.”* This *ayah* constitutes the gist of this *surah*. It was mentioned earlier in this *surah* that the revolutionary struggle of the Prophet (SAW) was two-fold i.e. for the Arabian peninsula in particular and for all of the mankind in general. Thus when the Prophet (SAW) finished fighting with the idolators of the Arabian peninsula, he started fighting the People of the Scriptures and those around them when Allah

(SWT) revealed this *ayah* and commanded the believers to put to rout the enemy from within and from their immediate neighborhood. Thus we see that the Prophet (SAW) himself made preparations to fight against the Romans, who were finally defeated along with the fire worshippers of Persia in the reign of the first Caliph, Abu Bakr As-Siddique (RAA). The believers were also asked to be hard on their opponents, for otherwise they would continue to suffer afflictions hurled upon them by their enemy. In the end, Allah (SWT) encouraged the believers that they should know that He is with those who are pious and fear Him alone.

(124) *"And whenever a surah is revealed, there are some of them who say: "Which of you has this increased in faith?" As for those who believe, it has increased their Faith, and they rejoice."* This refers to the hypocrites who whenever a surah was revealed to the Prophet (SAW), would ask the believers sarcastically as how much this surah has increased them in faith. Thus, Allah (SWT) answered them the believers are surely strengthened in faith when they listen to His revelations and they rejoice over.

(125) *"But as for those in whose hearts is a disease, it will add impurities to their existing impurities, and they die while they are disbelievers."* On the other hand, these hypocrites who have a disease of *Nifaq* in their hearts, when they listen to the revelations of Allah (SWT), it adds to their disbelief and filth and they die as disbelievers. This is as Allah (SWT) stated in surah *Al-Baqarah*: *"He causes many to go astray with it (Qur'an) and guides many with it."*³

(126) *"Do they not see that they are tried every year once or twice? Yet, they do not repent, nor are they admonished."* i.e. even these hypocrites are put to trial every now and then, still they persist in their hypocrisy and do not repent nor learn a lesson from their trials.

(127) *"And whenever a surah is revealed, they look at one another (saying): "Does any one see you?" Then they slip away. Allah (SWT) has turned away their hearts because they are a people who understand not."* This was the behavior of the hypocrites whenever a surah was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), they would look around and when no one was watching, they slipped away from there, thus, turning away from the

truth. This is because Allah (SWT) said that He has turned away their hearts from the truth and thus they do not understand.

(128) *“Verily, there has come unto you a Messenger (SAW) from amongst yourselves. It grieves him that what afflicts you. He is greedily solicitous for you, (and) for the believers he is most kind and merciful.”* Allah (SWT) informs the believers that indeed the advent of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is a great blessing from Allah (SWT) for them. He has sent to them a Messenger (SAW) from within them who is grievous if any affliction or calamity touches them and is greedily solicitous over them that they may be rightly guided, and is very kind and merciful to them.

(129) *“But if they turn away, say: "Allah is sufficient for me. There is no God except He. In Him I put my trust and He is the Lord of the Mighty Throne.”* i.e. O Prophet (SAW) if they give no heed, then you say to them that verily Allah (SWT) alone is sufficient for me and I am not in need of any protection and help other than Allah (SWT) except Whom there is no God, for I have put my whole trust in Him and He is the Lord of the Mighty Throne.

Foot Notes

[1] Surah Al-Fath(48):10.

[2] Abu Hayyan was a great scholar of exegesis of Qur’an. He died in Egypt in the year 745 A.H (1344 C.E). His exegesis is called as Al-Bahr Al-Muhit.

[3] Surah Al-Baqarah(2): 26.