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Section 12: Dealing with Hypocrites

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 88

To deal with hypocrites as enemies unless they amend their conduct

فَمَا لَكُمْ فِي الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِتْنَةٍ وَاللَّهُ أَركَسَهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا أَتُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَهْدُوا مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا

88. "Why should you take both sides concerning hypocrites, while Allah has discarded them because of what they have earned? Do you want to guide someone whom Allah has forsaken to astray? For, whoever Allah has forsaken to astray, never shall you find a way for him."

Occasion of Revelation

According to what some commentators of the Qur'an have narrated from Ibn-Abbas, a group of the citizens of Mecca had embraced Islam, but in fact, they were in the row of hypocrites and that was why that they did not emigrated to Medina. Yet, finally, they had to go out from Mecca finally. (And haply, because of the particular condition they had, they did so for the purpose of spying).

The Muslims recognized the matter, but, very soon, they differed among themselves that how to treat this group. Some believed that those hypocrites should be forsaken because they were, indeed, the adherents of the enemies of Islam.

But some others, who were rather simple-minded and saw only the outward of the things, opposed that idea and surprisingly said how they should fight against some people who had testified to the Unity of Allah and the prophet hood of the Messenger.

The verse was revealed and blamed the fault of the second group and then guided them.

Regarding the above occasion of revelation, the relation of this verse and the verses next to it with the former verses about the hypocrites, is quite clear.

At the beginning of the verse, it implies why have you separated into two groups about the hypocrites and each group of you judge in a different form? It says:

"Why should you take both sides concerning hypocrites....."

Then the holy Qur'an says that *Allah* has taken success and His support from this group of hypocrites because of their disgraceful indecent deeds they have done, and He has reversed their thoughts totally. It is like a person who instead of standing on his feet, stands on his head. It says:

"...while Allah has discarded them because of what they have earned...."

Then, at the end of this holy verse, the Qur'an addresses those, shallow-minded Muslims who supported this group of hypocrites, and says:

"...Do you want to guide someone whom Allah has forsaken to astray? For, whoever Allah has forsaken to astray, never shall you find a way for him."

It is an everlasting way of *Allah's* treatment that the effect of the deeds of no one separates from him. How can you expect that those whose thoughts are filthy, whose hearts are full of hypocrisy, and their treatment is supporting the enemies of *Allah* be guided? This is an illogical and, improper expectation.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 89

وَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ كَمَا كَفَرُوا فَتَكُونُونَ سَوَاءً فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ حَتَّىٰ يُهَاجَرُوا
فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ
وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا

89. *"They wish that you should disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you might be (all) alike; therefore do not take from among them friends until they migrate in Allah's way. But if they turn back (to infidelity), then seize them and slay them wherever you find them, and do not take from among them a friend or a helper."*

In the previous verse, the words were about those hypocrites whom some simple-minded Muslims raised to support and intercede, but the Qur'an stated their separation from Islam.

Now this holy verse, following that idea, indicates that the inner darkness of these hypocrites is so much so that, not only they themselves are disbelievers, but also they desire that you should disbelieve, too,

as they do, and you would become equal to them. It says:

"They wish that you should disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you might be (all) alike....."

Therefore, they are worse than the ordinary pagans, because those pagans are not the thief and robbers of others' Faith, while these hypocrites are, and they, as a habitual manner, ceaselessly try to spoil the creeds of others.

Now that they are like that, it says:

"...therefore do not take from among them friends..."

This is a frame, unless they reform their affairs and stop hypocrisy and destruction. The sign of this status is that you see they migrate from the centre of infidelity and hypocrisy to the camp of Islam in the way of *Allah*. It says:

"...until they migrate in Allah's way..."

But if they do not try to migrate, you should know that they have not abandoned their infidelity and hypocrisy. So, their expression of Islam is only for the purpose of spying and destruction. In this case, wherever you find them, you can capture them, or, if necessary, slay them. It says:

"...But if they turn back (to infidelity), then seize them and slay them wherever you find them....."

Then, at the end of the verse, it emphasizes again that you should never take friends from among them. It says:

"...and do not take from among them a friend or a helper."

Except this intensity of action, there is no other way to save an alive society, which is going forth alongside an improving revolutionary path, from the clutches of some seeming-friend enemies and dangerous spies.

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 90

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ إِلَى قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ أَوْ جَاؤُوكُمْ حَصِرَتْ صُدُورُهُمْ أَنْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ أَوْ يُقَاتِلُوا قَوْمَهُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَسَلَّطَهُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ فَلَقَاتِلُوكُمْ فَإِنْ اعْتَزَلُوكُمْ فَلَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ وَأَلْقَوْا إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ فَمَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيلًا

90. "Except those (hypocrites) who join a people between whom and you is a covenant, or who come to you, their hearts shrinking from fighting you or fighting their own people; and if Allah had pleased, He would have given them power over you, so that they should have certainly fought you. Therefore if they withdraw from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allah allows you no way (to fight) against them."

In the previous verse, the intensive action and slaying the hypocrites who assist infidels were referred to. In this verse two groups are exempted from them.

Military treaties, even with hostile infidels, and also international agreements should be respected at the time of peace.

"Except those (hypocrites) who join a people between whom and you is a covenant..."

And, in fighting, do not invade those who announce impartiality:

"... or who come to you, their hearts shrinking from fighting you or fighting their own people..."

And respect the peaceful motives and offers of stopping fire that you receive, since, in Islam, the principle is based on peace, and fight is for an exceptional case.

"...Therefore if they withdraw from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allah allows you no way (to fight) against them."

You should be attentive to the Power of *Allah* in order that you do not encounter with pride, and your sentiments be adjusted both.

"...and if Allah had pleased, He would have given them power over you, so that they should have certainly fought you. ..."

Muslims should be so powerful that their opponents even do not think of attacking them. That is why only the suggestion of peace is enough. To be certain, abandoning war and inspiring peace are necessary.

"... and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allah allows you no way (to fight) against them."

Surah An-Nisa', Verse 91

سَتَجِدُونَ آخِرِينَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَأْمَنُوكُمْ وَيَأْمَنُوا قَوْمَهُمْ كُلًّا مَا رُدُّوا إِلَى الْفِتْنَةِ أُرْكَسُوا فِيهَا فَإِنْ لَمْ يَعْتَزِلُوكُمْ وَيُلْقُوا إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ وَيَكْفُوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَخُذُوهُمْ

وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأُولَئِكُمْ جَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا

91. "You will find soon others who desire to be secure from you, and secure from their own people. So often as they are returned to mischief (of idolatry) they get thrown into it. Thereafter, if they do not withdraw from you, and do not offer you peace and restrain their hands, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them and against these We have given you a clear authority."

In order to save their lives, a group of the citizens of Mecca came to the holy Prophet (S) and hypocritically stated that they had become Muslims. But when they returned to their own city, they continued idol worshipping so that they would not encounter with the tortures of the disbelievers.

By that way, they could enjoy both parties and would be safe from the danger of both sides. Their tendency, of course, was actually rather more towards infidelity.

Thus, Muslims should know their different kinds of enemies and treat each of them appropriately while they would not trust the statement of them.

An Islamic government has authority and master ship in suppressing the vicious hypocrites, and clearing the society of them.

"...and against these We have given you a clear authority."

Yet, the intensive and suppressive punishment is specific to those hypocrites who have activities to destroy the Islamic government.

"...and restrain their hands, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them..."

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