

Home > An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 2 > Section 24, Fighting in Self-defense, Pilgrimage under Restrictions > Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 196 > The Rites of Pilgrimage

Section 24, Fighting in Self-defense, Pilgrimage under Restrictions

Religious Calendar to be according to the Lunar Year, Regard for the sanctity of the Sacred Month— Fighting in self-defense, Regard for the sanctity of the holy city, Self-defense during the sacred month, Pilgrimage under restrictions, combining 'Umrah' with 'Hajj'

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 189

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهْلِ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ
مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ اتَّقَى وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

189. "They ask you concerning the new moons; say: 'They are times appointed for mankind and (for) the Hajj'. It is not righteousness that you should enter dwellings from their backs but righteousness is this that one should guard himself (against evil); and enter the dwellings by their (proper) doors, and fear Allah: that you may be prosperous."

Occasion of Revelation

It has been said that Ma'az-ibn-Jabal came to the Prophet (S) and said that he was frequently asked about the crescent of the moon and that why it gradually changes to a full shape and then alters to its first status.

Also, it is narrated that the Jews asked the Messenger of Allah (S) what the crescent of the moon was for and what the use of it was. At that time the above verse was sent down and announced that the different states of the moon have different material and spiritual advantages in the system of the human

beings' lives.

As mentioned in the occasion of revelation of the verse, some people asked the Prophet of Islam (S) a few questions about the reason of the different peculiar shapes that the Moon seemed to have and the concerning use of them.

In answer to these questions, *Allah* ordered the Prophet (S) to tell them the effects and the different usages of the crescent for all people.

They ask you concerning the new moons; say: 'They are times appointed for mankind and (for) the Hajj'. It is not righteousness that you should enter dwellings from their backs but righteousness is this that one should guard himself (against evil); and enter the dwellings by their (proper) doors, and fear Allah: that you may be prosperous.'

The rising of the Moon at the beginning of each lunar month in the form of crescent, and then its gradual change, can be the source of many uses in the act of practicing worship and the accomplishment of religious duties by people, and in their material career as well.

Everybody can easily count days of the month and enumerate the month of the year by the help of the varying shapes or forms of the Moon when dealing with trading and writing agreements due to appointing the times of promises and contracts.

Besides that, fasting, the performances of the great worship of Pilgrimage and festivals, etc., prescribed by Islam, are timed according to the lunar months. The best way for people to recognize them and decide to arrange the affairs is this very form of the crescent in various shapes when they see them differently at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the months.

It is obvious that the regularity of the social life of man without a common and precise means of dating is impossible. So, the Moon, indeed, is a natural calendar for all human beings. It is a natural phenomenon that the entire people, whether literate or illiterate, wherever in the world they are, can make use of it.

For this reason, the Creator, the Great, has made this worldly calendar available for the use of the human race in their life system.

Natural Measures

One of the advantages of Islamic laws is that their orders have usually been arranged corresponding with the natural measures, for these measures are some means that are available to all people and, besides that, the passing of time does not affect them.

But, on the contrary, unnatural scales are not within reach to all human beings for every thing. For example, the population of the world have not been able to use of some international measures for timing the evening yet.

Therefore, we see that Islam has sometimes assigned the measure of a span, or a man's height and the like of it. And, for appointing a time, phenomena such as sunset, break of dawn, decline of sun from the meridian and the vision of the Moon are usually pointed out.

"It is not righteousness that you should enter dwellings from their backs..."

In this verse the statement is partly about the Hajj Pilgrimage which can be performed at its proper time by visual noting the crescent of the Moon. It has also pointed to one of the superstitious customs of the Age of Ignorance accomplished in the rites of pilgrimage which *Allah* prohibited them from.

It was the practice among Arabs that after getting into the pilgrim garments ('Ihr'am) they considered it unlawful to enter their house through the usual doors. Hence they cut a new entrance under the ground from behind their premises.

They did so because they thought it was a good action since it was desuetude of habit and, therefore, they would complete the act of the pilgrim garment which was desuetude of habits. 1

But the Qur'an explicitly says that righteousness lies in piety, not in the superstitious customs. So, it immediately tells them seriously to enter the houses from the very ordinary doors.

But the object and the significance of the revelation of this verse is reasonably wider, greater, and more common. For the fulfillment of any action, whether it is a ritual action or a non-religious one, we should enter it through its proper way, not from a deviated path.

Here, entering from behind is a figurative expression for turning aside from the right course, and entering by the door means sticking to the right path. This meaning is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) by Jabir, one of his companions. 2

In the commentaries from Ahlul-Bayt (as) it is narrated about this verse that they have said:

"We are the doors and the ways of Allah that invite unto (His) Heaven...". 3

This tradition means that in your total religious affairs you should arrive by the main door and take your agenda from them (as) who are trained in the school of revelation and the Divine Messages were revealed in their house, (Ahlul-Bayt).

The phrase: ***"It is not righteousness..."*** may point to another narrow meaning saying that you question about the crescent, instead of inquiring about theology, is like the manner of the one who has put the main and right path of the house aside and enters it through a burrow from behind the premise. What a disgraceful manner!

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 190

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

190. "And fight in the cause of Allah (against) those who fight you, but be not aggressive, for surely Allah loves not the aggressors."

Occasion of Revelation

It is narrated by Ibn -'Abbas that this verse was revealed about the 'Peace of Hudaibiyah'. The incident was in this manner that the holy Prophet (S) started on a journey to go to Mecca for 'Umrah accompanied by 1400 people out of his companions.

When they arrived Hudaibiyah, (a land near Mecca), pagans hindered them from entering into Mecca and doing the sacred rites of the 'Umrah.

After a lot of debates and discussions, they agreed with the Prophet (S) that Muslims would go to Mecca the following year when the pagans would empty the City for them to circumambulate the Sacred House for three days.

The next year, when they set out towards Mecca, they were scared that the pagans might not be loyal to their promise and prohibit them, hence, consequently, a battle could come forth and the Prophet (S) was not willing to fight in the forbidden month. So, this verse was sent down and .permitted them to defend and fight against the enemies if they initiated fighting.

In this verse, the Qur'an has issued the command of fighting upon hose who initiate war against Muslims. It lets Muslims use swords or any weapons and defensive means in order to stop the enemies. This condition, in fact, is for the time when the circumstances require and the course of patience in Muslims has ended, so they can openly and courageously defend their rights.

Fight: Why & Against Whom?

There are three subjects pointed out in this verse. They make manifest the logic of Islam about war.

1– The first phrase of the verse points to the ideal of the wars in Islam. It says: **"And fight in the cause of Allah..."**

Then, the main goal in Islamic fights (jihad) is the cause of *Allah* and the stretch of the Divine laws including: truth, justice, monotheism, and eradication of transgression, degeneration and deviation.

Thus, Islam condemns the wars aiming for: vengeance, ambition, conquering other countries, taking lands of others, and obtaining spoils of war. So, taking weapon and setting to war is right only when it is done in the path of *Allah*.

2- Now, the question is that against whom the holy struggle is right. The second phrase of the verse answers:

"...(against) those who fight you..."

It clearly says that Muslims should not begin war unless the opponents initiate fighting by using weapons, except for some peculiar cases which will be pointed out when discussing the verses about Holy War.

By the way, it is understood from this verse that civil people (women and children in particular), who have not risen for fighting, must not be invaded and they are, therefore, privileged from invasion. .

Basing on this principle, the great leader of Islam, Ali ibn Abu Talib (as) orders his soldiers thus:

"Do not fight them unless they initiate the fighting, because, by the grace of Allah, you are in the right and to leave them till they begin fighting will be another point (of right) from your side against them..." 4

3- The limit of war is defined by the next clause, saying:

"...but not aggressive..."

The basis of this meaning is that fighting in Islam is for the sake of *Allah* and in the path of *Allah*, where there should not be any transgression and aggression.

"...for surely Allah loves not the aggressors..."

That is why Islam, in spite of the wars of our Age, advises Muslims to observe many ethical principles in war.

For example, it tells them not to kill in fight those who put down their weapons and surrender, those who have lost their ability of fighting or, basically, are not able to fight, like old men and women and children.

Such people should not be invaded. Gardens and trees should not be destroyed. Muslims must not poison the water that their enemies use as their drinking water by poisonous ingredients (the chemical and microbial war).

Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) says:

"...If, by the Will of Allah, the enemy is defeated, then do not kill the runner away. Do not strike a helpless person. Do not finish a wounded. And, do not inflict on women even though they may attack your honour

with filthy words and abuse your officers..." 5

The above mentioned explanations prove the invalidity of the numerous accusations of the enemies of Islam against Islam about the Islamic Holy wars. With these clear statements of the Qur'an, upon the aims of fighting in Islam and the different dimensions that the Holy War has, the answer to the objections of the enemies is made manifest.

There will come forth some more explanations, of course, when commenting other verses of Jihad. *Allah* willing

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 191-192

وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ
وَلَا تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ فَإِنْ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَلِكَ
جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ

فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

191. "And slay them wherever you find them, and drive them away from where they drove you away. And persecution is more grievous than slaughter. And fight not with them at the Sacred Mosque unless they fight with you therein; then, if they fight with you, slay them; such is the retribution of the infidels."

192. "But if they desist, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

This verse tells Muslims to fight against the idol worshippers of Mecca, who had expelled them (Muslims) from their own home and city, and to drive them (the idol worshippers) out from that city, since they had persecuted the Muslims for years.

That treatment was more grievous than slaughter, because slaughter is taking the worldly life of a person instead of which the one reaches the prosperity of the next world, while in torture the one has neither the comfort of the present world nor the pleasure and ease of the coming world.

Yet, it enjoins Muslims not to fight at the Sacred Mosque in order to preserve the security and sanctity of it. But, if pagans did not observe the respect of the Mosque and fought against Muslims, they would do the same and punish them.

Explanations

- 1- Reciprocation and conclusiveness with harshness is certain in some respects.
- 2- Sacred premises of Mecca and the Sacred Mosque are holy but the esteem of the blood of Muslims is more sacred. So, here, the comparison of the state of important and more important is considered.
- 3- Since Muslims should not initiate in fighting, they must not initiate destroying the sacred things, either.
- 4- Knowing the reason of a commandment is the secret of mirth and obedience. The Qur'an expresses the reason for the command of fighting. It says that they persecuted you for years, and that torture is more grievous and dangerous than slaughter. If the Qur'an issues the command of expulsion, it is for the reason that they had expelled the Muslims from their houses for years.

"And slay them wherever you find them, and drive them away from where they drove you away. And persecution is more grievous than slaughter. And fight not with them at the Sacred Mosque unless they fight with you therein; then, if they fight with you, slay them; such is the retribution of the infidels. "

In the next verse it says that *Allah* accepts their repentance if they put aside the custom of infidelity and idolatry and, consequently, they will be brethren of Muslims. They will be even exempted from the taxes and from the punishments that offenders must tolerate.

"But if they desist, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

The clemency enjoined by Islam upon its adherents even against their bloodthirsty enemies in the battlefield, has no match in any religion. The Muslims have been definitely commanded to sheathe their swords if the enemy desists from fighting.

The fight allowed by Islam has to be only against the wrong done, and there should be no rancor against the enemy when they correct themselves or even when they end the hostility.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 193

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى
الظَّالِمِينَ

193 "And fight with them until there is no (more) persecution, and the religion is only for Allah

But when they desist, there should be no hostility save against the (willful) aggressors."

In this verse, the purpose of the Holy War in Islam (Jihad) is stated. It says that fighting is not for the sake of ordinary aims that humankind usually follow in their battles, nor for the sovereignty over the earth and conquest, nor for earning so much spoils, nor for preparing some selling markets and obtaining sufficient food stuff, nor for giving superiority to a group or a race over another group or race.

The aim of Holy Struggle is one and only one thing, and that is the attraction of *Allah's* pleasure which lies in the settlement of social justice, supporting the person, who have encountered with deceit and aberration, wiping out the environment of human societies from infidelity and idolatry, and, finally and particularly, getting the instruction, of *Allah* up in action.

Therefore, as it is realized, fighting is for eradication or persecution among humankind and settling the creed of monotheism in them throughout the world.

"And fight with them until there is no (more) persecution, and the religion is only for Allah..."

And at the end of the verse, it adds that if they return and leave out infidelity, corruption and idolatry, Muslims should not bother them to revenge the past. They must ignore the past because opposition and reciprocal fighting is used only against oppressor when the circumstances require

Islamic Holy War (Jihad), in fact can be divided into three categories:

1. The Preliminary Holy Wars for Freedom

Allah has designed some commands and programs for the sake of happiness, freedom, development, prosperity, and tranquility of Man. He has commissioned His prophets (as) to communicate these commands to people.

Now, if a person or a group of people imagine that this communication is against their personal mean benefits so that they produce some barriers on the way of Prophets' invitation, the prophets are rightful to remove those barriers from their way and acquire the freedom of delivering propagation, at first, through a peaceful way and, if it is not possible, then with the use of violence.

In other words, people of all societies have the right to hearken to the heralds of truth and be free to accept their invitations.

Now, if some persons decide to deprive them of their lawful right and do not let the call of the heralds of truth reach the ears of their spirits and, as a result, become free from the bounds of mental and social slavery, the adherents of these agenda are rightful to employ any means in order to obtain that freedom. Hence, the necessity of preliminary Holy Wars (Jihad) in Islam, as well as other heavenly religions, is made manifest.

Also, if some persons bear pressure upon some Muslim believers to invert them to their previous religion, they can apply any means to remove that pressure.

2. A Defensive Holy War

It sometimes happens that war is posed to a person or a group of people, viz, they are unexpectedly invaded or unwarily transgressed by an enemy. Here, all the heavenly laws and human rules consider the attacked person or group of persons rightful to rise and defend themselves.

Alongside this defense, they can use all their potentialities powerfully and do their best to protect their entity. This kind of struggle is called ***defensive Holy War***. Wars such as the Battles of Ahzab, Uhud, Mutah, Tabuk, Hunain and some other battles at the advent of Islam are counted among this kind of Holy War, which have had defensive forms.

3. Holy War Against Infidelity & Idolatry

At the same time that Islam invites the people of the world unto its call, which is the last and highest godly creed, it respects 'freedom of belief'. For this reason, it gives the nations who have the heavenly Book an enough respite to study and contemplate over Islam and willingly accept it.

If they do not accept it, they will be treated as 'a confederate minority', in a peaceful life under some particular conditions, of course, which are neither complicated nor difficult.

But infidelity and idolatry is neither a religion nor a creed nor is counted respectful. It is but a kind of superstition, a deviation, and stupidity. In fact, it is a kind of mental and ethical disease which should be, with any possible means, rooted out.

The terms 'honour' and 'respecting others' opinions' are used in the cases that those opinions have a safe and sound foundation. But, sickness, deviation, superstition, and aberration are not some things that can be counted respectable.

That is why Islam orders that idolatry be rooted out from the human societies, however much costly it may be, even at the cost of fighting. Idol-temples and the signs of idolatry, if not possible peacefully, should be destroyed by force.

Why Was Holy War Legislated in Medina?

We know that Holy War was enjoined for Muslims in the second year AH, while it was not compulsory before that.

The reason of this subject is clear because, on one hand, the number of Muslims in Mecca was so small that rising practically meant suicide.

On the other hand, the enemy was quite powerful in Mecca, and, indeed, Mecca was counted the main center of anti-Islamic powers. The opponents of Islam were so strong there that it was impossible to fight them inside Mecca.

But, when the Prophet (S) entered Medina, a great deal of people believed him, so many that he was able to spread his invitation clearly inside and outside of Medina. He (S) could form a simple government and prepare the necessary means for fighting with his enemies and since Mecca was a rather far distance from Medina, he succeeded to do it with tranquility and peace of mind, and the revolutionary Muslim troops could prepare themselves for fight and defense against enemies.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 194

الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحُرُمَاتِ قِصَاصٌ فَمَنْ اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا
عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

194. "The sacred month for the sacred month; and all sacred things are (under the law of) retaliation. Whoever then commits aggression (by fighting) against you, attack him in like manner as he attacked you; and have awe for Allah, and know that Allah is with the pious ones."

According to the Islamic calendar, there are four lunar months in every year which are specifically respected, and fighting is unlawful and forbidden therein. One month of these four months, i.e., Rajab is separate while the rest, i.e., Zil Qa'dah, Zil-Hajjah, and Muharram, are consecutive.

One of the reasons that the month Zil-Qa'dah is so called is that in this month it is necessary to have a halt of fighting.

This is the law of Islam that enjoins the adherents not to fight during four particular months of the year, but non-Muslim enemies always lie in ambush to misuse the opportunities. So, they may think that since Muslims are obliged to observe this law, they had better attack.

This verse says that if your opponents rush upon you during these four months, you can stand against them, too, and fight in the same months. So, you may apply the sacred month for the sacred month, because the sanctity of the blood and protection of the system of Islam is much more than the sanctity of these months.

"The sacred month for the sacred month..."

Then, whosoever did not regard with reverence should be treated under the law of retaliation.

"and all sacred things are (under the law of) retaliation."

Hence, as a general rule, it says:

"Whoever then commits aggression (by fighting) against you, attack him in like manner as he attacked you..."

Islam is not a religion of aggression and transgression, but it does not accept the aggression of others. Yet, the style of action should be in a manner that piety be always observed, and in retaliation, limits would not be violated when we do know and ought to be aware that *Allah* is with the pious ones.

"...and have awe for Allah, and know that Allah is with the pious ones."

Explanations

1- No path is blind in Islam. The protection of the unity of Islam and the souls of Muslims are preferred to the sanctity of places and times.

2- We must be equitable even in contact with enemies.

"Whoever then commits aggression (by fighting) against you, attack him in like manner as he attacked you..."

3- The necessity of piety, even at the time of fighting, is another one of the Islamic training principles.

4- The order of legislation should not be in a manner that it becomes a means of despair for Muslims and boldness in disbelievers. The principle of similar reciprocation stands for this very sake.

5- At the time of fighting in similar reciprocation, if you do not violate the limits of justice and be of the pious ones, you will enjoy of the Divine help.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 195

وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ

195. "And spend in the way of Allah; and cast not yourselves by your own hands into perdition: and do good (to others), for verily Allah loves the doers of good."

Holy War needs as much money and property as it needs the sincere, strong experienced battle men, because in Holy War, the existence of both the spiritual and physical preparation, and suitable weapons, artillery and other fighting equipments for troops are necessary.

True it is that the most important effective factor of the fate of a war is the involving soldiers, but a soldier needs to be equipped. Hence, the verse emphasizes that the lack of spending wealth in this way is to bring themselves and other Muslims to destruction.

"And spend in the way of Allah; and cast not yourselves by your own hands into perdition..."

At the time of revelation, in particular, a great deal of Muslims were full of ardor and emotions for Holy War, but they were so poor that they could not prepare the artillery. As the Qur'an states, they used to come to the Prophet (S) and ask him to supply the necessary means in order to send them to the battle-field.

But they usually came back with sorrow and grief while their eyes were shedding tears because the required means could not be supplied. The statement of the Qur'an in **Surah At- Taubah. No.9. verse 92** is thus; ***"...they went back while their eyes overflowed with tears on account of grief for not finding that which they should spend."***

Spending, a Prevention of Destruction

A general fact and a social rite can be taken from this holy verse in account of disbursing, although the subject is mentioned next to the verses of Holy War. The idea is that spending, in general, causes the members of a society to be delivered from perdition.

And, on the contrary, when the custom of donation be neglected and the properties be compiled in one pole of the society, there will come forth a majority of the poor and deprived. So, very soon, a great burst happens in the society in which the selves and wealth of capitalists will be burnt by the fire of that revolution. Here, thereby; the relation of 'donation' and 'prevention of destruction' is made clear.

Therefore, disbursement is useful for capitalist, before it would be beneficial to the state of the deprived; that is, the justification of wealth is a protector of wealth. Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) has pointed to this very fact where he says:

"...guard your properties by paying alms tax..." 6

Next to the stage of Holy War and donation, it leads to benevolence and, at the end of the verse, it commands to doing good because the stage of doing good is the highest stage in the course of human development which Islam regards to fully. It says:

"...and do good (to others), for verily Allah loves the doers of good."

The occurrence of this phrase at the end of the verse on donation points to this meaning that the act of donation must be fulfilled with an absolute sincerity and affection: far from any term of reproach or what annoys or hurts the person whom the favour is done to.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 196

وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحَلَّهُ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِ أَذًى مِّن رَّأْسِهِ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِّن صِيَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَمَن تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامٌ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ تِلْكَ عَشْرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ لَّمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلُهُ حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

196. "And complete the Hajj (Pilgrimage) and the 'Umrah for the sake of Allah; but if you are prevented (to complete it), then (send) whatever offering (sacrificial animal) as may be obtained with ease; and do not shave your heads till the offering reaches w place (of sacrifice); but whoever among you is sick, or has an ailment in his head, then he (should) make redemption by fasting, or alms-giving or sacrificing. And when you are secure, then whoever enjoys from the 'Umrah to the Hajj (he should offer) of whatever offering is easily available (for him).

But whoever finds none (to give), should fast three days during the Hajj (Pilgrimage), and seven days when you have returned; these (make) ten (days) complete. That is for the one whose family members do not dwell near the sacred Mosque. Have awe of Allah, and know that verily Allah is severe in penalty."

The Rites of Pilgrimage

The visitors of the holy shrine of Mecca usually perform the ceremonies of minor pilgrimage first. The rites are as follows:

They put on pilgrim's garb ('ihram) from some definite sites known as 'Trusting Place'. It means that they undertake to abandon doing a series of deeds which are unlawful for the person in a pilgrim state. They cover themselves with pilgrim's garb which consists of two pieces of unsewn cloth, and they continually say 'labbaika' while going towards Ka'bah.

When they reach Mecca, at first, they circumambulate Ka'bah in seven rounds. Then, they keep up a two-rak'at-prayer in a place called Maqam-i-Ebrahim (Station of Abraham). After that, they ply to and fro between two mountains named Safa and Marwah for seven times. Finally, they, having cut a piece of a nail or some hair of theirs, take off the pilgrim's garb.

Then, again for the ceremonies of Pilgrimage, they put on pilgrim's garb and go unto 'Arafat, which is a

land 24 kilometers far from original city of Mecca, in order to stay therein on the ninth of Zil-Hajjah, from noon until sunset, busy praying with invocation. After sunset, they move to Mash'ar-ul-Haram (Sacred Monument), which is located at a distance of 15 kilometers from Mecca, where they must remain until morning.

When the sun rises, they move into Mina, a land nearby there, and, on the same day, which is known as Feast of Sacrifice, they throw seven pebbles at a special Pillar called: 'Jamarah 'uqba', and then they sacrifice before shaving their heads (while women cut off a piece of hair from their heads). When they did their hair cut (Taqsir), they take off their pilgrim's garb at last.

They return to Mecca .the same day or after that and perform the ritual circumambulation of the Ka'bah, circumambulation prayer, running between Safa and Marwah, Nisa' circumambulation and Nisa' circumambulation prayer.

On the eleventh and twelfth of the month, they throw pebbles at three special pillars in Mina which are called 'Jamarat', one after another seven times at each pillar each day while, during the nights before these days, they have to remain in Mina.

Thus, they accomplish the rites of the formal Pilgrimage (Hajj) each of which is the survival of one historical event and that they are some effective hints and implicit declarations to the matters of refinement of character and social philosophies. (The description of each philosophy will be delivered when commenting on the concerning verses).

Now it is necessary to notify that the verse indicates that all these actions should be fulfilled for the sake of *Allah* and according to His commandments, not for making display and pretence or for the sake of idols.

Therefore, the first clause of the verse proclaims that in the deeds of Pilgrimage, both the formal Pilgrimage (Hajj) and the lesser formal one ('Umrah), no motive should interfere but seeking to be nearer to *Allah*.

"And complete the Hajj (Pilgrimage) and the 'Umrah for the sake of Allah..."

Then it adds that if something like sickness and fear of enemy happens that hinders you from performing the ritual rites of Hajj and 'Umrah after you are clothed in pilgrim's garb you must sacrifice an animal as it is possible for you.

"... but if you are prevented (to complete it), then (send) whatever offering (sacrificial animal) as may be obtained with ease..."

It should be noted, of course, that if the prevention is as a result of sickness and the like and the pilgrim's garb is done for the lesser formal Pilgrimage ('Umrah Mufradah), the sacrifice should be sent to Mecca, but if it has happened from the side of an enemy, the duty of sacrifice must be done at the same place

where the prevention has occurred.

The Prophet (S) behaved in the same manner in Hudaibiyah, too. But, if the person is in the pilgrim's garb of Hajj and becomes sick, the one must send the sacrifice to Mina.

"and do not shave your heads till the offering reaches its place (of sacrifice)..."

One of the rites that should be done in Hajj (Pilgrimage) is shaving the head (for men, and cutting some hair of the head for women). But they must be careful that they are not allowed to do this duty before sacrificing the offering in the place of sacrifice.

"...but whoever among you is sick, or has an ailment in his head, then he (should) make redemption by fasting, or alms-giving or sacrificing...."

The exception is for the person who has an ailment or a difficulty that has to shave before the appointed time. If the person did so, (i.e. shaved his head because of ailment and the like), it is necessary for the one to give ransom. This ransom can be three days of fasting, or feeding six indigents, or slaughtering a lamb.

"...And when you are secure, then whoever enjoys from the 'Umrah to the Hajj (he should offer) of whatever offering is easily available (for him). But whoever finds none (to give), should fast three days during the Hajj (Pilgrimage), and seven days when you have returned..."

When you are free from sickness and enemy and you want to perform the 'greater Pilgrimage', you must sacrifice whatever you can from animals such as a camel, cow, or lamb. But if any of you cannot find the animal, or financially is not able to afford it, he must fast three days during the days of pilgrimage (the seventh, eighth, and ninth days) and seven days after returning from Hajj so that it makes ten days.

"...these (make) ten (days) complete..."

It is evident that three days and seven days make ten days, yet the Qur'an says that they are totally ten days complete. This meaning may point to the idea that the ten days can be substituted for the sacrifice completely.

This greater Pilgrimage with these orders is for those who are not dwelling nearby the Sacred Mosque. (The known state among Muslim jurists is that everyone who is sixteen kilometers far from Mecca his duty is to follow the rites of the 'greater Pilgrimage', but those who are not far from Mecca by this distance, their duty is the 'separation Pilgrimage' (Hajj-i-Qir'an). This subject is detailed in books of jurisprudence furnished with its concerning evidences.)

"... That is for the one whose family members do not dwell near the sacred Mosque..."

Finally, at the end of the verse, the command is due to piety and that believers be aware not to have any shortcoming about the divine instructions in order to protect themselves from the severe punishment of *Allah*.

"...Have awe of Allah, and know that verily Allah is severe in penalty."

This emphasis may be for this that Pilgrimage (Hajj) is a great Islamic worship so that if the rites of it be not carefully observed and its spirit be neglected, there will be a large loss for Muslims.

This worship (Hajj) is the very one that Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) has considered it the 'flag' and 'magnificent motto' of Islam. At the last moments of his life, he (as) has remarked in his will, thus:

*"Fear Allah (and) keep Allah in view in the matter of your Lord's House (Ka'bah). Do not forsake it so long as you live, because if it is abandoned, you will not be spared."*⁷

Some enemies of Islam have also said that while Pilgrimage is in process they cannot gain victory.

One of the great believing men says: woe unto Muslims if they do not comprehend the meaning of Hajj, and woe unto others if they do not catch its meaning!

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1. Tafsir-Baydawi, vol. 1, p. 40
 2. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 2, p. 282
 3. Ibid
 4. Nahjul-Balagha, Letter No. 14
 5. Nahjul-Balagha, Letter No. 14
 6. Nahjul Balagha, saying No. 146
 7. Nahjul-Balagha, Letter No. 4

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