

Section 2: The Treachery of the Hypocrites Exposed

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verse 9

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَاءَتْكُمْ جُنُودٌ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا
وَجُنُودًا لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا

9. “O you who believe! Remember Allah’s blessing upon you when hosts came against you, so We sent upon them a strong wind and hosts, that you saw not, and Allah sees what you do.”

This verse, as well as the verses next to it, relate to the Battle of 'Ahzab which occurred in the fifth year of Hejira. In this war the Jews, pagans, and the hypocrites had decided to occupy Medina by a sudden attack. Salman Farsi suggested and the Prophet (S) agreed that the Muslims would dig a ditch around Medina and defend against the enemy.

In this action, digging the ditch, the Prophet (S) himself began digging the ground, and every time that a lightning was seen as the result of picking on a piece of stone, the Prophet (S) gave the glad tidings of the victory of Islam over an area of the world. In this Battle, Allah helped the Muslims by means of blowing winds and the descent of some angels.

However, this holy verse speaks about one of the greatest Divine trials concerning the believers and the hypocrites, and the trial of the truthfulness of their speech in action, which was pointed out in the previous verses.

This verse and the verses next to it discuss about one of the most important events of the history of Islam, i.e., the Battle of 'Ahzab. It was a war that, in fact, was counted a turning point in the history of

Islam and changed the balance of forces between Islam and infidelity in the benefit of the Muslims, and the victory of which was as a key for the later great victories.

In fact, the enemies of Islam were hopeless in this Battle, and after that they could not perform any magnificent work.

The Battle of 'Ahzab, as it is clear from its name, was a conclusive war from the side of all enemies of Islam with different groups whose unlawful benefits would be in danger by the development of this religion.

The first spark of fight was lit from the side of a group of the Jews by the name of 'Bani Nadir' who came to Mecca and encouraged Quraysh to fight against the Prophet (S). They promised the Quraysh to be with them and fight until the end. Then they went to the tribe of Qatfan and made them agree to the war.

These tribes invited their own confederate, such as the tribes 'Bani 'Asad' and 'Bani Salim', too; and since all of them had felt the danger they united with each other to put an end to Islam for ever. They wanted to kill the Prophet (S), to annihilate the Muslims, to occupy Medina, to spoil it, and quench the torch of Islam.

When the Muslims saw themselves before this great group of enemy, under the command of the Prophet (S) they began to consult, and, before anything else, by the suggestion of Salman Farsi, dug a ditch around Medina so that the enemy could not easily pass it and attack the city. (That is why one of the names of this Battle is 'The Battle of Ditch.)

Muslims tolerated some hard and dangerous moments. At that time the lives had become close to the lips. The hypocrites were hastily running here and there among the Muslims. The mass of the forces of the enemy and the small number of the soldiers of Islam in front of them, and their preparation from the point of war equipments and providing the accessory means, illustrated a hard and painful future before the eyes of the Muslims.

But Allah wished that the last stroke would come down on the body of the infidelity; and the row of the hypocrites would be recognized from the rows of Muslims; He wanted to divulge the conspirators, and put the true Muslims under a severe examination.

As it will be explained later, this Battle, at last, ended with the triumphant of the Muslims. A strong storm came under the command of Allah. It destroyed all the camps and means of the disbelievers. It caused a horrible fear to appear in their hearts. Allah sent some unseen forces of the angels to help the Muslims.

The manifestation of some surprising powers, such as that of Amir-ul-Mu'minin's against 'Amr-ubn-i-'Abdiwudd, were also added to them and the pagans, without being able to do anything, ran away.

This was a brief scenery of the Battle of 'Ahzab which happened in 5 A.H.1

From here on, we pay to the commentary of the verse and let the details of this Battle be discussed later under the title of ‘points’.

The Holy Qur’an, at first, summarizes this event in one verse, and then through sixteen other verses it explains its specialties.

It says:

“O you who believe! Remember Allah’s blessing upon you when hosts came against you...”

Then, it continues saying:

“...so We sent upon them a strong wind and hosts, that you saw not, and Allah sees what you do.”

Points Worthy to Be Noted

1– The application of the Qur’anic phrase: *‘uḥkurul (remember)* shows that these holy verses were revealed after the end of the Battle when some length of time had passed during which the Muslims could contemplate over what they had seen in that Battle and analysed them so that it had a deep effect in them.

2– The application of the word */junud/* points to different clans of the Age of Ignorance² and the Jews of Medina inside the city.

3– The purpose of “***hosts that you saw not.***”, who came to help the Muslims, is the same angels whose help to the believers in the Battle of Badr has also explicitly been mentioned in the Qur’an, but, as it was said in the commentary of verse No. 9 from Surah Al-’Anfal, there is not any evidence that these angels, these unseen Divine forces, had formally participated in the Battle and started fighting. But there are some hints which show that they came down for strengthening the spirit of the believers and to encourage them.

Surah Al-’Ahzab – Verses 10-11

إِذْ جَاءُوكُم مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنكُمْ وَإِذْ زَاغَتِ الْأَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ
الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ الظُّنُونَا

هُنَالِكَ ابْتُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَزُلْزِلُوا زِلْزَالًا شَدِيدًا

10. “When they came against you from above you and from below you, and when the eyes swerved and the hearts reached to the throats, and you did imagine about Allah diverse thoughts,”

11. “There it was that the believers were tried, and they were shaken a tremendous shaking.”

You can taste the sweetness of the graces of Allah when you depict the bitter scenes before you.

The spiritual moods affect on the body. (Fear causes the ordinary function of the eyes and the heart to be disturbed. For example, the eye becomes terrified and the pulse of the heart becomes fast.)

This holy verse illustrates the dangerous situation of the Battle of 'Ahzab, the great power of the enemy's army, and the intensive anxiety of a lot of Muslims.

It implicitly says that you may remember when the enemies entered your city from above you and from below you and surrounded Medina and when the eyes swerved because of fear and the hearts reached to the throats and you imagined badly about Allah with diverse thoughts.

The verse says:

“When they came against you from above you and from below you, and when the eyes swerved and the hearts reached to the throats, and you did imagine about Allah diverse thoughts,”

Many of the commentators believe that the Arabic word */fauq/ (above)* mentioned in this holy verse refers to the east of Medina wherefrom the tribe of Qatfan entered, and the word */’asfal/ (below)* refers to the west of it wherefrom the tribe of Quraysh and their assistants came.

Of course, regarding to the fact that Mecca is located in the south of Medina, the pagans of Mecca must have come from the south, but perhaps the condition of the road and that of the arrival the gate of Medina were in a state that they had to turn round a part of the city and arrive from the west.

However, the above sentence points to the siege of this city from the side of different enemies of Islam.

The Qur’anic phrase: */zaqat-il-’absar/ (the eyes swerved)* refers to the state that a person feels at the time of intensive horror when his eyes turn aside and gaze on a proper fix point.

The Qur’anic sentence */balaqat-il-qulub-ul-hanajir/ (the hearts reached to the throats)* is an interesting allusion, like that which is said in Persian language: ‘his soul reached his lips’, else the heart, the special organ, the distributor of blood, never moves from its place and it never reaches to the throat.

The Qur’anic sentence which says:

“...and you did imagine about Allah diverse thoughts”

points to this fact that in that state there had been appeared some wrong thoughts among a group of the

Muslims, because from the point of Faith, they had not reached to a perfect stage.

Such were the same ones about whom the next verse says:

“...they were shaken a tremendous shaking.”

Perhaps some of them thought they would finally be defeated and the enemy's army, with that power and might, could be victorious. They imagined that the last days of the life of Islam had approached and the Prophet's promises about the triumphant of Islam would never happen.

These thoughts, of course, had appeared in the minds of some of the Muslims in the form of a temptation.

This is similar to that which the Qur'an mentions concerning the Battle of 'Uhud, saying:

“...while another group have cared only for their own selves, thinking about Allah unjustly, the thought of ignorance...”³

It was here that the furnace of the Divine examination became hot, as the next verse says:

“There it was that the believers were tried, and they were shaken a tremendous shaking.”

It is natural that when a person falls into the tempest of thoughts, his body is not aloof of that tempest either, and it involves in an anxiety and agitation. Many times we have seen the persons who have mental agitation and, while they are sitting in their seat, they ceaselessly move, rub their hands to each other, and completely show their own anxiety in their manner.

One of the evidences of this horrible terror was that, as it is said, five famous heroes of Arabs, the greatest of whom was 'Amr-ubn-i-'Abdiwudd, had worn the clothes of war and came into the battle-field with a special pride, and challenged for champion. 'Amr-ubn-i-'Abdiwudd, in particular, was boasting and ridiculed both Hereafter, and Paradise. He said:

“Do you not say that your slain members will be admitted in Paradise? Is there none of you who desires to see Paradise?”

But all of the members of the army of Islam were silent before his shouts, and none dared to face with him, save Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as) who fought against him and caused a great victory for the Muslims.

As it is evident from its name, the Battle of 'Ahzab was a battle in which all the clans and different groups of the enemies of Islam had united in order to destroy the 'young Islam'.

The Battle of 'Ahzab was the last effort, the last trial of the infidels, and the last exhibition of the power of polytheists. It was for this reason that when the greatest champion of the enemy, i.e., 'Amr-ubn-i-'Abdiwudd stood before the brave officer of Islam, Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali-ibn-Abitalib (as), the Prophet

(S) said:

“The whole of Faith stood against the whole of polytheism.”⁴

For, in that event, the triumphant of one of these two groups over the other was the triumphant of infidelity over Faith or Faith over infidelity. In other words, it was a Battle which could define the future of Islam and polytheism.

That was why, after the defeat of the enemies in this great Battle, they could not stand firm any more, and from then on always the control of action was in Muslims’ hand.

The star of the luck of the enemy began to decline and the basis of their power was ruined.

Of course, at first Amir-ul-Muminin Ali (as) invited him to Islam, but he did not accept. Then he (as) invited him to leave the battlefield, he refused it, too, and he counted it shame for himself. The third suggestion was that he would come down from the horse and have a battle on foot.

‘Amr became angry and said:

“I did not believe that a person from among Arab gives me such a suggestion.”

He came down from his horse and attacked against Ali (as) with his sword.

Here, Ali (as) used a special style of fight, and quickly, and with a particular way, he struck with sword on the enemy’s leg and pushed it into his leg. It was at this time that the powerful body of ‘Amr fell on the ground.

A thick dust filled the space of the battle-field. A group of hypocrites thought that Ali (as) was killed by ‘Amr, but when they heard the sound of Takbir, ‘proclaim His greatness’, Ali’s victory was confirmed.

Suddenly they saw Ali (as) was coming toward the camp while he had a smile of victory on his lips and ‘Amr’s body, without head, was on the ground in corner of the battlefield.

The slain of the famous champion of Arab was not tolerable for the army of the clans and it ruined their hopes and desires. It was a stroke which weakened their spirit very much and disappointed them from victory.

So, the Prophet (S) told Ali (as) about them:

“If they compare your action today with the deeds of all the followers of Muhammad, your action will be preferred to their deeds, because by the slain of ‘Amr there will remain no house of the polytheists but there entered a disgrace in it; and there remains no house of the believers but entered an honour in it.”⁵

The famous learned man of the Sunnite, Hakim-i-Neyshaburi has narrated the same meaning about it

from the Prophet (S) with a different statement.

Here is the Prophet's statement:

*"The struggle of Ali-ibn-Abitalib against 'Amr-ubn-i-'Abdiwudd on the Day of Ditch is better than the deeds of my Ummah until the Hereafter Day."*⁶

In another tradition we recite that, after the end of the Battle of 'Ahzab, the Prophet (S) said:

*"Now we fight against them and they are not able to fight against us."*⁷

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verse 12

وَإِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ مَّا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا

12. "And when the hypocrites, and those in whose heart was a disease, were saying: 'Allah and His Messenger promised us naught but a delusion'."

To make the strivers of Islam disappointed and weakening their spiritual conditions is a sign of deviation and hypocrisy. Among the companions of the Prophet (S) there were some sceptics and some were hypocrites.

It was formerly said that the furnace of the examination in the Battle of 'Ahzab became hot, and everybody was engaged in that great examination. It is almost clear that, in such hard circumstances, the people who in the ordinary conditions are apparently in one row will be divided into different rows.

Here, too, the Muslims were divided into various rows: a group of them were true believers, a part of them were the elect of the believers, another part contained of some persons of a weak faith, some hypocrites, some obstinate and intensive hypocrites; some of them were in thought of their own home and life and wanted to run away; some of them tried to hinder others from going to Holy war; and a group of them worked to fasten their unity with the hypocrites. In short, everybody made manifest his inner secrets in this wonderful resurrection and on this "Manifestation Day."

Former verses were upon the state of the Muslims who were of a weak faith and the bad temptations and imaginations they had; and in this verse the position of the hypocrites, and those in whose heart was a disease, has been referred to.

It says:

"And when the hypocrites, and those in whose heart was a disease, were saying: 'Allah and His Messenger promised us naught but a delusion'."

It is recorded in the history of the Battle of 'Ahzab that during the time when the Muslims, one by one, were digging a ditch, one day they reached a big and hard piece of stone on which no pick affected.

The Prophet (S) was informed of this matter and he himself entered the ditch and stood by that piece of stone. When he hit the first stroke on it, a part of the stone was separated and a lightning came out from it.

The Prophet (S) victoriously said: "*Allahu Akbar*", and the attending Muslims, too, proclaimed His greatness.

For the second time, the Prophet (S) blew a strong stroke over the stone when another part of the stone separated and a lightning came out from it. So the Prophet (S) said: "*Allahu Akbar*" and the Muslims did, too.

Finally, the Prophet (S) blew the third stroke on the stone and a lightning came out and the rest of the stone split asunder. Again, the Prophet (S) said: "*Allahu Akbar*" and the Muslims, too, shouted: "*Allahu Akbar*".

Salman asked the Prophet (S) about it and he answered:

"In the midst of the first lightning I saw the land of "Hirah" and the castles of the kings of Iran, and Gabriel gave me the glad tidings that my Ummah will be victorious over them.

In the second lightning the reddish castles of Syria and Room manifested, and Gabriel gave me the glad tidings that my Ummah will defeat them.

In the third lightning I saw the castles of San'a and Yemen, and Gabriel informed me that my Ummah will defeat them again. Glad tidings be on you, O Muslims!"

The hypocrites looked at each other and silently said:

"What wonderful words! What false and baseless statements! He is watching the land of Hirah and the buildings of Kasra from Medina, and informs you of its occupation! While just now you are in the grips of a group of Arabs (and you are in the state of defence) and you can not even go to Baytul-Hathar (around Medina)!"

The above verse was revealed and announced that those diseased hypocrites say:

"Allah and His Messenger promised us naught but a delusion."

They are unaware of the infinite power of Allah.⁸

Verily, on that day, such information and glad tidings, save in the view of the aware believers, were not anything but a delusion and pride.

But the heavenly eyes of the Prophet (S) who, in the midst of fiery lightning produced as the result of the strokes of the picks for digging the ditch, could see the occupation of the castles of the kings of Iran, Room, and Yemen, and gave glad tidings to his devoted Ummah by removing curtains from over those secrets.

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verse 13

وَإِذْ قَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَا أَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ لَا مُقَامَ لَكُمْ فَارْجِعُوا وَيَسْتَأْذِنُ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمُ النَّبِيَّ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّ بُيُوتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ وَمَا هِيَ بِعَوْرَةٍ إِن يُرِيدُونَ إِلَّا فِرَارًا

13. “And when a party of them said: ‘O’ you the people of Yathrib! There is no place for you to stand (here) so go back,’ and a group of them asked permission of the Prophet, saying: ‘Verily our houses are exposed’; and they were not exposed. They only intended to flee away (from battle field).”

The hypocrites usually try to separate the believers from the religious culture, even in nominating of things and names.

(They say: “O’ you the people of Yathrib!”)

We must not be neglectful of the hypocrites’ propagations for discouraging the strivers.

Divine revelation makes the evil thoughts of hypocrites manifest and disgraces them publicly.

This verse explains the state of a dangerous group of these very diseased–hearted hypocrites who were more treacherous and polluted unto others.

It says:

“And when a party of them said: ‘O’ you the people of Yathrib! There is no place for you to stand (here) so go back,’

Briefly speaking, they mean that you can not do anything against this mass of enemy so you may go out of the battle and do not send yourself to death and that your wife and your children to be captives.

Thus, they wanted to separate the group of the Helpers from the army of Islam. This was from one side. On the other side, a group of the same hypocrites, who had houses in Medina, asked permission of the Prophet (S) to return home, and they sought pretexts for it.

Among their pretexts they said that their houses had no wall, while it was not true. They only desired to

leave the scene and run away.

The Arabic word *‘aurat/* is originally derived from *‘ar/* and it is used for something that its making manifest causes shame. Also, the word *‘aurah/* is used for the gaps appeared in clothes and the walls of a house; and for the damageable points of boundaries; and for whatever man is afraid of.

Here, the purpose is the houses which have not a certain door and wall and at which the enemy may attack.

By offering these pretexts, the hypocrites intended to leave the battle field and refuge to their own houses.

An Islamic narration indicates that the members of the tribe of ‘Bani Harithah’ sent a person to the Prophet (S) and said that their houses were without any guard, and none of the houses of the Helpers as well as their own houses had a protector, and there was not any barrier between them and the tribe of Qatfan who attacked from the east of Medina.

They asked the Prophet (S) to let them return to their own houses and defend their wives and children.

At this time, Sa’d-ibn-Ma’ath, the chief of Ansar (the Helpers) arrived and heard them. He told the Prophet (S) not to give them leave. He added:

“By Allah! Whenever we were confronted a difficulty, they sought the like of this pretext. They tell a lie.”

The Prophet (S) ordered them to stay and defend Islam, too.

Before the time the Prophet’s emigration to that city, the ancient name of Medina, had been Yathrib. After that it was gradually called ‘Madinat-ur-Rassul’ (the city of the Prophet) the shortened form of which was Madinah.

This city has had various names. Besides these two names (Yathrib and Madinah), the Late Sayyid Murtada has mentioned eleven names for it, including: Tayyibah, Tabah, Sakinah, Mahbubah, Marhumah, and Qasimah. (Some commentators call the name of the land of this city Yathrib.)

Some narrations denote that the Prophet (S) said:

“Do not call this city as Yathrib”.

Perhaps, it was for the reason that */yaʿrib/* is originally derived from */ʿarb/* in the sense of ‘to blame’ and the Prophet (S) did not like that name for this blessed city. However, it was not without reason that the hypocrites addressed the people of Medina as ‘The people of Yathrib’.

Perhaps it was for this reason that the Prophet (S) hated this name; or they wanted to announce the lack of formality of Islam and the title of ‘Madinat-ur-Rassul’ or to attract their attention to the Age of

Ignorance.

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verse 14

وَلَوْ دُخِلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَقْطَارِهَا ثُمَّ سُئِلُوا الْفِتْنَةَ لَأَتَوْهَا وَمَا تَلَبَّثُوا بِهَا إِلَّا يَسِيرًا

14. “And if an entry had been made upon them from all sides of the city. Then they had been asked to apostatise, they would certainly have done it, and they would not have stayed in it but a little while.”

In order to create sedition, enemy often takes help from the interior hypocrites.

Hypocrites easily turn away from the truth and go toward the enemy and cause disturbance.

This verse points to the weakness of the faith of this group implying that they are so weak in expressing Islam that if enemies come into Medina from its all sides and martially occupy this city and suggest the hypocrites to return to the belief of polytheism and infidelity, they quickly accept it and do not wait much time for choosing this way.

The noble verse says:

“And if an entry had been made upon them from all sides of the city. Then they had been asked to apostatise, they would certainly have done it, and they would not have stayed in it but a little while.”

It is clear that, such people, who are so weak in their faith neither are ready to fight against the enemy, nor do they entertain martyrdom in the way of Allah (s.w.t.), soon will they surrender and change their way.

Thus, the objective meaning of the Qur’anic word **/fitnah/** here is ‘polytheism’ and disbelief.⁹

But some other commentators offer another probability, saying that the objective meaning of the word **/fitnah/** here is fight against the Muslims, in a manner that if this group of hypocrites are suggested to, they will accept this invitation soon and will cooperate with seditious ones.

But this commentary does not agree with the apparent of the sentence which says:

“And if an entry had been made upon them from all sides of the city...”,

and perhaps it is for this very reason that the majority of commentators have chosen the first meaning.

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verse 15

وَلَقَدْ كَانُوا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ قَبْلُ لَا يُؤَلُّونَ الْأَدْبَارَ وَكَانَ عَهْدُ اللَّهِ مَسْئُولًا

15. “And indeed they had made a covenant with Allah before that, that they would not turn their backs (to the enemy) and covenants with Allah shall be questioned of.”

To make agreement is not so important, it is loyalty which is important. We must not take the covenant of Allah (s.w.t.) inconsiderable, because we will surely be questioned and reprimanded.

This holy verse summons the hypocrites to judgment.

It says:

“And indeed they had made a covenant with Allah before that, that they would not turn their backs (to the enemy)...”

They had formerly made a covenant to fulfil their promise in defending Monotheism, Islam, and the Prophet (S). Do they not know that the covenant with Allah, the Aware, will be questioned and they are responsible before it?

The holy verse continues saying:

“...and covenants with Allah shall be questioned of.”

Some commentators have said this covenant is the same promise that the tribe of ‘Bani Harithah’ had made with Allah and the Prophet (S) on the Day of the Battle of ‘Uhud.

At the time when they decided to return back from the battle field and were regretful, they made a covenant that they would never approach those affairs, but the same persons thought to breach their promise in the Battle of ‘Ahzab. 10

Some other commentators also believe that it refers to the covenant that they made with the Prophet (S) in the Battle of Badr, or in ‘Aqabah, before the Prophet’s migration. ‘Alusi has cited this meaning in Ruh-ul-Bayan. But it seems that the above verse has a vast meaning which encompasses both these covenants and other covenants and promises.

In principle, everybody who embraces Islam and pays allegiance with the Prophet (S) has made this covenant with him that he should defend Islam and the Qur’an so seriously that he gives his life.

The emphasis on covenant here is for this reason that even the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance used to

respect the act of promise and covenant, then how is it possible that after believing in Islam someone breaches his covenant?

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verse 16

قُلْ لَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمْ الْفِرَارُ إِنْ فَرَرْتُمْ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ أَوِ الْقَتْلِ وَإِذَا لَا تُمَتَّعُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

16. “Say: ‘Flight will never avail you if you flee from death or slaying, and in that case you will not be allowed to enjoy yourselves but a little’.”

After that Allah divulged the intention of the hypocrites that their purpose was not the protection of their houses but they wanted to escape from the battle field, He answers them through two proofs: at first, He commands to His Messenger as follows:

“Say: ‘Flight will never avail you if you flee from death or slaying, and in that case you will not be allowed to enjoy yourselves but a little’.”

Supposing you succeed to escape, your position will be one of these two ones: either your life’s final term has ended and your certain death has come, then wherever you are, death will seize you, even when you are at home beside your wife and your children, an incident from inside or outside puts an end to your life.

And if your life’s final term has not ended you will live in this world for a few days disgracefully and humiliatorily and you will be as a captive in the hand of enemies and then the divine punishment will seize you.

In fact, this statement is like what was revealed in the Battle of 'Uhud concerning another group of the slothful hypocrites, where the Qur'an says:

“...say: ‘Even if you were in your own homes, those for whom slaughter was ordained would certainly have gone forth to their deathbeds...”¹¹,

and they would be killed.

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verse 17

قُلْ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَعْصِمُكُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ سُوءًا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ رَحْمَةً وَلَا يَجِدُونَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا

17. “Say: ‘Who is he that shall defend you from Allah, if He desires punishment for you, or desires mercy for you?’ And they shall find for themselves, apart from Allah, neither protector nor helper.”

Mercy and punishment, or bitterness and sweetness will come to a man by the will of Allah (s.w.t.).

The will of Allah concerning the appearance of man’s afflictions and hardships is in this sense that, by his own authority and committing some evil deeds (like escaping from war) man draws himself toward the fire of the punishment of Allah and, since all things are done by Allah’s will, these afflictions and hardships are attributed to Allah.

So, this holy verse, addressing the Prophet (S), announces:

“Say: ‘Who is he that shall defend you from Allah, if He desires punishment for you, or desires mercy for you?’...”

“...And they shall find for themselves, apart from Allah, neither protector nor helper.”

Therefore, now that all your pre–destined affairs are with Him, do obey His command in the field of Holy war eagerly because it is the cause of your honour both in the world and before Him. So, if in this way martyrdom meets you, embrace it happily.

Surah Al-’Ahzab – Verse 18

قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الْمُعَوِّقِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالْقَائِلِينَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ هَلُمَّ إِلَيْنَا وَلَا يَأْتُونَ الْبَأْسَ إِلَّا
قَلِيلًا

18. “Indeed Allah knows those who hinder others among you and those who say unto their brethren: ‘Come to Us’ and they come not to the fight but a little,”

Allah is aware of all the evil propagations of the enemies of the truth.

This holy verse points to the state of another group of hypocrites who withdrew from the battle field of the Battle of ’Ahzab and invited others to abdicate it, too.

It says:

“Indeed Allah knows those who hinder others among you and those who say unto their brethren: ‘Come to Us’...”

They told them to leave that dangerous battle and there came not to the battle save a few of them who

came rather unwillingly or hypocritically.

The verse continues saying:

“...and they come not to the fight but a little,”

The Arabic term ***/mu‘awwiqin/*** is derived from */‘auq/* which means: ‘To hinder, to dissuade from something’.

The Qur’anic term ***/ba’s/*** originally means ‘intensity’ and the objective meaning of it here is ‘fight’.

The above verse may point to two groups. A group of hypocrites who were among the Muslims, (that the word */minkum/* (among you) is its evidence), and they tried to dissuade the weak-faith Muslims from the fight. These were the same as */mu‘awwiqin/*.

The second group were those who were outside of the scene from among the hypocrites or the Jews. When these people met the soldiers of the Prophet of Islam (S) told them to go to them and draw out themselves from that battle. (These are the ones whom are referred to in the second sentence.)

However, an Islamic narration indicates that it happened that one of the companions of the Prophet (S), who had come inside the city for a particular thing, and met his brother who had got bread and wine in his front. He told him that how he was passing the time luxuriously in the city while the holy Prophet of Allah (S) was busy fighting in the midst of swords and javelins.

In answer to him, his brother said:

“O silly man! You may come to sit with us and be happy. By the One to Whom Muhammad makes an oath, he will never come back from this battle field, and this huge army who are gathered there will not let him and his companions continue their lives.”

His brother said:

“You are telling a lie. By Allah! I will go and inform the Prophet (S) of what you said.”

Then he came to the Prophet (S) and explained for him what happened. It was then that the above verse was revealed.

Thus, the occasion of the revelation of the Qur’anic term ***/ixwanihim/*** (***their brethren***) may be meant in the sense of ‘true brothers’ or in the sense of ‘with the same manner’, as the Qur’an says:

“Verily, the squanderers are the brethrens (accomplices) of the Satans...”¹²

At the end, the Qur’an has pointed to the kinds of brethren:

A) Natural brotherhood which comes into being by the way of parents.

B) Religious brethren which is obtained by means of having the same religion.

C) Political and party brethren, which has been referred to in this verse.

D) The behavioural brotherhood which is provided by obedience and following someone; as the Qur'an introduces *Imubāḥirīn* (*squanderers*) they are as brethren of Satan. 13

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verse 19

أَشِحَّةً عَلَيْكُمْ فَإِذَا جَاءَ الْخَوْفُ رَأَيْتَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ تَدُورُ أَعْيُنُهُمْ كَالَّذِي يُغْشَى
عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ الْخَوْفُ سَلَقُوكُمْ بِاللِّسَانِ حِدَادَ أَشِحَّةٍ عَلَى الْخَيْرِ أُولَئِكَ
لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا فَأَحْبَطَ اللَّهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا

19. “Being niggardly with respect to you; but when fear comes you will see them looking to you, their eyes rolling like one who swoons of death; but when the fear departs, they smite you with sharp tongues, being niggardly of the good things. Those have never believed and so Allah has made their deeds in vain, and that is easy for Allah.”

The hypocrites are never benevolent for you. At the time of danger they are niggardly for helping and attending in the battlefield.

This verse implies that the motive of all these hindrances is that they are niggardly in all things unto you.

The holy verse says:

“Being niggardly with respect to you...”

The Arabic word *ʾaṣīḥḥah* is the plural form of *ʾaṣīḥ* which is derived from *ʾaṣī* in the sense of a stinginess which is accompanied with avarice.

They are misers not only in giving their souls in the battle field, but also in giving financial helps for providing the tools and means of war; in bodily helps for digging a ditch, and even for giving mental helps. It is miserliness together with avarice and an avarice which increases every day.

After stating their stinginess and saying that they refused to give any donation, the Qur'an refers to stating some other qualities of theirs, which have almost a common and general aspect in all hypocrites during all ages and centuries.

It says:

“...but when fear comes you will see them looking to you, their eyes rolling like one who swoons of death...”

Since they do not possess a correct faith and do not have a strong support in life, when they confront a hard event they totally lose their control, as if their souls are being taken.

Then, when the storm of afflictions subsides, they will come over to you so expectant that as if they are the main conquerors of the battle and shout like creditors and demand their share of the spoils with rough words.

The verse adds:

“...but when the fear departs, they smite you with sharp tongues, being niggardly of the good things...”

The Qur’anic term ***/salaqukum/*** is derived from ***/salq/*** which originally means: ‘to open something angrily’ whether it is the opening of one’s hand or tongue. This expression is used in respect to those who shout in a commanding tone and demand something.

The Arabic phrase: ***/alsinat in hidad/*** philologically means (sharp tongues), and here it ironically means: ‘being harsh in speech’.

At the end, the verse points to the last qualification of theirs which, in fact, is the origin of all their misfortunes.

It says:

“...Those have never believed and so Allah has made their deeds in vain, and that is easy for Allah.”

On the whole, we conclude that ***/mu‘awwiqin/*** (hinderers) were some hypocrites who had the following qualifications:

- 1– They never came to fight but a little.
- 2– They were never from among those who sacrifice their lives and properties, and they did not tolerate the least distress.
- 3– In stormy and critical moments they entirely might lose countenance because of intense fear.
- 4– At the time of victory, they considered themselves as the heirs of the whole glories.
- 5– They were some faithless people so their deeds were worthless with Allah, too.

Such is the custom and behaviour of the hypocrites in all times and in any society. What an exact

explanation the Qur'an has given about them, by which the like of them can be recognized, and how a great many examples of them we can see by our eyes in our own age!

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verse 20

يَحْسِبُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ لَمْ يَذْهَبُوا وَإِنْ يَأْتِ الْأَحْزَابُ يَوَدُّوا لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ بَادُونَ فِي الْأَعْرَابِ
يَسْأَلُونَ عَنْ أَنْبَائِكُمْ وَلَوْ كَانُوا فِيكُمْ مَا قَاتَلُوا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

20. “They think that the clans have not withdrawn, and if the clans should come (again) they would wish they were in the deserts (wandering) among the Bedouins, and seeking news about you, and if they were in your midst, they would fight not but a little.”

The coward persons who are of a weak faith always think that the enemy is stronger than the Muslims. (The hypocrites imagined that the clans of the Jews and polytheists would not be scattered unless they conquered Medina.)

This verse illustrates the state of fear of this group more clearly and explicitly. It implies that they were so frightened that, after the disperse of clans and the army of the enemy, they thought that they had not gone yet.

The verse says:

“They think that the clans have not withdrawn...”

A horrible incubus had cast its shadow over them, as if the soldiers of disbelievers were ceaselessly marching before their eyes, and they were threatening them with their swords and spears.

These coward fighters, these chicken-hearted hypocrites were afraid even of their own shadows. Any sound of a horse, or every cry of a camel they heard they twisted with fear and thought that the forces of the clans had returned.

Then the holy verse adds:

“...and if the clans should come (again) they would wish they were in the deserts (wandering) among the Bedouins, and seeking news about you...”

Every moment they sought repeatedly the last news from any traveller lest the clans had approached their region, and that they would hold you under this obligation that they had always been anxious about your situation.

Then, in the last sentence of the verse the Qur'an says:

“...and if they were in your midst, they would fight not but a little.”

Therefore, you may not be so worried of their going, nor should you be happy of their presence, because they are some worthless and useless persons, and their absence is better than their presence.

Even this little fighting is not for the sake of Allah. It is because of the fear of people's blame, and for pretence and hypocrisy, since if it were for the sake of Allah it would have not any limit and they would stand in this field until the end of their lives.

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1. What was said in the above was a brief from the detail discussion that Ibn-Athir, has recorded in his Book, 'Kamil'.
 2. such as: Quraysh, Qatfan, Bani-Salim, Bani 'Asad, Bani Fazarah, Bani Ashja', and Bani Marrah
 3. Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 154
 4. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 20, P. 215
 5. Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 20, P. 216
 6. Mostadrak-i-Hakim, Vol. 3, P. 32
 7. Tarikh-i-Kamil-i-Ibn-i-Athir, Vol. 2, P. 184
 8. This event is mentioned in 'Kamil-i-Ibn-i-'Athir, Vol. 2, P. 179
 9. As other verses of the holy Qur'an say, like Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 193.
 10. Tafsir-i-Qurtabi, Tafsir-i-Fi-Zilal under the verse
 11. Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 154
 12. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 27
 13. Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 27
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