

Surah al-Fath, Verses 17 – 29

Surah al-Fath – Verse 17

لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرْجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرْجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ حَرْجٌ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ يُعَذِّبْهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

17. No sin is there upon the blind, nor is there sin upon the lame, nor is there sin upon the sick [that they turn away from fighting in Allah's cause]. And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will admit him to Gardens [of Paradise] beneath [whose trees] rivers flow; and whosoever turns back, He will chastise him with a painful torment.

Legislators are supposed to attend to all legal aspects and stipulate specific laws for special cases (e.g. the lame, the blind, and the ailing). The disabled will not be deprived of being admitted to Paradise unless they obey Divine Commands to the best of their abilities.

It is reported on the occasion of the blessed Verse in question that upon being apprised of the order of engaging in jihad, the disabled entertained fear and informed the Noble Prophet (S) of their disabilities to participate in battles together with other believers and they were anxious of their fates.

Thus, the blessed Verse was revealed as per which there is no sin upon the blind, the lame, and the ailing if they fail to take part in jihad.

Irrespective of the occasion of revelation, it is evident that it applies to all religious obligations.

Thus,

“Whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger”

refers that believers are supposed to obey God Almighty and His Messenger (S) in all cases, be it concerning jihad or otherwise, and those who are disabled and owing to their disabilities fail to perform a number of their obligations, they shall be rewarded with Divine Bounties so long as they obey Allah and His Prophet (S).

Au contraire, those who are able to obey Allah and His Messenger (S) but they fail to act likewise shall be chastised with excruciating torments.

Surah al-Fath - Verses 18-19

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ
السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا

وَمَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً يَأْخُذُونَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا

18. Verily, Allah was pleased with believers when they gave pledge to you under the tree [at Hdaybiyya]: He knew what was in their hearts [of faith and sincerity] and He sent down serenity upon them, and He rewarded them with a near triumph.

19. And abundant spoils that they will capture. And Allah is Ever Omnipotent, All-Wise.

Giving pledge is a religious obligation whose keeping is obligatory and whose breaking is unlawful and entails evil consequences. God Almighty is satisfied with the faith accompanied by loyalty to His Messenger (S). It is noteworthy that religion is not discrete from politics. God is satisfied with the believers pledging allegiance with their Prophet (S) in social and political issues.

The blessed Verses are revealed on the occasion of the allegiance pledged at Hdaybiyya hence its designation bay'a al-ridhwan. Believers gave their pledge to the Messenger of God (S) beneath a tree well-known as the tree of sammara (shajara al-sammara) at the village of Hdaybiyya.

God Almighty was Aware that their pledge was devoid of sincerity and they obey the Messenger of Allah (S) in jihad. Consequently the blessed Verses in question were revealed to bear glad tidings to believers that owing to their pledge four things fell into their share:

1. Obtaining Divine Satisfaction which is the most exalted Bounty.
2. Fortitude and perseverance through which their hearts find confidence and they persevere in their faith.

3. Triumph which will shall into their faith soon, be it in the conquest of Khaybar, or as some maintain the conquest of Mecca.
4. Abundant spoils which fall into their share. God Almighty is Omnipotent and Truthful and He acts upon Wisdom.

Surah al-Fath - Verse 20

وَعَدَكُمْ اللَّهُ مَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً تَأْخُذُونَهَا فَعَجَّلَ لَكُمْ هَذِهِ وَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَ النَّاسِ عَنْكُمْ
وَلِتَكُونَ آيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ صِرَاطًا مُّسْتَقِيمًا

20. Allah has promised you abundant spoils that you will capture and He has hastened for you this [the spoils of Khaybar] and He has restrained the hands of men from [inflicting harm upon] you that it may be a sign [and a lesson] for believers and that He may guide you to the Straight Path.

The preceding two Verses bore the glad tidings of early triumph which according to a number of Qur'anic exegets, e.g. Tabari, Shaykh Tusi, Zamakhshari, Maraghi, and Tabarsi, allude to the conquest of Khaybar. The fortress of Khaybar located two hundred kilometers from Medina.

The fortress had lofty fortifications and ten thousand Jews resided in it and were engaged in agricultural activities in its vicinity. This remarkably fortified fortress had an extraordinary and heavy gate which could be moved by forty people.

Since Khaybar had turned into the enemy base and the spy den of the opponents of the Islamic faith, Muslims departed for Khaybar one month following the Treaty of Hdaybiyya. In the outset, Muslims were headed by those who failed to do anything, until the Noble Prophet (S) said that he would give the banner to one who had obtained the satisfaction of God Almighty and His Messenger (S), one who is loved.

He handed the banner to Imam 'Ali (as) the next day. Imam 'Ali (as) departed for the colossal fortress of Khaybar with the Muslim army.

A Jew from the top the wall asked him:

"Who are you?"

He replied:

"I am 'Ali ibn Abi Talib."

The Jew shouted:

“O Jews! You shall be defeated.”

It was at that time that Mirhab, the Jewish castellan proceeded to the gate to fight ‘Ali (as). ‘Ali (as) forcefully dislocated the gate and threw it aside, thus Muslims could enter the castle and conquer it. 1

At any rate, the blessed Verse in question is saying that God Almighty has promised to reward believers before long with abundant spoils and impede the enemy from inflicting harm upon them. He made the conquest of Khaybar happen earlier so that believers entertain no doubts as to the words of the Noble Prophet (S) regarding their triumph.

It is definitely a reference to the conquest of Khaybar which occurred prior to the conquest of Mecca in the same year at Hudaibiyya. Further details are to be found in exegetic and historical sources.

The blessed Verse proceeds with two further Bounties:

“That it may be a sign [and a lesson] for believers and that He may guide you to the Straight Path.”

Surah al-Fath – Verse 21

وَأُخْرَى لَمْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهَا قَدْ أَحَاطَ اللَّهُ بِهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرًا

21. And other [triumphs and spoils] which are not yet within your power [will fall into your share], but Allah compasses them. And Allah is All-Able to do all things.

Promising the achievement of spoils in future rests on Divine Omnipotence and Omniscience. Qur’anic Verses engender trust in God Almighty and educating monotheists.

The blessed Verse in question informs believers that another spoil shall also fall into your share which stays beyond your power at the time or you are unaware that it is encompassed by Divine Omnipotence but its occurrence is predetermined.

What was beyond their power at the time could be the conquest of Mecca or other bounties fallen into the share of Muslims at the lifetime of the Noble Prophet (S). However, the wide application of the Verse and the word “abundant” in the preceding Verse include all the spoils to fall into the share of Muslims to the last day.

Surah al-Fath - Verses 22-23

وَلَوْ قَاتَلَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوَلَّوْا الْأَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُونَ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا

سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا

22. And if those who disbelieve fight against you [they fail to confront you and] they certainly will retreat and turn their backs. Then they will find neither a protector nor a helper.

23. That [your triumph and disbelievers' fear of being defeated] has been the Way of Allah with those who passed away formerly and you will not find any alteration in the Way of Allah.

Weak Muslims attained to such might that their enemies could not stand against them. One who is not supported by God Almighty has no helper.

In the prayer of 'Arafa Imam Husayn (as) thus addresses God Almighty:

“One who has you [as a helper] has everything, but one who does not have you, has nothing.”

In this blessed Verse, God Almighty informs His Messenger (S) that if the disbelievers from Banu Asad and Qatafan intend to wage war with Muslims, He will cast fear into their heart so that they turn away from battle and flee. Disbelievers will be defeated, denigrated, and helpless at all times, since they have neither friend nor helper. It is an allusion to the truth that God Almighty is the only true friend and support.

One who has not entered the stronghold of

“There is no god, but Allah”

has no refuge and may not achieve any success.

Verse 23 is saying that it has always been the Way of Allah that Truth and the followers of Truth are triumphant at all times as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

“Indeed, it is I and My Messengers who shall be the triumphant”²

It is evident that:

“Verily, falsehood is ever bound to vanish”³

since falsehood disappears before truth and things other than God Almighty and His Signs are false and nothing.

Surah al-Fath – Verse 24

وَهُوَ الَّذِي كَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ بِبَطْنِ مَكَّةَ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ أَظْفَرَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا

24. And He it is Who has withheld their hands from you [at Hdaybiyya] and your hands from them in the midst of Mecca after He had made you triumphant over them. And Allah is Ever the All-Seer of what you do. [All triumphs and progresses are dependent upon Divine Will.]

The blessed Verse in question is saying that He is the One who withheld disbelievers from inflicting harm upon you at the heart of Mecca as he withheld your hands from them after He had made you victorious over them. God Almighty is the All-Seer of what you do.

Indeed, this account was a clear instance of

“manifest triumph”

in Qur’anic terms. A limited number without sufficient equipment entered the land of the enemy who had embarked upon military expedition against Medina and had left no stone unturned to defeat them. However, now that the limited number of Muslims penetrated their land they fearful that offered the peace treaty.

Could there be any more significant triumph that they conquered the enemy without the least bloodshed?

The Treaty of Hdaybiyya was indubitably a defeat for the Quraysh and a triumph for Muslims throughout the Arabian Peninsula since Muslims were able to cast fear into the hearts of their enemies. In other words, withholding from waging war is a reference to the Treaty of Hdaybiyya, since Meccan polytheists had prepared themselves for engaging in war against Muslims and the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) had pledged allegiance with Muslims to stay loyal to him.

Thus both parties were prepared to confront each other.

In the Treaty of Hdaybiyya, God Almighty impeded polytheists from attacking Muslims on the one hand and hindered Muslims from killing polytheists on the other. There were two reasons behind the treaty which were Bounties: preservation of the sanctity of the sacred precinct of Mecca which was not to be defiled by Muslims and the other Bounty was the ten year truce stipulated in the treaty in which the

number of Muslims was on the increase.

Since Muslims did not shed the blood of any of the Meccans, they went on pilgrimage the following year and three years after that they gloriously conquered Mecca. These Bounties were all the consequences of the treaty. Had some polytheists been fallen, peace, truce, pilgrimage in the following years, preservation of the sanctity of Mecca, and perhaps the conquest of Mecca would have been impossible.

Consequently, the Treaty of Hudaibiyya has been regarded as

“manifest triumph”

which paved the path of penetration and propagation of the Islamic faith.

Surah al-Fath – Verse 25

هُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْهَدْيِ مَعْكُوفًا أَنْ يَبْلُغَ مَحَلَّهُ
وَلَوْلَا رِجَالٌ مُؤْمِنُونَ وَنِسَاءٌ مُؤْمِنَاتٌ لَمْ تَعْلَمُوهُمْ أَنْ تَطَؤُوهُمْ فَتُصِيبَكُمْ مِنْهُمْ
مَعْرَّةٌ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ لِيُدْخِلَ اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ لَوْ تَزَيَّلُوا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

25. They are the ones who disbelieved and hindered you from al-Masjid al-Haram and detained the sacrificial animals from reaching their place of sacrifice. Had there not been believing men and believing women [in Mecca] whom you did not know [owing to the command as to attack], that you may kill them and on whose account a sin would have been committed by you without [your] knowledge [We would have issued the command of waging war and attacking Mecca and confrontation with these disbelievers, but we did not issue such command], that Allah might bring into His Mercy whom He wills, if they [believers and polytheists] had been apart, We truly would have chastised those of them who disbelieved with excruciating torment.

The Arabic word ma'kuf is employed in the sense of an animal kept for sacrifice. The word mu'takif designates someone who makes himself bound to something or a place for some sacred cause. The word ma'arra indicates loss and the verbal form tazayyalu signifies “they had been apart.”

The blessed Verse in question treats of Divine Favors bestowed upon believers such that war and bloodshed were removed from the people of Mecca for the safety of believers.

Thus it is said that though Meccan polytheists prevented Muslims from entering Masjid al-Haram and returned the seventy camels brought by the Noble Prophet as sacrificial animals from the sacrificial place, God Almighty lifted the command of war, since believing men and women lived in Mecca who

concealed their belief out of fear and had there occurred a war between Meccan polytheists and Muslims, they would have perished without they being aware of the same and they would have been grieved.

Concerning the reason for accepting the truce with Mu'awiya, Imam Hasan (as) said:

"I avoided war out of discretion and defending their blood." 4

Thus, God Almighty bestowed His Mercy upon Meccan believers and provided them with safety against being killed. It is also worthy of note that the prothesis of the law ("if") apodosis is deleted, in other words, had it not been for providing Meccan believers with safety against their lives, We would have commanded jihad against Meccans and you would have conquered them.

To lay further emphasis, the blessed Verse in question thus closes:

"Had there not been believing men and believing women whom you did not know, that you may kill them and on whose account a sin would have been committed by you without [your] knowledge, that Allah might bring into His Mercy whom He wills, if they [believers and polytheists] had been apart, We truly would have chastised those of them who disbelieved with excruciating torment."

The verbal form tazayyalu ("they had been apart") derives from the root z-w-l ("disperse, scatter, break up, separate").

Based on numerous traditions cited in Shi'i and Sunni sources concerning the blessed Verse in question, it could be said that there were believers living amongst disbelievers and it was for their safety and God Almighty did not chastise disbelievers.

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as), he was asked:

"Was 'Ali (as) not mighty and perseverant in God's religion?"

The Noble Imam replied:

"Yes, he was."

He was again asked:

"Why did he not destroy disbelievers and hypocrites when he conquered them? What did impede him from doing the same?"

Imam Sadiq (as) replied:

"Owing to one Qur'anic Verse."

He was asked about the Verse and he answered:

“The Verse in which God Almighty says:

‘if they [believers and polytheists] had been apart, We truly would have chastised those of them who disbelieved with excruciating torment.’”

Then the Noble Imam (as) added:

“There were believers under Divine custody residing with disbelievers and hypocrites and ‘Ali (as) did not intend to kill fathers so that those under custody become apparent ... and also our Riser (qa’im) of the Ahl al-Bayt (“the Noble Prophet’s family”) will not rise until such believers under Divine custody become apparent.”⁵

God Almighty is Aware that a number of their children will voluntarily convert to the Islamic faith and it is for their sake that He exempts fathers from immediate chastisement.

Surah al-Fath – Verse 26

إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ الْحَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةَ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَى وَكَانُوا أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا

26. When those who disbelieve had entertained in their hearts pride and arrogance, the pride and arrogance of the time of ignorance, then Allah sent down His serenity upon His Messenger and upon believers [and they prepared themselves for peace] and made them adhere to the truth of fear of God and they were well entitled to it and worthy of it. And Allah is the Omniscient of all things.

The blessed Verse in question treats of the account of the Quraysh whose arrogance and false pride of the time of ignorance and also their hatred against the Messenger of God (S) made them impede the Noble Prophet (S) and his companions who had set to enter Mecca, his hometown, on pilgrimage.

Although it was difficult for the Noble Prophet (S) and his companions, but since it was according to Divine Wisdom they had to tolerate them and their harms until the time of triumph and conquest arrives. Thus, they had to make peace with them and abstain from waging war and bloodshed.

Since it was Divine Wisdom and discretion, God Almighty:

“sent down His serenity upon His Messenger and upon believers”

so that they receive perseverance and serenity and obey Divine Command.

“And made them adhere to the truth of fear of God”

indicates that God Almighty made believers persevere in the fear of God which is

“There is no god but Allah,”

“In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,”

or

“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah,”

with which the Quraysh failed to be satisfied and desist from entertaining the arrogance of the time of ignorance and disobeying Divine Command, though it was hard for believers to return without having gone on pilgrimage to Mecca.

“They were well entitled to it and worthy of it”

since believers, as required by faith, were God fearing and more entitled or worthy of fear of God Almighty or being granted serenity. Fear of God Almighty, the fruit of faith, had penetrated into their hearts, since whoever is more perseverant in faith entertains more fear of God. The believers accompanying the Noble Prophet (S) at Hudaibiyya persevered in faith and fear of God.

“Allah is the Omniscient of all things”

indicates that God Almighty is All-Aware of things in the world in terms of betterment and corruption. He was All-Aware that the Noble Prophet (S) and his companions were not supposed to go on pilgrimage to Ka'ba, but it was better for them to depart for Mecca that year and accept the peace treaty as the prerequisite for facile conquest of Mecca to happen in future.

Surah al-Fath - Verse 27

لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ لَتَدْخُلَنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ
مُحَلِّقِينَ رُؤُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ لَا تَخَافُونَ فَعَلِمَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا فَجَعَلَ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ
فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا

27. Verily, Allah shall fulfill the true vision which He showed unto His Messenger in very truth. Truly, you shall enter al-Masjid al-Haram if Allah wills, secure, having your heads shaved, and

having your hair cut short, entertaining no fear. He knew what you knew not and He granted besides that a near triumph.

Prophets' dreams are among those which definitely come true. One of the manifestations of the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an is that it was prognosticated that Muslims would enter Masjid al-Haram in security and the same was realized. Man is unaware of the favorable or unfavorable consequences of his deeds; as a consequence of which his should obey God Almighty.

Muslims though about entering Mecca but God Almighty was Aware that the consequences of making peace would be far better. In fact, God Almighty made His Messenger's (S) vision come true, since it was a true vision rather than a confused dream.

Its postponement was based on Wisdom. One of the reasons lying behind such postponement was to test believers' perseverance so that perseverant believers be distinguished from non-perseverant ones.

The li- in li-tadkhulunna is an intensifying particle, though a number of Qur'anic exegetes maintain that it is employed as a particle of oath indicating by God! God willingly, they will enter Masjid al-Haram the following year in triumph and glory, in which case, li-tadkhulunna is the proodosis.

It is said that

"If God wills"

designates that whoever God wills will enter since a number of companions might decease or there might be some other hindrance for them. Thus, whoever God Almighty wills and obeys the Messenger's (S) command will be triumphant and will enter in safety with their heads shaved and following performance of pilgrimage rituals.

"If God wills"

may also instruct believers to utter the formula before embarking upon doing anything. God Almighty was Aware of something of which believers were unaware and thereby preordained that prior to the conquest of Mecca there was to precede another triumph which was either the conquest of Khaybar or the Treaty of Hdaybiyya.

Surah al-Fath – Verse 28

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ
شَهِيدًا

28. He it is Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the religion that He may make it superior to all religions. And All-Sufficient is Allah as a Witness.

The secret behind the triumph of the Islamic faith is Divine Guidance and Truth;

(“He it is Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the religion”).

Conquering falsehood by Truth is an ideal which may solely be realized by God Almighty. It is attested many a time in the Holy Qur’an that Islam is superior to all religions.

The superiority may indicate Islam’s superiority in terms of scholarship, logic, and argument which has always been so, or it may also make a reference to the future when the Islamic faith will encompass the world over, when the inheritors of the earth will be righteous servants of God Almighty as the sovereignty of Islam wielded its sway in a vast area in the latter half of the first/seventh century.

The pronoun huwa

(“He”)

in the blessing Verse in question refers to Divine Truth and Simple Essence, in other words, God Almighty is He Who sent down His Messenger (S) with the means of Guidance, i.e. many a miracle, the Inimitable Qur’anic Verses, and manifest religion and laws and made him conquer disbelievers so that the religion of Truth, i.e. the Islamic faith, be manifest to all peoples and followers of different religions and they recognize that the religion of Truth is the Islamic faith and there exist no doubt for anyone as to its Divine Truth.

“And All-Sufficient is Allah as a Witness”

reflects that the Pure Essence of God Almighty is sufficient to bear witness to His Messenger’s (S) Prophethood and Truth in his words and deeds.

Qur’anic exegets disagree on the manner of the superiority and triumph of the Islamic faith over all other religions. Some maintain that the superiority lies in logical and argumentative aspects saying that such superiority has realized since in terms of logic and argument, the Islamic faith is superior to all other religions.

Some other Qur’anic exegets hold that superiority (li-yudhirahu) is employed in the outward sense of the word since it is attested in the same sense. thus, it may be said that many a vast area throughout the world are within the territory of Islam and in modern times, more than forty Muslim countries with a population of approximately one billion are under the banner of Islamic faith, but a time shall arrive in which all the world hold the same banner and it will attain to perfection through the Rise of Mahdi (as).

According to a Prophetic tradition,

“There will remain no house made from stone and mud, nor do tents made from wool and hair unless Allah makes the name of Islam enter them.”

The eminent scholar Tabarsi in his *Majma’ al-Bayan* cites a tradition from Imam Baqir (as) which is an interpretation of the blessed Verse in question, saying:

*“The Promise given in this Verse shall realize at the Rise of Mahdi (as) from the family of the Noble Prophet (S). On that day, there shall remain no one on the face of the earth but those who acknowledge the Truth of Muhammad’s (S) Prophethood.”*⁶

On the interpretation of the blessed Verse in question, Shaykh Saduq in his *Ikmal al-Din* narrates a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as), saying:

“By Allah! The meaning of the Verse is yet to realize and it shall solely realize when the Riser rises. Upon his Rise, there shall be no one denying belief in God Almighty throughout the world.”

The traditions concerning the Rise of Mahdi (as) are such that no Muslim scholar from any denomination may deny their consecutive transmission (tawatur). Many a book have been written in this respect whose authors have unanimously acknowledged the reliability of the traditions concerning the reformer of the world, Imam Mahdi (as).

These traditions are attested in many a well-known Islamic source including sunan, ma’ajim, and masanid books among which mention may be made of the following: the Sunan compiled by Abu Da’ud, Tirmidhi, Ibn Maja, Ibn ‘Amr al-Dani; Masanid compiled by Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ibn Ya’la, Bazzaz; Hakim’s Sahih; Ma’ajim (Kabir and Mutawassit) compiled by Tabarani, Ruyani, Dar Qutni; Abu Nu’aym’s Akhbar Mahdi; Khatib’s Ta’rikh Baghdad; Ibn ‘Asakir’s Ta’rikh Dimashq.

It is worthy of note that a number of Muslim scholars have written books devoted to such traditions, e.g. Abu Nu’aym’s Akhbar Mahdi; Ibn Hajar Haythami’s al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi ‘Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntadar; Shukani’s al-Tawdhih fi Tawatur Ma Ja’a fi al-Muntadar wa al-Dajjal wa al-Masih; Idris ‘Iraqi Maghribi’s al-Mahdi; Abu al-‘Abbas ibn ‘Abd al-Mu’min al-Maghribi’s al-Wahm al-Maknun fi al-Radd ‘ala Ibn Khaldun.

A number of earlier and later scholars have also explicitly mentioned that the traditions narrated concerning Mahdi (May God Almighty Hasten His Rise) are indubitably consecutive in their chains of transmission, e.g. al-Sakhawi in *Kitab al-Fath al-Mughith*; Muhammad ibn Ahmad Safawini’s *Sharh al-‘Aqida*; Abu al-Hasan al-Abri’s *Manaqib al-Shafi’i*; Ibn Taymiyya’s *Fatawi*; Suyuti’s *al-Hawi*; Idris ‘Iraqi’s *al-Mahdi (as)*; Shukani’s *al-Tawdhih fi Tawatur Ma Ja’a fi al-Muntadar*; Muhammad Ja’far Kinani’s *Nadm al-Tanathur*; Abu al-‘Abbas ibn ‘Abd al-Mu’min’s *al-Wahm al-Maknun*.

The aforesaid traditions are cited in most of Shi’i tradition compendia and Qur’anic exegetic works under the blessed Verse in question.

Surah al-Fath - Verse 29

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا
يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِّنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ
فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ فَآزَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَىٰ عَلَىٰ
سُوْقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
مِنْهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

29. Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and falling down in prostration, seeking Bounty and Satisfaction from Allah. The mark of them is on their faces from the traces of prostration. That is their description in the Torah. But their description in the Gospel is like a [sown] seed which sends forth its shoot, then makes it strong and becomes thick and it stands straight on its stem, delighting the sowers, that He may enrage the disbelievers with them. Allah has promised those among them who believe and do righteous good deeds, forgiveness and a mighty reward.

Muslims need to be severe, decisive, and firm against enemies;

(“And those who are with him are severe against disbelievers”).

The blessed Verse in question presents a clear depiction of the Noble Prophet’s (S) companions, adherents, and those who followed him illustrating it with expressions from the Torah and the Gospel which is a source of glory and pride for those who persevered at Hdaybiyya. It also provides Muslims of all ages with a lesson.

The blessed Verse opens with:

“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”

It does not matter whether men of insignificance like Suhayl ibn ‘Amr like it or not or hide themselves from the sun shining on the entire world. God Almighty bears witness to His Prophethood and believers who are aware of it bear witness to the same. The blessed Verse then proceeds to present a depiction of the Noble Prophet’s (S) companions and followers.

Thus it depicts their outward and inward characteristics and also their thoughts, emotions, and deeds by enumerating five attributes.

Firstly,

“Those who are with him are severe against disbelievers.”

Secondly, they are

“merciful among themselves.”

Believers are like a hearth of emotions and love for their brethren, friends, and co-religionists and they are similar to a blazing and burning fire and a solid and hard wall against enemies.

In fact, their emotions may be summarized in their love and wrath; however, the existence of the twain is by no means inconsistent with each other, nor do their wrath against enemies and their love for their friends make them leave the path of Truth and Justice.

The third attribute treats of their deeds:

“You see them bowing and falling down in prostration.”

The expression of serving and worshipping God Almighty is depicted by the two main pillars of

“bowing”

and

“falling down in prostration”

as their permanent states. Such worship reflects submission to Divine Command and negation of arrogance and false pride.

The fourth characteristic reflects their sincere intention:

“seeking Bounty and Good Pleasure from Allah.”

They neither resort to pretension nor do they expect people to reward them, but they are solely attentive toward Divine Satisfaction and Bounty. It constitutes their only incentive in their lives.

The expression:

“Divine Bounty”

reflects their confession to their faults and regarded their deeds less worthy of Divine Reward.

Despite making efforts, they still say:

“O God! Woe unto us if you do not bestow Your Bounty upon us!”

The fifth and the last depiction treats of their fair-seeming appearance:

“The mark of them is on their faces from the traces of prostration.”

The Arabic word *sima* literally denotes

“mark”

be it on the face or other parts of the body. The word, however, is employed in modern Persian in the sense of “appearance.” In other words, their “appearance” clearly reflects that they are humble people before God Almighty, right, law, and justice and it is not only reflected on their faces, but also all their being and life indicate the same.

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) regarding the interpretation of the blessed Verse in question that the mark of their faces indicates:

“wakefulness at night for establishing prayer”

whose marks are visible on their faces during the day.⁷

It is worthy of note that these meanings and interpretations are all consistent.

Following such depictions, the Holy Qur’an adds:

“That is their [the Noble Prophet’s companions] description in the Torah.”

This truth is already mentioned in the Scriptures revealed more than one thousand years ago. However, it should be borne in mind that the expression:

“those who were with him”

refers to those who stood with the Noble Prophet (S) in terms of thought, beliefs, ethics, and practice, rather than his contemporaries some of whom differed with him in the aforesaid terms.

The Holy Qur’an proceeds to treat of their description in the Gospel, saying:

“Their description in the Gospel is like a [sown] seed which sends forth its shoot, then makes it strong and becomes thick and it stands straight on its stem, delighting the sowers.”

The Arabic word *shat’a* denotes “sprout; chicken” but the word ad hoc signifies offshoot. *Azara* derives from ‘-z-r (“support, back up”). The verbal form *astaghlada* derives from gh-l-d (“become strong”).

The clause *istawa ‘ala suqihi* means “It is so strong that it stands on its own,” though the word *suq* indicates “stem, stalk.” The expression *yu’jab al-zura’* signifies that fast growth and abundant sprouts and crops are to such an extent that even farmers who are at all times engaged in such things are

perplexed.

Such people with these descriptions never cease for one single moment, but they always grow, sprout, and bear crops. They propagate the Islamic faith at all times throughout the world through their words and deeds and add to the number of the Muslim community each and every day. They never stop, but they always proceed and despite being pious, they are warriors too.

Despite being warriors, they are comely both outwardly and inwardly. They have vigorous emotions and pure intentions. They represent Divine Wrath in the face of enemies and reflect Divine Mercy and Favor before the friends of God Almighty.

The blessed Verse in question proceeds to say that such exalted characteristics, fast growth, and blissful movement serve as a source of encouragement for friends, but at the same time, enrages disbelievers;

“He may enrage the disbelievers with them”.

Thus the blessed Verse in question closes:

“Allah has promised those among them who believe and do righteous good deeds, forgiveness and a mighty reward.”

It goes without saying that the characteristics mentioned in the opening of the blessed Verse encompassed faith

and righteous good deeds. Thus, reiteration of these two characteristics makes a reference to its continuity. In other words, God Almighty has solely promised those among the Noble Prophet's (S) companions that they remain in his line and perpetuate faith and righteous good deeds; otherwise, those who were among his friends and companions one day and left him the day after proceeding another path contrary to his will never be rewarded by God Almighty.

It is also worthy of note that the clause

“And those who are with him”

does not indicate physical association and companionship with the Noble Prophet (S), since hypocrites associated with him, but “with him” definitely indicates being with him in terms of faith and fearing God Almighty. Thus, we may never make use of the blessed Verse in question to come to a conclusion regarding all the contemporaries and companions of the Noble Prophet (S).

It is interesting, however, that modern Muslims have distanced from the impressive guideline of the Verse and the descriptions provided in it regarding true believers and the companions of the Noble Prophet (S) and at times enter into such conflicts with one another, entertain hatred, and embark upon bloodshed and the enemies of the Islamic faith have never embarked upon the same!

At times, they establish such friendly ties with disbelievers that it sounds as if they are brothers descending from the same forefathers. Such bowing and prostration, sincere intentions, desire for Divine Bounty, reflection of the marks of prostration on faces, growth, sprouting, invigoration, and standing on one's feet are not visible.

It is also noteworthy that the more we have distanced from these Qur'anic precepts, the more we have entangled ourselves in pain and humility; but we are unaware of the sources of blows inflicted upon us. False pride and arrogance of the time of ignorance impedes thinking, revision, and return to the Holy Qur'an.

O Lord! Awaken us from such perilous and deep sleep!

1. Ibn Athir, al-Kamil, vol. 2, pp. 216–221. Besides Ibn Athir, the well-known Sunni historian, all Shi'i and Sunni historians and Qur'anic exegetes have reported the account with minor alterations in details.

2. 58:21

3. 17:81

4. Ibn Athir, Kamil, vol. 3, p. 205, apud Imam dar 'Iyninnat Jami'a, p. 128; see also Tafsir Burhan; Tafsir Safi; Majma' al-Bayan under the blessed Verse in question.

5. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 70. Numerous traditions are cited in this respect.

6. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 5, p. 25; Tafsir Qurtubi, under 24:55, vol. 7, p. 4692.

7. Man la Yahdhuru al-Faqih and Rawdhat al-Wa'idhin, apud Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 78.

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