

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي

سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

*Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) 5:35*

**O You Who Believe!**

- Do your duty to Allah.
- Seek the means of approach unto Him.
- And strive with might and main in his cause.
- That you may prosper.

## **Commentary**

Allamah Taba Tabai (AR)

It is clear from the above discourse that in the clause: “and strive hard in His way”, the word *al-jihad* (fighting, striving) has been used in its wider sense which covers both fighting the unbelievers and struggling against one’s base desires and anger. There is no reason to restrict it to the fight against unbelievers, especially as the clause is connected to the preceding order to seek means of nearness to Allah, and you have seen what it means. Moreover, the reason given in the two following verses is more appropriate to that wider connotation.

However, it is possible to restrict this *jihad* to the fight against unbelievers, keeping in view the Qur’anic style: The *jihad* in this verse is qualified with the phrase: “in His way”, and this qualification has been used in all the verses which exhort Muslims to fight the enemy; while general striving does not contain this condition, as Allah says: *And (as for) those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them onto Our ways; and Allah is most surely with the doers of good (29:69)*. Accordingly, the order to fight in the way of Allah after the order to seek means of nearness to Him mentions a particular after the general for showing its importance; and probably the same is the case of the order of seeking means of nearness to Him coming after the order of fearing Allah.

Also, the verse clearly shows that these are the laid down punishments for waging such war and making mischief in the land; so whoever draws out a sword and strives to make mischief in the land or slays someone, he will have to be killed because he is a fighter against Allah and His Messenger and a mischief-maker; it does not come under retribution, i.e., he is not being killed because he has slayed a respectable soul; so even if the heirs of the slain person agree to take blood-money, his punishment of killing is not waived.

al-Ayyashi has narrated in his at-Tafsir from Muhammad ibn Muslim from Abu Ja'far (AS) a tradition which says, *inter alia*,

Abu Ubaydah said, 'May Allah ameliorate you! (What) do you see if the heir of the slain person pardoned him (i.e. the slayer)? Abu Ja'far (AS) said, *'If they pardoned, then it is incumbent on the Imam to kill him, because he certainly had waged war, killed and stolen.'* Then Abu Ubaydah said, 'Then if the heirs of the slain wanted to take blood-money from him and let him go free, do they have the right to do so?' He said, 'No. His (punishment) is to be killed.'

[as-Suyuti] narrates from Ibn Abi Shaybah, Abd bin Hamid, Ibn Abid-Dunya (in Kitabul-Ashraf), Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatik from ash-Sha'bi that he said,

Harithah ibn Badr at-Tamimi, a resident of Basrah, had made mischief in the land and waged war; and he talked with some men from Quraysh to obtain from Ali a promise of security for him, but they refused. Then he came to Sa'id ibn Qays al-Hamadani. So he approached Ali and said, 'O Leader of the Faithful! What is the recompense of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive to make mischief in the land?' He said, '(It is) *that they should be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides, or they should be banished from the land.'* Then (the Imam) said, *'Except those who repent before you have them in your power.'* Then Sa'id said, 'Even if it be Harithah ibn Badr.' Thereafter, Sa'id said, 'This is Harithah ibn Badr; he has come repenting; is he then safe?' [The Imam AS] said, 'Yes.' So [Sa'id] brought him to Ali, and he did his *bay'ah*; and the Imam accepted it from him and wrote for him a warrant of safety.  
(ad-Durrul-Manthur)

[al-Kulayni] narrates through his chain from Sawrah Bani Kulayb that he said that I said to Abu Abdillah (AS),

A man comes out of his house, proceeding to mosque or for some other work; another man meets him and going behind him, beats him and takes away his clothes? (The Imam) said, 'What do they say about it those who are in your place?' I said, 'They say that it is open immorality; and war mongering happens in the towns of polytheists.' He said, 'Which has more sanctity, the house of Islam or the house of polytheism?' I said, 'The house of Islam.' Then (the Imam) said,

Such people are covered by this verse: The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive to make mischief in the land is only this, that they should be killed ..... (al-Kafi)

al-Qummi has written about the words of Allah: *O you who believe! Fear Allah and seek means of nearness to Him .....*, that (the Imam) said,

Come near Allah through the Imam.

That is, through obedience to the Imam. Thus it is based on the flow of the Qur'an, and applies the verse to its best import. A similar narrative has come from Ibn Shahrashub that he said,

The Leader of the Faithful (AS), said about the divine word: *and seek means of nearness to Him*: 'I am the means of nearness to Him.'" And nearer to it is the narration of *Basairud Darajat*, through his chains from Salman from Ali (AS). Also, possibly the two narratives may be a sort of interpretation. Ponder on it.

Majmaul-bayan quotes a tradition from the Prophet (S) that he said,

Ask from Allah for me the *wasilah*, as it is a rank in the Garden, will not get it except one servant, and I hope that I shall be him.

[as-Suduq] narrates through his chain from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri that he said, The Messenger of Allah (S) said,

Allah remarks, *ask for me the wasilah*. We asked the Prophet (S) about the *wasilah*; so he said, 'It is my rank in the Garden .....

 (It is a long narrative, known as the Hadith of Wasilah.)

If you meditate on this hadith and as to how the meaning of verse fits on it, you will find that *wasilah* is the position of the Prophet (S) in presence of his Lord, with which he gets nearer to Allah; and joins him there his pure progeny, then the good servants from among his *ummah*. And it has been narrated in some traditions narrated from them that verily the Messenger of Allah adhered to his Lord, and we adhere to him and you [the Shi'ahs] adhere to us.

Appended to these traditions is the narration of al-Ayyashi from Abu Basir that he said, I heard Abu Ja'far (AS) saying,

Enemies of Ali, they shall abide in the Fire; Allah has said: *and they shall not go forth from it*.

Mir Ahmed Ali (AR) and Aqa Mahdi Puya (AR)

Wasilah is a means of access to a thing or a being.

If Allah had willed He could have guided mankind directly through inspiration, but in His infinite wisdom, He had not deemed it desirable. He selected and appointed His representatives to convey His message and laws to people and administer their affairs in every age. Please refer to pages 1 to 7, and the commentary of al Baqarah: 2 to 5, 30 to 38, 48, and 124 to know that the Holy Prophet and his Ahlul-Bayt are the only means of approach to Allah.

Thus wasilah or means of access to Allah is to faithfully follow the Holy Prophet and the holy Imams of his holy house, who have been thoroughly purified by Allah (Ahzab: 33).

The Holy Prophet said:

I and Ali are from one divine light.

I will soon be called back, so I will have to go away from you, but I leave behind, amid you, the thaqalayn (two weighty indispensable influential authorities), the book of Allah and my Ahl ul Bayt. Should you be attached to these two, never, never shall you go astray, after me, for verily these two will never be separated from each other; and, joined together, they shall meet me at the spring of Kawthar.

My Ahlul-ayt amongst you are like the ark of Nuh. He who sails on it will be safe; but he who holds back shall be drowned and lost."

Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars

Imam Amirul-Mu'mineen Ali (AS) has said that *the best means by which seekers of nearness to Allah, seek nearness, is the faith in Allah and His Messenger, striving in His way, (to believe) in the expression of Divine purification, the establishment of performance of Hajj (pilgrimage) of the House (i.e. Ka'bah) and Umrah (lesser pilgrimage), regard for kinship, almsgiving secretly and openly, and extending benefits (to people).*

Therefore, in order to reach felicity, we must both stop committing sins and perform worships.

In the meantime, doing goodnesses are wholly the means toward felicity if we ourselves do not waste them through our own sins.

However, Ahlul-Bayt (AS) are the very firm cord and means of nearness to Allah (SWT).

In Islamic literatures, narrated from the Immaculate ones (AS) , the *Nahjul-Balagha*, Sermon 110, the /wasilah/ (means ) , mentioned in this verse, has been rendered into Imam (AS (At-Tafsir-us-Safi) . In this regard, it is also cited in some traditions: " They are firm the cord and the means to Allah (SWT) ." (At-Tafsir-us-Safi) .

Supplication is a subject about which there has been cited in the books of many Sunnite scholars, such as: Sawa'iq, by Ibn-Hajar; Sunan-i-Bihaqi; Sahih-i-Darmami; and also in Wafa'-ul-Wafa, vol. 3, p. 1371. Sura An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 64, Sura Yusuf, No. 12, verse 97, and Sura Taubah, No. 9, verse 114 can be taken as some authentic references for supplication, too.