

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْمُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ فَلَا يَقْرَبُوا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ
بَعْدَ عَامِهِمْ هَذَا وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ عَيْلَةً فَسَوْفَ يُغْنِيكُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّ
شَاءَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

At-Tauba (The Repentance) 9:28

O You Who Believe!

- Truly the Pagans are unclean.
- So let them not, after this year of theirs, approach the Sacred Mosque.
- And if you fear poverty.
- Soon will Allah enrich you, if He wills, out of His bounty.
- For Allah is All-knowing, All-wise.

Commentary

Allamah Taba Tabai (AR)

God said, " O you who believe! Truly the Pagans are unclean; so let them not, after this year of theirs, approach the Sacred Mosque."

Majmaul Bayan has explained this verse as, " All the evil things abhorred by man are unclean or Najis. e.g. an unclean man, woman or nation are in short unclean. The word " I'la" denotes poverty in this verse. This was the explanation of Majmaul Bayan.

The idolaters were banned entry into the sacred mosque when it was asked for the Muslims to prevent them from doing so. The reason given for this ban is that they are unclean. This means the idolaters are subjected to a special form of uncleanliness and a special form of "pure cleanliness." Whatever be the thought behind it the thing that is clear is that we are asked not mix with the idolaters in a benign manner.

The year mentioned is the 9th year of Hijra. This is the year when Hazrat Ali (AS) went with the Surah Tauba to Makkah and recited it to the idolaters and then declared that from that day - no one had the right to come bare-bodied and circumambulate the Ka'ba for none among the idolaters had the right to enter the mosques precincts.

The words, "And if you fear poverty," means that if you fear the you will lose business and your market will be destroyed and you will face dire poverty, then you should not despair for God in his great mercy will give you refuge and shield you from poverty.

God has made this great promise to allay the fears of the people of Makkah and those who visit it in the days of Hajj but this promise is not limited to any specific time frame. The promise is valid today for those who practice the religion diligently and God will be their refuge and make them superior to others. His words are echoing throughout the ages and the lands for idolatry is diminishing but the idolaters of Makkah then were not given more than 4 months after the day of recitation of Surah Baraat. At the expiry of this period excepting for a limited few most of the idolaters accepted Islam. Those who remained adamant came to an agreement with the Messenger who gave them a respite of some time. The point in a nutshell is that nearly all idolaters accepted Islam.

A Complete Discussion

Majmaul Bayan has quoted the commentators and the historians who say:

In the end of Ramadan or the Beginning of Shawwal of the 8th Hijra, the Holy Messenger after subjugating the idolaters of Makkah decided to move towards Hunayn to fight the tribes of Bani Hawazan and Bani Thaqeef. The chieftain of the Bani Thaqeef, Malik bin Auf Nasiri together with the women and children of his tribes families had reached the place called Autas to face the Muslim army. Incidentally the old and blind chief of the Jasham tribe Dareed bin Hamad was with them. He asked the people where they were and they told him that they had reached Autas.

He quipped,

This is a good place for battle; the ground is neither too soft nor too hard and uneven. I hear the sounds of the camels and the donkeys but I also hear the wailing of the children!

The people told him that Malik bin Auf has brought all women and children with him. Dareed exclaimed,

By God Malik is good to herd sheep but not to lead men in battle. Ask Malik to meet me.

Dareed told Malik after he came,

O Malik. You are the chief of this tribe, but there will come another day for this is not the end that you think of destroying the entire generation in one stroke. Take all of them back to the nearest town and keep with you only the warriors and the cavalry, because in a battle only the sword and the horse are of use. Your children and women will return to you if your army wins and if you lose you will not be shamed before them!

Malik retorted,

You have grown old and senile. You have lost the experience and intelligence that you once had.

On the other side the Messenger unfurled the biggest flag and handed it over to Hazrat Ali. To all the allies who entered Makkah with their flags he said, " Go ahead."

After a rest of fifteen days his tents were pitched outside Makkah and he sent an emissary to Safwan bin Umayya asking if he could hire a hundred body armors. Safwan asked, " Does he want to hire or does he desire to take them by force?" He was told that the Messenger desired to hire them and so he gave the hundred armors and joined them. Two thousand of those who had converted to Islam after the liberation of Makkah also joined in. The force now became twelve thousand in numbers because the original force that had entered Makkah was ten thousand strong. So now the Messenger left with an army of twelve thousand.

The Messenger sent one of his companions to Malik bin Auf and when he reached there he saw and heard him telling his friends, " Each of you should keep his wife and his children behind him. You should break your scabbard and hide in the gorges of the hills. After the sun rises you should attack the enemy as one force and destroy the army of Muhammad for he has not faced anyone experienced in battle."

The holy Messenger started towards Hunayn after the morning prayers and suddenly the first rank of the Bani Hawazan attacked his men from all sides. The tribe of Banu Saleem leading the Muslim army was faced with defeat for the force behind them who had boasted about their numerical strength deserted the battle. Hazrat Ali and few of the faithful remained with the flag steadfast till the end. Those who fled were fleeing in such a hurry that they did not glance at the Messenger as they passed him. Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib had the reins of the Messengers ride in his hands while he was flanked on both sides by Fazal bin Abbas and Abu Sufian bin Harith bin Abdul Muttalib. On his opposite side were Nufil bin Harith and Rabiah bin Harith together with nine from Banu Hashim. The tenth person Ayman was standing close by.

The uncle of the Messenger Abbas bin Abdul Mutallib recited the following stanzas: We were nine that day and we protected the Messenger in such a manner that the enemy fled. My work was to shout loudly " O my son!" every time my son wanted to attack the enemy so that they would feel scared. The tenth one amongst us had put his life in peril and he never cried out even when he was hurt." When the Messenger saw his companions fleeing then he asked his uncle Abbas bin Abdul Mutallib who had a stentorian voice to cry out loud, " O Muhajirs and Ansars (O emigrants and their helpers), O companions of Surah Baqarah! O people who have sworn allegiance under the date tree in Hudaibiya, where are you fleeing? The Messenger stands here!"

When the voice of Abbas reached the escapers they returned and said " We come! We come, O Messenger of God!" The Ansars especially started to fight the idolaters fearlessly. The Messenger then said, " The cauldron of war is a fire! The truth is that I am the Messenger of God and the son of Abdul Mutallib."

A little later help came from God and the soldiers of Hawazan fled in all directions with the Muslims chasing them. Malik bin Auf ran and took shelter in the fortress of Taif. Nearly hundred of his soldiers were killed and the Muslims captured their booty, men and women. The Messenger ordered that the women and children be taken to nearby Ja'rana and kept there. He appointed Badeel bin Warqa Khizai as their protector and he himself went after the fleeing enemy.

He surrounded the fortress where Malik bin Auf had taken shelter in order to capture him and the rest of the month was spent there. In the month of Zilqada he went to Jara'na and distributed the war booty amongst his soldiers that was taken in Autas in the battle of Hunayn.

Sa'ad bin Museeb says,

A soldier from the front rank of the enemy said that, 'We challenged the companions of the Messenger, they were not able to stand their ground for a short amount of time that takes to milk an ewe. After breaking their ranks and pushing them back we reached close to the Messenger when we saw and heard a radiant personality telling us, " Go back O blackguards!" and we returned and the result was that those people whom we had nearly captured now attacked and overpowered us. These radiant personalities were the angels who had come to help.

Zuhri says, " I heard Shiba bin Uthman saying, " I was hiding and tailing the Messenger so that I could avenge the death of Talha bin Usman and Usman bin Talha who were martyred at Uhud by attempting to kill the Messenger. God informed His Messenger about my intentions and me. The Messenger turned and faced me then struck me on the chest and said, " O Shiba I hand you over to God!" My limbs started to shiver on hearing these words. Suddenly I felt that this person whom I hated the most had now become more precious to me than my own life. So I gave witness, " I give witness that you are God's Messenger sent by Him for God informed you about the inner secrets of my heart." The Messenger distributed all that was captured in Ja'rana and among the captives were, six thousand women and children. The numbers of camels and sheep were uncountable.

Abu Saeed Hazari says, "The Messenger distributed the entire war booty among those of the Quraysh and those Bedouins who felt attracted to Islam only when they received such booties. He gave nothing to the Ansars, so Sa'ad bin Ibada approached the Messenger and said, " O Messenger of God! The Ansars are unhappy with the distribution that you have just made because you have given it all to the city dwellers and other Arab tribes but have given nothing to the Ansars (your helpers)."

The Messenger replied, " What do you think personally?"

He said, " I too belong to the Ansars!"

The Messenger then said, " Go and ask the Ansars to come here." Sa'ad gathered all of them and the Messenger came to them. He praised the Almighty God and said, " O people of Ansar, is it not true that you were all wayward before I came to you and God sent His guidance to you through me? You were penniless and God made you oblivious from poverty? Were you not thirsting for each others blood when God instilled love in your hearts?" They all answered unanimously, " Yes it is true o Messenger of God!"

The Messenger said, " Will you not answer me?"

They said, " What can we say, our necks are laden with the obligations of God and His Messenger!"

The Messenger said, " You could have replied that, " You came to us exiled by your own people and we gave you refuge, respect and prominence. You were empty handed and we helped you with the worldly goods. You were afraid of the enemy and we gave you shelter. You had no friends and we befriended you!"

The Ansars said, " All this is the benevolence of God and His Messenger."

The Messenger then said,

You are upset because of this insignificant wealth through which I have tried to bring man to the folds of Islam? But you pay no heed to the great graces that God has bestowed upon you through Islam and his guidance? What then, O Ansars, you do not like those who love the world to take the worldly goods (camels and sheep) while you take away the Messenger of God himself? By God who controls my life, if all the people go to one side and the Ansars go to another then I will follow the path taken by the Ansars. Had there been no reward for migration then I would have called myself an Ansar. O God have mercy on the Ansars and the children of then children also.

This short speech affected the Ansars so much that they began to weep. Their eyes and beards were wet with tears. It was then that they said, " We are agreeable with God's supremacy and your prophet hood and we are happy that the unity of God and you O messenger have come as our share." Then all the men dispersed.

Anas bin Malik says,

The Messenger called his proclaimer and asked him to proclaim that none should cast his eyes upon a pregnant woman until she gives birth to a child and not to be attentive to other women till they cross the period of one menstrual cycle. Then the people of Hawzan came to Jara'na to pay ransom and release their family members or to buy their freedom. Their representative said, " O Messenger of God, your maternal aunts and your breast feeders who had suckled you are also among the prisoners. Had we met the same fate that we have met now, if we faced and fought Abi Shimir and Numan bin Manzar, we would have hoped for mercy from the two Arab kings. And you are more merciful and forgiving than all." They then recited a few couplets of poetry.

Then they were asked what would they prefer from the war booty, the prisoners or the wealth. They answered, " Since you give us the right to choose between the prisoners and the wealth, we would like to tell you that we prefer our relatives more. We do not ask you about our camels and sheep. The Messenger said, " All the prisoners with Banu Hashim are yours but the rest of the Muslims have to be asked and I will request and you should also meet them in this regards by declaring yourselves to be Muslims.

The people of Hawazan came and stood besides the Muslims when the Messenger rose to lead the Zuhar prayers and said, " We have fostered the Messenger of Allah. Present among the prisoners are his aunts and those who suckled him. We too are Muslims now so we hope the Messenger will return our prisoners to us."

The Messenger rose up and said, " I forgo both my share and the share of Banu Hashim. Whomever among you so desires may forgo his share happily. Those who do not agree to this can take a price for their share and I am willing to pay the same to him." On hearing this most of the Muslims returned their share without asking for compensation excepting some who showed their interest in taking a price. A person was sent to Malik bin Auf telling him that his share of loot will be returned to him if he became a Muslim and above this he would be camels and sheep. Malik bin Auf came out from the fortress of Taif recited the Kalima and became a Muslim. The Messenger returned all his relatives and materials and added to it 100 female camels and let him go. He made him the guardian of the Muslims of his tribe.

The Compiler says

The author of Tafsir Qummi has recorded a similar hadith in his commentary but here the couplets that have been referred to the Messenger are absent. No authentic narrator like Museeb, Zuhri, Anas or Ibn Saeed has been mentioned. The Sunni people have recorded most of the issues of this hadith.

The hadith recorded by Ali bin Ibrahim Qummi has an addition as we will observe shortly, for he says that when the Messenger saw the Muslims facing defeat, he moved his ride, took his sword out of the scabbard and spoke to Janab Abbas,

Go to that high rise and call out, " O companions of Surah Baqarah, O companions of Shajara, Where are you fleeing? The Messenger stands here." Then he raised his hands towards the sky and prayed, " O Lord all thanks and praise to You, I narrate my conditions to you and plead to you for help." Jibril came down a little later and said, " O Messenger your prayer was similar to the prayer of Musa bin Imran for making a road in the river and save his people from the Pharaoh.

The Messenger then asked Abu Sufyan bin Harith for a handful of dust and he obliged. The Messenger threw it towards the idolaters and said, " Let you be insulted" and then raised his head towards the heavens and said, " Lord! If this group is killed, then your worship will cease on this earth. So if you feel that you should not be worshipped anymore then it is up to you."

On the other side the Ansars returned after they heard Hazrat Abbas. They broke their scabbards and shouted, " Here we come", yet they were ashamed to come in front of the Messenger of Islam who asked Abbas " Who are they?" He told him that they were all Ansars. The Messenger then said, " Now the cauldron of war is seething". The help came from God and the Hawazan were defeated.

Tafsir Durre Manthur says that Abu shaykh Muhammad bin Abdullah Umair Yashi has recorded " There were four thousand Ansar with the Messenger on that day, a thousand from Jahina, and a thousand from Narina, a thousand from Aslam and another thousand from Ghaffar with a thousand from Ashjah. In the same way there were a thousand from Muhajirs and other tribes with him. The verse "On the day of Hunain: Behold! Your great numbers elated you, but they availed you naught" was revealed under this situation."

Ishaq has been quoted in Seerah bin Hisham saying , " When the people fled and the people of Makkah witnessed then with venom and hatred in their hearts, they said words that clearly exhibited their animosity. Abu Sufyan bin Harab said, " These people will not stop before they reach the river and will surely run up to there." He further notes that Abu Sufyan had brought the "gambling arrows" hidden under his loins." Among them was a Habla bin Jambal whom Ibn Hisham has recorded as Kalah bin Jamabal. He remained idolating together with his brother in the period of respite that the messenger had given to them. On the day of Hunayn he was elated and shouted pointing at the Messenger, " The sorcery is defeated!" His brother shouted at him to keep quiet. " Today our leader is a Quraysh but if we are defeated then one of the Hawazan will lead us. I prefer the Quraysh as a leader than one of the Bani Hawazan."

Ibn Ishaq records Shiba bin Uthman Abi Talha from the tribe of Abduldar as saying, *I was thinking that today I can soothe the scars on my heart and can revenge the death of my father who was killed in Uhud. I got ready to do so and followed Muhammad waiting for the right opportunity to kill him but suddenly something entered my heart and overwhelmed it. I lost all the will power I had to take my revenge. I understood that this is the work of God and I cannot succeed in my aim.*

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

The infidels are unclean both literally and metaphorically. It refers to their physical uncleanliness as well as to their impure hearts and souls. According to the holy Imams anything wet touched by an idolater should not be used unless properly purified.

When the unclean pagans were debarred from entering the sacred precinct of Ka-bah, the Muslims began to worry about the profits from trade and commerce, but Allah assured them that their welfare and economic position will not suffer. This actually happened.

Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars

One of the four commandments that Ali (AS) conveyed to the people of Makkah in the rites of Hajj (pilgrimage) in the ninth year A.H. was that from that year no pagan was allowed to enter the Holy Mosque and to circumambulate the Ka'bah. This verse has pointed to this matter and its philosophy. It says:

" O you who have Faith! The polytheists are indeed unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year, ..."

Then, in response to those shortsighted persons who said with the absence of pagans in the Sacred Mosque their business and trading would decline and they would become poor and miserable, the Qur'an says:

"... and if you fear poverty, then Allah will enrich you out of His grace if He pleases; ..."

And He did enrich them in the best form and, at the age of the Prophet (S) with the spread of Islam, the crowds of pilgrims to the Sacred Mosque started to come toward Mecca, and this circumstance has been being continued up to the present time. Consequently, Makkah, which was located in a place surrounded by some dry mountains, has been changed into a very much inhabited city and an important center of bargains and tradings.

Finally, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds that Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise; and whatever instruction He commands is according to His Wisdom, and He is perfectly aware of its results. The verse says:

"...verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."