

Al-Anfal (The Spoils of War) [8:48]

وَإِذْ زَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَلَهُمْ وَقَالَ لَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَإِنِّي
جَارٌ لَكُمْ فَلَمَّا تَرَآءَتِ الْفِيئَتَانِ نَكَصَ عَلَى عَقَبَيْهِ وَقَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنْكُمْ
إِنِّي أَرَىٰ مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٤٨﴾

Remember Satan made their (sinful) acts seem alluring to them, and said: "No one among men can overcome you this day, while I am near to you": But when the two forces came in sight of each other, he turned on his heels, and said: "Lo! I am clear of you; lo! I see what ye see not; Lo! I fear Allah. for Allah is strict in punishment."

MUHAMMAD HUSAIN TABA TABAI (AR)

And remember when Satan made their evil deeds seem fair to them and said, "No one of mankind can overcome you this day and verily I am your neighbor. But when the two forces came in sight of one another he ran away and said, "Verily I have nothing to do with you. Verily I see what you see not. I fear Allah for Allah is severe in punishment.

Satan adorns the foul deeds by instilling in the hearts of sinners that whatever they do is good and beautiful and they can derive pleasure out of it and enjoy the thrill from it. This is what their hearts want and they do not get the chance to reflect on the bad effects of their deeds or the final outcome.

When he said, "No one of mankind can over come you this Day." It may mean that the results of what they are about to do will be favorable because they have the arms and strength. This may also mean the contamination of the souls which is a sign of decadence and waywardness by going against God and His Messenger. He drives them towards injustice, so he said, "No one can overcome you this Day. This will beautify and make them content and they will make preparations to fight. His intentions are complete in the words, "I am your neighbor."

The word *Al Jawar* means neighbor. In those days the Arabs were living in clans and the duty of the neighbor was to defend his neighbor if attacked. The same idea is found present in our society in different styles.

The words, “But when the two forces came in sight of each other he ran away.” *Aqibah* means to turn tail, flee or desert. The words, “Verily I have nothing to do with you” is the outcome of “verily I see what you see not. “And may be hint for the coming of the angels through whom God aided the Muslims. Iblis then says, “I fear Allah, for Allah is severe in punishment.” Is the reason for saying, “I have nothing to do with you”

The Day of the Truth is the day when Iblis adorned the deeds of the idolaters and they came out wanting to fight God and His Messenger. They wanted to extinguish the light of God so he adorned this deed of theirs and made them happy and content by saying, “No one can overcome you this Day.” He said, “I am your neighbor and will help you but when the two armies faced each other he turned and fled telling the idolaters, “Verily I have nothing to do with you. Verily I see what you see not.” What He means is “I can see the angels come down to help the Muslims and I fear God’s wrath for God is very severe in punishment.”

As you see, it means the instigation that Iblis is able to instill in the hearts of the idolaters to fight against the Muslims and the elation that he is able to generate in their minds about it. When the armies faced each other and the help arrived from God that cowed the idolaters and they felt fear and their thoughts changed. They no longer thought themselves as superior and that they could overcome the Muslims. This realization of doom spelt fear in their hearts.

Their attachment to Iblis takes place when he appears to them in human form and says, “No one in mankind can overcome you this day.” . He misleads them and takes them close to war and when two armies face each other, Iblis sees a picture right opposite of what he had told the idolaters. So he flees the battlefield saying “verily I have nothing to do with you. I see what you do not see.” He was seeing the help from God coming down in the shape of angels so he says, “Verily I fear Allah for Allah is severe in punishment.” The incident as reported in the Sunni and Shia books compliments this explanation.

Iblis had taken the form of Sarqa bin Malik for the idolaters. This man was one of the elders of the tribe of Kinana. He did what he was told and he lifted the flag but ran when the two armies faced each other saying, “Verily I have nothing to do with you.” We will soon discuss this when we discuss the Hadiths.

Some commentators have insisted on the first explanation and rejected the second as being weak in authority and proof and because the mind refuses to admit them. There is nothing to say that Iblis is able to convince them to go to battle and then flees when he sees the punishment coming. The second version is closer to the meaning as per the evident words of the verse. It is especially so when we read the words, Iblis said like, “I am your neighbor”, but when the two forces came into sight of each other, he ran away.” And then said, “Verily I have nothing to do with you.”

In Durre Manthur Ibn Abi Hatim has narrated through Ibn Ishaq about the verses, “And remember when Satan made their evil deeds seem fair to them” and, “When the hypocrites and those in whose hearts was a disease said”. He said the group of people referred to here is one that came out with the Quraysh with doubts in their minds. When they saw the companions of the Messenger being few in numbers they were proud and they subjected their faith to disillusionment. Those who saw their own few numbers and the large number of the enemy are five, Qais bin Walid bin Mughira, Abu Qais bin Fakah bin Mughira Almaghzumian, Haris bin Zamah, Ali bin Ummaya bin Khalaf, and Aasi bin Manbah.

One reason is very evident in this verse that says “Those with disease in their hearts” and some say the words, “These people are deceived in their religion” were uttered by the hypocrites. They were from Medina but their hearts were diseased even though they had come out together with the Holy Messenger.

MIR AHMED ALI (AR)

The leaders of evil, like Shaytan, wash their hands off their followers and leave them to face destruction when they find their plans have failed.

See commentary of al Baqarah: 8 to 20 for the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease.

From verse 8 to verse 20 the conduct of the hypocrites has been described.

Aqa Mahdi Puya Says:

Those disbelievers, who put on a show of coming into the fold of Islam in order to avail safety and security, to serve their self-interest, and to protect their social position, have been described as the hypocrites (munafiqin).

Although a large number of commentators find it suitable to point to Abdullah bin Obay and his comrades, exclusively, as the hypocrites referred to here and in other places, but the use of the word munafiqin is not restricted to Madani surahs. In verse 11 of al Ankabut, revealed in Makka, when Abdullah bin Obay and his active partisans did not appear on the scene, this word was used to identify, in general, one and all, in any age, who may possess this evil.

Among those who accepted Islam and agreed to follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet, some were reluctant converts; some were uncertain about the bonafides of the Holy Prophet as the messenger of Allah; some, under protest and with a heavy heart, followed the mainstream but at heart were pagans; some only put up a front.

Such half-hearted, unwilling, or deceptive acceptance of faith is devoid of the higher spiritual conceptions, therefore, sincere and perfect practice of the faith was not possible. And men and women belonging to this category could never fulfil any of the demands of the faith, particularly that which did not serve their interest, because, in their minds, something else, not the faith in Allah and the Holy Prophet, was more likely and feasible.

The incident about the cutting down of trees during the siege of Bani Nadhir, referred to in verse 5 of al Hashr; the abandonment in time of trouble by running away from the battle of Uhad, referred to in verses 153 to 155 of Ali Imran; the expression of doubt about the bonafides of the messenger of Allah, throws light on the conduct of those companions who were weak or indecisive in their belief.

In between the two directly opposite groups, the thoroughly purified muttaqin, and the munafiqin whose hearts, ears and eyes have been sealed, there is the type of above-noted group of converts who agreed to give answer to the call of the Holy Prophet to worship one Allah and follow His commandments. But, on account of their inability to detach themselves completely from the habits, customs and mental attitude of the "days of ignorance" and infidelity, failed, on many occasions, to meet the demands of pure faith. This, because of the infiltration of doubts and suspicions about the genuineness of the prophethood of the Holy Prophet.

(i) According to Tabari (Vol. 3, page 21, published from Egypt), Shibli (Al Faruq), Ibna Kathir (Badayah Wan Nahayah: Volume 4, page 28, published in 1351 Hijra from Egypt), the second and the third caliphs were among the deserters in the battle of Uhad.

(ii) According to Tarikh Khamis, Vol. 2, page 24, published in 1302 Hijra from Egypt), Sahih Bukhari (Vol. 2; page 82 published in 1355 Hijra from Egypt), Tafsir Durr Manthur (Vol.2; page 77 published in 1314 Hijra from Egypt), and Tafsir Kathir (Vol. 3; page 351 published in 1402 from Beirut), the second caliph Hazrat Umar bin Khattab, as per his own version, had never before suspected so strongly the bonafides of Muhammad the true messenger of Allah, as at the time of the treaty of Hudaibiya.

AYATULLAH KAMAL FAQIH IMANI AND SEVERAL SCHOLARS

Here, in this verse, another scene of the Battle of Badr, which happened on the day of war, has been illustrated.

At first, it implies that on that day, Satan made their deeds seem decorous to them, so that they would think of their actions optimistically and became encouraged by them. The verse says:

“And (remember) when Satan made their deeds fair seeming to them ...”

Satan’s decoration is such that, by the way of stimulating lusts, desires, and indecent qualities in him, he makes the feature of man’s actions so fair seeming to his eyes that he will terribly be attracted to it. Satan tempts them that today they have so many fighters with a lot of arms, so much so that none of the people can overcome them, and they are an undefeatable army. The verse says:

“... and said: Today none of people shall overcome you, ...”

Then Satan adds that besides that, he is also their neighbour and so near to them that, at the necessary time, like a faithful sympathetic neighbor, he will withhold no support from them. The verse continues saying:

“... and I will be a protector for you.’ ...”

But when the two armies encountered each other and the angels came to help the army of Unity, the infidels observed the power and steadfastness of the Muslims. Then, Satan turned back and shouted at them, saying that he hated them (the infidels) . The verse says:

“... But when the two hosts sighted each other, he turned upon his heels, and said: ‘Indeed I am leaving you. ...”

Satan brought forth two reasons for his awful turning back. The first reason was that he said:

“... Verily I see what you do not see. ...”

By this phrase, Satan meant that he saw the signs of triumph in the features of the believing Muslims, as well as the effects of Allah’s support and angels’ helps among them.

Satan added another thing, saying that he was afraid of the painful punishment of Allah in the scene which he saw very near. The verse says:

“... surely I fear Allah ...”

Allah's punishment is not such a simple thing that anybody can resist before it, but it is certain that His retribution is sharp and severe. The verse says:

"... and Allah is severe in retribution '."