Interpretation of the Quran: Surah Al-Imran (3)- Lesson (31)- Verse [121]: ‘Uhud’ battle
Praise be to Allah, the Lord of Creations, and Peace and blessings be upon our prophet Muhammad, the faithful and the honest.

Oh, Allah, we know nothing but what You teach us. You are the All-Knower, the Wise. Oh Allah, teach us what is good for us, and benefit us from what You taught us, and increase our knowledge. Show us the righteous things as righteous and help us to do them, and show us the bad things as bad and help us to keep away from them.

O Allah our Lord, lead us out from the depths of darkness and illusion, unto the lights of erudition and knowledge, and from the muddy shallows of lusts unto the heavens of Your Vicinity.

Some considerations of ‘Uhud’ battle

Dear brothers, Allah the Exalted talks about ‘Uhud’ battle in the following verse (and continues talking about it) up to the next sixty ones. However, before we start interpreting these verses, drawing upon Allah’s mercy and perseverance, we should consider two things. First, we should talk about the wisdom behind this battle where Muslims defeated by the unbelievers. Second, we should talk about the events of this battle. So, we would shift from the wisdoms of this battle to its events. Then we start interpreting the verses which start with (as Allah the Exalted says):

“And (remember) that morning, when you left your household (early) to leave the faithful (ones) at their stations for battle (of Uhud)”

[Al ‘Imran 121]

1- Prophet Muhammad’s life is purposefully planned by Allah

Dear brothers, the first fact is that the events, problems, crises, misfortunes, difficulties, victories, and defeats in Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) life are purposefully planned by Allah the Exalted. This is because Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) had a complete and impressive attitude in each of these events. Such events taking place during Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) life were distinguished in the sense that they caused the emergence of rules related to shariah (Islam). Again, there were victories, defeats, progresses, delays, plots, severe torment exercised against Muslims, killings for Allah’s sake, worthy victory and the like. Thus, all these events were purposefully planned (by Allah) so that they can be lessons for Muslims who would come after Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

Therefore, every event is planned by Allah the Exalted to be a reason for establishing a straight approach on the part of Allah the Exalted for us believers in Allah the Exalted to get benefit from. Indeed, Muslim nations urgently need these lessons which are obtained from Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) life. Thus, the first fact is that these lessons resulting from Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) interaction with the people, the environment and the circumstances around him seem to be an approach which can be utilized as a way of solving the problems we are facing today.

2- ‘Uhud’ and ‘Hunayn’ defeats

O brothers the second fact is that Muslims, during Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) life, underwent two defeats in battle, namely ‘Uhud’ and ‘Hunayn’. More specifically, in ‘Uhud’, they did not abide by
the military instructions, i.e. they were defeated due to some reasons related to fighting rules. However, in ‘Hunayn’ battle they were defeated because they were afflicted with a hidden kind of unbelief (in Allah). Hence, it can be concluded that we undergo defeat in life either because our preparations have not been good enough or because our Iman (belief in Allah) has been weakened. Allah the Exalted says:

[Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies, of Allah and your enemies]

[Al-Anfal 60]

Preparations and belief in Allah are a must

The first condition, namely the condition of making adequate preparations, is needed but not enough on its own. The second one is that of having belief in Allah, as stated in the following verse:

[and it was due from Us to aid those who believed]

[Ar-Rum 47]

That is, the companions of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), who risked their lives to save his, did not deserve to achieve victory against unbelievers in ‘Uhud’ battle. Because they did not abide by the plan put by Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). This indicates the great value of organization; leadership and obedience in Islam. Thus, Muslims were defeated not due to a mistake made by Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) but due to the fighters’ behavior. That is, when Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) asked the Muslim archers to take their positions on Mount ‘Uhud’, he ordered them to stay in these positions even if they saw the Muslim’s army is being eaten by birds (An Arab figure of speech meaning that the archers were asked to stay in their positions under any circumstances). However, they did not abide by Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) order. On the contrary, they left their positions and rushed towards the battle field for the sake of taking the spoils (booty) unbelievers left behind them. Allah the Exalted says:

[Among you are some who desire this world and some who desire the Hereafter]

[Al ‘Imran 152]

So, we (Muslims) cannot achieve victory unless we achieve two conditions each one of them is needed but not enough on its own. First, we can achieve victory when we are monotheists; when we announce our weaknesses to Allah the Exalted. When we place our trust in Allah the Exalted, as Muslims did in Badrs’s battle, as stated by Allah the Exalted:

[Allah had helped you at Badr, when you were of a contemptible little force]

[Al ‘Imran 123]

Second, we can achieve victory after making adequate preparations, as stated by Allah the Exalted:

[Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your ability]

[Al-Anfal 60]

In this verse, there is a gentle gesture. That is, Allah the Exalted does not ask us to prepare power that is equivalent to our enemies’. This may be beyond Muslims’ ability, in particular in these days because our enemies are much more developed than us in terms of electronic war, satellites, missiles, hit accuracy, chemical, deadly
and moral weapons, media and the like. So, if Allah the Exalted orders us to make preparations that are equivalent to our enemies', this will be beyond our recent ability. However, Allah the Exalted had mercy upon us, and thus ordered us just to prepare the power available to us. Allah the Exalted says:

[Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your ability]  
[Al-Anfal 60]

Allah the Exalted also ordered us to truly believe in Him and announce our weakness to Him. Only then, we can achieve victory since Allah the Exalted says:

[And that our forces, they surely must conquer]  
[As-Saffat 173]

[O you who believe! If you will aid (the cause of) Allah, He will aid you, and plant your feet firmly]  
[Muhammad 7]

[and it was due from us to aid those who believed]  
[Ar-Rum 47]

[We will, without doubt, help our apostles and those who believe, (both) in this world’s life]  
[Ghafir 51]

These facts are taken for granted. When do Muslims get defeated then? The answer is:

They do when they do not make adequate preparations that are available to them against their enemies or when they feel proud of themselves forgetting Allah's grace upon them. This would make them undergo a kind of hidden but serious unbelief in Allah. Thus, we (Muslims) undergo defeat either due to our weak belief in Allah or our weak preparations. If we have sufficient belief in Allah and are well-prepared, we will certainly achieve victory. For instance, even Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) companions whom Allah the Exalted has acknowledged their superior status in Islam and was pleased with them, as stated in the Quran where Allah the Exalted says:

[Allah’s Good Pleasure was on the Believers when they made promise to you under the Tree]  
[Al-Fath 18]

Despite all of that they lost the battle because they were afflicted with a hidden kind of unbelief in Allah, in particular when they were proud of their number (about 10 thousand fighters) and of the fact that they had control over the whole Arab peninsula since they were the biggest power in the peninsula at that time. As stated by Allah the Exalted:

“Oh on the day of (the battle of) Hunayn: look! Your large numbers made you very happy, but they did not help you a little bit: The land, being that is wide blocked you, and you turned back to withdraw”  
[Al-Tawba 25]

What can we learn from this lesson in our daily life?

For instance, if a merchant buys a kind of goods without thinking about it, without knowing what goods are required for the market, without knowing its financial feasibility or without considering the prices in the market, i.e., he buys the goods randomly, then it can be said that this merchant did not make sufficient preparations. And if he says ‘I will buy it',
and did not ask Allah’s help, he has a kind of weakness in his belief in Allah the Exalted. In this case, he can never sell it. In consequence, he will win nothing.

The lessons of ‘Uhud’ and ‘Hunain’ battles apply to Muslims’ life as a whole.

These two lessons can be applicable to every aspect of life. For instance, if a student says, ‘O Allah I am good at algebra but weak at geometry’, he will likely fail in algebra and succeed in geometry. That is why in the second exam he is likely to say: ‘O Allah I ask you for help in both algebra and geometry’. So, when you falsely think that you are superior to others and that you are not in need of Allah’s support, you will not achieve success. Or when you do not make adequate preparations like a student who did not study at all, but only said, ‘I am a believer in Allah and therefore Allah likes me. And if I do not succeed, it is Allah’s will’. Glory be to Allah, this is not accepted.

This is a significant lesson in all aspects of our life, i.e. for our students, our professions, our medicine, our engineering, our commerce, our war, our peace and so forth. That is, we should make the required preparations by doing everything we can as if these preparations are everything. Then we should place our trust in Allah as if all the preparations we have already made are nothing. Thus, if we lack making sufficient preparations we cannot achieve victory. Similarly, if we lack having monotheistic belief in Allah, if we feel proud of ourselves, if we forget our Lord and if we do not have recourse to Him we cannot achieve victory. This is a significant lesson in Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) life. That is, Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) companions, who were superior in their belief, sacrifice and monotheism, achieved victory in the battle of Badr in spite of the fact that they were a few because they were monotheists and because they made the preparations which were available to them at that time. However, in ‘Uhud’ battle they disobeyed Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) order. Thus, if they achieved victory in that battle, in spite of their disobedience, Allah’s course would be cancelled. To clarify, if a student succeeds despite the fact that he/she has not studied at all, this means that studying has no value whatsoever.

Allah the Exalted wanted Muslims to pay for their default (in ‘Uhud’ battle). Of course, Allah Al-Mighty is able to have enabled Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) to hold a handful of dust and throw it on the faces of his enemies (in ‘Uhud’ battle), and then they may have run away. Nonetheless, if this happened, Muslims are likely to, for instance, lack making preparations after Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) death and then say, ‘there is no Prophet among us now and therefore Allah will not grant us victory over our enemies’. On the contrary, Allah the Exalted ordained that Muslims should be severely punished because of their default (illustrated above). However, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) prayed for those archers who disobeyed him (in ‘Uhud’ battle). Thus, Muslim scholars have come to a wonderful conclusion, namely that those archers disobeyed a regulatory order not a religious one where each one is different from the other.

Quraish did not achieve its goal in ‘Uhud’ battle

Anyway, dear brothers, Quraish did not achieve their purpose in this battle. More specifically, if they wanted to take revenge for its members murdered in ‘Badr’ battle, it can be said that they achieved some of it. And if they wanted to retrieve their tribal prestige, it can be said that they achieved some of it as well. However, if they wanted to wipe Muslims out and liberate the route which their commercial caravans took when heading for Damascus, then they did not achieve these two aims. No matter how many setbacks Muslims suffer from, they will be still existent because Allah the Exalted is on their side and will never dispense with them. But, Allah the Almighty only disciplines them exactly like a father who does not dispense with his son or dismisses him outside the house when he makes mistakes. Rather, he just disciplines him.

This means that if you are a believer in Allah, you should be patient with Allah’s process of disciplining you.
Allah will not dispense with you completely. He just ordains that you should suffer from some adversities in order to push you to know Him and obey Him.

Dear brothers, ‘Uhud’ battle was a kind of separation of believers in Allah. Adversities are called: the tests to which men are always put. Allah the Exalted says:

[Behold! they came on you from above you and from below you, and behold, the eyes became dim and the hearts gaped up to the throats, and you imagined various (vain) thoughts about Allah. In that situation were the Believers tried: they were shaken as by a tremendous shaking.]

[Al-Ahzab 10-11]

[Allah will not leave the believers in the state in which you are now, until He separates what is evil from what is good]

[Al ‘Imran 179]

For instance, all school students wear unified dress, and they all belong to the same school. However, they are different in terms of the knowledge they acquire. Some of them are superior to the ones who are lazy, some of them are hard-working and some are not. So, how can such differences be determined? (Of course) it can be done by taking a test. Similarly, you, O brothers, should prepare yourselves for tests. Everybody claims that he/she likes Allah, likes obeying Him, and seeks to enter Allah’s paradise which its width is that of the whole heavens and the earth. This is mere speech. Allah the Exalted says:

[Allah will not leave the believers in the state in which you are now, until He separates what is evil from what is good]

[Al ‘Imran 179]

Hence, there must be a test. Within such adversities, there is a test. Therefore, some Muslims in ‘Al-Khandaq’ (the trench) battle said, (as Allah the Exalted reports):

[(Allah) and His Messenger promised us nothing but delusion]

[Al-Ahzab 12]

Not only this, one of them said, ‘How does your friend (Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him)) promise us that we will be able to conquer the countries governed by Caesar and those by Cyrus (of Persia) while we are unable even to use a bathroom. On the other side, Allah the Exalted says:

[Among the Believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah. Of them some have completed their vow (to the extreme), and some (still) wait: but they have never changed (their determination) in the least]

[Al-Ahzab 23]

Thus, we are living in a world of tests, as stated by Allah the Exalted:

[Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, "We believe", and that they will not be tested?]
Of course, it is impossible for this to happen (people left alone without testing). Once, people asked an Imam (a religious leader) saying, ‘O Imam, shall we ask Allah the Exalted to test us or to empower us?’ he said: ‘You will not be empowered until you have been tested (by Allah)’. Thus, we are living in a world of tests, as stated by Allah the Exalted:

[(thus) do We try (men)]

[He Who created Death and Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed: and He is the Exalted in Might]

[Hence, within such adversities and battles, there is a kind of test. For instance, once an earthquake took place in Cairo. Some doctors moved from Cairo to Alexandria (a coastal city in Egypt) for saving themselves. Conversely, others stayed in their hospitals working around the clock helping the wounded. Thus, it can be said that this earthquake separated good doctors from those who are not.

At all times, therefore, separation (between the truthful and the untruthful) does exist. Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) hijra (migration from Mecca to Medina) helped to separate true believers from those with weak belief. At that time, some believers complied with Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) order and moved from Mecca to Medina. Furthermore, they preferred it to keeping their money, houses and social status in Mecca. Others stayed with their houses and money, and therefore did not move. In this sense, hijra, battles and adversities are all kinds of separation. Even the worry and distress that men sometimes suffer from are considered a process of separation. For instance, sometimes believers fall under pressure. Some of them cannot stand such pressure. Therefore, they disobey Allah in order to save themselves. However, others do the opposite. That is why true belief does not change whether under executioners’ whips (torture) or with bright gold bars (temptation). A (true) believer is as strong as a mountain and is not affected by these temptations and is not slackened by pressures. So, this battle is a separation of believers, as stated by Allah the Exalted:

[Among you are some who desire this world and some who desire the Hereafter]

O brothers, there is another fact. Suppose a teacher gave some information to his students for the sake of clarification. If a student, who for example has not complied with this information, is not punished for this, then the teacher’s information will prove useless. For example, suppose that a teacher assigns his students a task; the next day some students have done it while others have not. In this case, if a teacher treats those who have done it and those who haven’t equally, then all students would come without doing any task the next day. Thus, if a teacher’s instructions are not abided by, they would prove useless. Bearing this in mind, it can be said that if Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) companions achieved victory though they disobeyed his orders, obedience would be of no avail. This is an educational issue in the sense that if a defaulter is not punished or if a good doer is not awarded, values, prompters, fear and greed would fall down.

Uhud’ is as a completion of the process of constructing Muslims’ character.

In fact, the battle of Uhud is considered as a completion of the process of constructing the Muslims’ character. On my way to the mosque, an idea occurred to me; it is that in this good city, we (Muslims) pray, make supplications to Allah the Exalted, and give sermons and lessons; mosques are full of those people who come to perform prayers. Then to whom credit should be given for this?

Certainly, it should be given to Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) companions who sacrificed the
most precious things among which are themselves. In ‘Uhud’, ‘Badr’ and ‘Khandak’ (the trench) battles, for instance, they offered a lot of sacrifices. Only in ‘Uhud’ battle, seventy companions, among the elite, were killed. Thus, Islam was extensively paid for. Unfortunately we have taken from Islam but given it nothing. We have gathered fruits but haven’t planted trees. Thanks to Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) companions’ belief, and sacrifices Islam reached this country.

I swear by Allah the Only God that if Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) companions understood religion to be a set of rituals, appearances, celebrations, libraries, satellite channels, symposiums and the like-as we understand it nowadays-Islam would never have reached Medina (let alone other cities, countries and continents). Nonetheless, Islam reached Spain, and whoever goes there can see Muslims’ architectures. Also, Islam reached China where there are fifty million Muslims. In Indonesia, there are two hundred fifty million Muslims as well. Thus, had Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) companions not understood Islam genuinely, they would not have shifted from being shepherds (in the desert) to the leaders of nations. Therefore, only by sticking to this straight approach (Islam), by sticking to monotheism Muslims can retrieve their leading position which the Muslim nation was as characterized by.

Brothers, after ‘Uhud battle, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) wanted to turn the defeat into victory. His companions were all wounded since they have been fiercely fighting all day. Later on, you will be informed of the adversities that befell on them and the calamities they underwent. Nonetheless, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) ordered them to head for Hamra’a al-Assad (a place) in order to chase after the unbelievers in Allah. He only let the ones who participated in yesterday’s battle (Uhud battle) to go after the unbelievers at Hamra al-Assad in spite of the fact that he was under calamity; he was afflicted with serious and profound wounds. This is because Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) did not want unbelievers to fulfill all their aims. Thus, unbelievers ran away.

Do not worry about this religion

O brothers, a last comment I can say is, ‘do not worry about this religion’. It is the religion of Allah, and therefore Allah the Exalted will defend it. Your concern should be about whether or not Allah has enabled you to be a soldier in this religion.

Dear brothers, when you are not able to undertake such kind of jihad (fighting), there is still another kind of jihad which Allah the Exalted described as being big jihad, namely to bear responsibility for the Quran, i.e. to learn it, to teach it because you should acquaint believers with the Quran.

‘Does the reward of reading the Quran for the dead get to them?’ a scholar was once asked. He answered: And can you teach the Quran to the living? In other words, you should forget about the dead and think of the living. Can you teach the Quran to the living? Can you convince people to apply the teachings of the Quran at home, at their marriage, in their picnics, money, work and sorrow? This is a big jihad.

When military jihad is not available, the other Jihad aimed at learning and teaching the Quran to others must be sought. Indeed, it is possible to do so in all ages. For instance, you can hold an Islamic conference in America (in the heart of the enemy countries), you can preach to Islam everywhere which is evident by the fact that mosques are filled with people performing their prayers. Hence, praise be to Allah the Exalted; if it is not possible for you to perform military jihad for some reason, it is possible to help make the Quran deeply rooted in believers’ characters, to understand it and to teach it to others. It is possible for you to tell a verse, a hadith, a rule, a story, or a bibliography of righteous people to those people around you. In brief, you can do everything, but it is laziness which prevents you from taking action. What can prevent you from sitting with your family or friends to teach them about Islam? Or what can prevent you from reporting Friday sermons to those who are around you?

Dear brothers, it was reported that Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) said,

‘enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. If you see people obeying stinginess, running after their lusts, preferring this worldly life (to the hereafter), if you see people admiring their own opinions and if you find matters going beyond your control, then you should take care of yourself and forget about others. And you should know that Patience days would occur next; to be patient on these days seems like taking hold of embers. Thus, a worker on such days shall be given as the reward of fifty men working for such work’. 
Your family, neighbours, friends, colleagues and the like are related to you. So, when we teach them through wisdom and good advice, to deeply root the teachings of Islam in them, and to be examples to them, this is called the big jihad, as stated in the Holy Quran by Allah the Exalted:

[but strive against them with the utmost strenuousness, with the (Qur'an)]

[Al-Furqan 52]

The ways of doing good and calling for the belief in Allah are widely available. Islam only needs to be spread because it is the right religion. Its strength lies in its word. Prophets of Allah (Peace Be Upon Them) came with the truthful, clear, bright and correct word: Monotheism. Therefore, they were able to change the world.

Who were the Arabs? They were tribes fighting each other in the pre-Islamic era. For example, one habit was common then is that somebody stretches his leg and says, 'if one thinks of himself to be better than me, let him dare to beat it.' Then somebody else comes and beats it. For some reason, a war breaks out and lasts for more than ten years. What backwardness was that! Other bad practices were common like: calling each other by offensive nicknames, being proud of backward values, obscene flirting, drinking alcohol, and unbearable usury and so forth.

There was a big chaos. On the contrary, Prophet Muhammad's (Peace Be Upon Him) life was full of good to the extent that Allah the Exalted swore by his life in the Quran saying:

[Verily, by your life (O Prophet), in their wild intoxication, they wander in distraction, back and forth]

[Al-Hijr 72]

Dear brothers, these are some morals of this battle, the battle of Uhud. Talking about 'Uhud' battle in these verses, Allah the exalted shows the reasons and details of this battle. Therefore, these details should be narrated before delving into explaining these verses.

Dear brothers, please consider the following verse

“Remember that morning you did leave your household (early) to post the faithful at their stations for battle; and Allah hears and knows all things”

1- The reason for the battle of Uhud

The above-mentioned verse is an introduction to the story. Sixty verses were revealed by Allah the Exalted to describe it. Within this chapter (Al-Imran), it was referred to some morals and good ends occurring during this battle which took place in the month of Shawal in the third year after Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) migrated from Mecca to Medina as stated by the majority of Muslim scholars. Talking about the reason of this battle, it can be said that since the nobles of Quraish (tribe) were afflicted with an adversity which they have not experienced before in 'Badr' battle, where Abu Suffian son of Harb (one of Quraishi nobles) felt sad for the killing of their chiefs, they (unbelievers) came to the sides of Medina (city of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) in 'al-Suw eik' battle. Having been unable to achieve his intended goals, Abu Suffian son of Harb started provoking people against Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and against Muslims. He could gather about three thousand people from Quraish (tribe), from its allies and (others) from Ethiopia under his command. They also brought their wives with them in order not to run away and to be obliged to defend them. Then Abu Suffian headed them towards Medina where he chose to stay somewhere near 'Uhud' Mountain.
2- Material, Moral and systematic preparation

Please listen carefully! Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) consulted his companions about whether to fight unbelievers outside Medina or to barricade themselves inside it. The latter was Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) own opinion, i.e. to make Muslims stay inside Medina and if unbelievers enter, Muslim men can fight them in the streets while women can do so from above their houses. Abdullah son of Obai agreed with him, and this was the decision. However, a group of respectable companions who had not gone outside Medina in ‘Badr’ battle suggested that Muslims go outside Medina to fight the unbelievers.

[O you who believe! Put not yourselves forward before Allah and His Messenger. but fear Allah. for Allah is He Who hears and knows all things]

Thus, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) got up, entered his house, wore his armour and got out again. After seeing him in his armour, the ones who insisted on going outside the Medina became remorseful. Jaber son of Abdullah reports this event saying that Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) said:

“T had a dream as if I were in a well defended shield where there were slaughtered cows. So, I interpreted the shield to be the Medina and by Allah the cows are something good. He said to his companions, ‘what do you think if we stay in Medina and if they come inside it, we will fight them.

Then they said, ‘by Allah no one could enter it aggressively before Islam, so how can the unbelievers enter it after Islam? Then Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) said, ‘Okay will do it your way’. Therefore, he wore his armour. Then al-Ansars (residents of Medina) said, ‘how did we reject the idea of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him)?’ Hence they came to him and said, ‘O Allah’s prophet we have decided to abide by your opinion’. However, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) said, ‘no prophet can take off his armour after he has worn it until he has fought against enemies”.

[reported by Ahmad]

Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) showed that hesitation is very bad and it often causes frustration and failure. Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) went outside Medina along with one thousand of his companions. He had already asked Um Maktom’s son (Abdullah) to lead people in prayers. Look at this system. There must have been a leader in Medina while all Muslims had gone to ‘Uhud’ Mount. Therefore, he asked Um Maktom’s son (Abdullah) to lead people in prayers.

3- The dreams of Prophet Muhammad the night before ‘Uhud’ battle.

In Medina, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) had already had a dream. He had dreamed a notch on his sword, cows had been being slaughtered, and that he had inserted his hand in a well defended shield. Thus, the notch was interpreted as that one person from his family would be injured (He was Hamzah (the prophet’s uncle)), the cows were interpreted as that a group of his companions would be killed and the shield was interpreted as being Medina.

4- Prophet Muhammad’s movement toward ‘Uhud’ Mount
Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) went outside Medina on a Friday. Once he reached al-Shaw betw een Medina and 'Uhud', Abdullah son of Obai along w ith one third of the people who went out w ith Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) withdrew because their opinion was not taken into consideration in relation to where to camp. Therefore, Abdullah son of Amer followed them reproving them and encouraging them to come back again. He said, 'come on and fight your enemies for the sake of Allah, come on drive the enemies from your city. However, they answered, as stated be Allah the Exalted in the Quran:

[Had we known how to fight, we should certainly have followed you." They were that day nearer to Unbelief than to Faith]

[Al 'Imran 167]

Thus, he left them and came back. A group of Ansars (people of Medina) asked Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) to permit them to ask their Jewish allies for help. But, he rejected this proposal. This is a second lesson for us to learn. The first one has been 'you should not hesitate' while the second is 'you should not ask unbelievers to help you against other unbelievers'. Huraah son of Haritha passed through walls leading the Muslim army till he arrived at 'Uhad' shua'b (a passage between two mountains) making the mountain at their backs. He ordered people not to fight until they have been ordered by him. This is the system they followed. Since the strength of an army lies in abiding by the leader's orders, this is an opening lesson for soldiers to learn. Thus, he ordered people not to fight until they have been ordered by him.

5- Prophet Muhammad’s way of organizing his army

On Saturday morning, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and his seven hundred companions got ready to fight against the unbelievers. They were one thousand people among whom there were fifty knights and fifty archers. He appointed Abdullah son of Jubair as the leader of archers and ordered them to keep their positions (On the mountain of Uhud) and not to leave even if they see Muslim soldiers being eaten by birds.

Now, in any affair, in travel for instance, there should be an Amir (leader) who has his own vision; he knows and see things in which his followers do not. Thus, his orders should be abided by. By the way, not every order can be justified. I can remember that Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) in ‘Badr’ battle said to his companions very briefly, ‘do not kill my uncle al-Abbas’.

‘How is he preventing us from killing his uncle while we are killing our fathers and brothers?’ one companion thought.

The companion meant that ‘We must not kill him just because he (al-Abbass) is his (Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him)) uncle. Nonetheless, it is okay to kill our fathers and brothers’. How ever prophet Muhammad did not disclose Why not to kill his uncle. Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) did not add anything more. This is because his uncle (al-Abbass) was already a Muslim. He converted to Islam secretly. In addition, he w as the prophet’s eyes on Quraish (tribe). al-Abbass w as informing Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) of every decision made on higher levels within the Quraish tribe. Truly, this is a clever and wise leadership. Had Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) said, for instance, ’my uncle is a Muslim; so do not kill him’, he w ould have revealed his secret and thus his mission w ould come to its end. Similarly, if his uncle (al-Abbass) did not come w ith Quraish in order to fight Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), his secret mission w ould be disclosed. If he came he w ould probably be killed by Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) companions. For this reason Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) did not add anything more than to say ‘do not kill my uncle al-Abbas’. Thus, not every order can be justified. This is needed in our daily life. For instance, if there is a leader of a group of people who is known for his wisdom, care and loyalty for which Allah has ordained that he becomes a leader of that group. Not everyone can ask for justification (of the leader’s orders). There are difficult circumstances under which you (as a leader) should give commands without any justification for these commands.

Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) appointed Abdullah son of Jubair as the leader of archers and
ordered them to keep their positions and not to leave them even if they see Muslim soldiers being eaten by birds. This is a clear order issued by a wise leader. The archers were behind the army. Therefore, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) ordered them to shoot unbelievers with arrows so they may not attack Muslims from the back.

Taking precaution, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) wore two armours. Allah the Exalted says:

[O you who believe! Take your precautions]

Whenever a naïve Muslim does not take the means required for doing something, whenever he/she is careless, and whenever he/she is not proficient at his/her job, they would probably say, ‘we have nothing to do but to ask Allah to help and protect us’. This speech is uttered by people who are ignorant. We must take the means and preparations required for doing everything in our daily life as if means and preparations are everything, then after we do all what we can do we ask Allah for help and protection as if all the preparations we made are useless. Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) wore two armours in spite of the fact that he is the master of the creation and the most beloved by the Creator. He also gave the banner (of the Muslim army) to Musa'b son of Omeir.

6- Prophet Muhammad dismissing young companions from joining the army:

Now, I'd like you to examine the difference between the youth of this age and those of that age. Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) reviewed the young companions, and thought that some of them were too young to fight enemies. Among those were Abdullah son of Omar, Usama son of Zeid, Usaid son of Hudair, al-Bara’a son of Azeb, zeid son of Arkam, Zeid son of Thabet, Obabeh son of Aws and Amr son of Hizam. He dismissed them because they were too young to fight. However, he allowed some of those who were able to fight such as Sumrah son of Jundob and Rafe son of Khodaj. To be accurate, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) accepted either Sumrah or Rafe. So, the one dismissed went to his mother in tears. Therefore, his mother came to Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) pleading to him in order to allow her son to fight. Thus, both of them struggled together before Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) in order to show who is stronger. Certainly Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) had no time since the enemies were so close. However, respecting the young’s character is part of his upbringing. Anyway, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) allowed them both to participate in fighting. That is, he gave Sumrah and Rafe the permission to fight at the age of fifteen years old.

Nowadays, fifteen-year old take their burgers and go to the playground to watch a football match. However, the companions were allowed to fight enemies at the same age. Thus, some people reported that Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) allowed people to participate in fighting in accordance with their age. Other people said that Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) permitted people to participate in fighting according to their ability to do so and dismissed others because they were unable to do fighting. In other words, they thought that puberty has nothing to do with Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) decision.

7- Dividing the Muslim army into both a right side and a left side

A young companion said, ‘When he, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), saw that I was able to fight, he allowed me to do so. Then Quraish was getting ready to fight against Muslims. They were three thousand knights. They appointed Khaled son of al-Waleed as the leader of the right side of their army. Look! Khaled son of al-Waleed was one of Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) fiercest enemies. It was he who defeated Muslims in ‘Uhud’ battle. Then he turned to be one of the most prominent companions after he converted to Islam. Then he was called ‘Allah’s drawn sword’. Thus, do not despair of a man even if he is indulged in doing sins or even if he is strongly hostile to Islam. This is because he may be guided to the right path by Allah. Therefore,
you should not give up hope for anyone to be guided to the right path. When Khaled converted to Islam, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) said to him: “O Khaled, I was astonished at you” because he later converted to Islam. “I can see that you have a reasonable thought”.

Look how the man (Khaled) who caused the death of seventy people of Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) best companions became afterwards?

Khaled said: “By Allah, I participated in a hundred or so battles. There is no place in my body which is void of a sword beat or an arrow stab. Nonetheless, I am dying now in my bed the same as a camel would die. May a coward’s never go to sleep” he said”.

Ekrimah son of Abi Jahl was the leader of the left side of the unbelievers’ army. Such people were the chiefs of the unbelievers. Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) gave his sword to Abi Dujanah, a brave champion, who was strutting at the war (Uhud battle).

8- The start of fighting

The first person who took the initiative among unbelievers to start fighting was Abu Amer al-Faseq (Al-Faseq is someone who did not follow the way of Allah after it is being introduced to him or her) whose real name was Abdullah son of Amer. He was called the ‘monk’ due to his religious attitude as well as his commitment to ignorance. Therefore, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) named him ‘Al-Faseq’. He was the head of ‘al-Aws’ tribe in the pre-Islamic era. However, when Islam was revealed, he showed open enmity to Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). That was because the profits he used to obtain in the past disappeared by the advent of Islam. Thus, he went outside al-Medina heading for Quraish in order to convince them to fight against Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). He assured them that his folk (who became Muslims) will follow him if they see him coming with Quraish for fighting against Muslims. Then the first people he met when he came with Quraish were his own folk. However, when he called them out they did not respond to him. They said, ‘O Al-Faseq May Allah curse you, May Allah curse you’. Look at this loyalty (on the part of Muslims).

Muslims bravely fought against unbelievers in ‘Uhud’ battle. More specifically, Hamzah, Talhah, Shaibeh, Abu Dhujanah and an-Nadr son of Anas strongly fought. A group of Ansars (residents of al-Medina) were injured while fighting fearlessly. Then fighting has become fiercer. In the beginning, Muslims were able to achieve victory over unbelievers who ran away until they reached their women. This is the critical point.

9- Archers went down the mountain (Uhud Mount)

Once the Muslim archers saw the defeat of their enemies, they thought the war was over. However, they had already had clear instructions given by Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) dictating that ‘even if you see the Muslim army being eaten by birds, do not leave your positions (upon ‘Uhud’ mountain). Nonetheless, they left their positions assigned by Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and said, ‘let’s take booty, let’s take booty’. Allah the Exalted says:

[Among you are some that desire this world and some that desire the hereafter]

[Al ‘Imran 152]

Then their leader reminded them of Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him) order. However, they turned a deaf ear to him since they thought that unbelievers would not be back again. They left their positions and only ten of them stayed with their leader. That is why unbelievers launched another attack, killed the archers who stayed in their positions, surprised the companions from the back while they were collecting booty and
surrounded them. Some of the companions were honored by Allah with martyrdom. Then enemies jumped on Prophet Muhammad’s (Peace Be Upon Him). Anyway, we will continue in the next lesson God willing.

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Questions

1- A brother is asking, ‘is it right (religiously speaking) if a man has his marriage contract done by a sheikh (not formally done by the court)?

A brief comment, women’s rights (within marriage) cannot be maintained except through arranging a formal marriage contract, i.e. the contract that is legally registered in the records of the court of religious affairs. Fifty years ago, any sheikh could do a marriage contract. However, nowadays women’s rights cannot be maintained except through arranging a formal marriage contract by the court. Therefore, I recommend brothers who want to get married to do a formal marriage contract unless there is an urgent need not to do so. But, if there is no need except, for example, to enable a young man to go to his in law’s house and sees his fiancée whenever he likes, then you should not enable him to do so until he has had his marriage contract done.

2- If a young man who has already had his marriage contract done by a sheikh, not legally in the court, wants to break up, should he pay his fiancée her dowry?

Yes, he should. If he has not had a sexual intercourse with her, then he should pay her half her dowry. In case he has not already determined her dowry, then he should pay her half the dowry commonly known even if the contract has been made with two words uttered by a sheikh. This is Allah’s religion.

3- Some scholars (sheikhs) behave with their disciples as if they were people of wisdom, i.e. they do the same as Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) used to do with his companions. Furthermore, they do not allow others to question them about the validity of what they do claiming that they are the heirs of Allah’s prophets since they are scholars. Is this right?

According to the Islamic sharia (rules), no one is infallible. Everybody except Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) can make mistakes. Among his companions, there were some people who wished for this worldly life and others for the hereafter. We just believe in that only Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is infallible. As for his nation, it is infallible as a whole (not as individuals). Thus, if everybody claims that he/she is infallible, he/she has been fallen in a big trouble.

3- Is victory and defeat a fate ordained by Allah the Exalted?

Yes they are. This is planned by Allah in order to test believers’ belief and truthfulness. Sometimes, unbelievers get strong and do whatever they like to do, i.e. they kill people as it is happening all over the world. This is a very difficult test. Hence, weak believers fail in this test. For instance, they would say, ‘where is Allah?’ How ever, strong believers do not feel affected by what is happening. They can realise Allah’s wisdom, Allah’s test and Allah’s will working behind the scenes. They can see this worldly life as a field for work, for tests; even if one does not succeed in it, he/she still has his/her own belief, righteous work, intention and the hereafter. Genuine winning does not take place in this worldly life as evidenced by what Allah the Exalted said to Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), as stated in the holy Quran:

[Whether We show you (realised in thy life-time) some part of what We promise them,- or We take your soul (to Our Mercy) (Before that)]

Yunus (Jonah) 46

You may pass away before victory takes place. As Muslims, we should be supporting Allah’s approach; we should have Allah satisfied with us. But, it is impossible to ask Allah to change his decrees.

4- Is a woman religiously allowed to wear trousers under her coat?

Women’s clothes should be loose and thick so that her body’s details cannot appear. As long as a woman wears a long, loose and thick coat that neither shows her skin’s color nor describes her body details, then it can be said that she is wearing religiously legal clothes. Thus, if she wears trousers under her coat, it is not a problem except if she, for example, enters the house of one of her relatives who asks her to take her coat off.
where there is a man looking at her. In this case, she is committing a sin.

If trousers describe her organs' size, they are religiously illegal. However, husbands have the right to see their wives on any appearance and/or with any clothes even if they are too modern ones. Women have to wear decent clothes in the presence of their mahrams (mahrams are the males who cannot marry that woman because they are related to her such as her father, son, brother, uncle, and the like). These clothes should not be short, i.e. they have to cover at least the upper half of their arms, their knees and their whole chests. These decent clothes have been called 'service clothes' by Muslim scholars. So, the girl who wears indecent clothes in the presence of her brother, father, son etc is committing a sin. A woman has to wear 'service clothes' in the presence of her mahrams. However, there is no limit between a husband and his wife. But, when she goes out, she has to cover her whole body. Also, her clothes have to be thick not showing her skin and loose. This is the religiously legal rule.

5- A disagreement happened between a husband and his wife. In consequence, the man decided that his wife can visit her parents for only one hour a month. Is this religiously legal?

No, it is not enough. As a grateful son, can you be satisfied to see your mother or father one hour a month? So, do to others what you would like to be done to you. Your wife, likes her father and mother as you like yours. Thus, she needs to meet with them more than one hour a month.

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