

## Fast 23

### Courage in the face of the gravest danger – 2

“Even as your Lord caused you to go forth from your house with truth, though some of the believers were surely averse, disputing with you about the truth after it had become clear — as if they were being driven to death while they saw (it).” — 8:5–6

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*Notes:* “you” and “your” are singular here, referring to the Holy Prophet. These verses relate to the battle of Badr, the first full battle which the Muslims had to fight in self-defence after the Quraish of Makkah sent a strong army to attack them. Some Muslims wanted to capture an unarmed trading caravan of the Quraish which was passing through the area. They felt that to march out to engage the Quraish army was like being “driven to death”. But the Holy Prophet followed the course by which the “truth” would be on his side, that of going out to fight the Quraish army. It took the highest courage to adopt that course.

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“Soon shall the armies be routed, and they will show their backs.” — 54:45

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*Notes:* This is a prophecy which was fulfilled at the battle of Badr, having been revealed long before. How desperate the situation was for the Muslims at this battle can be seen from the following incident. Before the battle, the Holy Prophet prayed in his tent in these words:

“O Lord, I beseech You according to Your covenant and Your promise; O Lord, if such is Your will (i.e. defeat for the Muslims), You may not be served after this day”.

He saw that Muslims were facing the prospect of losing this battle, and thus being annihilated from the world, so much so that if that happened there would none left to serve the One God. His prayer became so fervent that Hazrat Abu Bakr took his hand and said: “Allah is sufficient for you, O Messenger of Allah”. So the Holy Prophet went out and he recited the above verse.

The Holy Prophet led Muslims into the battle of Badr purely on the expectation of help coming from God, while from the circumstances which he faced he could only conclude that they might all be wiped out.

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“When you went away far, and paid no heed to anyone, and the Messenger was calling you in your rear.” —3:153

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*Notes:* This refers to events at the battle of Uhud, which we have already mentioned in the Study for Fast 18. In the later stages of that battle, when the Muslims became scattered and were running in all directions, the Holy Prophet shouted to them: “Towards me, O servants of God. I am the Messenger of Allah”. Hearing this, the Muslim soldiers converged towards

him and this consolidated their position. But the Prophet's call placed him at great personal risk because the Quraish now knew where he was, and headed towards the same direction. The Holy Prophet thus endangered his own life in order to consolidate the Muslim army.

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“Certainly Allah helped you in many battlefields, and on the day of Hunain, when your great numbers made you proud, but they availed you nothing, and the earth with all its vastness was narrowed for you, then you turned back retreating. Then Allah sent down His calm upon His Messenger and upon the believers, and sent armies which you did not see, and punished those who disbelieved. And such is the reward of the disbelievers. Then will Allah, after this, turn mercifully to whom He pleases. And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” — 9:25–27

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*Notes:* This battle was fought after the conquest of Makkah and therefore the Muslim army was large, as indicated in the words “when your great numbers made you proud, but they availed you nothing”. The advance party of the Muslim army was ambushed by the archers of the enemy and as a result they retreated, causing disorder in the whole Muslim army. In that situation, *the Holy Prophet advanced alone towards the enemy*, despite the archers, proclaiming at the top of his voice: “I am the Prophet, this is not a falsehood, I am the son of Abdul Muttalib”. Seeing this, others joined him in the assault, and in the end they won the battle.

The words “sent armies which you did not see” refer to the Divine help sent to the Muslims.

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