

Fast 22

Courage in the face of the gravest danger – 1

- The Holy Prophet Muhammad faced many situations of the gravest danger, almost alone, when he could have been killed by his enemies. He showed the highest degree of courage and remained resolute on the right path. Some of these situations are illustrated below from the Quran.

“If you do not help him, Allah certainly helped him when those who disbelieved expelled him — he being the second of the two; when they were both in the cave, when he said to his companion: **Do not grieve, surely Allah is with us.** So Allah sent down His tranquillity on him and strengthened him with forces which you did not see, and made lowest the word of those who disbelieved. And the word of Allah, that is the uppermost. And Allah is Mighty, Wise.” — 9:40

Notes: This was revealed in connection with the Tabuk expedition when the Holy Prophet appealed to his followers join it. God assured him of help, even if people did not help him, and referred back to an incident during his migration or *hijra* from Makkah to Madinah, which was the most critical hour of his life. Fleeing his persecutors, he was forced to hide in a cave called Thaur, about three miles from Makkah, with only one companion, Abu Bakr, who is called here as “the second of the two”. The believers are told that God saved the Prophet from the hands of his enemies when he had just one companion amidst a whole nation of enemies, and that God would help him now.

Notice that even now, at the time of the revelation of this verse, when the Holy Prophet was the ruler of that nation, and was able to raise an army of 30,000 men for this expedition, still his reliance was solely on God, and not on these resources at his command.

The opponents and critics of our *Jama‘at* say that we will not succeed in our mission because our size is small. They say we are proved to be false because of our small size. Yet Allah says to the Holy Prophet: You will succeed even if you have no followers, or just one follower with you, *because Allah is with you.*

“Fight then in Allah’s way — you (O Prophet) are not responsible except for yourself; and urge on the believers. It may be that Allah will restrain the fighting of those who disbelieve. And Allah is stronger in prowess and stronger to give exemplary punishment.” — 4:84

Notes: The command “fight” is here addressed in the singular tense to the Holy Prophet. The primary duty to defend Islam *lay on the Holy Prophet alone*, as against all the forces of Arabia. Even if no one at all fought with him, he would fight all by himself. This shows:

1. That he never put any trust in the prowess of his followers, and his confidence was based solely on Divine help.
2. The fighting mentioned here could not be aggressive fighting, because no one wanting to launch an attack would ever say that he would do it single-handedly. Only in self-defence would someone vow to fight even if alone.

As to what is meant in this verse by urging the believers to fight, before the tunnel-visioned critics of Islam jump to the conclusion that Muslims here are being urged simply to attack others, they should read a verse only nine verses before this:

“And what reason have you not to fight in the way *of* Allah, and *of* the weak among the men and the women and the children, who say: Our Lord, take us out of this town, whose people are oppressors, and grant us from Yourself a friend, and grant us from Yourself a helper!” (4:75)

Hence, fighting *in the way of* Allah was fighting *in the way of* the weak and helpless men, women and children who were praying to God to be saved from the oppressors of their town, Makkah. This was the fighting to which the Holy Prophet is asked to “urge on the believers”.