

Fast 27: Final triumph of the Holy Prophet

- Chapter 110 of the Quran, *An-Nasr* or *The Help*, was revealed during the last pilgrimage of the Holy Prophet and he lived only eighty days after its revelation.

“¹When Allah’s help and victory comes,

²and you (O Prophet) see people entering the religion of Allah in companies, ³celebrate the praise of your Lord and ask His protection.

Surely He is ever Returning (to mercy).”

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ ۖ وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ

يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا ۖ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَ

اسْتَغْفِرْهُ ۖ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا

Verses 1–2: The great victory which had come was the triumph of the religion of Islam in the whole of Arabia. Deputation after deputation from all parts of Arabia came to Madinah and accepted Islam at the hand of the Holy Prophet. History does not present another example of the wonderful transformation wrought by the Holy Prophet within the short space of twenty-three years.

Verse 3: On witnessing the greatest triumph known to history, the Holy Prophet is told to celebrate the praise of his Lord, and to ask protection. “Celebrate (do *tasbīḥ* of) the praise of your Lord” also teaches that people joining Islam should be taught the concept of the Oneness of God in Islam. This is because the beliefs they held formerly about God, in particular ascribing partners to God, are contrary to the perfection of God, and perfection of God is what is declared by performing the verbal act of *tasbīḥ* (saying *subḥān Allāh*).

For whom was protection or forgiveness (*ghafr*) to be asked? If it was for the Holy Prophet, it was a protection against **elation** at an unprecedented victory, because such **euphoria** ill befitted a Teacher of righteousness. At a time of a great victory, human beings tend to lose all self-control and start rejoicing in their own greatness or of their nation. Islam here teaches asking protection of God against such tendencies.

But it is more likely that the Holy Prophet was required to ask protection for the masses who were now accepting Islam in companies and large groups. In fact, he was required to ask Divine forgiveness or protection for his former oppressors, forgiveness for those who had been his deadly enemies, who were guilty of the gravest crimes.

Note also that whenever our Holy Prophet Muhammad found himself in the company of people he used to make *istighfār*, i.e., seek Allah’s protection, before taking his leave. The intention was to protect his heart from being affected by any evil in the people’s talk, since not everyone was at a high standard of purity. From this we can gauge how much the Holy Prophet feared and hated sins.

Not only the Holy Prophet individually, but Muslims as a whole are also addressed here. Muslims, as a body, must observe the Holy Prophet's example of religious propagation and do the same. That is, they should spread the praise and glory of Allah throughout the world with single-mindedness of purpose and seek Allah's protection against their internal weaknesses. It was because of these weaknesses that Allah later closed the door of His help and victory upon the Muslims, and the rising tide of the religion of Islam subsided.

Ever returning to Mercy: This attribute of Allah in verse 3 indicates not only that if a person turns back from the actual commission of sins, Allah turns to him mercifully, but it also means that whenever and however a servant turns to his Lord, so, too, will his Lord favour him with compassion.

Thus, in the hour of his triumph, the Holy Prophet asked Allah for protection for himself from the slightest shortfall in obeying His commands, and forgiveness of sins and faults of others, whether friend or foe, follower or opponent. And this, almost the last revelation he received, reiterated that Allah is ever returning to mercy.

- Ibn Abbas said that this chapter was an indication of the Holy Prophet's approaching end. The following incident reported by him is very enlightening from many points of view. Referring to the time of the Caliph Umar, Ibn Abbas said:

Umar used to make me sit with the elderly men who had fought in the Battle of Badr. Some had objection to it and said to Umar: "Why do you bring in this (young man) to sit with us while we have sons like him?" Umar replied: "You know the reason (i.e., his religious knowledge)".

One day Umar called me and made me sit in the gathering of those people. I realised that he called me just to show them (my religious knowledge). Umar then asked them: "What do you say about the Word of Allah: When Allah's help and victory comes." Some of them said: "We are ordered to praise Allah and ask for His forgiveness when Allah's Help and victory comes to us." Some others kept quiet and did not say anything. On that, Umar asked me: "Do you say the same, O Ibn Abbas?" I replied: "No." He said: "What do you say then?" I replied: "It refers to the death of the Messenger of Allah, about which Allah informed him. Allah said: 'When Allah's help and victory comes' — this is a reference to his death — 'Celebrate the praise of your Lord and ask His protection. Surely He is ever Returning (to mercy).' On that Umar said: "I do not know anything about it other than what you have said."

(See Bukhari, hadith 4970). Thus the Holy Prophet Muhammad's death came at the peak of his triumph and victory.