

The Quranic Concept of War

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Brigadier S.K.Malik

BERSERKER

BOOKS



THE QURANIC CONCEPT OF WAR

Brigadier S. K. Malik

Foreword by
General M. Zia-ul-Haq

ADAM PUBLISHERS & DISTRIBUTORS
Shandar Market, Chitli Qabar
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“Behold, thy Lord said to the angels, ‘I will create a vicegerent on earth’. They said, ‘Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?—whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)? He said, ‘I know what ye know not.’

And He taught Adam the nature of all things; then He placed them before the angels and said, ‘Tell Me the nature of these if ye are right’.

They said, ‘Glory to Thee: of knowledge we have none, save what Thou hast taught us: in truth it is Thou who are perfect in knowledge and wisdom’.

He said, ‘O Adam! tell them their natures’. When he had told them, Allah said, ‘Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of heavens and earth, and I know what ye reveal and what ye conceal?’”

Foreword

I write these few lines to commend Brigadier Malik's book on 'The Quranic Concept of War' to both soldier and civilian alike. JEHAD FI-SABILILLAH is not the exclusive domain of the professional soldier, nor is it restricted to the application of military force alone.

This book brings out with simplicity, clarity and precision the Quranic philosophy on the application of military force, within the context of the totality that is JEHAD. The professional soldier in a Muslim army, pursuing the goals of a Muslim state, CANNOT become 'professional' if in all his activities he does not take on 'the colour of Allah.' The non-military citizen of a Muslim state must, likewise, be aware of the kind of soldier that his country must produce and the ONLY pattern of war that his country's armed forces may wage.

I have read this book with great interest and believe that it has a useful contribution to make towards this understanding that we jointly seek as citizens of an Islamic State, soldier or civilian. I pray and trust that this book will be read by many. For a task so sincerely undertaken and so devotedly executed, the author's reward is with his Lord.

GENERAL M. ZIA-UL-HAQ
Chief of the Army Staff

Preface

Brig. S.K. Malik has made a valuable contribution to Islamic jurisprudence by presenting a comprehensive survey of the Quranic Approach to the Principles of War and Peace. His has been a scholarly presentation of what may be considered as an "analytic Re-statement" of the Quranic wisdom on the subject of war and peace. Some ruling concepts on that subject, as these are to be discerned in the writings of Western publicists, have been examined and exhibited for what they are worth in the context of Quranic principles. As far as I am aware there are hardly any Books in the forensic literature of Islam that have dealt with the problem from the perspective from which the learned author has attempted to deal with it in his treatise. The annexures exhibit some special features of Holy Prophet's military campaigns and more specifically, the case-studies that have a bearing on the battles of Badr, Ohad and Khandaq tend to show author's deep insight into the way Quran deals with the issues of war and peace. The value of the book has been considerably enhanced by the author having included in the book several maps showing the principal patterns of war strategy employed in the battle of Badar, Ohad and Khan-daq. He has also included general bibliography and incorporated all the Quranic references in the light of which he has attempted to present his thesis.

Seen in the Quranic setting, man's role here below is one of 'struggle', or striving and of energetically combatting forces of evil or what may be called, "counter-initiatory" forces which are at war with the harmony and the purpose of his life on earth. The most glorious word in the vocabulary of Islam is *Jihad*, a word which is untranslatable in English but, broadly speaking, means.

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'striving', 'struggling', 'trying to advance the Divine causes or purposes.

The man, according to the teaching of Islam, has been sent down as *Khalifa-tul Ard*, that is, he has been called upon to play the role of being a successor to earth. The earth has its own potentialities. It, too, has been created for a purpose. But man has been sent down as a responsible being and he is here to secure improvement of earth, of making this brown earth of God green. He is here to introduce order and reform, in the light of Heavenly mandate, what has been deformed by Satanic forces.

All this energetic striving to move forward is also clearly demanded of man at the time when choices have to be made out of the two conflicting courses of conduct which our consciousness presents to us. This world in which we live is the arena where there is a conflict between good and evil, between right and wrong and between *Haq and Na-Haq* (truth and untruth) and between *Hilal and Haram* (legitimate and forbidden) courses of conduct. When man resolutely chooses that course of conduct which has been declared by the Lord by means of revelation, to be the right course, he fulfils the law; it is the duty of man to opt for goodness and to reject the evil. The fulfilment of this duty is not at all easy, it is also a war—a war with his lower-self. This may be called and has been called *Jihad Bin-nafs* (striving with oneself). Similarly, when a believer sees that someone is trying to obstruct another believer from travelling on the road that leads to God, spirit of *Jihad* requires that such a man who is imposing obstacles should be prevented from doing so and the obstacles placed by him should also be removed, so that mankind may freely be able to negotiate its own path that leads to Heaven. To omit to do this is a culpable omission, if only because by not striving to clear or straighten the path we become passive spectators of the counter-initiatory forces imposing a blockade in the way of those who mean to keep their faith with God. The ordinary wars which mankind has been fighting for the sake of either revenge or for securing satisfaction of

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their desire of getting more land or more booty are not allowed in Islam. This is so because here the rule is, all striving must be for the sake of God and for the purposes of up-holding His Majesty, Authority and the sanctity of His Holy Name. The wars in the theory of Islamic law are in the nature of an undertaking to advance God's purposes on earth, and invariably they are defensive in character. It is a duty of a believer to carry forward the Message of God and to bring it to the notice of his fellow-men in handsome ways. But if someone attempts to obstruct him from doing so he is entitled, as a measure of defence, to retaliate. The problem of war in Islam, therefore, strictly speaking, is controlled by one master desire, namely, of pleasing the Lord and of defending the lawful interests of those who, having believed in Him, are not being allowed to carry on the obligations imposed on them by their religion.

So far as the Holy Quran is concerned, there are numerous verses contained in it which highlight this concept of *Jehad*, and in one of the verses of the Holy Quran it has been clearly stated: "To those who strive unto us (*Jahidu-fina*) we always show them the way" (Chap: 29 V. 69). All this clearly means that *Jehad* also is a means of discovering the truth, of finding out what man should do in order to fulfil the law. Even search for knowledge is an aspect of *Jehad* and has been ranked as a *Jehad-e-Akbar*, that is to say, it is regarded as a greater struggle as contra-distinguished from *Jehad Bil-Saif* (striving with sword) which is described as a *Jehad-e-Asghar*, that is, *Jehad* on the minor scale.

It would thus appear that in Islam the personal will of the conqueror, his lust for power, his desire to have personal fame are totally irrelevant. When he fights in the name of Allah he does so to uphold His law and the honour of His Name and for the defence of legitimate interests of the believers. It is only in defined set of circumstances that war is permitted. As any one can see, this is a highly *controlled* affair; indeed, it is totally regulated by law.

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The Islamic law regulates declaration of war as also the limitations imposed on its conduct; upon examination, it would appear that Islamic Law has been designed to promote ideal of justice. In Chapter II verse 190 we have reference to the duty of the Muslims to "fight in the cause of God those who fight you and be not aggressors. God loveth not those who are aggressors." This clearly shows that there is a direction to the believers to fight only those who fight them. The believer thus is not allowed to be the aggressor, since "God does not love those who are aggressors." Of course, the term used, 'you', in the context would seem to be a pointer towards *the whole of the body of believers* and it is in this sense that war in Islam is *total*, that is, everybody who is a believer is to contribute his share towards the waging of war.

The Muslims when they are engaged in fighting are not to transgress the limits within which war is allowed to be waged and, in principle, they are not to be cruel or become revengeful. The general command to be just and fair is discernible from Chapter V. Verse 8:

"Oh, ye who believe
stand out firmly for God as witnesses
To fair dealings,
And let not the hatred of other people to you
make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice.
Be just, that is next to piety. And fear God.
Surely, Allah is aware of what you do."

Then there is that famous directive issued by the first Caliph of Islam, Hazrat Abu Bakr which seems to reflect the spirit of moderation and humanitarian approach of the law of Islam. Said he, "Remember that you are always under the gaze of God and on the eve of your death; that you will have to reckon on the Last Day:.....When you fight for the glory of God behave like men, without turning your back, but let not the blood of women or that of children or the aged tarnish your victory. Do not destroy

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palm trees; do not burn dwellings or wheat fields; never cut down fruit trees; only kill cattle when you need it for food. When you agree upon a treaty take care to respect its clauses. As your advance progresses, you will meet religious men who live in monasteries and who serve God in prayer; leave them alone, do not kill them or destroy their monasteries." There are various traditions of the Prophet which tantamount to making similar declarations. (see particularly Mohammad Hamidullah's *Muslim Conduct of State*, Lahore 1968, page 204). It would be seen that these declarations that have a bearing upon the humanization of the ethos of the combatants in war were uttered at a time when barbarian kings drove their swords into the ground of battle-field calling for massacre of all enemies taller than the hilt. But in Islam war is waged to establish supremacy of the Lord only when every other argument has failed to convince those who reject His Will and work against the very purpose of the creation of mankind. Indeed, a person who goes to holy war virtually is offering *testimony* regarding the paramountcy and supreme authority of God's law by giving up the most precious thing he has, namely, his life. This seems to be in response to the norm laid down in the Holy Quran for those who wish to approach righteousness and win favour with their Lord. Says the Quran: "You cannot approach righteousness until you give up that which you love the most." Indeed the very word "*Shaheed*" which is roughly taken to mean as a martyr, literally signifies the idea that he has borne testimony as a witness that God's law is supreme and any one who attempts to obstruct the progress of those who are taking their path to God will be dealt with sternly—for that is the only way in which to restore and to rehabilitate the authority of God on Earth. Similarly, in the Quran in Chapter IV Verse, 75, we are admonished that we must rescue those who are being oppressed by their tyrannical rulers. The actual text is as follows:

"And why should ye not fight
In the cause of God

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And all those who
Being weak are ill-treated
(And Oppressed)
From amongst men, women and children
Whose cry is "Oh, Lord.
Rescue us from this land
Whose rulers are oppressors
And raise for us from thee
One who will protect,
One who will help."

Broadly speaking the war aims of any Muslim armed force engaged in fighting have also been stated in Sura Mohammad verses 1 and 4:

"Those who disbelieve and hinder (men) from the path of God, their deeds will Lord render astray (from their mark).....Therefore, when you meet the unbelievers smite their necks; at length, when you have thoroughly subdued them build a barrier against them; thereafter (is the time for) either generosity or ransom, until war lays down its burden."

Islam views the world as though it were bipolarised in two opposing camps—*Darus-Salam* facing *Darul-Harb*—the first one is submissive to the Lord in co-operating with the God's purpose to establish peace, order and such other pre-conditions of human development, but the second one, on the other hand, is engaged in perpetuating defiance of the same Lord. Such a state of affairs which engages any one in rebellion against God's will is termed as "Fitna"—which word literally means *test* or *trial*. The term "Fitna" refers us to misconduct on the part of a man who establishes his own norms and expects obedience from others, thereby usurping God's authority—who alone is sovereign. In Sura Infa'al Chapter 8—Verse 39, it is said "And fight on until there remains no more tumult or oppression and they remain submissive

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only to God." To the same effect are the words used in Sura *Toha* Verse 9, "Fight those who believe not in the Lord, nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which has been forbidden by lord and His Apostle nor acknowledge the religion of truth (even if they are) of the people of the book, until they pay *Jazya* with willing submission and feel themselves subdued."

Many Western Scholars have pointed their accusing fingers at some of the above verses in the Quran to be able to contend that world of Islam is in a state of perpetual struggle against the non-Muslims. As to them it is a sufficient answer to make, if one were to point out, that the defiance of God's authority by one who is His slave exposes that slave to the risk of being held guilty of treason and such a one, in the perspective of Islamic law, is indeed to be treated as a sort of that cancerous growth on that organism of humanity, which has been created "*Kanafsin Wahidatin*" that is, like one, single, indivisible self. It thus becomes necessary to remove the cancerous mal-formation even if it be by surgical means (if it would not respond to other treatment), in order to save the rest of Humanity.

In Islam, the believer is admonished to invite non-believers to the fold of Islam by employing the power of his persuasion and by using beautiful methods in extending the invitation to them to accept Islam. The first duty in Islam is to extend *Dawa*, and the Prophet of Islam himself has been described by Quran as 'Invitor to God'—one sent by God to call under His command people to His ways. Thus every believer, to begin with, has to reflect this virtue by inviting people in handsome ways, particularly those who are seen by him as disrupting public order by creating mischief in the land. They are invited to shun their false ways and to return to the true path. It is only after they refute this 'Dawa' and confront the world of Islam by raising huge armies and equipping them with weapons to fight Muslims that a situation arises in which, the invitation to accept God's law having been declined, the believers have no option but in sheer self-defence

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to wage a war against those who are threatening aggression—since that is the ultimate court of appeal in which the issue between right and wrong can be *finally* decided. The justification for waging war in defence of what is right is that, he who is in the right, if he goes to war with the purest of intentions, will be assisted by the Lord to prevail against those who having defied God's law have virtually created chaos in the land—for God doth not love the mischief-makers.

It is true that in modern society the maintenance of international order and peace in the international community of mankind proceeds upon the premises of sovereign equality of 'nation-states' whose number at present is 151. And this number is reached by taking notice of the *territorial* aspect of the structure of a modern nation-state. The idea of Ummah of Mohammad, the Prophet of Islam, is incapable of being realised within the frame-work of territorial states much less made an enduring basis of *viewing* the world as having been polarised between the *world of Islam* and the *world of war*. Islam, in my understanding, does not subscribe to the concept of the territorial state and it would be recalled that even Iqbal in his lectures on "The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam" went so far as to suggest that, Muslim states, to begin with, be treated as territorial states and that too only as an *interim measure* since these are later on to be incorporated into commonwealth of Muslim *states*. Each one of these states has first to acquire strength and stability before it is able to prepare the ground on which a unified state of Islam can appear on the historical scene.

In the context of present considerations, there are three terms that are often used indiscriminately and have caused greatest confusion in the contemporary of Islamic thought which require clarification: these are (1) *Ummah*; (2) *Quome*; and (3) *Millat*. This is not the place at which any extended discourse is called for to elaborate the precise meanings that could be accorded to these terms. But suffice it to say that each one of these terms is a

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manifestation of the application of principle of synthesis or integration. *Quome* has something to do with its root verb, *Quam Yaqume*, which means to *stand*. This necessarily signifies a group of people who constitute themselves as a nation by appeal to the principle of geographical contiguity—people who have a territorial nexus with some defined portion of the land. The word 'Millat' which is primarily associated with *Millat-e-Ibrahimi* is more *racial* on its scope, in the sense that, the principle of synthesis here is the *blood* or the tie of consanguinity, that is to say, those who have same quality of blood flowing in their veins, can and do form a nation. For instance, the Jews who call themselves as "Bani Israel" are a nation on that account. Even if they are wandering in the wilderness and have no fixed habitat, they consider themselves a *nation* if only because they are able to trace their descent from a common ancestor. The term *Ummah* is associated with Umma of the Prophet of Islam and is linked with the root word, the *mother*. Here the mother-principle is to be spelled out from that famous verse of the Holy Quran which says "*Ma kana Mohammadan Abu Ahadin Min Rajali Kum wala Kin Rasul Lullah wa Khatmunibiyeen*" which means "Mohammad is not father of any one man but he is a Messenger of God (One sent down by Him) and he is the seal of the Prophets." If Mohammad is not the father of any one man, no believer can inherit anything from him except the Message he brought and the model of exemplary conduct that he has left behind. He had been sent down by God having been raised from the *Ummiyeens* to *recite his verses* to them, to *purify* them, to *teach them their destiny* and *make them wise* (See Surah Jumma Vs. 2) All that he has done in relation to these duties imposed on him by God is the *virsa* (that is, 'inheritance') of the believers as also the Message contained in the '*Umul-Kitab*' he has brought and since he has set the seal of finality upon the whole process of Prophecy which had been going on since times immemorial., he becomes, for all time to come the spiritual guide of the whole of mankind and that is why he has been elsewhere in the Quran called *Rafatilinnas*—as any one can see, the Umma participates in this

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heritage by a set pattern of thought, belief, and practice and by reason of this spiritual participation in the enterprise of universal history it supplies the spiritual principle of integration of mankind—a principle which is *supra-national, supra-racial, supra-linguistic* and *supraterritorial*. Thus man is viewed as way-farer on his way to God and all those who join him in this march, (Fi Deenillah Afwaja) draw their nourishment from that spiritual reservoir of the milk of humanity of the kind which only an spiritual mother is capable of supplying to her infant children. It is important for the Mussalmans to realise how distant they are as yet from the Muslim ideal and unless they cling to the rope of God and put an end to their internal schism they will not be able to view the world of Islam as one *Ummah*. Their role on earth is to communicate the same Message of God and his practice (*Sunnah*) which they have inherited from their Prophet and if there be any one who stifles their efforts and obstructs them from communicating the Message he will be viewed as *constituting membership of Darul-harb and liable to be dealt with as such*. Since the motto of a believer is "La Ikraha Fiddin", war is not the way to secure conversions to Islam. This purpose has specially been directed to be achieved by means of extending "Dawa", and using valid arguments and presenting the case in beautiful ways to those who do not believe.

The law of war and peace in Islam is as old as the Quran itself. Indeed, the term used by Muslim Jurists for international law is *Sayyar* which is a plural of *Seerat* shows that it is the conduct of the state in relation to another state which is what international law regulates. In Islamic international law this conduct is, strictly speaking, regulated between Muslims and non-muslims, there being, viewed from Islamic perspective, no other nations. The modern international law although it was very vitally influenced by Islam traverses a different ground altogether. It is a law which regulates conducts of various nations interse on the basis of *sovereign equality of all nations*. In Islam, of course, no nation is sovereign since God alone is the only sovereign in Whom all

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authority vests.

17. Before I conclude this brief survey of the special features and characteristics of the law of Islam touching and concerning the problems of war and peace I would like to refer to a recent article entitled "Conduct of Hostilities and the Protection of the Victims of Armed Conflicts in Islam" by Marcel A. Boisard. The writer is the Co-Director of Diplomacy Training Programme, in Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva. He has enumerated in a summary form the basic features reflected in legal rules of lofty humanitarian qualities as follows:

1. "armed hostilities oppose systems, not people, who therefore are to be spared insofar as military necessities *stricto sensu* permit;
2. strictly forbidden are excesses of any kind: inflicting cruel and useless suffering upon the enemy, using treacherous means and weapons of mass and indiscriminate destruction;
3. the illegality of those reprisals which could constitute a violation of basic humanitarian principles;
4. the distinction between combatants and non-combatants, respect for those who are no longer engaged in battle—the dead, the wounded, the prisoners—and neutralization of medical personnel and supplies;
5. affirmation of individual responsibility—the basic axiom of Muslim law in general—implying the non-permissibility of collective punishment and the taking of hostages;
6. decent treatment of prisoners; guarantees that their lives will be spared and that they will be released as soon as possible;

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7. collaboration with the enemy on all humanitarian projects;
8. finally, it can be noted at this stage that the above-mentioned rules are binding in the case of "internal" conflicts as well. Rebels automatically enjoy a de jure recognition and are not held responsible for deaths and destruction caused by their acts of war."

Learned author after having summed up the above mentioned rules proceeds to offer his appreciation of the excellence and comprehensiveness of the rules he discerns in the scheme of Islamic International Law: in his words:

"This enumeration demonstrates that the fundamental postulates of the Muslim "law of war" are particularly pertinent, repeating and, sometimes, in their substance, going beyond the norms decreed by the rules of the Hague and the Geneva Conventions. We have described them in their raw state and in their positive traditional formulation, and have thus perhaps not emphasized an essential factor in the economy of the system: the absolute identity of law and religion. Because of his responsibility as an individual the Muslim violating rule might expose himself, perhaps to worldly, and certainly to divine, punishments. Within the double perspective of eternity and relativity, we have had to concentrate our attention on the latter, though it is less important in the eyes of the believer. Legal scholars, searching for the guiding principles of their speculation in and from the sources of the faith and the example of the Prophet, established, as early as the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries, imperative norms which regulated internal and international conflicts. It is worth recalling them for they could be inspirational, not only to certain political leaders in the contemporary Muslim world, but also

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to participants in various diplomatic conferences, on arms limitation, on protection of human rights in times of violence, and on the reaffirmation of the international humanitarian law of armed conflicts. Indeed, the Muslims believe these rules to be divine and even the most sceptical outside observers must recognize that they are, at the very least, eternal.”

I have no doubt, the present book would stimulate interest in the Islamic law of War, particularly the special emphasis that the religion of Islam places upon regulation of hostilities by law. Brig. Malik has laboured to the end that the concept of war in Islam be better understood and for this we owe a deep debt of gratitude to him. May God bless his work and advance him, (Ameen).

76-Moslemabad, Karachi.

ALLAH BUKHSH K. BROHI

Author's Note

The Holy Quran is a source of eternal guidance for mankind. Its Treasures are available to all those who genuinely seek them. As Man proceeds to probe into it, the Book begins to reveal itself unto him. The science and logic of this sublime divine document simply prevails upon his mind. Each new discovery reinforces his Faith, adds to his knowledge, broadens his spiritual horizon and gives him Light and Guidance to regulate his affairs.

The Book makes repeated appeals to mankind to use intellect and reason in its understanding and interpretation. It calls upon us to make the fullest use of all our senses in the search of Knowledge and Truth. It lays emphasis upon the importance of human observation, investigation, inquiry and research. Indeed, the Holy Quran invites mankind to study it; to deliberate upon its laws and principles; to observe and investigate the Signs of Allah given in it; and to reflect upon its theory and philosophy.

Our human failings and shortcomings need not deter us from conducting a research into the Holy Quran. Man, by his very nature, is mortal and fallible; and the Book, undoubtedly sublime and perfect, has, after all, been revealed for human mortals like us. Given honesty of purpose, a research conducted along the lines suggested by the Holy Quran is, in fact, the safest, the surest, the most absorbing, rewarding, revealing, and profitable research of all. The Guidance given in the Book is based on solid divine foundations and has the brightest prospects and potential of producing results.

As a complete Code of Life, the Holy Quran gives us a

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philosophy of war as well. This divine philosophy is an integral part of the total Quranic Ideology. It is a philosophy that is controlled and conditioned by the Word of God from its conception till conclusion. No other military thought known to Man possesses this supreme characteristic; from it, flow its numerous other attributes. It is complete, perfect, comprehensive, balanced, practical and effective.

The Quranic military thought can be studied from several angles and directions. It has its historical, political, legalistic and moralistic ramifications. This study is essentially a technical and professional research into the subject. The *raison d'être* of this work lies in its approach. Such a research is essential to put our subsequent study of the Muslim military history in its correct perspective. It is needed to lay bare those secrets of war which the human mind has been struggling to decipher for ages. It should be undertaken to obtain a total and overall view of the divine theories and concepts on war. Above all, it should be understood, absorbed and practised to benefit ourselves from its unlimited blessings.

This book is a modest attempt at introducing the subject to the reader. Research into the Holy Quran is not one-man's job. It is the collective and continuous responsibility of the entire Muslim Ummah. It takes a life-time of research to extract a 'drop' out of this Never-ending Reservoir of Knowledge and Wisdom; and it is only by pooling such 'drops' that we can derive the maximum benefit from it.

I shall consider myself immensely fortunate if this humble attempt is worth a fraction of that 'drop'.

S. K. MALIK

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I offer my grateful thanks to General M. Zia-ul-Haq for sparing his most valuable time to go through the manuscript of the book and for endorsing a 'Foreword' to it. To Mr. A.K. Brohi, I owe a heavy debt of gratitude for his generous and affectionate guidance in the preparation of this work and for writing its 'Preface'

I acknowledge, with deep reverence, the debt of gratitude I owe to Lieutenant-General A.I. Akram for guiding and training me, over the past many years, to undertake a work of this nature. It was his kind and competent guidance that blazed new trails and gave direction to my efforts. To Major-General Saeed Qadir, who took a keen personal interest in the whole project, I am highly obliged and indebted.

My grateful thanks are also due to Dr. Aman Ullah Khan, Chairman, Department of Islamic Studies, University of the Punjab; and to Lt. Col. Shahid Ahmed Khan of the Army Education Corps (formerly, Head of the English Department, Pakistan Military Academy) for their kind advice and assistance.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

As a perfect divine document, the Holy Quran has given a comprehensive treatment to its concept of war. The Book defines and determines all aspects of the use of 'force' in inter-state relations. The Quranic injunctions cover the causes and object of war; its nature and characteristics; limits and extents; dimensions and restraints. The Book also spells out a unique and distinctive concept of strategy, and prescribes its own rules and principles for the conduct of war.

The Quranic philosophy of war is infinitely supreme and effective. It strikes a perfect balance between war and policy. It penetrates deep down to systemise and regulate all issues involved in the initiation, planning, conduct and control of wars. It operates within well-defined divine controls that ensure that war is neither allowed to exceed its scope and purpose nor kept below the optimum level specified. Its laws and principles are universal in nature and abiding in significance. Unlike man-made philosophies, these are neither the product of a given set of circumstances nor made especially for it.

The Holy Quran does not interpret war in terms of narrow national interests but points towards the realisation of universal peace and justice. It provides an in-built methodology for the attainment of this purpose. The methodology makes maximum allowance to its adversaries to co-operate in a combined search for a just and peaceful order.

This living and dynamic philosophy has, however, suffered from the lack of an objective and purposeful research at the hands of both, its critics and supporters, in varying degree. The critics misinterpreted it as a form or aspect of adventurism, expansionism, and fanaticism. The supporters concentrated rather excessively on its metaphysical and super-natural aspects but made little effort to highlight its immense scientific and logical approach. This indifference to research, be it wilful or inadvertent, has, with the passage of time, prevented us from seeing the Quranic military thought in its true light and perspective. It has rendered it less assertive, if not altogether extinct, amongst the rival military concepts and philosophies of the day. A modern military mind, in search of solutions to the complexities of the present-day wars, finds little attraction to the study of a philosophy nearly 1400 years old. The gulf between the problems of modern wars and the Quranic military thought appears to him to be almost as big and wide as that between an arrow and an atom bomb. As a result, humanity in general and the Muslim community in particular stand deprived of the unlimited benefits and blessings of this supreme divine philosophy.

There is, therefore, an urgent need for up-dating the research into the subject to find answers to the current and future problems of war. This poses a formidable but, by no means, an insurmountable challenge. It calls for the revival of the characteristic Quranic spirit of inquiry and research. Guided by this sublime spirit, our ancestors have, in the past, made outstanding contribution to numerous branches of science and art. To an honest and genuine student of the modern military science, the Quranic philosophy of war also presents an equally rich and rewarding field for research. It is, in fact, the crying need of the day. It contains, amongst numerous other characteristics, a message of hope and assurance for the oppressed peoples of this troubled world.

Divine in conception, the Quranic philosophy of war is evolutionary in development and human in application. Within its well-defined parameters, it provides ample scope for human application and research. With all its distinctive import and identity, it is also open to influences from the other philosophies on war. It can particularly absorb a great deal of the modern military science at the operational level, without sacrificing its own distinctive and fundamental features and principles. To acquire better understanding and obtain optimum results, we must, therefore, make maximum use of the flexibility that its Divine Author graciously provides. But, while making conscious efforts to learn from the traditional philosophies on war, we have to resist all temptations of seeking a reflection of our own preferences and inclinations in the Book of God

The Quranic military thought is an integral and inseparable part of the total Quranic Message. The study of this philosophy will remain incomplete and inconclusive without an understanding of the basic and fundamental characteristics of the Book itself. We cannot obviously comprehend a 'part' without identifying and comprehending the 'whole' to which it belongs and whose characteristics it shares. In doing so, it is not our intention to carry out a detailed appraisal of the Holy Quran. We shall merely refresh ourselves about a few attributes of this luminous divine document in order to put this study in its true light and perspective.

A complete and perfect heavenly revelation, the Holy Quran is an unlimited reservoir of knowledge, wisdom, science, logic, light and guidance for mankind till Eternity. It has, to use its own words, been revealed as 'the Book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims.'¹ A perpetual and never-ending source of sure and pure inspiration, the Book, as has been admitted on all hands, is free from all forms of mutilations,

1. Nahl: 89

Introduction

modifications, additions and subtractions. Since its revelation, it is unchanged in its originality, beauty, idiom, diction, phraseology, etymology, science, logic, letter and spirit. Its accuracy and authenticity is preserved and guaranteed under divine guardianship. "We have," says its Divine Author, "without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)."² No other document, divine or man-made, can match the quality and beauty of the Holy Quran. "And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our Servant," challenges Almighty Allah, "then produce a Sura like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allah, if your (doubts) are true."³

The Book, however, lays down its own mystic doctrine as to the three categories of human beings and how they receive God's message. "This is the Book," says Almighty Lord, "in it is guidance, sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah; who believe in the Unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them; and who believe in the Revelation sent to thee and sent before thy time, and (in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereinafter. They are on (true) guidance from their Lord and it is these who will prosper."⁴ At another occasion, the Holy Quran says, "There hath come to you from Allah a (new) light and a perspicuous Book wherewith Allah guideth all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety, and leadeth them out of darkness, by His Will, unto the light,—guideth them to a Path that is Straight."⁵ As to those who reject Faith, the divine verdict has it that 'Allah hath set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes is a veil; great is the penalty they (incur).'⁶ Referring to the third category of men who outwardly profess Faith but harbour treacherous designs inwardly, the Holy

2. Al-Hijr : 9

4. Baqara : 2-5

6. Baqara : 7

3. Baqara : 23

5. Maida : 17-18

Quran rules, "These are they who have bartered guidance for error but their traffic is profitless, and they have lost true direction."⁷

A glimpse into the personality of the Man to whom this infinitely supreme divine guidance was revealed; who received and absorbed it; applied and practised it; and transmitted it to posterity for eternal light and guidance also forms an integral part of this Study. Volumes have already been written on that sublime being and volumes will continue to be written till Eternity. To assess the impact of his personality on this research, we shall recapitulate but a few utterances of the Holy Quran about him. According to the Book, the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) has been sent 'as a Witness, a Bearer of glad tidings and a Warner and as one who invites to Allah's (Grace) by His leave, and as a Lamp Spreading Light'.⁸ "Ye have indeed in the Apostle of Allah," the Book tells the human race, "a beautiful pattern of (conduct) for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the praise of Allah."⁹ Similar tributes have been paid to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) on numerous other occasions in the Book. What is important for us to know, for the purpose of this study, is, that the application of the divine instructions on war by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) forms an inseparable part of the Quranic concept of war. To conduct a thorough and comprehensive research, our approach must be integrated and co-ordinated. We must relate the Quranic revelations on war with their interpretation and application by the Holy Prophet during his war against the Pagans. That 'beautiful model of conduct' must be identified and followed in the understanding of the Quranic philosophy of war and in the planning, conduct and control of wars as well.

Equally important it is for us to understand the timings, method and sequence of the revelation of the Quranic military thought. The divine philosophy on war was not revealed soon after the advent

7. Baqara : 16

8. Ahzab : 45-46

9. Ahzab . 21

of Islam. It was sent about twelve years later, at a time when nearly two-third of the Quranic Suras had already been revealed. In marked contrast with the man-made theories and philosophies, the divine concept of war was also not 'written' as a single coherent document, nor administered in one concentrated package or dose; it was, in fact, revealed gradually and progressively. The initial instructions, revealed before the commencement of actual fighting, were brief and sketchy. They dwelt on the fundamental causes of war and spelt out its central theme and object. Also specified in these commands were the controls imposed on the extent, method and techniques of fighting. Most of the subsequent instructions were revealed in the form of a divine critique on a previous military campaign. These covered, in addition to the specific issues involved in the campaign, the Quranic concept of strategy and its principles for the conduct of wars. They also amplified the earlier instructions pertaining to the causes, object, nature, characteristics, dimensions and ethics of war. Together with their application by the Holy Prophet, these divine revelations give a complete and comprehensive coverage to the Quranic concept of war.

Historical Perspective

In 610 AD, when the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) voiced his Divinely-ordained Mission in Arabia, the four major global Powers were the Eastern Roman Empire, the Persian Empire, China and India. The Eastern Roman Empire stretched over Asia Minor, Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine, Egypt, North Africa, Crene and Carthage. The Persian Empire controlled the regions of Iraq, Mesopotamia, Modern Persia, Bactria and portions of Central Asia extending up to the confines of India and Tartary. Both these Empires had common, though undemarcated, boundaries with Arabia in the south that generally ran through the Syro-Mesopotamian desert. Seldom defined, the normal frontiers between the Byzantines and the Persians passed along a line running from the Eastern end of the Black Sea southwards to the Euphrates at a point north-east of Palmyra, thus including the regions of Caucasus, Armenia and Lower Euphrates in the Persian Empire. The political power of China extended from the Persian Gulf to the Pacific while India was flourishing under the rule of Harsha Vadhana.

For centuries before the birth of Islam, the Persians and the Romans had been in a state of war with each other. As early as 480 BC, Xerxes had invaded Greece both by land and sea, and was defeated. From 470 to 387 BC, there remained constant commutation between war and peace between the Hellenic and the Persian world. In 387 BC, according to the Peace of Antalcidas, Persia had virtually become the Suzerain power of Greece. In 330 BC, however, Alexander rose to conquer Persia and spread

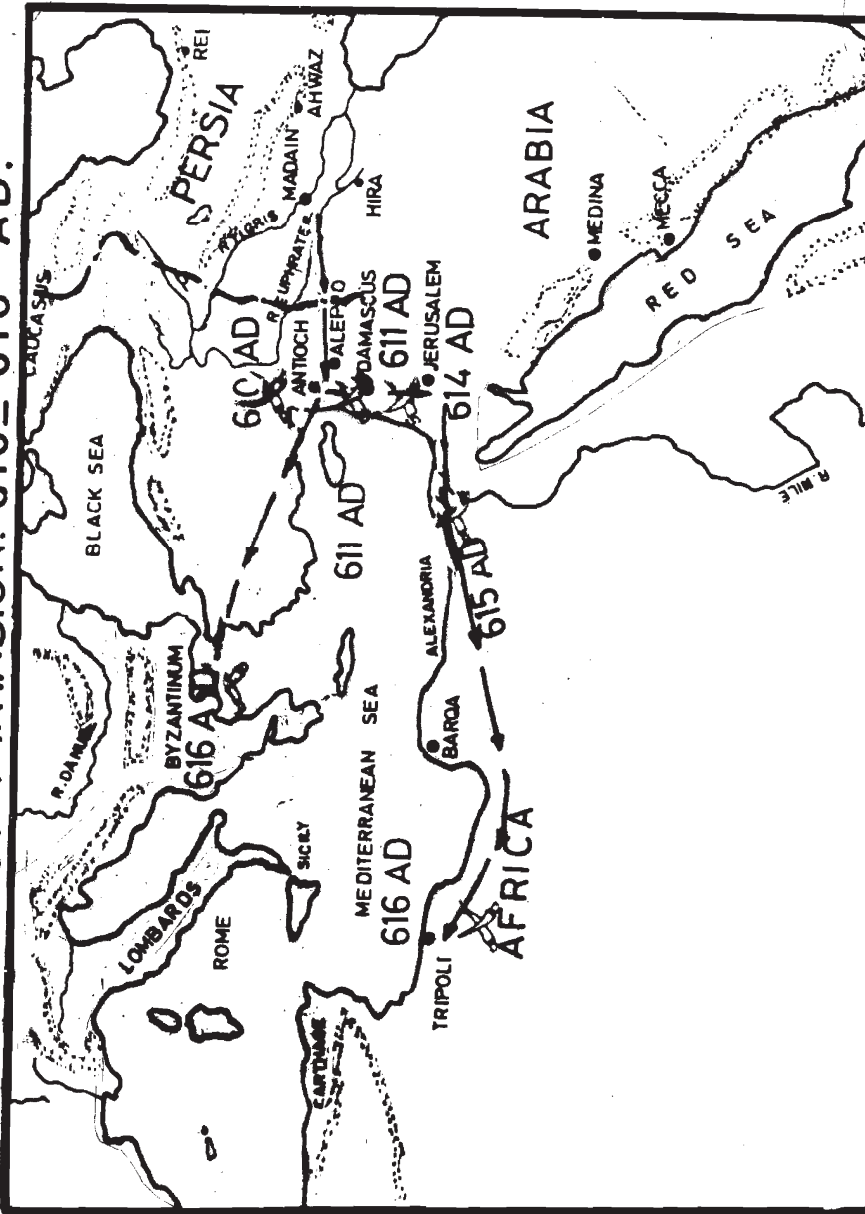
the Hellenic influence from the Atlantic to Central Asia. But, led by Parthia, the Persians later revolted against Hellenism and installed the Dynasty of Arsacids who won back Persia proper, and extended their influence up to the Black Sea and Palmyra. In 225 AD, the Sassanids overthrew the Arsacids but the fury of war between the two Empires went on unabated. In 330 AD, with the transfer of the Roman capital to Constantinople, the Persio—Roman wars became even more intense and frequent.

In the middle of the 6th century, when Justinian and Anaushirwan, contemporary rulers for 34 years, reigned over the Romans and the Persians respectively, the conflict took yet another violent form. In 540 AD, the Persians took the initiative, invaded Syria and captured Antioch but their advance further was checked by Belisarius, an able Roman General. Anaushirwan died in 579 AD and was succeeded by his unworthy son Harmuz who was deposed and killed in 590 AD. His son Khusrau (Chosroes II) was installed on the Persian throne and ruled until 628 AD. It was to him that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) had addressed a letter inviting him to Islam.

On the Roman front, Phocas, a simple centurion, executed the Roman Emperor Maurice in 602 AD and seized the throne until deposed by Herculius, the son of the governor of Africa, in 610 AD. Herculius, known as Harqal in the Islamic History, ruled the Eastern Roman Empire till 642 AD. It was during his reign that the Muslims conquered Syria and Egypt from the Romans.

The conflict between Herculius and Chosroes II (610—628 AD) was of a deep political and spiritual significance; and is referred to in the Quranic chapter called 'Rum'. During the first half of this period, the scales of war weighed distinctly in favour of the Persians. By 611 AD, they had conquered the chief Syrian cities of Aleppo, Antioch, and Damascus. Between 614-615 AD, Jerusalem also fell to the Persian arms. A year later,

THE PERSIAN INVASION: 610 - 616 AD.



the Persians had conquered Egypt and extended their influence up to Tripoli. About the same time, they had also ravaged Asia Minor and reached the gates of Constantinople.

The Idolatrous Arabia was delighted at the victories of the Heathen Persia over the Christian Rome. So were the Jews of Syria who had been living under the perpetual tyranny and oppression of the Christians. But, while the Persians, the Pagans and the Jews were rejoicing in these victories, the Holy Quran had altogether different plans to foretell. "The Roman Empire", declared the Book, "has been defeated—in a land close by; but they, (even) after (this) defeat of theirs, will soon be victorious,—within a few years. With Allah is the Decision, in the Past and in the Future: on that Day shall the Believers rejoice."¹ These revelations gave the much-needed strength and assurance to the Muslims but had little effect upon the Pagans who made them the subject of their mockery and criticism.

During the Persio-Roman wars, the Peninsula of Arabia proper was never conquered by either Power but the outlying regions were annexed by both at various times. Arabia, however, was subjected to the impact of cultural influences from both the Powers. Similarly, there existed strong cultural and political ties between Arabia and Abyssinia, a kingdom across the Red Sea. Yemen was under the influence of Persia while the Romans, under Justinian, had forged an alliance with Abyssinia. The Persians and the Abyssinians were thus at war with each other, and the Yemen coast of Arabia, easily accessible to Persia by sea, was mostly exploited as the theatre of their operations.

In 570 AD, the year of the birth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) Abraha, the Abyssinian governor in Yemen, mounted an expedition aimed at destroying the Ka'aba in Mecca but was decisively defeated and destroyed. A reference to this expedition

1. Rum: 2-4

by 'Ashabil Fil' (Companions of the Elephant) has been made in the Holy Quran. "Seest thou not," the Book says, "how thy Lord dealt with the Companions of the Elephant? Did He not make their treacherous plans go astray? And He sent against them Flights of Birds, striking them with stones of baked clay. Then did He make them like an empty field of stalks and straw, (of which the corn) has been eaten up."²

Meanwhile, the tiny Muslim community in Mecca was the object of the Koraish tyranny and oppression since the proclamation of Islam. They were continuously subjected to the most inhuman torture, repression and persecution. They were ridiculed, brow-beaten and assaulted; those within the power of the enemy were chained and thrown into prisons; others were subjected to prolonged economic and social tribulations. The enemy repression reached its zenith when the Koraish denied the Muslims access to the Sacred Mosque to fulfil their religious obligations. This sacrilegious act amounted to an open declaration of war upon Islam. It eventually compelled the Muslims to migrate to Medina, twelve years later, in 622 AD.

The Muslim migration to Medina brought in its wake events and decisions of far-reaching significance and consequence for them. While in Mecca, they had neither been proclaimed an Ummah nor were they granted the permission to take recourse to war. In Medina, a divine revelation proclaimed them an 'Ummah' and granted them the permission to take up arms against their oppressors. The permission was soon afterwards converted into a divine command making war a religious obligation for the Faithful.

The mission assigned to the New State emphasised its moderation, balance, practicality and universality. "Thus have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced," declared the Book,

2. Fil: 1-5

3. Baqara: 143

“that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Apostle a witness over yourselves.”³ In a subsequent revelation, the Holy Quran ruled, “Ye are the best of Peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah.”⁴ These proclamations laid the foundations of the political, social, economic and military philosophies of the New State, and formed the basis of its policy and strategy. They also set in train a chain of divine revelations pertaining to state policy and its socio-economic structure.

Briefly, the newly established State was directed to follow a path of justice, righteousness and moderation in all its internal and external dealings. It was commanded to strike a balance between the extreme formalism of the Mosaic Law and the pronounced ‘other worldliness’ of Christianity. It was also to remain vigilant and ready to act as an arbiter or a dispenser of justice amongst the rival systems of the world. In short, as interpreted by Allama Abdullah Yousaf Ali, it was to live not for itself, but for mankind.

Concurrent with these declarations, the New State was endowed with a Qibla in Mecca replacing the previously declared one in Jerusalem. The new Qibla was not only meant to fix the direction in which the Muslims were to turn in prayers; it was also to act as a hall-mark of their distinctive identity and a symbol of their international unity. Said Almighty Lord, “We see the turning of thy face (for guidance) to the heavens: now shall We turn thee to a Qibla that shall please thee. Turn then thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque. Wherever ye are, turn your faces in that direction.From whencesoever thou startest forth, turn thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque;.....among wheresoever ye are, turn your face thither: that there be no ground of dispute against you among the people, except those of them that are bent upon wickedness.”⁵

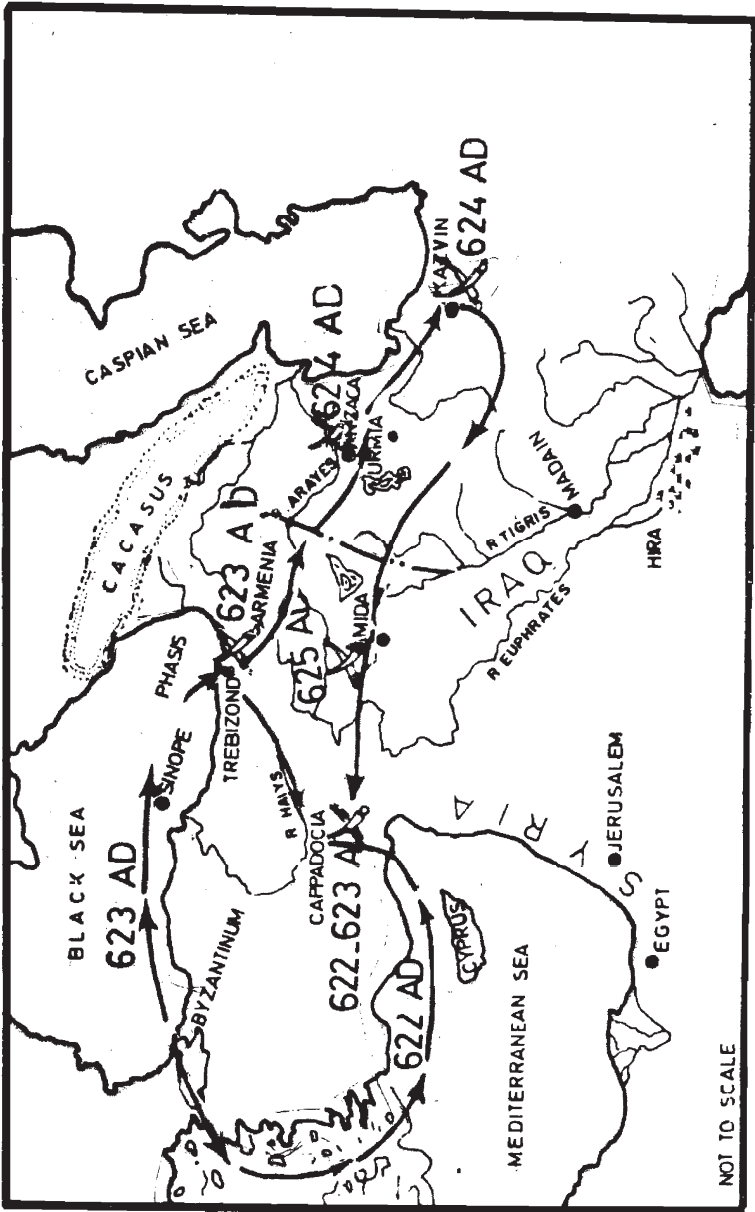
4. Al-i-Imran: 110

5. Baqara: 144, 149-150

From its very inception, the microscopic city-state of Medina was threatened by multiple adversaries. The immediate threat emanated from the Jewish community of Medina that had entrenched itself in the city for the past 500 years or so. The Jews had also a strong and prosperous existence in North Arabia at Ailya, Maqna, Tabuk, Tema, Wadi-al-Qarra, Fidak and Khyber. There were then the hostile Pagan tribes living around Medina that shared the religious beliefs of the Koraish and had been having prolonged political and social intercourse with them. The main threat to the existence of the State, however, came from Mecca, four hundred miles away, wherein lay the gravitational centre of the war between the Muslims and the Pagan Arabia. Yet another adversary, even more dangerous, that was to jump into the arena soon afterwards, comprised the Hypocrites. They professed outward loyalties to Islam but were inwardly busy in cutting at its roots.

On the Persio—Roman front, the divine prophecy regarding the defeat of the Persians began to materialize in 622 AD, the year of the Hijra, and was to consummate in 628 AD. Having assumed control of the Byzantine Empire, Heraclius launched a massive and brilliant counter-offensive against the Persians. Passing through the Dardanelles, he crossed into Armenia in 623 AD, and conquered Kazwin. The following year, he conquered Cilicia and simultaneously repulsed an attack by the Avars against Constantinople. In 627 AD, he defeated the Persians in detail at the battle of Nineveh, forcing their monarch to evacuate Chalcedon, Egypt and Syria. In 628 AD, Chosroes Parvez was assassinated and, according to a treaty signed between the two Empires, the boundaries of 602 AD were restored. The True Cross was handed back to the Byzantines and the divine prophecy stood fulfilled. A year later, in 629 AD, the victorious Roman armies, returning from Persia, were to measure swords against the Muslims for the first time in the battle-field of Muta. Two years later, they were to concentrate a huge force at Tabuk and pose a direct threat to the security of Muslim Arabia.

THE ROMAN COUNTER-OFFENSIVE : 622 - 628 AD



NOT TO SCALE

After the demise of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), the Muslims were compelled by circumstances to fight a simultaneous war against the Romans and the Persians. Under the rising sun of Islam, the Persian Empire disappeared from the map of the world by 680 AD. By about that time, the Muslims had conquered Syria, Egypt, Anatolia, Cyranica, Tripolatania and Armenia from the Romans as well.

The Causes of War

Eversince Cain, prompted by feelings of jealousy and hatred, killed his younger brother Abel, human beings have been at war with one-another for a variety of reasons. Research scholars have conducted several studies to identify the causes of these wars. In his scholarly works, 'The Mathematical Psychology of War' and 'Statistics of Deadly Quarrels', Lewis. F. Richardson attributed the eruption of wars to a deep-seated disease of the human mind. He further opined that a common cure for war was unfortunately war itself. According to him, severe and intense wars did confer immunity on those who experienced them but, as the next generation appeared, the immunity faded and war was entered upon with renewed enthusiasm. Adam Smith and Thomas Hobbes also concluded that wars were integral to human nature. A recent historiographer of the eminence of Toynbee observed that the human history followed a cycle of war and peace which, on an average, completed its full rotation in a little over one hundred years. In his view, the European history completed a full cycle between the period 1815—1914.

Lenin asserted that wars occurred because of the stresses and strains of the monopolistic capitalism. According to Bernard Brodie, the causes of war were traceable to economic, political and psychological factors. Wars have also been waged for the sake of expansion, succession, independence, revolution and liberation. Germany ignited the Second World War to attain her geo-political designs of a German Lebensraum; the Japanese followed suit to

establish the Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere. In his book, 'The Causes of War', Geoffrey Blainey concentrated on the forces that contribute towards the occurrence of wars. His conclusions ranged from nationalism, ideology and the eccentricities of the decision-makers to the war-potential of nations, their economy, and internal cohesion and unity.

In his monumental work, 'A Study of War', Quincy Wright seems to suggest that war is a social disease that should be dissected in all its manifestation to find a cure. Defining war as 'a legal condition that equally permits two or more hostile groups to carry on a struggle by armed conflict', he concludes that wars occurred because of the existence of contradictions between certain concepts and their actual realization. He groups the causes of war into two categories: literary or philosophical and actual. The 'literary' causes were a matter of philosophical or intellectual opinion while the 'actual' causes were those derived from the case studies of specific wars.

Quincy Wright sub-divided the literary causes of war into scientific, historical and practical. In his view, the scientific causes lay in immaturities in social knowledge and control. The historical causes covered issues like the domestic problems, aggressive foreign policies, unresolved disputes, new developments in military doctrine, technique and armament, dynastic claims and historic rivalries. The practical causes originated from the complexities of human nature: its ambitions, aspirations, animosities and irrationalities. According to this school of thought, wars were caused to exist and to survive; to accumulate wealth, power and social solidarity; and to find relief and relaxation from boredom and frustration.

Of special interest to us are Quincy's deductions about the causes of wars derived by him from specific case studies. This is so because, in addition to the Hundred Years War, the Thirty Years War, the Napoleonic Wars and the First World War, his case studies also include the early Muslim wars and the Crusades.

Analysing the causes of the early Muslim wars, Quincy attributes them to the harassment and pressure to which Arabia was subjected by her neighbours, the release of surplus energy, economic difficulties, over-population, the need to preserve internal unity, the traditional war-mindedness of the Arabs, and the doctrine of Jihad. He looks upon the Crusades as the natural outcome of the renewed enthusiasm of Christianity and its recently developed ideology of just wars, political ambition, and economic difficulties.

The current theory on the causes of war is, that, wars might be caused when vital but incompatible national interests are at stake. "In a sovereign-state system," says Frederick. H. Hartmann, "it can hardly be over-emphasised that war and peace depend upon the decision of each and every state. War is potential in such a system. What converts potential into strife is an incompatibility between the vital interests of two or more states." According to Hartmann, any cause is a significant cause if a state thinks it to be so, and wars occur simply because one sovereign nation decides to invade the other.

In the variety of causes of the war listed so far, a few trends are noticeable. Firstly, these causes suffer from lack of uniformity; different wars have different causes. Secondly, the causes of war change with the changes and developments in the human society; the tribal society had different causes of war than those prevalent in the present-day international system. Thirdly, the causes of war cover a wide spectrum, ranging from boredom and frustration to the realization of vital national interests. Fourthly, there is no internationally acceptable law, tribunal or objective criterion to determine the justness or otherwise of a cause of war. Each nation has its own values and standards for the formulation of its national interests and, consequently, its own causes of war. What can provoke one nation to go to war might not, in the words of Hartmann, 'ignite even a spark in the other!'

When the Holy Quran commanded the Muslims to go to

war with their adversaries, it dwelt at length at the causes that necessitated that decision. To understand these causes, we shall, first of all, make an attempt to follow the basic Quranic law about the sacredness and preservation of human life. It would be recalled that when Islam appeared on the scene of the world, human life held little value. In Arabia, Rome, Persia, and in other parts of the world, human beings were killed, burnt or buried alive, and slaughtered like animals or tortured to death for the sake of fun, sport, pleasure, custom, tradition and superstition. Such merciless killings were resorted to without any fear of accountability before law. Islam rose to denounce these inhuman practices, declared human life sacred, and issued strict commands for its respect, preservation and protection. It prohibited the taking of human life except for reasons of law and justice; and made all unlawful deaths accountable and punishable both in this world and in the Hereinafter. In the perspective of the Holy Quran, such an accountability ensured the preservation of human life and was in the larger interest of the human race itself.

“We ordained for the Children of Israel,” said the Holy Book, “that if anyone slew a person—unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land—it would be as if he slew the whole people. And if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.”¹ According to these verses, the taking of human life unlawfully was as sinful as the saving of a life was pious and noble. Elucidating the point further, the Book addressed the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), “Say, ‘come, I will rehearse what Allah hath (really) prohibited you from; join not anything as equal with Him..... Take not life, which Allah hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law. Thus doth He command you, that ye may learn wisdom.”² At yet another occasion, the Holy Quran said, “Those who invoke not, with Allah, any other god, nor slay such life as Allah has made

1. Maida : 35

2. Anam : 151

sacred, except for just cause, nor commit fornication;—and any that does this (not only) meets punishment, (but) the Penalty on the Day of Judgement will be doubled to him, and he will dwell therein in ignominy.”³

As in the case of individuals, so in inter-state relationship, war could only be waged for the sake of justice, truth, law and preservation of human society. The central theme behind the causes of wars, as spelt out by the Holy Quran, was the cause of Allah. This cause manifested itself in different shapes and forms at different stages in the history of Islam. In the pursuit of this cause, the Muslims were first granted the *permission* to fight but were later *commanded* to fight in the Way of God as a matter of religious obligation and duty.

The first Quranic revelation on the subject that granted the Muslims the permission to fight, read, “To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight) because they are wronged;—and verily, Allah is most Powerful for their aid. (They are) those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right,—(for no cause) except that they say, ‘Our Lord is Allah.’”⁴ Deliberating on the rationale behind the grant of the permission, the Book ruled, “Did not Allah check one set of people by means of another, there would surely have been pulled down monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques in which the name of Allah is commemorated in abundant measure.”⁵ At another occasion, the Holy Quran said, “Every time they kindle the fire of war, Allah doth extinguish it; but they (ever) strive to do mischief on earth. And Allah loveth not those who do mischief.”⁶ What expectations did Almighty Allah place on that ‘set of people’ with whose help He planned to check the other? “(They are) those,” the Book claimed, “who, if We establish them in the land, establish regular prayer and give regular charity, enjoin the

right and forbid wrong.”⁷

A few months after the grant of the permission to fight in self-defence, came the divine command making war a religious compulsion and obligation. “Fight in the cause of Allah,” it said, “those who fight you but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors.”⁸ This revelation introduced new elements to the permissible causes of war. Fighting was to be in the cause of Allah. It was to be undertaken only against those who fought the Muslims first. During the conduct of war, the limits specified by God were not to be transgressed; those who did so were to incur divine displeasure. Elucidating these points, the Book added, “And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter. But fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there: but if they fight you, slay them. Such is the reward of those who suppress Faith.”⁹

What did the Holy Quran mean and imply by characterising tumult and oppression as ‘worse than slaughter’? This condemnation referred, more specifically, to the Koraish denial of the right of worship to the Muslims in the Sacred Mosque, a denial that was tantamount to the declaration of an open war upon Islam. The central idea in the divine approach to this issue was that the Pagans had no justification to stop the Muslims from performing their religious obligations at the Sacred Mosque while the latter did not interfere with the rites and rituals of the former. “But what plea have they,” ruled the Book at a subsequent occasion, “that Allah should not punish them, when they keep out (men) from the Sacred Mosque—and they are not its guardians? No men can be its guardians except the righteous; but most of them do not understand.”¹⁰ Defining tumult and oppression more directly and

7. Hajj : 41

9. Baqara : 191

8. Baqara : 190

10. Anfal : 34

pointedly, the Holy Quran decreed, "They ask thee concerning fighting in the Prohibited Month, say, 'Fighting therein is a grave (offence). But graver is it in the sight of Allah to prevent access to the path of Allah, to deny Him, to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque, and drive out its members. Tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter.'" ¹¹

The Book emphasised the need for fighting in the Cause of Allah at several occasions and in various manners and forms. "Then fight in the cause of Allah," it said, "and know that Allah heareth and knoweth all things."¹² Distinguishing the Faithful from the Unbelievers, the Holy Quran observed, "Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who reject Faith fight in the cause of Evil, so fight ye against the friends of Satan: feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan."¹³ "Then fight in Allah's cause," the Book emphasised, "thou art held responsible only for thyself—and rouse the Believers. It may be that Allah will restrain the fury of the Unbelievers: for Allah is the strongest in might and in punishment."¹⁴ Similarly, it ruled, "O ye who believe! if ye will aid (the cause of) Allah, He will aid you, and plant your feet firmly."¹⁵

The successful migration of the Muslims from Mecca to Medina had given a rude shock to the hopes of the Koraish to be able to destroy Islam. Consequently, they switched their tyranny and oppression over to the recently converted Muslims living in scattered dwellings in the desert. "And why should ye not fight in the cause of Allah," the Holy Quran asked the Muslims, "and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated (and oppressed)?—men, women, and children, whose cry is, 'Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from Thee one who will protect; and raise for us from Thee one who will help.'" ¹⁶ After Hodaibiyya, a ten-year treaty of peace had been

11. Baqara : 217 13. Nisaa : 76 15. Muhammad : 7
12. Baqara : 244 14. Nisaa : 84 16. Nisaa : 75

signed between the Muslims and the Meccans. But, the Kor-aish violated their obligations under the treaty and hatched underhand plots to discredit the Holy Prophet and to have him expelled from Medina as well. "Will ye not fight people," the Book inquired of the Muslims, "who violated their oaths, plotted to expel the Apostle, and took the aggressive by being the first (to assault) you? Do ye fear them? Nay, it is Allah Whom ye should more justly fear, if ye believe."¹⁷

It follows, therefore, that the principal cause of war made permissible by the Book was the Cause of God. From the human point of view, it was a call for the deliverance of the weak, the ill-treated, and the persecuted from the forces of tyranny and oppression. It was the cause of the humanity in general and not that of the Muslim community in particular. Saving the places of worship, irrespective of religious discrimination, and protecting mankind from mischief and bloodshed were causes with a truly universal and humanitarian significance and application. There was no semblance of any kind of adventurism, militarism, fanaticism, national interests, personal motives and economic compulsion in the whole affair. The Book also furnished mankind with an objective criterion of universal validity and application to assess the justness of their causes of war. War was made permissible only to fight the forces of tyranny and oppression.

Interpreting the Quranic causes of war for their application to the present-day international system, Dr. Hamid Ullah, in his scholarly work, 'The Muslim Conduct of State', identified a set of circumstances under which an Islamic State could initiate a war with her adversaries. In his opinion, war could be entered upon if the enemy physically invaded the Muslim territory or behaved in an unbearable and provocative manner short of actual invasion. War could also be waged for punitive, retaliatory and preventive

17. Tauba : 13

purposes. Permissible also would it be to resume a war stopped temporarily for reasons short of a '*modus vivandi*' or durable peace. A Muslim state could also enter into armed hostilities in sympathy with their brethren living in another state but only after scrutinizing each case on its own merit and not as a matter of general rule.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Object of War

When Clausewitz, the founder-father of modern military thought, defined war as a 'continuation of policy by other means', he did, in fact, throw a challenge to the students of Political Science and International Relations to develop a theory around 'policy'. Clausewitz thus put the cart before the horse and forced the policy-makers to conduct deeper research into the science of politics. It was not 'policy' that took the initiative to define the meaning, sphere, limits and extents of 'war'. On the contrary, 'war' forced 'policy' to define and determine its own parameters. It took the human mind hundreds of years to establish, if at all, the relationship between national aims and objectives, national interests, national policy and war; and even longer to realise that war was subservient to policy. Nonetheless, the political scientists did rise to the occasion to theorise; they opined that, in brief, policy was the pursuit of national interests and that war became an instrument of policy when vital but incompatible national interests were at stake. What they failed to establish, however, was concerning the rationale behind the determination of national interests.

"National interests," concedes Bernard Brodie, "are not fixed by nature nor are identifiable by any generally acceptable standard of objective criteria. They are, instead, the product of fallible human judgement on matters on which agreement within the nation is usually less than universal." Nor is the formulation of national interests, as is well-known to us today, necessarily or essentially governed by the considerations of peace. That being so, the logical outcome of the concept of national interests in the

international system of today is tension and war, and not peace, harmony, justice and understanding. Indeed, national interests set in train a vicious and never-ending cycle, the common denominator of which is 'war', not 'peace'.

Opposed to the philosophy of national interests, we have, on record at least, a parallel school of thought that advocates that war must result in a durable and lasting peace. Theorists belonging to this school are idealists and have no methodology to offer to implement their thesis. "The object of war," observes Liddell Hart, "is a better state of peace even if from your point of view." In propounding this theory, Liddell Hart appears to have overlooked the simple rule that peace is essentially a two-sided affair. It is unthinkable that there would be peace without some kind of understanding, adjustment or accommodation amongst all the contending parties. Indeed, the imposition of a one-sided peace is just another celebrated procedure for the realisation of national self-interests with similar implications and consequences. Instead of bringing peace and security to mankind, the one-sided peace imposed upon Germany after the First World War resulted in greater bloodshed and misery, barely twenty years later.

The Yalta Conference that concluded the Second World War and formulated the Allied post-war strategy also came under heavy criticism for its inadequacy and short-sightedness. Like several other students of politics and war, General Fuller was also its vehement critic. His contention was that the Allied leaders had sacrificed the vital necessity of obtaining a durable peace at the altar of securing the unconditional surrender of Germany. The great military thinker had, however, no alternative of his own to suggest to them. As the Second World War came to a close, the Allied war effort also began to give way to their respective national interests. Each side, however, had its own interpretation of what constituted its enlightened national interests. Russia saw her interests in conquering the heart of Europe; the Allies, in the destruction of the German military might.

The considerations of peace did weigh heavy on the minds of the nations of Europe whenever they developed the means to destroy one-another. Such an atmosphere prevailed after the conclusion of each devastating war and after the atomic explosion of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But, it did not last long. The Europeans soon came to realise that there did exist means of protection against weapons that were once looked upon as total and absolute. Once that happened, their baser and destructive elements again overtook the saner ones. Similar motives underline the present age of 'detente and 'deterrence'. The considerations of peace come to human mind only when the choice is between 'suicide' and 'co-existence'. They are the bye-products of exigency, not of a recognised or consistent policy or philosophy. They failed to stand the test of the time in the past, nor are they resulting in durable global peace at present. Indeed, they have no worthwhile role to play even in the future.

History has numerous examples to offer in which the so-called peace treaties and defensive alliances were concluded only to perpetuate wars. "Any alliance," wrote Hitler, "whose purpose is not the intention to wage war is senseless and baseless." The germs of the Second World War were present in the Treaty of Versailles that was entered in to terminate the First World War. In 1938, Hitler demonstrated his own theory by signing a pact with Russia only to invade her after the conquest of France. The trouble spots of today, which could trigger off the next war, are the direct or indirect result of the Yalta Conference where the Allied leaders drew up the post-war map of the world. In more recent history, India entered into a treaty of 'friendship' with Russia under the umbrella of which she invaded and dismembered Pakistan. Many more examples can be cited to highlight this modern concept of 'diplomacy'.

The Holy Quran spelt out the object of the divine war against Baganism soon after it commanded the Muslims to take

recourse to fighting. "And fight them on," ruled the Book, "until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah."¹ Similar instructions were repeated after the termination of the battle of Badr, about a year later. "And fight them on," the Holy Quran directed on that occasion, "until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah altogether and everywhere."² These injunctions laid down the ultimate and absolute divine purpose behind this war which was 'to obtain conditions of peace, justice and faith.' As discussed in the previous chapter, the creation of such conditions demanded the eradication of tyranny and persecution. In turn, the eradication of tumult and oppression had several facets but, in essence, it meant the restoration of Muslim right of worship in the Sacred Mosque.

In the initial stages of the attainment of this object, the Holy Quran made liberal allowance and concessions to the Pagans to co-operate and contribute towards creating just and peaceful conditions. During this period, a number of checks and controls were imposed on the Believers to force them to seize the first opportunity to terminate the state of war. They were commanded to reciprocate every move made by their adversaries towards ceasing hostilities or entering into peace with them. "But if they cease," the Book directed them, "let there be no hostility except to those who practise oppression."³ It went further to emphasise, "But if they cease, verily Allah doth see all that they do. If they refuse, be sure that Allah is your protector—the Best to protect and the Best to help."⁴ The Holy Quran also decreed, "But if they cease, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."⁵ This implied that, in such a situation, there was to be no rancour against the enemy. The Muslims were to follow the 'oft-forgiving and most-

1. Baqara : 193

3. Baqara : 193

5. Baqara : 192

2. Anfal : 39

4. Anfal : 39-40

merciful' nature of their Lord and forgive their foes. Likewise, the Book commanded the Believers, "But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in Allah: for He is the One that heareth and knoweth (all things). Should they intend to deceive thee, verily Allah sufficeth thee."⁶

The divine emphasis on reciprocating the enemy inclination towards peace raised the question of entering into treaties and alliances with them for which a clear-cut philosophy and methodology had to be prescribed. On this issue, the Holy Quran gave the Muslims a theory based on justice, equality and reciprocity. It was a theory that applied equally to the covenant between Man and God, and the treaties and alliances between nations and states. About the covenant between Man and God, the Holy Quran recalled the divine pledge with the Israelis and said, "O Children of Israel! call to mind the (special) favour which I bestowed upon you, and fulfil your Covenant with Me as I fulfil My Covenant with you."⁷ The Book warned those who, having entered into a Covenant with their Lord, broke it and embarked upon disruption and mischief. Said the Holy Quran, "Those who break Allah's Covenant after it is ratified, and who sunder what Allah has ordered to be joined, and do mischief on earth: these cause losses (only) to themselves."⁸ As in the case of the Covenant between Man and God, so in inter-state agreements, the observance of a treaty was a two-way traffic. The Muslims could not go on fulfilling their part of the agreement if the Pagan kept violating theirs. They could honour their commitments only if the latter also did likewise. "As long as these stand true to you, stand ye true to them: for Allah doth love the righteous,"⁹ was the divine command to them in inter-state agreements.

What about those Pagans who violated the principle of reciprocity and broke their treaties? "They are those," the Book

6. Anfal: 61-62

7. Baqara: 40

8. Baqara: 27

9. Tauba: 7

said to the Muslims, "with whom thou didst make a covenant, but they break their covenant every time and they have not the fear (of Allah). If ye gain the mastery over them in war, disperse, with them, those who follow them, that they may remember." ¹⁰ Should, however, they suspect treachery from the Pagans, the Book permitted the Muslims to revoke their treaties with them. "If thou fearest treachery from any group," it said, "throw back (their covenant) to them (so as to be) on equal terms: for Allah loveth not the treacherous."¹¹ At a subsequent occasion, the Holy Quran ruled, "But if they violate their oaths after their covenant, and taunt you for your Faith,—fight ye the chiefs of Unfaith: for their oaths are nothing to them: that thus they may be restrained."¹²

The above policy remained in force for a period of nearly eight years, that is, from 622 to 629 AD. During this period, some Pagan tribes did remain true to their treaties with the Muslims and the latter reciprocated their loyalty both in letter and spirit. A majority of them, however, entered into agreement to seek a timely escape from a difficult situation and renounced it each time they could gain an advantage over the Muslims or cause them some damage. After such a prolonged tolerance, the Almighty Lord eventually decided to issue His commands to deal with this dissident and treacherous group. It was decided to bear no further responsibility to the treaties concluded with them and revoke them altogether. "A (declaration) of immunity," read a divine injunction revealed in the ninth year of Hijra, "from Allah and His Apostle, to those of the Pagans with whom ye have contracted mutual alliances."¹³ A formal announcement to this effect was made to the Arabian tribes gathered in Mecca for the pilgrimage, a few months later. "An announcement from Allah and His Apostle," it said, "to the people (assembled) on the day of the Great Pilgrimage,

10. Anfal: 56-57

12. Tauba: 12

11. Anfal: 58

13. Tauba: 1

that Allah and His Apostle dissolve (treaty) obligations with the Pagans."¹⁴

To those Pagans with whom the treaties were abrogated, a grace period of four months was allowed to re-shape their strategy. Said the Book, "Go ye, then, for four months, backwards and forwards, (as ye will), throughout the land, but know ye that ye cannot frustrate Allah (by your falsehood) but that Allah will cover with shame those who reject Him."¹⁵ Should they fail to avail themselves of this facility, the Holy Quran directed the Muslims to 'fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them.'¹⁶ The Almighty Lord, however, gave a chance to those who faithfully observed their pledge, to continue their alliance till the end of its term. "(But the treaties are) not dissolved," He ruled, "with those Pagans with whom ye have entered into alliance and who have not subsequently failed you in aught, nor aided anyone against you. So fulfil your engagements with them to the end of their term: for Allah loveth the righteous."¹⁷ These revelations commanded the Muslims to fulfil their treaty commitments for the contracted period but put them under no obligations to renew them.

Deliberating upon the rationale behind these decisions, the Book observed, "How can there be a league before Allah and His Apostle, with the Pagans, except those with whom ye made a treaty near the Sacred Mosque? As long as these stand true to you, stand ye true to them: for Allah doth love the righteous."¹⁸ According to these directions, the tribes of Banu Hamza and Banu Kinana, who swore their treaty near the Sacred Mosque and had faithfully observed it, were made an exception and given full benefit of their fidelity. "How (can there be such a league)," the Holy Quran dwelt further on this point, "seeing that if they get an advantage over you, they respect not in you the ties either of kinship

14. Tauba: 3

16. Tauba: 5

18. Tauba: 7

15. Tauba: 2

17. Tauba: 4

or of covenant? With (fair words from) their mouths they entice you, but their hearts are averse from you; and most of them are rebellious and wicked.”¹⁹ “The Signs of Allah have they sold for a miserable price,” the Book issued its verdict upon them, “and (many) have they hindered from His Way: evil indeed are the deeds they have done. In a Believer, they respect not the ties either of kinship or of covenant! It is they who have transgressed all bounds.”²⁰

The Book, however, kept the doors of compassion and forgiveness open for those who offered genuine repentance. Said the Holy Quran, “If, then, ye repent, it were best for you; but if ye turn away, know ye that ye cannot frustrate Allah. And proclaim a grievous penalty to those who reject Faith.”²¹ Similarly, it said, “If they repent, and establish regular prayers and practise regular charity, then open the way for them: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”²² At another occasion, the Book ruled, “But (even so), if they repent, establish regular prayers, and practise regular charity, they are your brethren in Faith: (thus) do We explain Signs in detail, for those who understand.”²³

It would be recalled that, for nearly eight years, the Pagans had been denying the Muslims the right of access and worship in the Sacred Mosque. After the Muslim conquest of Mecca, they kept visiting the Mosque and performing their rituals for nearly one year when a divine declaration bade them to stop this practice. “It is not for such as join gods with Allah, to visit or maintain the mosques of Allah,” the Book decreed, “while they witness against their own souls to infidelity. The works of such bear no fruit: in fire shall they dwell.”²⁴ “The mosques of Allah”, the Holy Quran continued, “shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allah and the Last Day, establish regular prayers,

19. Tauba: 8

21. Tauba: 3

23. Tauba: 11

20. Tauba: 9-10

22. Tauba: 5

24. Tauba: 17

and practise regular charity, and fear none (at all) except Allah. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance.”²⁵ “O ye who believe!,” the Almighty Lord told the Believers, “truly the Pagans are unclean; so let them not, after this year of theirs, approach the Sacred Mosque.”²⁶ Since the concourse in Mecca used to add to the profits of the trade and commerce of the people, the Book told the Muslims not to nourish any fears in their minds on that score. “And if ye fear poverty,” it said, “soon will Allah enrich you, if He wills, out of His bounty, for Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.”²⁷

In the final stage, all those living in Arabia who did not embrace Islam, including the Christians and the Jews, were given the option to choose between ‘war and submission’. As a token of their willing submission, they were called upon to pay the ‘Jizya’ to the Islamic State. The root meaning of ‘Jizya’ is ‘compensation’. In its technical sense, it was a poll-tax levied on those who did not embrace Islam but were willing to live under the protection of the Islamic State and enjoy personal liberty of conscience. As interpreted by Allama Abdullah Yousaf Ali, the Jizya was partly symbolic and partly a commutation for military service, being a poll-tax on able-bodied males only. But, as the amount was insignificant and the exemptions numerous, its symbolic character predominated. Ruled the Holy Quran, “Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Apostle, nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the ‘Jizya’ with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.”²⁸

The divine instructions on the object of war also covered the Muslim policy towards the ‘hidden’ enemies, that is, the hypocrites. At Ohad, the treachery played by them had brought the Muslims to

25. Tauba: 18

27. Tauba: 28

26. Tauba: 28

28. Tauha: 29

near disaster, and opinion was divided as how to deal with them. "Why should ye be divided into two parties about the Hypocrites?" came the diving ruling, "Allah hath upset them for their (evil) deeds. Would ye guide those whom Allah hath thrown out of the Way? For those whom Allah hath thrown out of the Way, never shalt thou find the Way."²⁹ The Holy Quran warned the Muslims about the intentions of the hypocrites, saying, "They but wish that ye should reject Faith, as they do, and thus be on the same footing (as they)."³⁰ As to the policy to be adopted towards them, the Book suggested two alternative courses of action. Firstly, it advised the Believers not to take friends from their ranks 'until they flee in the way of Allah (from what is forbidden),'³¹ that is, submit themselves to discipline and stop from infringing orders. Secondly, should they turn renegades, the Book directed the Faithful to 'seize them and slay them wherever ye find them.'³²

To these rules were made two exceptions for showing clemency. The first exception related to those hypocrites who joined a group between whom and the Muslims there was a treaty of peace. The second covered those who approached the Muslims 'with hearts restraining them from fighting you as well as fighting their own people.'³³

Opposed to these two classes to whom clemency might be shown was a third category that was considered the most dangerous and was dealt with severely. This class manipulated to retain the confidence of both the Muslims and their own people but was ready to betray either if it suited its purpose. In dealing with them, the Holy Quran directed, "If they withdraw not from you nor give you (guarantees) of peace besides restraining their hands, seize them and slay them wherever ye get them. In their case. We have provided you with a clear argument against them."³⁴

29. Nisaa: 88

31. Nisaa: 89

33. Nisaa: 90

30. Nisaa: 89

32. Nisaa: 89

34. Nisaa: 91

These instructions provide us the basis for adopting a suitable policy and strategy towards the hidden enemy of today that manifests itself in the form of anti-state elements, enemy agents, saboteurs, propagandists and partisans. Should they persist in their evil designs, they are to be treated at par with the known or the declared enemy.

To recapitulate, in the Quranic perspective, the object of war is to obtain conditions of peace, justice and faith. To do so, it is essential to destroy the forces of oppression and persecution. In the initial stages of its realisation, the Holy Quran made generous concessions to the adversaries to terminate the state of war and invited them to contribute in creating conditions of harmony and peace. The law of equality and reciprocity was observed in dealing with treaties and alliances. But, as the enemy went on rejecting one divine concession after another, it became necessary to adopt a harder line. A declaration of immunity from the treaty obligations was pronounced to those who played treachery with the Muslims but strict commands were issued to fulfil the treaty obligations with others who remained loyal and true to them. The doors of compassion, forgiveness and mercy were always kept open and those offering genuine repentance were forgiven. In the final stages, the Pagans were forbidden from performing their rituals in the Sacred Mosque and those who did not embrace Islam were called upon to either pay the 'Jizya' as a token of their willing submission or accept war. Those who paid the 'Jizya' were given freedom of religion and the protection of the Muslim State.

The Nature and Dimensions of War

In the traditional thinking, the nature and pattern of war is said to be in a constant state of change and evolution. At various stages of the development and evolution of the history and philosophy of war, military thinkers have propounded different theories about the nature, pattern, dimensions and characteristics of war. Until about the eighteenth century, students of war were familiar with its physical dimensions only. During the past two centuries, however, both the military theorists and its renowned practitioners had begun to identify the moral and psychological forces involved in the planning and conduct of war. As time passed, these factors continued assuming greater importance. Gradually, the psychological factor came to be considered as the decisive factor. The physical dimensions of war were relegated to a position of secondary importance; they were found meaningless without due moral and psychological backing.

In the European military history, Napoleon was amongst the pioneers to stress and demonstrate the ascendancy of the psychological factor in war over the physical, which Clausewitz later theorized. The crusade was kept up by Liddell Hart who considered it as the all-important and the most-decisive element of war. An ardent critic of Clausewitz in several other fields, he acknowledged the latter's contribution in introducing moral factors to warfare. "Clausewitz's greatest contribution to war," admitted Liddell Hart, "lay in emphasising the psychological factors. Raising his voice against the geometrical school of thought, then fashionable, he showed that the human spirit was infinitely more

important than operational lines and angles." Psychological warfare has since become a recognized, indeed specialised, branch of war.

Scores of other studies have also been conducted into the subject. In his book, 'The Art of War on Land', Colonel Burns identified a set of four strands which, in his opinion, combined together to win a war. Burn's strands, to which he did not attach any relative weightage, were the Commander, the Troops, Morale and Resources. The commander's strength was to be determined by his personality, knowledge and capacity for planning; that of the troops by their training and technical efficiency. Morale included everything that conferred upon the troops the will to win the war while Resources comprised the numbers, armaments, supplies and transport. Burns compared these strands with the fibres of a cord and ruled that the strength of the cord was to be determined by the total strength of all the fibres. An army might be relatively weak in one strand but could be strong in the aggregate. In the winning of wars, it was the total strength of the 'cord' that mattered and not that of the individual strand.

With evolution in the subjects of Science, Technology and International Relations, corresponding changes have come in the theories and concepts about the nature and dimensions of war. Concepts like the national wars, nation-at-arms, ideological wars, economic wars, limited wars, and total and general wars are the product of these developments. Not long back, warfare was looked upon as the exclusive province of the soldier. Today, it is regarded as a multi-disciplinary function that demands the application of all the elements of national power. Indeed, it is considered to be too serious a business to be left to the soldier alone.

The dimensions given to war by the Holy Quran take into account the divine purpose behind the creation of Man and guide him to his ultimate Destiny. In determining them, the Book has penetrated deep down to identify and unfold the 'real'

issues involved in the planning and conduct of wars. The fountain-head of these dimensions lies in the fact that the cause of war is the cause of Allah. To proceed from this base, the Book commands the Muslims to wage their war with the spirit of a religious duty and obligation. "Fighting is prescribed for you," declares the Book, "and ye dislike it but it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you and that ye love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knoweth, and ye know not."¹ This Quranic injunction adds new facets and depths to the concept of a total war. It makes a Muslim citizen answerable both to the State and to Allah in the fulfilment of this divine obligation. When prescribed, it also looks upon war as something virtuous for the Faithful and beneficial for the rest of the humanity. The biggest virtue of this war lies in its cause and object. A war fought to end repression and to create conditions of justice and peace cannot but be noble and virtuous.

Upon the foundations furnished by this 'master dimension of war, the Book proceeded to raise a grand edifice. To those who fought for the Cause of Allah, the Holy Quran made promises of generous heavenly assistance. "O ye who believe!," it said, "if ye will aid (the cause of) Allah, He will aid you, and plant your feet firmly."² It left them in no doubt about the impact and import of the divine aid. "If Allah helps you, none can overcome you," the Book claimed, "if He forsakes you, who is there, after that, that can help you? In Allah, then, let the Believers put their trust."³ On the other hand, the Book emphasised that none would come to the help and assistance of those who rejected the Faith. "If the Unbelievers should fight you," it ruled, "they would certainly turn their backs; then would they find neither protector nor helper. (Such has been) the practice (approved) of Allah already in the past: no change wilt thou find in the practice (approved)

1. *Baqara*: 216

3. *Al-i-Imran*: 160

2. *Mohammad*: 7

of Allah.”⁴

With these divine promises were attached certain standards and pre-conditions necessary for the Muslims to qualify themselves for the heavenly assistance. “O ye who believe!”, said Almighty Allah, “Shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous penalty?—that ye believe in Allah and His Apostle, and that ye strive (your utmost) in the Cause of Allah, with your property and your persons. That will be best for you, if ye but knew!”⁵ In that case, the Book held out a promise to them, saying, “He will forgive you your sins, and admit you to Garden beneath which rivers flow, and to beautiful mansions in Gardens of Eternity: that is indeed the supreme achievement.”⁶ It went on to add, “And another (favour will He bestow), which ye do love,—help from Allah and a speedy victory: so give the Glad Tidings to the Believers.”⁷

The Holy Quran then goes on to spell out the traits and qualities of the people who deserve God's aid. It demands Man's total submission as the ‘price’ of heavenly help. Says the Book, addressing the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), “Say: Truly my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds.”⁸ Elaborating further, the Book rules that God's blessings are meant for those men of faith and devotion, who, when afflicted with calamity, say, “To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return.”⁹ “They are those,” the Book continues, “on whom (descend) blessings from Allah, and Mercy, and they are the ones that receive Guidance.”¹⁰ At a subsequent occasion, the Creator of the Universe enters into a bargain with the Faithful. “Allah hath purchased of the Believers,” read these beautiful verses, “their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the Garden of (Paradise):

4. Fath: 22-23 6. Saff: 12 8. Anam: 162 10. Baqara: 157
5. Saff: 10-11 7. Saff: 13 9. Baqara: 156

they fight in His Cause, and slay and are slain: a promise binding on Him in Truth, through the Law, the Gospel, and the Quran: and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain which ye have concluded: that is the achievement supreme."¹¹

The Book, however, made it clear to the Believers that heavenly assistance promised to them was not a matter of right or routine. They had to come up to the divine standards and qualifications to earn the divine aid. Should they fail to do so, they would not only forsake the divine help but would also run the risk of incurring Godly wrath. "O ye who believe!, " the Book observed, "What is the matter with you, then, when ye are asked to go forth in the Cause of Allah, ye cling heavily to the earth? Do ye prefer the life of this world to the Hereafter? But little is the comfort of this life, as compared with the Hereafter. Unless ye go forth, He will punish you with a grievous penalty, and put others in your place; but Him ye would not harm in the least. For Allah hath power over all things."¹² At another occasion, the Book warned those Believers who did not display the highest standards of devotion and sacrifice in their service for the Cause of Allah. "If it be," said the Book, "that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your mates, or your kindred; the wealth that ye have gained; the commerce in which ye fear a decline; or the dwellings in which ye delight—are dearer to you than Allah, or His Apostle, or the striving in His cause;—then wait until Allah brings about His Decision: and Allah guides not the rebellious."¹³ On the same subject, the Book ruled, "Or do ye think that ye shall enter the Garden (of Bliss) without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They encountered suffering and adversity, and were so shaken in spirit that even the Apostle and those of faith who were with him cried: when (will come) the help of Allah?"¹⁴

The divine verdict on the question of heavenly help to the Believers while fighting against their adversaries thus stands clear and undisputed. God has not reserved His bountiful blessings for any community of people as such. The Muslims would be making a grave mistake if they took His help for granted, without first qualifying themselves to obtain it. God does not change the condition of a people who do not first effect a change inside their own hearts and souls. He helps only those who help themselves; and bestows this honour only upon those who genuinely deserve it. Prior to Islam, the Israelis mistook themselves as God's chosen people and came to grief but their progeny have since learnt their lesson and are no longer repeating that mistake. Let us, therefore, be in no doubt that we are entitled to only that which we earn and strive for. We cannot harvest any more than what we grow and nourish. Should we fail to come up to the divine standards, we shall not only lose the heavenly help and assistance but might incur God's wrath instead. Talking of *Ohad*, the Holy Quran told the Muslims, "Allah's object also is to purge those that are true in Faith and to deprive of blessing those that resist Faith. Did ye think that ye would enter Heaven without Allah testing those of you who fought hard (in His Cause) and remained steadfast?"¹⁵

Fighting causes danger to life and property; it results in hunger, thirst, fatigue, injury, death, destruction and devastation. The Holy Quran acknowledged these horrors of war and dealt with them in a logical and scientific manner. In this regard, the Book gave mankind a distinctive philosophy of Life and Death, and Reward and Punishment. Said the Holy Quran, "How can ye reject the faith in Allah?—seeing that ye were without life, and He gave you life; then will He cause you to die, and will again bring you to life; and again to Him will ye return."¹⁶ According to these injunctions, death in this world, no doubt, inevitable, was

15. *Al-i-Imran*: 141-142

16. *Baqara*: 28

nevertheless not to be the end of life. Another life awaited us in the Hereafter, and our ultimate return was to our Lord. Against this perspective, the Book called upon the Faithful to fight in the Way of Allah with total devotion and never contemplate a flight from the battlefield for fear of death. "Running away", the Holy Quran told them, "will not profit you. If ye are running away from death or slaughter; and even if (ye do escape), no more than a brief (respite) will ye be allowed to enjoy."¹⁷ It also gave the ruling that the time of death was fixed; and that no one could extend it even by a moment. "O ye who believe!", the Book said, "Be not like the Unbelievers, who say of their brethren, when they are travelling through the earth or engaged in fighting, 'if they had stayed with us, they would not have died, or been slain'. This that Allah may make it a cause of sighs and regrets in their hearts. It is Allah that gives Life and Death, and Allah sees well all that ye do."¹⁸

Having spelt out the divine verdict on the inevitability of Death and on Life after Death, the Book gave its ruling on those who die fighting for the Cause of God. "And if ye are slain, or die, in the way of Allah," it said, "forgiveness and mercy from Allah are far better than all they could amass."¹⁹ "Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead," the Book continued, "Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the Presence of their Lord. They rejoice in the Bounty provided by Allah."²⁰ On other occasions also, the Book told us that such men as died during fighting for Allah's Cause were actually living 'though ye perceive (it) not.'²¹ To crown it, the Holy Quran assured the Faithful that even if they died or were slain, it was unto Allah that they would be brought together in the end.

What rewards did the Almighty Lord promise to those who

17. Ahzab: 16

20. Al-i-Imran: 169-170

18. Al-i-Imran: 156

21. Baqara: 154

19. Al-i-Imran: 157

obeyed His commands on war? "Those who believed and those who suffered exile and fought (and strove and struggled) in the Path of Allah," ruled the Book, "they have the hope of the Mercy of Allah; and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."²² The divine rule in this regard was that 'never will ye be dealt with unjustly in the very least.'²³ Reward for good deeds and punishment for evil deeds was to be the keynote of the divine approach to this issue. Promised Almighty Lord, "Allah suffereth not the reward of the Faithful to be lost (in the least)."²⁴ "Let those fight in the Cause of Allah," the Book said, "who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter, to him who fighteth in the cause of Allah,—whether he is slain or gets victory—soon shall We give him a reward of great (value)."²⁵ The Holy Quran also promised, "Those who leave their homes in the cause of Allah, and are then slain or die,—on them will Allah bestow verily a goodly Provision: truly Allah is He who bestows the best Provision."²⁶

The divine reward was to vary according to the performance of the Believers. Said the Book, "Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause of Allah with their goods and their persons. Allah hath granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons than to those who sit (at home)."²⁷ It went on to say, "Unto all (in Faith) hath Allah promised good: but those who strive and fight hath He distinguished above those who sit (at home) by a special reward,—ranks specially bestowed by Him, and Forgiveness and Mercy. For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."²⁸ On the other hand, the Book warned those who hated to strive and fight in the Cause of Allah; who rejoiced themselves in their inaction; and who wanted to save their skins from the hazards of the battle that 'the fire of Hell is fiercer in heat if only they could understand!'²⁹ "Let them laugh a little," the

22. Baqara: 218 24. Al-Imran: 171 26. Hajj: 58 28. Nisaa: 95-96

23. Nisaa: 77 25. Nisaa: 74 27. Nisaa: 95 29. Tauba: 81

Holy Quran ruled, "Much will they weep: a recompense for the (evil) that they do."³⁰ The Book then goes on to pass its judgement on them, saying, "If, then, Allah bring thee back to any of them, and they ask thy permission to come out (with thee), say, 'Never shall ye come out with me, nor fight an enemy with me: for ye preferred to sit inactive on the first occasion: then sit ye (now) with those who lag behind' Nor do thou ever pray for any of them that dies, nor stand at his grave: for they rejected Allah and His Apostle, and died in a state of perverse rebellion."³¹

To recapitulate, the fountain-head of the Quranic dimensions of war lies in the fact that war is waged for the cause of Allah, and with the object of imposing conditions of justice and peace. To those who fight for this noblest heavenly cause, the Book promises handsome heavenly assistance. The index of fighting for Allah's Cause is Man's total submission to His will. Those who fail to submit themselves fully and completely to the Will of God run the risk of incurring heavenly wrath. Nature has no particular or specific liking for any community of people as such; it helps only those who qualify themselves for it, and punishes the rest. Fighting involves risk to life and property that must be accepted willingly and cheerfully. Death in this world is inevitable; life in the Hereafter is certain; and the reward of those who fight for the cause of Allah is safe, splendid and sure. Our reward is in direct proportion to our performance. Those who die fighting for the cause of Allah never actually die.

For those who believed and practised them, the Quranic dimensions revolutionized warfare in its real sense. They conferred upon them a personality so strong and overbearing as to prove themselves equal to, indeed dominate, every contingency in war. They dwarfed the psychological and moral dimensions discovered by the human mind after taking so long and labyrinthine a

30. Tauba: 82

31. Tauba: 83-84

route. They conferred upon the Muslim armies a complete and total protection and immunity against all the psychological and moral attacks that the enemy could bring to bear upon them. In turn, they provided them with a firm and durable platform to launch effective psychological and moral attacks against their mortal foes. They enabled them to bear the pains of war willingly and resolutely. Knowledge and skills of war followed in the wake of such devoted and spirited men. Learnt and applied with devotion, they proved to be vastly more superior and effective than the 'hollow' expertise of the enemies. They helped them conquer the fear of death, and become immortal and invincible.

"Writers on strategy, and certainly its practitioners", says Bernard Brodie, "have almost always rejected from their conscious concern those characteristics of war that to ordinary folk are its most conspicuous ones. In the treatise on strategy, battle-fields rarely have the smell of death. Weapons produce firepower, but no searing din and uproar. Men in battle and on the march feel triumph, and sometimes panic, but rarely are described suffering pain, cold, sweat, exhaustion or utter misery." The Quranic philosophy of war provides answers to such questions that are bound to agitate the human mind. It recognises the physical and psychological strains of warfare, and provides an effective antidote to them. Given the element of faith and belief in its theories, it pays back exceedingly more than what little we give to it.

The Ethics of War

The Quranic philosophy of war is, for the better part, a philosophy of checks and restraints on the use of 'force' in interstate relations. The very Quranic command that directed the Muslims to go to war with the Pagans also bade them not to exceed limits. "Fight in the cause of Allah, those who fight you," it said, "but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors."¹ Divine controls on war were imposed at all stages of the revelation of the Quranic Message. For the first twelve years, the Muslims were called upon to put up with the atrocities, the Korai^{sh} perpetrated on them but hold back their hands from fighting. With the issuance of the divine command for fighting, were also specified the causes for which war could be entered upon. The Holy Quran also spelt out a clear and unmistakable object of war. The underlying theme behind the Quranic causes and object of war was the preservation and promotion of peace and justice. In the initial stages of the attainment of this object, liberal concessions were made to the enemy to terminate war and create conditions of peace. Against all the prevalent norms and practices, no one was allowed to take any life except for reasons of justice and law; those who did not obey this command were made accountable and punished. Finally, the doors of compassion, forgiveness and mercy were always kept open to those who offered genuine repentance.

1. Baqara: 190

According to an age-old tradition, fighting in Arabia was prohibited during the three sacred months of Ziqad, Zil Haj and Muharram, and the Holy Qur'an issued directions for the observance of this custom. "The prohibited month for the prohibited month," the Book said, "and so far all things prohibited,—there is the Law of Equality. If then anyone transgresses the prohibition against you, transgress ye likewise against him but fear Allah, and know that Allah is with those who restrain themselves."² The Book likewise commanded the Muslims to respect the Arab custom of observing truce at the Sacred Mosque, on a reciprocal basis. 'But fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there,'³ was the Quranic injunction in the matter. On both these issues, the Muslims, no doubt, permitted to follow the law of Equality and Reciprocity, were nevertheless counselled to show restraint. The Quranic injunction that 'Allah is with those who restrain themselves' speaks of the importance attached to tolerance and forbearance.

Not content with these restrictions alone, the Book imposed a total ban on the inhuman methods of warfare practised in Arabia and elsewhere, prior to Islam. Based on the instructions issued on the subject by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and by the Early Caliphs, the muslim jurists have conducted several studies to identify the acts forbidden to the Muslim armies during the fighting. According to Dr. Hamid Ullah, all cruel and torturous ways of killing the enemy are prohibited. The killing of women, minors, servants and slaves, who might accompany their masters in war but do not take part in the actual fighting, is also not allowed. The Muslim armies must also spare the blind, the monks, the hermits, the old, the physically deformed and the insane or the mentally deficient. Forbidden also is the decapitation of the prisoners of war; the mutilation of men and beasts; treachery and perfidy; devastation and destruction of

2. Baqara: 194

3. Baqara: 191

harvests; excesses and wickedness; and adultery and fornication with captive women. The killing of enemy hostages, and resorting to massacre to vanquish an enemy is prohibited. The killing of parents except in absolute self-defence; and the killing of those peasants, traders, merchants, contractors and the like who do not take part in actual fighting is also not allowed.

A clear and definite divine directive was issued about the prisoners of war. "Therefore, when ye meet the Unbelievers (in fight)," ruled the Book, "smite at their necks; at length, when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly (on them): thereafter (is the time for) either generosity or ransom."⁴ According to this directive, the Muslims were told that, firstly, their primary consideration in war was to subdue the enemy, and not to take prisoners. Secondly, prisoners could be taken only after the enemy had been thoroughly subdued. Thirdly, once taken, they must be treated humanely; the choice being only between 'generosity and ransom.' In the battle of Hunain, the Muslims had captured a large number of prisoners. All of them were repatriated on payment of ransom. The ransom for some of them, who were too poor to pay it, was paid personally by the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Revealed as early as the seventh century AD, the Quranic checks and controls on war reinforce its claim that war has but a limited and restricted purpose to perform in its overall policy and strategy. They also ensure that, once unleashed, the military instrument does not become uncontrollable. No other philosophy can match the Quranic instructions about the humanitarian problem involved in war. They stand guard on the Ideology against the irresponsible and malicious criticism levelled against it by its critics. The general pardon proclaimed by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) on his triumphal entry back to Mecca as the unquestioned

religious and temporal ruler of Arabia is a shining example of the characteristic Quranic restraint in matters pertaining to war. Viewed against the atrocities and bloodshed caused by the world's great conquerors, with which the pages of human history are still reeking, the Quranic concept of war is supreme both, in its humanitarian and moral contents.

A common charge levelled by the critics against Islam, is, that it has spread through the sword; a charge which most of its supporters vehemently refute. The truth is that the checks and controls imposed by the Holy Quran on the use of force have no parallel. In practice, there were but few isolated instances where the Muslims transgressed these limits but the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) disapproved of them. It must, however, be understood that the exercise of restraint in war is essentially a two-sided affair. It cannot happen that one side goes on exercising restraint while the other keeps on committing excesses. In such a situation, a time comes when the very injunction of preserving and promoting peace and justice demands the use of limited force. It would be sinful to withhold the use of force under those circumstances. Islam permits the use of the 'sword' for such a purpose. Rather than be apologetic about it, a Muslim should be proud of the fact that, when used, his sword is meant to subdue the forces of tyranny and repression, and to bring peace and justice to mankind. And, it is withheld the very moment these conditions are obtained.

What has been the attitude of other societies and civilizations towards this problem? Dating back to pre-Christian era, the recorded military history gives us adequate information about the attitudes of other nations and communities towards the humanitarian problems involved in war. During this period, wars have been fought among tribes, nations and countries. In these wars, the victors have often treated the vanquished as part of the spoils of war. As late as the middle ages, no moral code or ethics of war existed for dealing with the captives and the wounded. In Europe,

this problem drew a serious thought only in the eighteenth century, after the Napoleonic wars. Initially, some nations adopted isolated humanitarian practices but these measures were later legalized through customs and treaties between the period 1815—1914.

The modern ethics of war are embodied in the Geneva Convention. First convened in 1864, through the efforts of Jean Henry Dunant, a Swiss citizen from Geneva, the Geneva Convention enjoys wide international acceptance today. The three basic principles of the Convention are humanity, solidarity and universality. It provides for the rights of the sick, the wounded, the unarmed civilians and other humanitarian issues including the prisoners of war. Despite the Geneva Convention, however, nothing could prevent the Germans from launching a chemical attack against the Allies in the battle of Ypres in the First World War. In the closing years of the Second World War, the Allies subjected Germany to incessant aerial bombing, killing millions of innocent children and women and destroying non-military targets. The nuclear attack on Hiroshima and Nagasaki broke all the previous records of inhuman and merciless human massacre. More recently, India retained the Pakistani prisoners of war in her captivity for nearly three years.

In Islam, a war is fought for the cause of Allah. A Muslim's cause of war is just, noble, righteous and humanitarian. A victory in Islam is a victory for the cause of Islam. So noble and humanitarian a cause cannot be allowed to be attained through inhuman and undignified ways. Humanitarianism thus lies at the very heart of the Islamic approach to war.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Strategy for War

Before studying the Quranic concept of strategy, it is essential to carry out a selective analysis of its evolution so as to acquire an idea of the stages through which the human thought has passed on this subject. In an article pertaining to the evolution of strategic thought, Harry. L. Coles expresses the view that the history of strategy can be divided into two-time groups: the pre-1945 time-group during which strategy suffered from under think; and the post-1945 period in which it has been suffering from the opposite malady—the over-think. The climax of the pre-1945 strategic thought was the discovery that the decision should be sought in the psychological dimensions of war. With the advent of the nuclear bomb in the post-1945 period, the theory of strategy has, after passing through several evolutionary stages, eventually come to be dominated by 'deterrence'.

In early nineteenth century, Clausewitz defined strategy as 'the art of the employment of battle to gain the object of war,' a concept to which Moltke, Schlieffen, Foch and Ludendorff also religiously subscribed. The crux of their thesis was that, in war, all other considerations should be subordinated to the main consideration of fighting a decisive battle. A century later, Liddell Hart rose to denounce Clausewitz on two scores. His first objection was that Clausewitz's strategy intruded into the sphere of policy. The second note of discord was that it confined the means of strategy to the pure and exclusive utilization of battle.

Opposed to the 'blood-red wine of Clausewitzian growth'

Liddell Hart courted the idea of 'bloodless victories' and termed it as 'perfect strategy'. As examples of perfect strategy, he cited Caesar's Illerda campaign, Cromwell's Priston campaign, Napoleon's Ulm campaign, Moltke at Sedan in 1870, Allenby's Samaria campaign in 1918, and the German conquest of France in 1940. In Liddell Hart's language, strategy was 'the art of distributing and applying military means to gain the ends of policy'. The aim of strategy, he contended, was to produce a strategic situation so advantageous that 'it it does not of itself produce the decision, its continuation by battle is sure to achieve this'. Psychological dislocation of the enemy directed at producing a direct decision was thus the primary aim of Liddell Hart's strategy. "If this was not possible," he conceded, "then a physical or logistical dislocation must precede battle, to reduce fighting to the slenderest proportion."

It follows that dislocation, the central theme of Liddell Hart's strategy, could be produced either in the physical or logistical sphere, or in the psychological sphere. Developing his thesis further, Liddell Hart tells us that, in the physical field, dislocation could be caused by upsetting the enemy's dispositions, dislocating the distribution and organization of his forces, endangering his rear and cutting his lines of communication. In the psychological sphere, it was the natural outcome of the physical effects produced on the enemy.

Beaufre, the famed French strategist, agreed with Liddell Hart's theory of the psychological dislocation of the enemy but disagreed with his definition. In Beaufre's opinion, Liddell Hart's definition 'hardly differed from that of Clausewitz'. Beaufre looked upon strategy as 'the abstract interplay of forces which spring from the clash between two opposing wills'. "In this dialectic of wills," he claimed, "a decision is obtained when a certain psychological effect has been produced on the enemy." The guiding principle in the dialectic of opposing wills was 'to obtain the decision by creating, and then exploiting, a situation resulting in sufficient

moral disintegration of the enemy to cause him to accept the condition that was desired to be imposed upon him'. Lenin, the revolutionary, had earlier laid similar emphasis on the moral factor, though in a different context, by ruling that 'the soundest strategy in war was to postpone operations until the moral disintegration of the enemy rendered a mortal blow easy and possible'.

Admiral Eccles thought that a correct understanding of strategy was essential since it lay at the very heart of the military problem. He launched a crusade to find harmony and cohesion of concept rather than diversity of ideas and language available in the literature of strategy. He found this identity in the views of Liddell Hart (which we have already studied above) and Herbert Rosinski. Rosinski called strategy as 'the comprehensive direction of power', and went on to add that the application of strategy was not a mere direction but one that took into account possible counter-actions as well. It thus became a means of control, which, in Rosinski's opinion, was its real essence. To Rosinski's definition, Eccles himself proposed an addition. "Strategy," he ruled, "was the art of comprehensive direction of power to control situations and areas to attain objectives." It was essentially concerned with control for a given effect. Elaborating upon the nature of control, he observed, that strategy was concerned with what to control; the purpose, nature and degree of control; and the method or scheme of control. Like Beaufre, Eccles also recognized that force was only one of the means by which control could be established.

With the invention of the atomic weapons, there appeared, between 1945 and 1955, a class of strategists who looked upon the nuclear bomb as the 'absolute' weapon of war. Accordingly, they formulated the theory of the strategy of balance of terror, best described by the similitude of 'two scorpions in a bottle', a metaphor coined by J. Robert Oppenheimer. With further developments in nuclear bombs and greater knowledge of their effects came Dulles' theory of massive nuclear retaliation enunciated in 1954 and McNamara's flexible response. This was followed by

other schools of thought hovering round graduated deterrence, second strike capability and the oceanic system.

In 1959, Albert Wohlstetter denounced the theory of the 'balance of terror'. His thesis was that a deterrent force existed only if it was capable of inflicting reprisals. He laid down a set of six conditions for a second strike capability and came to conclude that the United States possessed none of them at that time. Dr. Henry Kissinger, in his famous book, 'Necessity for Choice' embraced the new gospel of limited wars and introduced the element of 'credibility' to 'deterrence'. "Deterrence," he wrote, "requires a combination of power, the will to use it, and the assessment of these by the potential aggressor." Since 1960, deterrence has dominated the realm of strategy in one form or the other; it has been variously described as active and passive; offensive and defensive; direct and indirect; relative and total or absolute; positive and negative; limited and general; counter-force and counter-city, and so on.

Let us now make an attempt to study the Quranic concept of strategy. The first step to this study is to understand the difference between total strategy, that is, Jihad, and military strategy. The term, Jihad, so often confused with military strategy, is, in fact, the near-equivalent of total or grand strategy or policy-in-execution. Jihad entails the comprehensive direction and application of 'power' while military strategy deals only with the preparation for and application of 'force'. Jihad is a continuous and never-ending struggle waged on all fronts including political, economic, social, psychological, domestic, moral and spiritual to attain the object of policy. It aims at attaining the overall mission assigned to the Islamic State, and military strategy is one of the means available to it to do so. It is waged at individual as well as collective level; and at internal as well as external front.

Waged in its true spirit, and with the multiple means available to it, the Islamic concept of total strategy has the capacity

to produce direct results. Alternatively, however, it creates conditions conducive to the military strategy to attain its object speedily and economically. Military strategy thus draws heavily on the total strategy (Jehad) for its successful application. Any weakness or strength in the formulation, direction or application of the total strategy would affect military strategy in the like manner. In the absence of Jehad, the preparation for and application of 'force' to its best advantage would be a matter of exception, not rule. Conversely, optimum preparation and application of the military instrument forms an integral part of Jehad.

What then is the Quranic concept of military strategy? Instructions pertaining to the divine theory on military strategy are found in the revelations pertaining to the battles of Badr, Ohad, Khandaq, Tabuk and Hodaibiyya. Recalling the situation at Badr, the Holy Quran reminded the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him), "Remember, ye implored the assistance of your Lord and He answered you, 'I will assist you with a thousand of the angels, ranks on ranks'. Allah made it but a message of hope, and an assurance to your hearts: (in any case) there is no help except from Allah, and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise."¹ The Book went further to add, "Remember, He covered you with a sort of drowsiness to give you calm as from Himself,...to strengthen your hearts, and to plant your feet firmly therewith."²

About Ohad, the Book recalled, "Remember, thou saidst to the Faithful: Is it not enough for you that Allah should help you with three thousand angels (specially) sent down? 'Yea',—if ye remain firm, and act aright, even if the enemy should rush here on you in hot haste, your Lord would help you with five thousand angels making a terrific onslaught. Allah made it but a message of hope for you; and an assurance to your hearts: (in any case) there is no help except from Allah, the Exalted, the Wise."³ In

1. Anfal: 9-10

2. Anfal: 11

3. Al-i-Imran: 124—126

this battle, a time also came when the Muslims faced a military set-back. At that time, the Almighty Lord, in the words of the Holy Quran, gave them 'one distress after another by way of requital to teach you not to grieve for (the booty) that had escaped you and for (the ill) that had befallen you.'⁴ "After (the excitement) of the distress," the Book recalls, "He sent down calm on a band of you overcome with slumber, while another band was stirred to anxiety by their own feelings, moved by wrong suspicions of Allah—suspicions due to Ignorance."⁵

Again in the battle of Hunain, the Muslims were initially defeated and faced a situation nearly similar to Ohad, although they recovered soon and won a great victory in the end. Talking of that occasion, the Holy Quran says, "Assuredly, Allah did help you in many battle-fields and on the Day of Hunain: behold! Your great numbers elated you, but they availed you naught: the land, for all that it is wide, did constrain you, and ye turned back in retreat. But Allah did pour His calm on the Apostle and on the Believers and sent down forces which ye saw not: He punished the Unbelievers: thus doth He reward those without Faith."⁶ Referring to the situation at Hodaibiyya, the Book tells us, "It is He Who sent down Tranquillity into the hearts of the Believers, that they may add Faith to their Faith."⁷ Of the Oath of Fealty taken by the Muslims at Hodaibiyya under an extremely difficult situation, the Holy Quran recalls, "He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down Tranquillity to them, and He rewarded them with a speedy Victory."⁸

In the situations referred to above, we see that whenever Almighty Allah wishes to frustrate and destroy the designs of His enemies, He does so by strengthening the hearts of the Believers, and by sending down calm and tranquillity upon them as from

4. Al-i-Imran: 153.

6. Tauba: 25-26

8. Fath: 18

5. Al-i-Imran: 154.

7. Fath: 4

Himself. We, therefore, infer that, to prevent our adversaries from imposing their will and decision upon us in war, it is essential for us to maintain a state of calm, assurance, hope and tranquillity amongst our ranks. But, what should we do to impose *our* will and decision upon the enemy? To find answer to this question, let us make another probe into the Book.

Talking of Badr, the Holy Quran addresses the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him), "Remember, thy Lord inspired the angels (with the message), 'I am with you: give firmness to the Believers: I will instil terror into the hearts of the Unbelievers.'"⁹ Again in the battle of Ohad, the Book identified the causes of the Muslims defeat and provided them divine guidance about their future course of action. Should the Muslims observe the divine code of conduct prescribed for them, the Book held out a promise, saying, "Soon shall We cast terror into the hearts of the Unbelievers."¹⁰ On the question of instilling terror into the hearts of the enemies, a reference is also available in Sura 'Ahzab', pertaining to the battle of Khandaq. "And those of the people of the Book who aided them," the Holy Quran referred to the treachery of Banu Quraiza, "Allah did take them down from their strongholds and cast terror into their hearts, (so that) some ye slew, and some ye made prisoners. And He made you heirs of their lands, their houses, and their goods, and of a land which ye had not frequented (before). And Allah has power over all things."¹¹

We see that, on all these occasions, when God wishes to impose His will upon His enemies, He chooses to do so by casting terror into their hearts. But, what strategy does He prescribe for the Believers to enforce their decision upon their foes? "Let not the Unbelievers think," God commands us directly and pointedly, "that they can get the better (of the Godly): they will never frustrate them. Against them make ready your strength to the utmost

9. Anfal: 12 10. Al-i-Imran: 151 11. Ahzab: 26-27

of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies of Allah and your enemies, and others besides, whom ye may not know, but whom Allah doth know."¹²

The Quranic military strategy thus enjoins us *to prepare ourselves for war to the utmost in order to strike terror into the hearts of the enemies, known or hidden, while guarding ourselves from being terror-stricken by the enemy.* In this strategy, guarding ourselves against terror is the 'Base'; preparation for war to the utmost is the 'Cause'; while the striking terror into the hearts of the enemies is the 'Effect'. The whole philosophy revolves round the human heart, his soul, spirit and Faith. *In war, our main objective is the opponent's heart or soul, our main weapon of offence against this objective is the strength of our own souls, and to launch such an attack, we have to keep terror away from our own hearts.*

The Quranic strategy comes into play from the preparation stage, and aims at imposing a direct decision upon the enemy. Other things remaining the same, our preparation for war is the true index of our performance during war. We must aim at creating a wholesome respect for our *Cause* and our will and determination to attain it, in the minds of the enemies, well before facing them on the field of battle. So spirited, zealous, complete and thorough should be our preparation for war that we should enter upon the 'war of muscles' having already won the 'war of will'. Only a strategy that aims at striking terror into the hearts of the enemies from the preparation stage can produce direct results and turn Liddell Hart's dream into a reality.

During peace-time, our 'Will' must find its expression through 'Preparation'. The war of preparation being waged by us during peace is vastly more important than the active war. Strategy has comparatively greater stakes in a drill square, during a training exercise, at a model discussion and in an operational conference

than in the theatre or zone of operations. Anything we do or fail to do during peace-time is creating a certain impact—favourable or otherwise—upon our potential adversaries. Seemingly trivial and innocent acts of commission and omission can also accumulate together to assume great importance. We must be constantly conscious of the fact that our strategy is working in full swing during peace-time, and by our actions, we are either contributing towards the attainment of its aim or are undermining it, as the case may be.

Preparation must be 'to the utmost', both in quality and in quantity. It must be a continuous and never ending process. Preparation should be at the plane of total strategy, that is, Jihad, and not of the military instrument alone. Military preparedness will yield the desired results only if it forms a part of the total preparedness. Quantitative preparation may have its physical limitations but qualitative preparation is limited only by our will and energy to acquire it. The lesser the physical resource, the greater must be the stress and reliance on the spiritual dimensions of war. The operational effectiveness of a fighting force depends upon its total strength: physical as well as spiritual. An army might be inferior in one field but should be superior to the opponent in the aggregate. The side that is inferior in the physical strength can draw on its spiritual strength to acquire a higher degree of aggregate strength. Physical strength must, however, be prepared for and applied 'to the utmost'. Physical preparedness is complimentary to spiritual preparedness and *vice versa*; none can compensate or intercede for the other.

Terror struck into the hearts of the enemies is not only a means, it is the end in itself. Once a condition of terror into the opponent's heart is obtained, hardly anything is left to be achieved. It is the point where the means and the end meet and merge. Terror is not a means of imposing decision upon the enemy; it is *the decision* we wish to impose upon him.

Psychological and physical dislocation is, at best, a means, though, by no means, conclusive for striking terror into the hearts of the enemies. Its effects are related to the physical and spiritual stamina of the opponent but are seldom of a permanent and lasting nature. An army that practises the Quranic philosophy of war in its totality is immune to psychological pressures. When Liddell Hart talks of imposing a direct decision upon the enemy through psychological dislocation alone, he is taking too much for granted.

Terror cannot be struck into the hearts of an army by merely cutting its lines of communication or depriving it of its routes of withdrawal. It is basically related to the strength or weakness of the human soul. It can be instilled only if the opponent's Faith is destroyed. Psychological dislocation is temporary; spiritual dislocation is permanent. Psychological dislocation can be produced by a physical act but this does not hold good of the spiritual dislocation. To instil terror into the hearts of the enemy, it is essential, in the ultimate analysis, to dislocate his Faith. An invincible Faith is immune to terror. A weak Faith offers inroads to terror. The Faith conferred upon us by the Holy Quran has the inherent strength to ward off terror from us and to enable us to strike terror into the enemy. Whatever the form or type of strategy directed against the enemy, it must, in order to be effective, be capable of striking terror into the hearts of the enemy. A strategy that fails to attain this condition suffers from inherent drawbacks and weaknesses; and should be reviewed and modified. This rule is fully applicable to nuclear as well as conventional wars. It is equally true of the strategy of nuclear deterrence in fashion today. To be credible and effective, the strategy of deterrence must be capable of striking terror into the hearts of the enemy.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Conduct of War

To begin this Study, let us first recapitulate some of the traditional theories about the conduct of war against the background of which we shall be studying the Quranic principles on the subject. In his penetrating work, 'Strategy: The Indirect Approach,' Liddell Hart made an attempt to epitomize, from the history of war, a few truths of experience which seemed to him so universal and fundamental as to be termed 'axioms.' According to him, these maxims applied to tactics as well as strategy alike. The great military thinker came to the general conclusion that all the principles of war could be concentrated into one single principle, that is, concentration of strength against weakness. To apply this principle, he put forward eight rules, six positive and two negative. The positive rules were: the maintenance of the aim; the adjustment of the means to the end; the adoption of the line of least expectation and resistance; the undertaking of a line of operations that threatened multiple objectives; and ensuring that plans and dispositions were flexible and adaptable to the circumstances. In the negative rules, he advocated that all the weight should not be thrown in one stroke while the enemy was on guard, and that an attack, once failed, should not be resumed along the same lines or in the same form.

Napoleon emphasised the need for concentration of effort, offensive action, surprise and protection. Clausewitz evolved two primary rules of war. They were the concentration of effort and action in strength against the main enemy forces which implied the

enforcement of decision in the main theatre of operations. In Foch's view, the two decisive rules of warfare were the economy of force and freedom of action. Andre Beaufre agreed with Foch but added that, to apply these rules, it was essential to undertake two progressive steps. The first was to select the decisive point to be attacked; the second, to select the preparatory manoeuvre which would enable the decisive point to be reached.

The champions of the wars of revolution had a different approach to the problem. Lenin and Stalin condensed the theory and practice of war in three main rules. They stressed the unity of the country and the army, the security and protection of the rear areas, and the necessity of psychological action preceding the military action to pave the way for victory. Mao Tse Tung advocated six rules. He recommended concentric withdrawal in face of the enemy advance, and advance of own forces if the enemy withdrew. According to him, strategically, a ratio of one to five was sufficient but tactically five to one was essential. He also advocated that there should be close cohesion between the army and the civil population, and that the armies should be able to live off the enemy.

A host of other theories also kept appearing from time to time. Geo-politicians like Mackinder and Spyksman saw the application of strategy in geography. Douhet concluded that airpower was the sole arm of decision. In the initial stages of its invention, the nuclear bomb was looked upon as the absolute weapon. Tactical doctrines and formations like the Greek Phalanx, the Roman Legion, the Oblique Order of Frederick, the Great, the trench warfare of the First World War, and the 'blitzkrieg' of the Second World War also exerted decisive influence on the conduct of war in their respective times. As military knowledge advanced, a controversy arose between the exercise of generalship and the observance of rules and principles of war. One school of thought held that the observance of the recognized principles was the all-important factor in war, the other looked upon principles as an aid to

generalship which, in their opinion, was the sole decisive factor. Advancement in technology has today resulted in a conflict between the 'man' and the 'machine.' While some look upon technology as the dominant factor in war, others still emphasise the importance of the age-old human factor. A stage is also beginning to reach where the 'machine' is becoming too sophisticated and complicated for the 'man' to handle.

In the contemporary thinking on the conduct of war, a high degree of reliance is placed on the principles of war. All the military thinkers do not unanimously agree on one set of principles. The list of the principles put forward from time to time exceeds two dozen but those generally studied in military institutions include the maintenance of the aim, offensive action, concentration, co-operation and co-ordination, economy of effort, security, morale, administration and unity of command.

The Quranic maxims on the conduct of war encompass the art of decision making, the supremacy of the aim, selection of objectives, constant striving and struggling, comparative evaluation of situations, domination and aggressiveness, will and determination, patience and perseverance, firmness and steadfastness, and prayers. Within the overall framework of the Quranic concept of the strategy of war, these rules bestow calmness, hope, assurance and moral ascendancy on the Muslim armies and instil terror in the hearts of the enemy. A brief discussion on each of these rules of war follows in the subsequent paragraphs.

Decision Making: "And consult them in affairs (of moment)," the Book instructed the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), "then, when thou hast taken a decision, put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him)."¹ These lines, revealed on the occasion of Ohad when confusion

prevailed regarding the decision about the choice of the battle-field, have three main implications. Firstly, all decisions pertaining to war must be taken after cool, deliberate, thorough and detailed deliberation and consultations. Secondly, the prerogative of the final decision rests with the commander. Thirdly, once taken, the decision must be upheld with single-minded attention and devotion. When everything 'human' has gone into the process of decision making, trust must be reposed in God and all fears, doubts and reservations thrown over-board.

The Supremacy of the Aim: Once the decision is taken, the aim must be kept supreme and uppermost through all the stages of the conduct of war and followed through with utmost zeal. During the Days of Ignorance, the spoils of war and ransom for the prisoners captured during the fighting used to offer great temptation to the belligerents. By a divine injunction, the Holy Quran subordinated these temptations to the primary and overriding aim of destroying the enemy. Considerations like the spoils of war and ransom or generosity for the prisoners were relegated to a secondary position. They were to be attended to only after 'the war lays down its burdens,'² or, alternately, after the Muslims had 'thoroughly subdued the land.'³

Selection of Objectives: On the occasion of Badr, the Holy Quran issued instructions to the Muslims about the selection of their objectives. "Smite ye above their necks," it said, "and smite all their finger-tips off them."⁴ The most sensitive parts of the human body lie above the neck. An effective strike against these parts can finish off the opponent totally. At Badr, however, most of the Koraish warriors were wearing armour. The Holy Quran counselled the Muslims to smite the finger-tips off such opponents. In battle, therefore, we should first identify and strike at the most sensitive and vulnerable points of our

2. Mohammad: 4

3. Anfal: 67

4. Anfal: 12

adversary and aim at finishing him off completely. When that is not possible, our effort should be to choose those targets which, when struck, will deprive him of his ability to use his weapons or combat strength against us. We should always avoid hitting the enemy's strength directly with our weakness.

Constant Striving and Struggling: The decision having been taken and the objectives selected, the Book called upon the Muslims to strive and struggle, towards the attainment of the aim, constantly and actively. "Strive and struggle, with your goods and your persons, in the cause of Allah. That is best for you, if ye (but) knew,"⁵ were the repeated Quranic directions on the subject. Striving and struggling implies the spending of one's self in the way of God either through life or property or both. It demands the pursuit of the aim using multiple and alternative plans, methods and techniques. Ceaseless but determined, spirited, and thorough efforts launched in the pursuit of the aim are bound to be crowned with success, soon or late. The real test of this virtue, however, comes under conditions of adversity, not prosperity. The struggle must be kept on with full zeal and confidence; come what the odds.

Comparative Evaluation of Situations: War is an interplay between two or more opposing forces. While assessing or evaluating a military situation, the Holy Quran exhorted the Muslims not to remain unmindful of the enemy situation. True picture would emerge only after a relative assessment of both the sides is carried out. "If a wound hath touched you," the Book assured the Muslims, "be sure a similar wound hath touched the others."⁶ Similarly, it said, "And slacken not in following up the enemy. If ye are suffering hardships, they are suffering similar hardships; but ye have hope from Allah, while they have none."⁷ Ability to locate and exploit the enemy's weaknesses even under adverse circumstances is a supreme act of generalship. The great Muslim

5. Tauba: 41

6. Al-i-Imran: 140

7. Nisaa: 104

general, Khalid bin Walid, was an expert in this art, and it accounted much for his brilliant victories. Successful is the commander who can accurately assess the strength and weakness of his own as well as those of his adversary at all stages of the conduct of war.

Domination and Aggressiveness: The Holy Quran wishes to see the Muslim armies always in an uppermost, dominating and commanding position over those of their adversaries. "When the forbidden months are past," the Book directed them, "then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war)."⁸ The Book wants the Muslims to retain the initiative to themselves through bold, aggressive but calculated and deliberate planning and conduct of war. We shall later see that, despite the gross inferiority of his numbers and material, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) never let the initiative to pass on to his adversaries. The study of the Prophet's military campaigns will also provide us an insight into some of the methods adopted by him to ensure the retention of the initiative.

Will and Determination: "Be not weary and faint-hearted, crying for peace, when ye should be uppermost," the Holy Quran counselled the Muslims, "for Allah is with you, and will never put you in loss for your (good) deeds."⁹ On the same theme, Book instructed the Muslims, "So lose not heart, nor fall into despair: for ye must gain mastery if ye are true in Faith."¹⁰ Referring to the demoralization that gripped them during the battle of Ohad, the Book, observed, "How many of the Prophets fought (in Allah's way), and with them (fought) large bands of Godly men? But they never lost heart if they met with disaster in Allah's way, nor did they weaken (in will) nor give in"¹¹ Commenting on those

8. Tauba: 5

10. Al-i-Imran: 139

9. Mohammed: 35

11. Al-i-Imran: 146

undaunted few who stood to their ground in face of grave danger at Ohad, the Book remarked, "Of those who answered the call of Allah and the Apostle, even after being wounded, those who do right and refrain from wrong have a great reward. Men said to them, 'A great army is gathering against you:' and frightened them: but it (only) increased their Faith."¹² The Quranic message on this vitally important issue is that men of Faith fighting for a righteous Cause with total Devotion and Submission and willing to make total Sacrifice have no cause to fall into despair or weaken in will and determination.

Patience and Perseverance: The Holy Quran has laid the greatest emphasis on patience and perseverance (Arabic Sabr) as one of the principal war-winning factors. "Allah", says the Book repeatedly, "is with those who patiently persevere."¹³ The Holy Quran also claims that the exercise of patience and perseverance can compensate for numerical inferiority. "O Apostle! rouse the Believers to the fight," came the divine command at Badr, "if there are twenty amongst you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred: if a hundred, they will vanquish a thousand of the Unbelievers: for these are a people without understanding."¹⁴ "The Arabic word 'Sabr,'" comments Allama Abdullah Yousaf Ali, "implies many shades of meanings which it is impossible to comprehend in one English word." In his opinion, it implies patience in the sense of being thorough, and not rash. It also means constancy, firmness of purpose and steadfastness. It entails a systematic, as opposed to spasmodic or chance action. It demands a cheerful attitude of resignation and understanding in sorrow, suffering, crisis or defeat. Haqqani interprets it as following Reason, and restraining Fear, Anger and Desire. Patience is an aspect of courage which, in turn, is supported and nourished by professional competence of the highest order. In war, human and equipment casualties will occur; plans will be

12. Al-i-Imran 172—173

13. Anfal: 46

14. Anfal: 65

upset and will need modifications; the frictions of war will upset the movement plans; positions will be overrun by the enemy; and attacks will be halted, even repulsed. It will take 'patience' born of professional competence, and moral courage to face these situations, and 'perseverance' to attain the goal, tribulations notwithstanding.'

Firmness and Steadfastness: Firmness and steadfastness go hand in hand with patience and perseverance. "O ye who believe! Fight the Unbelievers who gird you about, and let them find firmness in you,"¹⁵ was the divine guidance revealed to the Muslims on the eve of the battle of Tabuk. Similar instructions appear in the Book on numerous other occasions. Giving the Muslims the divine concept of firmness and steadfastness, the Book says, "Truly Allah loves those who fight in His Cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure."¹⁶ During the conduct of fighting, the Holy Quran bade the Muslims never to turn their backs to the enemy, except on two occasions. "O ye who believe!" it directed, "when ye meet the Unbelievers in hostile array, never turn your backs to them. If any do turn his back to them on such a day—unless it be in a stratagem of war, or to retreat to a troop (of his own)—he draws on himself the wrath of Allah, and his abode is Hell,—an evil refuge (indeed)."¹⁷ The two exceptions recognized were withdrawal as a stratagem of war and the retreat of a detachment of troops to the main body. Allama Abdullah Yousaf Ali interprets stratagem of war as '*reculer pour mieux sauter*', that is, to go back in order to jump forward or to deceive the enemy by a feint.

Sacrifice: In the Quranic perspective, supreme achievement lies in supreme sacrifice. Sacrifice denotes a bond between Man and God; in it man sacrifices the ephemeral things of this world to obtain, in return, eternal salvation, the fulfilment

15. Tauba: 123

16. Saff: 4

17. Anfal: 15-16

of his highest spiritual hopes, which the Holy Quran describes as 'achievement supreme.' "Who is he," offers Almighty Allah, "that will loan to Allah a beautiful loan, which Allah will double unto his credit and multiply many times?"¹⁸ Sacrifice may take the form of bearing suffering, hardships, want, hunger, thirst, fatigue, injury and death. It must be motivated by a selfless spirit of serving the cause. The reward of sacrifice is a life of honour in this world and salvation in the Hereafter. "Never will I suffer to be lost the work of any of you," promises the Holy Quran, "be he male or female: ye are members, one of another. Those who have left their homes, or been driven out therefrom, or suffered harm in My cause, or fought or been slain,—verily, I will blot out from them their iniquities, and admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing beneath;—a reward from the Presence of Allah, and from His Presence is the best of rewards."¹⁹ The first person singular used by Almighty Allah for purposes of emphasis in these lines is worth noting and should leave us in no doubt about the value of sacrifice. The Holy Quran is full of such injunctions. History stands witness to the fact that a self-sacrificing nation has always come out to be the victorious.

Unity of Thought and Action: During the conduct of fighting, the Holy Quran called upon the Believers to display the highest standards of mutual love, affection, respect and concern. It enjoined them to hold together the Rope of God, collectively and firmly, and forge unity and cohesion in their ranks. "O ye who believe!," the Book said, "persevere in patience and constancy: vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allah; that ye may prosper."²⁰ The Holy Quran warned them to guard against disunity amongst their ranks, saying, "And obey Allah and His Apostle; and fall into no disputes, lest ye lose heart and your power depart."²¹ Giving the Muslims the divine concept of unity, the Book

18. Baqara: 245

20. Al-i-Imran: 200

19. Al-i-Imran: 195

21. Anfal: 46

rules, "And (moreover) He hath put affection between their hearts. Not if thou hadst spent all that is in the earth, couldst thou have produced that affection, but Allah hath done it: for He is Exalted in Might, Wise."²² On another occasion, the Book observed, "Mohammad is the Apostle of Allah; and those who are with him are strong against Unbelievers, (but) compassionate amongst each other."²³ The Muslim military history has it that disunity amongst the Muslim ranks was one of the biggest factors responsible for some of their worst defeats. A glaring example is the battle of Tours, fought and lost by the Muslims due to internal strife, in France in 721 AD. But for mutual dissensions, they stood all chances of winning the battle, and changing the entire course of European history in consequence.

Security and Precautions: The army must observe full precautions to guard itself against being surprised by the enemy. "O ye who believe!" advised the Holy Qurān, "take your precautions, and either go forth in parties or go forth all together."²⁴ It also directed the Muslims to take full precautions while engaged in prayers, saying, "When thou (O Apostle) art with them, and standest to lead them in prayer, let one party of them stand up (in prayer) with thee, taking their arms with them. When they finish their prostrations, let them take their positions in the rear, and let the other party come up—which hath not yet prayed,— and let them pray with thee, taking all precautions, and bearing arms."²⁵ The Book went on to warn them, "The Unbelievers wish, if ye were negligent of your arms and your baggage, to assault you in a single rush. But there is no blame on you if ye put away your arms because of the inconvenience of rain or because ye are ill; but take (every) precaution for yourselves."²⁶

Discipline and Obedience: Discipline and obedience forms

22. Anfal: 63

24. Nisaa: 71

26. Nisaa: 102

23. Fath: 29

25. Nisaa: 102

the very heart of Islam, the religion of submission to the Will of God. The necessity of willing and instant obedience has been emphasised by the Holy Quran on numerous occasions. The discipline and obedience with which the Muslims followed their great leader has since become proverbial. While there are innumerable such examples of submission and obedience, we must constantly remind ourselves of the fact that it was indiscipline and insubordination of orders that was, in the main, responsible for the Muslim debacle at Ohad.

Prayers: During the conduct of fighting, the Book calls upon the Muslims to resort to prayers more often than in times of peace. The Quranic philosophy on the subject is that prayers strengthen Faith and protect against psychological pressures. Innumerable are the Quranic instructions on the subject of prayers but we may just remind ourselves of a few. "O ye who believe!," says the Book, "when ye meet a forcè, be firm, and call Allah in remembrance much (and often); that ye may prosper."²⁷ As to the Godly response to the prayers, the divine verdict has it, "When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me: let them also, with a will, listen to My call, and believe in Me: that they may walk in the right way."²⁸

27. Anfal: 45

28. Baqara: 186

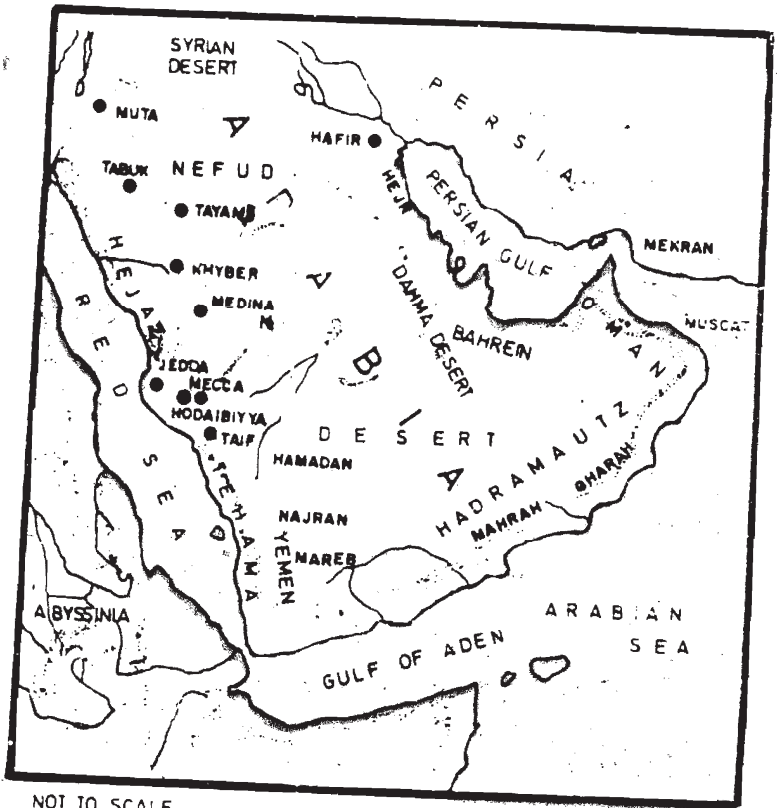
The Application of Quranic Military Thought

The Plan of War

It will be recalled that the Pagans had declared a state of war upon Islam the very day it took its birth and had carried on with their war for twelve years without any retaliation from the Muslims. The Muslims entered the arena only after their migration to Medina; from then onwards the war became a two-sided affair and lasted for a period of about eight years. During the first five years of this war, Mecca continued to be the centre of political power in Arabia and the Koraish were on a strategic offensive against the Muslims. In that period, they mounted three major attacks on Medina with the intention of destroying the Muslim community there. They were defeated at Badr but were successful in winning a military victory over the Muslims at Ohad. After Ohad, the Pagan tribes surrounding Medina became more active and mounted several attacks on the city in order to finish off the Muslims completely but failed. In collusion with the Pagans and the Jews, the Koraish launched their third and the strongest attack on Medina two years later. They succeeded in laying siege to the city but were ultimately defeated in the famous battle of Khandaq. This reversal deprived them of their capability to launch a fresh invasion of Medina and brought forth a state of strategic balance between the belligerents.

A year later, at Hodaibiyya, a ten-years treaty of peace

ARABIA: 610 AD



NOT TO SCALE

was signed between the Muslims and the Meccans. This ushered in an era in which the two communities became 'equals' in the exercise of political power in the region. The conquest of Mecca, that followed two years later, settled the scores finally and shifted power firmly to the Muslims. During the intervening period, the Muslims also undertook successful expeditions to subjugate the hostile tribes of Hunain and Taif, and the Jewish strongholds of Khyber, Fidak, Doma and Qarra, in North Arabia. The operations in North Arabia brought them in contact with the Roman Syria, and the two sides tested each-other's will and muscles in the battles of Muta and Tabuk.¹

In 632 AD, the year when the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) breathed his last, the Muslims had conquered the whole of the Arabian Peninsula, an area equal in size to Europe minus Russia. According to Muhammad Hamidullah, this vast expanse of land was conquered at the cost of only 150 men killed in the battle-field on the enemy side.

Ten years ago, in 622 AD, when the Muslims first took up arms, they had little more than a tiny existence in a hostile desert country. The political, socio-economic and military environments under which they had been called upon to plan and conduct their war were highly precarious for them. Politically, the state, just born, had to contend with the well-entrenched and powerful Jewish factions of Medina. The socio-economic conditions were even worse; both the Ansars and the Muhajirs were in the process of finding mutual social adjustment and were facing acute economic problems. Militarily, the Muslims had to face their multiple adversaries, that is, the Meccans, the Jews, the surrounding Pagan tribes and the hypocrites, with virtually negligible resources. To magnify these problems, a Meccan invasion of Medina, supported by most of the other hostile factions, also seemed imminent.

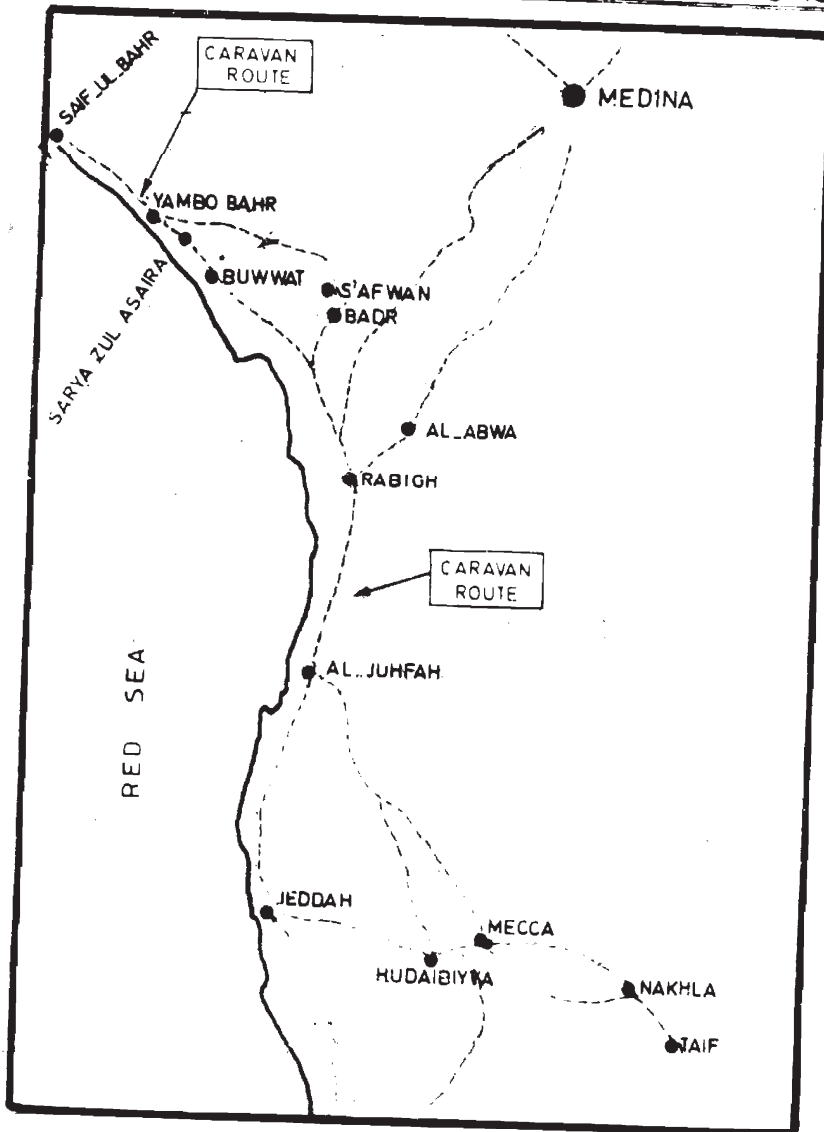
1 For the Holy Prophet's military campaigns, see Appendix- 1.

At that stage, the Holy Prophet's chief concern was the defence of the city-state of Medina. The main threat to the security of Medina came from Mecca, some 400 miles away. The immediate threat, of no small intensity, however, came from the Jews, the Pagans and the hypocrites. The elimination of the immediate threat, if decided upon as the foremost priority, would consume the entire Muslim strength but leave the main enemy in tact. On the contrary, the neutralization or destruction of the Koraish would not only rid Medina of its main enemy but would also constitute a major setback to the remaining adversaries, both in physical and psychological terms. The Muslims clearly lacked the resources to face all their adversaries simultaneously and the prevention of a coalition between them was of vital significance to their security.

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) dealt with his multiple enemies by making a co-ordinated, integrated and concentrated use of the spiritual, diplomatic and military instruments. On the diplomatic front, the Jews of Medina, who posed the most immediate threat to the security of the state, were neutralised through a treaty of friendship, co-operation and mutual assistance. To extend the parameter of security around the city, treaties of neutrality, if not of friendship and assistance, were concluded with the surrounding tribes. The hypocrites, who had not assumed an alarming proportion till then, were set aside to be dealt with later. On the spiritual front, the believers were called upon to demonstrate to the Pagans, through example as well as precept, their perfect 'Way of Life' and attract them into the fold of Islam.

The strategy adopted against the Meccans was one of exhaustion through economic strangulation and psychological dislocation. The central idea in this strategy was the disruption of the caravan routes initially between Mecca and Syria and later between Mecca and Mesopotamia as well. The route to Syria passed between Medina and the Red Sea, a maximum distance of

PRE_BADR RAIDS AND LIAISON MISSIONS



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80 miles, and was within easy striking reach of the Muslims. It was the most important, if not the only, commercial life-line of the predominantly trading community of Mecca. The economic life of the Koraish was almost entirely oriented to their trade with Syria while only a small quantity of merchandize was exchanged between Mecca and Mesopotamia. The Muslims rightly appreciated that the successful interception of the trade route to Syria would shake the Koraish both economically and psychologically.

The Pagan strategy, on the other hand, was that of complete and total annihilation of the Muslims through the application of force. It was their endeavour to destroy the Muslims before the latter could gain a firm foothold on the soil of Medina. In pursuance of this strategy, they embarked upon war-like preparations and also forged treaties and alliances with the other tribes hostile to the Muslims.

Initial Operations.

As the war commenced, the Muslims took the initiative and unfolded their strategy. Between the period Ramazan 1 AH and Rajab 2 AH, they undertook several raids and liaison missions aimed at befriending the neighbouring tribes, broadening the parameter of security around Medina, and restricting or denying the use of the caravan route to the Koraish. The missions were imaginatively conceived and daringly executed. The caravan route was intercepted at places as far as Saif-ul-Bahr, Rabigh, Abwa, Bawwat and Safwan. A raid was launched against Nakhla, a place located between Mecca and Taif, some four hundred miles away from Medina. All these missions were launched with the help of Muhajirs only; almost all were bloodless. The missions were generally successful; they succeeded in imposing a great deal of caution upon the Koraish caravans.

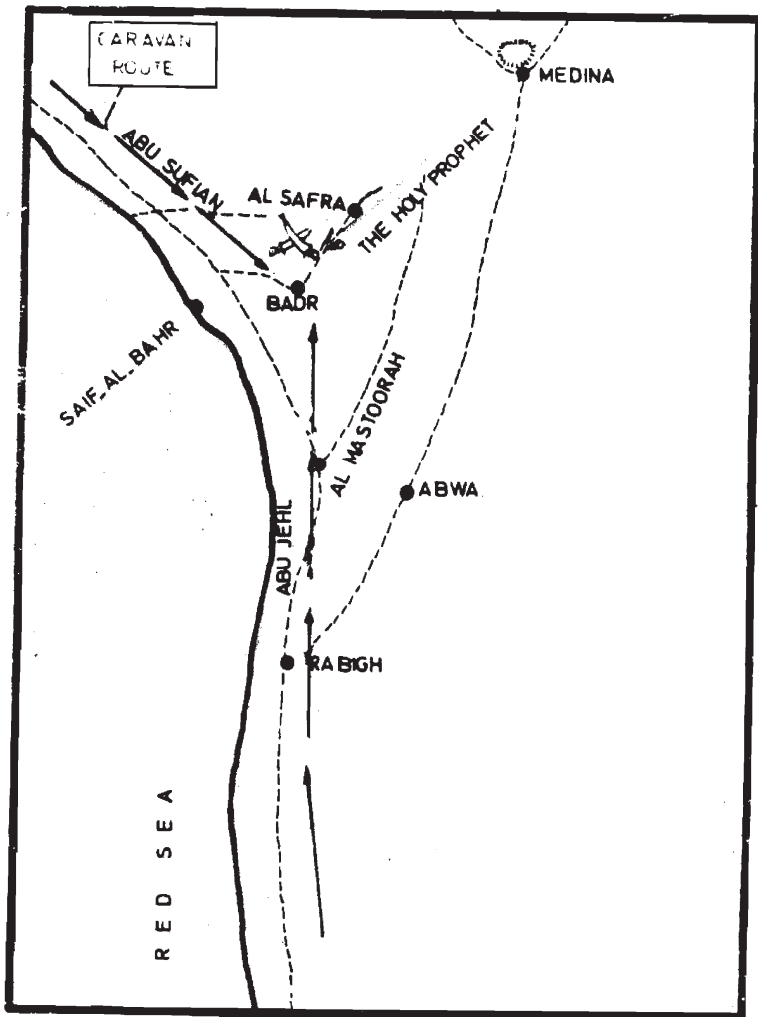
One such raid, planned against a Koraish caravan returning from Syria, confronted the Muslims with an exceedingly difficult situation at Badr. Apprehending a Muslim interception,

Abu Sufian, the commander of the caravan, sent an urgent despatch to Mecca for help. The Koraish responded by sending an army of 1,000 picked warriors. A time came when all the three parties, that is, Abu Sufian's caravan, the Prophet's raiding party and the Koraish army came within a radius of 25 miles around Badr and Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) convened a council of war to deal with the situation.

The Muslims had three alternative courses of action before them. Firstly, they could take possession of Abu Sufian's lightly held caravan before the main Koraish army came to its rescue. This course promised overwhelming chances of success but would leave the main Koraish army intact; and would not eliminate the most dangerous threat to the security of Medina. The next alternative was to go back to Medina without seeking contact with either of the Koraish parties. This step offered a timely escape from the situation but would prove highly disadvantageous to the Muslim Cause in the long run. It would embolden the Koraish and other hostile forces to confederate and launch a joint invasion of Medina. The last course open was to seek battle with the main Koraish army and destroy it. This would make the greatest contribution to the security of Medina, provided the Muslims could muster the skill and courage needed to destroy an army that was thrice their numbers and many times their armament and equipment.

An important factor in arriving at that decision was the reaction of the Ansars. Of the 313 Muslim warriors present there, the Ansars numbered 243 and, according to the Pledge of Aqabah, had undertaken to defend the Muslims only within the city of Medina. At the council of war, the Holy Prophet gave his party a forthright and candid analysis of the situation and indicated his preference for the third course. He then looked up to the Ansars for its ratification. The Ansar approval came with its traditional dedication and promptness, and it was decided to face the main Koraish force at Badr.

THE BATTLE OF BADR



NOT TO SCALE

TO MECCA

The magnitude of this decision can be gauged from the Prophet's well-known remarks on the morning of the fateful day of Badr. "Almighty Allah," He beseeched Him in his prayers, "if these 313 perish today, there would be none left to worship Thee on earth." The issue at stake in this seemingly small skirmish was of basic and fundamental importance both to the Creator of our Universe and His choicest creation, the Mankind. The outcome of the battle and the events that followed it proved that the Holy Prophet's decision was as bold and daring as it was calculated and correct. Inferior in numbers, the Muslims of Badr proved themselves superior to their enemy in their 'total strength and effectiveness' and inflicted a crushing defeat upon them.

The divine analysis of Badr, carried out in the Quranic chapter entitled 'Anfal', summed up the lessons of Badr.² The lessons dealt with the object of war, and certain aspects of its dimensions, strategy, and conduct. They also covered the issues relating to the spoils of war, the prisoners and their ransom. During the Days of Ignorance, the spoils of war offered a great temptation to the belligerents. Here was the first occasion in which the Arabs had fought each other as Muslims and Non-Muslims. The Muslims had won the battle and gathered booty as well. A party amongst the believers had a greedy eye over these spoils and entered into argument with their colleagues over its distribution. The Holy Quran ruled that the spoils of war were for Allah and His Apostle, and that no prisoners were to be taken until the Muslims had 'thoroughly subdued the land' first. Simply stated, it meant that the Muslims were not to look for material gains while fighting for the Cause of Allah.

The outcome of Badr was too unexpected for the Koraish and its consequences too disastrous to take the situation lying down. To exist, they must react quickly and destroy the

Muslim community in Medina. At stake for them was not only the revival of the traditional Koraish prestige but the restoration of their commercial life-line. The caravan route to Syria was of too great an importance to them to be abandoned by them completely. As an interim measure, therefore, they switched over to trading with Mesopotamia but, as a long term solution, they started making massive preparations for the total destruction of the city-state of Medina. Accordingly, they forged alliances with other tribes, collected and spent huge sums, and set about making a grand plan for an expedition against Medina. Once ready, they launched several raids against the Muslims in the neighbourhood of Medina in order to harass them and resuscitate their own morale.

The Muslims, on the other hand, were determined not to let the Koraish use the caravan route again. They reacted to the Koraish raids successfully and continued their earlier policy of gaining more allies along the trade route. Not only that but they undertook raids to intercept the Koraish caravans to Mesopotamia as well. The missions to Banu Ghatfan and Banu Sulaim had that object in view.

The Medina of those days was inhabited by three Jewish tribes called Banu Qunaiqa, Banu Nazir and Banu Quraiza. All these tribes had entered into a treaty of co-operation and mutual assistance with the Muslims. One of them, the Banu Qunaiqa, played treachery upon them during the Holy Prophet's absence to Badr and was expelled from the city.

Ohad: A Crisis and its Management

In pursuance of their policy of destroying the Muslim community in Medina, once and for all, the Koraish launched an invasion of Medina, a year later. It culminated in the battle of Ohad where the Muslims suffered a military defeat but the Koraish failed to pursue their victory on the battle-field to force a political decision upon them. Nonetheless, the debacle at Ohad was one

of the gravest crises suffered by the Muslims during the life-time of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). A battle of great events and decisions, Ohad has many a valuable lesson to teach. Of particular interest to us are the causes that led to that crisis and the manner in which it was controlled and managed both during and after the battle. A case study of this crisis appears later in this chapter;³ its salient features are summarised below:—

- (a) *The Koraish War Aim:* The political aim behind the Koraish invasion that resulted in the battle of Ohad was the complete destruction of the city-state of Medina. To achieve this aim, it was essential for them to annihilate the Muslims and bring Medina under their political and military influence.
- (b) *The Choice of the Battle-field:* On hearing the news of the Meccan advance, a discussion ensued amongst the Muslims about the choice of their battle-field. The Ansars and some other elders were in favour of accepting a siege and fighting from within the city, a choice favoured by the Holy Prophet as well. The other group wanted to fight from outside the city. Being in majority, the latter won the issue, and it was decided to give battle to the Koraish at Ohad, three miles North of Medina.
- (c) *The Treachery of the Jews:* The Medinite Jews, who were under treaty obligations to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Muslims against an enemy invading Medina, deserted them on the morning of the battle. This reduced the Muslim strength from 1,000 to 700, besides causing them a great deal of anguish and anxiety.
- (d) *The Contemplated Desertion of the Muslim Tribes:*

3. See Appendix—III

The Application of Quranic Military Thought

Seeing the Jews desert, the Muslim tribes of Banu Salma and Banu Haritha also contemplated cowardice and threatened desertion. Under persuasion from the Holy Prophet, however, they later gave up the idea.

- (e) *The Disobedience of the Archers*: Prior to the battle, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) placed a band of 50 Archers on a mound that overlooked an exposed flank, and ordered them not to vacate their post under any situation. As the Muslims routed the Koraish in the initial assault and started collecting booty, the Archers disobeyed the Prophet's orders and left their post to take their share of the spoils.
- (f) *Khalid's Counter-Attack*: Khalid-bin-Walid, the Koraish cavalry commander, seized the opportunity, captured the Mound of the Archers and launched a counter-attack against the Muslim left rear, causing great confusion in their ranks. The retreating Koraish also returned to the battle-field and subjected the Muslims to a two-pronged attack. The Muslims failed to withstand the Koraish attack and began to give way.
- (g) *The Rumours about the Prophet's Death*: In the confusion caused by the Koraish counter-attack, someone from the Koraish spread the news that the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) had been killed. Hearing this, most of the Muslim warriors left the battle-field in grief. The Holy Prophet had, in fact, been wounded, and, protected only by a handful of devotees, was the main target of the enemy attack.
- (h) *The Distress*: At that point, the Muslims were in a state of grave distress. Their initial victory had been turned into a defeat. The booty, the lure of which

had caused them to disobey orders, had also escaped them. Their ranks had been disintegrated; their Prophet was not only wounded but rumoured even to have been killed. The Koraish had clearly won the day.

- (i) *The Koraish Festivity:* The Koraish began to rejoice in their victory and wind up their camp. Apprehending that the enemy might exploit its success to invade Medina, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) alerted his followers to prepare themselves to face the impending threat but it did not ultimately materialize. The Koraish dismantled their camp and took the route to Mecca.
- (j) *The March on Hamra-al-Assad:* The Holy Prophet apprehended that the Koraish might return to invade Medina on the following day. Accordingly, he established contact with them at Hamra-al-Assad the next day and forced them to disperse in all directions.
- (k) *The End:* The Koraish did win a great military victory over the Muslims but failed to achieve their political aim. They left the battlefield without conquering Medina or stationing their forces in the city. The Muslims continued maintaining their hold on Medina as before.

Ohad is a battle of many splendid lessons. These are summed up in the divine critique conducted on the battle in the Quranic Chapter 'Al-i-Imran', a part of which is reproduced later in the book.⁴ The lessons pertained mainly to the nature and dimensions of war and its conduct. The critique also dealt, at length, with the causes of the Muslim defeat in the battle. It is

4. See Appendix—IV

generally said that the Muslims lost the battle because the Archers vacated their station of duty. Khalid took control of the Mound and launched a flanking attack against them that took them by surprise and caused great confusion in their ranks. To add to their woes, the main Koraish Army also returned to the battle-field and attacked them, forcing them to fight on two opposite fronts. This dislocated the Muslims and resulted in their defeat. Students of the art of war, therefore, usually infer from this battle that an army should always guard its flanks. A surprise flanking attack can cause a great deal of confusion in the opposing camp; and a body of troops that is forced to fight in two different directions suffers a great disadvantage.

The above deductions are no doubt correct but are not conclusive in themselves. To identify the real cause of the Muslim defeat, we must probe deeper to find out as to why the Archers disobeyed the orders and left the Mound. To do so, we have to go back to the battle of Badr. It was the love of booty that had caused resentment in the Muslim army after that battle. As a result, the Book bade them not to give themselves in to the temptation of the spoils of war and ransom for the prisoners. Again at Ohad, they disobeyed the orders of the Prophet to grab their share of the booty. It thus follows that the love of booty which the Holy Quran wanted them to ignore while fighting for the Cause of Allah had not yet left them. The basic cause of the Muslim defeat at Ohad, therefore, was a weak Faith and not an exposed flank which, in effect, was a manifestation of that weakness.

The Muslim defeat at Ohad induced the neighbouring Pagan tribes into believing that the days of Islam were numbered. In the hope of administering the final blow upon it, they organized several expeditions against the Muslims. Each enemy attempt was however destroyed by the Muslims inside their own land. Not only that, but they launched successful raids against the Eastern caravan route as well and rendered it unsafe for the Koraish.

The missions to Zat-al-Raqqah, Domatul Jandal and Banu Mustaliq were undertaken with these objectives in view. It is significant to note that, during this period, the Muslims did not give themselves in to inactivity but retained tactical initiative through bold and daring actions. "The most striking contrast between the two sides during these years of hostilities," says Glubb, "is provided by the ceaseless activity of the Muslims as opposed to the passivity of the Koraish."

Inside Medina, the hypocrites intensified their subversive activities and started spreading highly damaging and demoralising rumours about them. The Holy Quran bade the Muslims not to pay heed to their enemy's propaganda. The Jewish tribe of Banu Nazir, that had broken its covenant with the Muslims during Ohad, was expelled from the city. The Jews moved to the North, settled in Khyber, Fidak, Wadi-al-Qarra and began to take active role against the Medinites. In collusion with the ruler of Domatul Jandal and the surrounding tribes, they started molesting the Muslim trade caravans moving between Medina and Syria. They even bribed the tribes of Ghatfan and Fazara to join the Meccans in launching a fresh and final invasion of Medina.

It did not however take the Meccans long to realise that they had failed to pursue their military victory at Ohad to force a political decision upon the Muslims. They were shocked to find that the Muslim community in Medina was still intact and very much in control of the city. Disgusted and dismayed, they started making fresh efforts to raise a huge army to invade Medina. At that point in time, they were fortunate to find such willing and powerful confederates as the Ghatfans and the Jews. The stage was set for the siege of Medina.

The Siege of Medina

The siege of Medina was the last and the strongest Koraish bid to destroy the Muslims. Using various instruments including propaganda, the traditional Koraish prestige, booty and bribe.

the Meccans succeeded in activating the tribes to the North and East of Medina against the Muslims. On 31 March 627 AD, this grand coalition, with a total strength of 10,000 men, besieged Medina from three directions. The Koraish supported by Banu Huzail and Banu Damra came from the South; the tribes of Ghatfan, Marra, Ashja and Fazara surrounded Medina from the East; while the Jews of Khyber, Qarra and Fidak poured down the North. To add yet another dimension to the siege, Banu Quraiza, the Jewish tribe of Medina and an ally of the Muslims, played treachery upon them, revoked its treaty and entered the battle actively on the side of the Koraish. This was a highly dangerous development for the Muslims. Located as they were, Banu Quraiza could attack the city of Medina directly and stab the Muslims in their back.

Against this confederacy, the Muslims could muster a total strength of 3,000 men only. Under advice from Sulaiman Farsi, a Persian convert, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) had a trench dug in the direction where Medina lay open to a cavalry attack. At suitable intervals along the length of the ditch, archers were stationed to keep watch and thwart any Koraish attempt to cross it.

The Koraish fought their battle on the military, economic and psychological fronts simultaneously. On the military front, their efforts to cross the trench had been successfully frustrated but, in the other two fields, they were the uppermost. As the siege prolonged, it increased the economic difficulties of the Muslims almost to a breaking point. The defection of Banu Quraiza added new dimensions to the psychological pressure exerted against them even though an attempt made by them to attack the city was resolutely foiled. At one stage, the Holy Prophet suggested to the Ansars that the Muslims sign a treaty of peace with the Ghatfans, the strongest of the Pagan tribes, on somewhat disadvantageous terms. But, with full deference, the Ansars begged him not to do

so, for their sake alone. They repeated their full confidence and resolve to continue the fight to the last.

Despite the Ansar determination, the situation called for a speedy end to the battle. To do so, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) decided to launch a psychological attack on the thin and brittle 'cord' that held the Confederacy together. With the help of a newly converted Muslim of Banu Ghatfan, of whose conversion his tribe had no clue, feelings of mutual mistrust and suspicion were fanned between Banu Quraiza on the one hand, and the Koraish and Ghatfan on the other. An unfavourable gale combined with the difficulties of finding food and forage for such a large force, and frustration resulting out of a long siege, added fuel to the fire. The gulf within the enemy camp became so wide that both the Koraish and Banu Ghatfan were forced to lift the siege and withdraw. In the ultimate analysis, the Muslims succeeded in winning a truly bloodless victory against their multiple adversaries.⁵

Hodaibiyya and Mecca

A year after Khandaq, the Holy Prophet decided to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca with an unarmed band of 1,400 Muslims. According to the age-old Arab custom, fighting in these sacred months was prohibited and no one was denied access to the Sacred Mosque. At a council of war, however, the Koraish decided to oppose the Muslim entry in Mecca and forestall them at Hodaibiyya, eight miles from the city. Anticipating the war-like designs of the Meccans, the Holy Prophet took a fresh pledge from his unarmed companions to fight the enemy unto death. The Holy Quran calls this pledge as the Pledge of Good Pleasure.

The confrontation at Hodaibiyya eventually resulted in a treaty of peace between the Muslims and the Koraish. It had

5. For the divine analysis of Khandaq, see Appendix—IV

four important clauses. Firstly, there was to be a ten-year truce between the Muslims and the Koraish. Secondly, the Muslims were to return to Medina without performing the Pilgrimage that year but could return to do so the following year. Thirdly, a Meccan who defected to the Muslims had to be returned to the Koraish. Fourthly, a Muslim who came to Mecca and was apprehended by the Koraish was not to be handed back. The last three clauses created a great deal of disappointment amongst the Muslims and most of them looked upon the treaty as unequal and unwise. They showed visible signs of disgust and dismay as their Prophet ordered them to complete the pilgrimage rites at Hodaibiyya and return to Medina.

The Koraish hailed the treaty as a great victory for them. The Holy Quran, on the other hand, called it a manifest victory for the Muslims. The full impact of the treaty appeared later. The Koraish gains from the treaty were nothing more than a mere saving of face and the permission to use the caravan route between Mecca and Syria; the Muslim gains were multiple. Firstly, the Koraish accepted the Muslims as equal partners in the exercise of political power in Arabia. Secondly, the Muslims assured for themselves the right to perform the pilgrimage in the following year. Thirdly, the Holy Prophet got access to the nomad tribes around Mecca to preach Islam. As a result, most of these tribes embraced the New Faith which left Mecca detached, friendless and isolated. Fourthly, the return of the Koraish defectors, who invariably went back highly impressed by the Muslims, coupled with the non-return of the Muslims, created a class of Muslims or Muslim sympathizers inside Mecca. Lastly, it gave the Muslims time to deal with the hostile Jewish tribes in Khyber and Jarra in North Arabia.⁶

Two years later, the Meccans themselves took the initiative

6. For the divine verdict on Hodaibiyya, see Appendix - VI

and revoked the treaty. As a result, the Muslims undertook yet another bloodless expedition against them and the capitulation of Mecca followed. Talking of the Holy Prophet's treatment towards the Meccans, critics like Glubb confess that Muhammad, the Conqueror, was not vindictive. A general amnesty was proclaimed and the foes were pardoned and forgiven.

Hunain and Tabuk

The battle of Hunain administered the coup-de-grace upon the idolatrous forces in Arabia, but not without giving the Muslims serious moments of anxiety and concern. Here was the only occasion in the life-time of the Holy Prophet where the Muslims were superior to their adversary in numerical strength. This superiority rendered them over-confident and careless, for, they advanced into the mountainous territory of Banu Hawazan without ensuring the security of their flanks. As they passed through the narrow defile of Hunain, to debouch into the open valley ahead, they were assailed by Banu Hawazan from all directions. So complete was the enemy surprise, that the Muslim vanguard panicked and fled; the rest of the army following suit. The Holy Prophet with his handful of companions, stood firm and called out to his men to rally round him. For a time, the battlefield gave the look of Ohad, but the situation was soon brought under control, and the Muslims eventually won a great victory.

As stated before, the work of subjection in North Arabia had brought the Muslims in contact with the Roman Syria. In the initial testing of strength Herculius, the Byzantine Emperor, who was then present in Syria, gathered a huge force under his personal command, marched to Tabuk, and assumed a threatening posture. The Holy Prophet reacted to the Roman threat with the speed of lightning. Gathering a force of 30,000 men, the largest he ever commanded, he moved in person to Tabuk. Struck with terror at the Muslim reaction, the Romans dispersed before the

Muslim army reached there.⁷

Conclusions

More than mere military campaigns and battles, the Holy Prophet's operations against the Pagans are an integral and inseparable part of the divine message revealed to us in the Holy Quran. They are, in addition, an 'institution' for learning the application of the art of war prescribed for us by the Almighty Lord. Each of these campaigns demands a detailed and exclusive research to discern something of the 'beautiful pattern of conduct' demonstrated by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) in their planning and conduct. For the purpose of this study, however, we shall concentrate only on the main lessons taught by the campaigns discussed above in order to understand certain aspects of the application of the Quranic military thought.

The Muslims were commanded to take up arms against their oppressors soon after their migration to Medina and the proclamation of their statehood. Here was a state that had little more than a microscopic existence of its own but was called upon to face the might of the Koraish and scores of other hostile Arabian tribes. At that critical point in time, the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) showed an extraordinary depth and vision in identifying and sifting his enemies and formulating his strategy towards them. The chief adversary were the Koraish of Mecca and the strategy adopted towards them centred on the disruption of their caravan route to Syria. It took only a few raids and diplomatic missions, most of these bloodless, to implement this strategy. This prevented the Meccans from using the caravan route and, in consequence, shook them as a community. Never before, in the history of war, had so much been achieved by putting so little an effort nor has it been demonstrated since.

7. For the Holy Quran on Tabuk, see Appendix—VII

The war he planned and conducted was total to the infinite degree. It was waged on all fronts: internal and external, political and diplomatic, spiritual and psychological, economic and military. Here was an ideal situation in which the military strategy, operating as an integral component of 'Jehad', the total strategy, produced spectacular results. By virtue of the application of their total power, the Muslims succeeded in turning the scales upon their enemies barely five years after the commencement of the war.

From the very beginning, the Meccans had adopted a strategically offensive posture against the Muslims but the latter always retained the initiative at the tactical level. After Badr, the caravan route to Syria was finally closed to the Meccans, and all their efforts to open it were successfully foiled. The momentous victory of Badr was followed by the military defeat of Ohad and that, in turn, had given rise to renewed hostilities from the Pagans, the Jews and the Hypocrites. To arrest this trend, the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) intensified his activities at the tactical level manifold. The aggressor was always met and destroyed inside his own territory. Indeed, it was during this period that even the Eastern caravan route was raided and rendered unsafe for the Pagans.

We then see the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) at Khandaq surrounded by multiple enemies both from within and without. A student of war cannot but wonder as to how could he have won such a glorious victory against them under those circumstances! He did this by breaking the psychological bond, brittle as it was in its very conception and nature, that united the confederacy together in their common bid to annihilate the Muslims. Then came the treaty of Hudaibiyya, the full impact of which even the Muslims failed to understand in the initial stages. It gave the Muslims time to deal with the hostile tribes in North Arabia. It also isolated Mecca from the neighbouring tribes as

a result of which the city capitulated without offering much resistance.

Deliberating on the Holy Prophet's strategy, Muhammad Hamidullah writes, "In fact, the Prophet Muhammad always preferred, both as a general policy and as a point of principle, to overwhelm the enemy but not to annihilate him. The means thereto were twofold: bringing economic pressure to bear on the Quraishites, and increasing his own military might ceaselessly with a long-range policy. He struck at the right moment when the enemy would not dare offer any resistance and his objective could be reached in a bloodless manner. The resources and energies of the enemy, preserved intact, if redirected in better and constructive channels, could but add to the power of the Islamic State". If bloodlessness, the identification and application of all the elements of national power, the ability to locate and conquer the gravitational centre of war and the most judicious and effective application of the military instrument are the index of perfect strategy, then the Holy Prophet's war against the Pagans is its most shining example.

We also learn from these campaigns that no amount of physical and psychological pressure can work on a force whose faith remains unshaken. Conversely, even a minor psychological 'prank' played against an adversary with a brittle faith can result in his self-inflicted defeat. A Muslim army betraying weaknesses of faith is vulnerable to psychological attacks. When an entire army gets afflicted with panic, the steadfastness of a few dedicated souls can forestall a disaster or turn it into victory.

The most outstanding lesson which all these campaigns whether taken individually or collectively, teach us, is, that order to produce results, the Quranic philosophy of war demands a complete and total application. It cannot be applied in bits and pieces.

APPENDICES

THE HOLY PROPHET'S MILITARY CAMPAIGNS

Serial	Campaigns	Remarks
1. Pre-Badr Raids and Liaison Missions		
(a)	Sarya Saif-ul-Bahr	These operations covered the period from Ramzan 1 AH to Rajab 2 AH. Some of these raids/liaison missions were undertaken with the intention of keeping the caravan route under constant watch. The rest were undertaken for entering into treaties of friendship/neutrality with the neighbouring tribes. One of these raids was launched on Nakhla, between Tayef and Mecca, a distance of some 400 miles from Medina. The raid on Safwan was of a retaliatory nature. All these missions were undertaken with the help of Muhajirs only; almost all were bloodless.
(b)	Sarya Rabigh	
(c)	Sarya Dharrar	
(d)	Ghazwa Waddan/Abwa	
(e)	Ghazwa Bawwat	
(f)	Ghazwa Safwan	
(g)	Ghazwa Zul Ashir	
(h)	Sarya Nakhla	
2. Operations between Badr and Uhud		
(a)	Ghazwa Badr	These operations covered the period from Ramzan 2 AH to Shawwal 3 AH. This period started with the memorable
(b)	Sarya Umair Bin Addi	

- victory of Badr but culminated in the military defeat at Ohad. The Ansars took full participation in these battles. The battles of Banu Sulaim and Banu Suwaiq were of retaliatory nature. Banu Qunaiqa, one of the three branches of the Jews of Medina, who had played treachery during the battle of Badr, was expelled from the city. (The other two branches were Banu Nazir and Banu Quraiza of whom we shall hear later). The Koraish defeat at Badr deterred them from using the caravan route in future. Some of these missions were duels between two individuals or groups; others took the form of a show of force or the testing of muscles by the Meccans who had formed an alliance with the neighbouring tribes and were contemplating to invade Medina.
- (c) Sarya Alam Bin Umair
 - (d) Ghazwa Banu Qunaiqa
 - (e) Ghazwa Suwaiq
 - (f) Ghazwa Banu Sulaim
 - (g) Sarya Banu Sulaim
 - (h) Sarya Mohammad Bin Maslama
 - (i) Ghazwa Ghatfan
 - (j) Sarya Qarda
 - (k) Ghazwa Ohad

3. Between Ohad and Khandaq

- (a) Ghazwa Hamra-al-Assad
 - (b) Sarya Qutan
 - (c) Sarya Abdullah Bin Uwais
 - (d) Sarya Rajeeh
 - (e) Sarya Bir Moghuna
 - (f) Sarya Umroo Bin Ummaih
 - (g) Ghazwa Banu Nazir
- These operations covered the period from Shawwal 3 AH to Ziqad 5 A.H. During this period, the Muslims rose from their defeat at Ohad to win a great, almost bloodless, victory at Khandaq. The path to this victory was, however, difficult and hazardous. After their defeat at Ohad, their adversaries had concluded that the days of Islam were numbered. Accordingly, the enemy planned series of attacks on Medina,

but, in each case, the hostile concentrations were dispersed or destroyed by launching bold and aggressive attacks inside their territory. The Jewish tribe of Banu Nazir, which had broken its covenant with the Muslims, was expelled from Medina. Of particular note is the battle of Hamra-al-Assad; it was undertaken by the Holy Prophet on the day following Obad to prevent Abu Sufian from returning to invade Medina. Similarly, as promised to Abu Sufian after the battle of Obad, a mission was undertaken to Badr, a year later, but the Koraiash did not appear. Khandaq marked the end of Koraiash initiative to launch fresh operations against Medina.

These operations covered the period from Ziqad 5 AH to Muharram 7 AH. During this period, the neighbouring Pagan tribes and the Jews of North Arabia made several unsuccessful attacks on Medina. The day following Khandaq, Banu Quraiza, the last of the Jewish tribes of Medina, which had joined hands with the enemy, was annihilated almost to a man. After Badr, the Koraiash had switched over to the caravan route through Nejd for their trade with Syria and the Muslims struck them there also. The most important event of this period was the Treaty of Hudaibiyya, according to which, the Meccans and the

- (h) Ghazwa Badr (Last)
- (i) Ghazwa Domatul Jandwal
- (j) Ghazwa Banu Mustaliq
- (k) Ghazwa Khandaq

4. Between Khandaq and Khyber

- (a) Sarya Abdullah Bin Attique
- (b) Ghazwa Banu Quraiza
- (c) Sarya Qariza
- (d) Ghazwa Banu Lahyan
- (e) Ghazwa Qardz
- (f) Sarya Marzaq
- (g) Sarya Zul Qissa
- (h) Sarya Banu Salha
- (i) Sarya Yamoom
- (j) Sarya Taraf
- (k) Sarya Wadi Qatra

- (l) Sarya Domatual Jandal
- (m) Sarya Fidak
- (n) Sarya Qarda
- (o) Sarya Abdullah Bin Rawaha
- (p) Sarya Gharituseen
- (q) Sarya Umroo
- (r) Ghazwa Hodaibiyya
- (s) Ghazwa Khyber

Muslims entered into a treaty of peace with each other for a period of ten years. The treaty was later dissolved by the Koraish and this resulted in the Muslim conquest of Mecca, two years later.

5. Between Khyber and Mecca

- (a) Ghazwa Wadi Qarra
- (b) Ghazwa Zat-al-Rakka
- (c) Sarya Eiss
- (d) Sarya Qadid
- (e) Sarya Fidak
- (f) Sarya Hasmi
- (g) Sarya Tarya
- (h) Sarya Banu Qalab
- (i) Sarya Manqa
- (j) Sarya Kharba
- (k) Sarya Banu Marrah
- (l) Sarya Bashir Bin Saad
- (m) Sarya Ibn Abi Auya

These operations covered the period from Muharram 7 AH to Ramzan 8 AH. The most important event of this period was the bloodless conquest of Mecca. The Muslim attack on Mecca followed the break-up of the Treaty of Hoda'biyya by the Meccans, almost two years after its conclusion. The intervening period had, however, given the Muslims the freedom to deal with the Jewish tribes of North Arabia and to extend their influence in the tribes around Mecca.

- (n) Sarya Zat Aslah
- (o) Sarya Zat Araq
- (p) Sarya Muta
- (q) Sarya Zat Salasal
- (r) Sarya Saif-al-Behr—II
- (s) Sarya Muharrab
- (t) Ghazwa Mecca.

6. Between Mecca and Doma

- (a) Sarya Khalid bin Walid (I)
- (b) Sarya Umroo
- (c) Sarya Saad
- (d) Sarya Khalid bin Walid (II)
- (e) Ghazwa Hunain
- (f) Sarya Uyaina Bin Hasin
- (g) Sarya Qutaba Bin Amer
- (h) Sarya Zahak Bin Sulban
- (i) Sarya Abdullah Bin Khadafa
- (j) Sarya Banu Tay
- (k) Ghazwa Tabuk
- (l) Sarya Domatul Jandal

This was the final phase of the operations. It covered the period from Ramzan 8 AH to Rabi-al-Awwal 9 AH. The termination of this period brought the whole of the Arabian Peninsula under the religious as well as temporal authority of the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him). During this period, there was an initial testing of will and muscles between Muslim Arabia and the Roman Syria in the battles of Muta and Tabuk. In the battle of Hunain, fought close to Mecca, the Muslims suffered an initial set-back but recovered soon and were eventually successful.

Appendix II

*The Holy Quran on Badr***1. Describing the March of the Muslims from Medina**

Just as thy Lord ordered thee out of thy house in truth, even though a party among the Believers disliked it, disputing with thee concerning the truth after it was made manifest, as if they were being driven to death and they (actually) saw it.

*Anfal: 5-6***2. On 'The Divine Purpose behind the Battle'**

Remember ye were on the hither side of the valley, and they on the farther side, and the caravan on lower ground than ye. Even if ye had made a mutual appointment to meet, ye would certainly have failed in the appointment: but (thus ye met), that Allah might accomplish a matter already enacted; that those who died might die after a Clear Sign (had been given), and those who lived might live after a Clear Sign (had been given). And verily Allah is He Who heareth and knoweth (all things).

Anfal: 42

Behold ! Allah promised you one of the two (enemy) parties, that it should be yours: ye wished that the one unarmed should be yours, but Allah willed to justify the Truth according to His words, and to cut off the roots of the Unbelievers;—that He might justify and prove falsehood false, distasteful though it be to those in guilt.

*Anfal: 7-8***3. Outlining the Muslim Policy towards those who Broke their Covenants**

They are those with whom thou didst make a covenant, but

they break their covenant every time and they have not the fear (of Allah). If ye gain the mastery over them in war, disperse, with them, those who follow them, that they may remember.

If thou fearest treachery from any group, throw back (their covenant) to them, (so as to be) on equal terms: for Allah loveth not the treacherous.

Anfal: 56-58

4. On 'The Muslim Conduct during the Fighting'

O ye who believe! When ye meet a force, be firm, and call Allah in remembrance much (and often); that ye may prosper: and obey Allah and His Apostle; and fall into no disputes, lest ye lose heart and your power depart; and be patient and persevering: for Allah is with those who patiently persevere.

Anfal: 45-46

5. On 'The Divine will and its Imposition'

Remember in thy dream Allah showed them to thee as few: if He had shown them to thee as many, ye would surely have been discouraged, and ye would surely have disputed in (your) decision: but Allah saved (you) : for He knoweth well the (secrets) of (all) hearts.

And remember when ye met, He showed them to you as few in your eyes, and He made you appear as contemptible in their eyes: that Allah might accomplish a matter already enacted : for to Allah do all questions go back (for decision).

Anfal: 43-44

6. On 'The Strategy for War'

Let not Unbelievers think that they can get the better (of the Godly): they will never frustrate (them). 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, and others besides, whom ye may not know, but whom Allah doth know. Whatever ye shall spend in the Cause

of Allah, shall be repaid unto you, and ye shall not be treated unjustly.

Anfal: 59-60

7. On 'The Object of War'

And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah altogether and everywhere; but if they cease, verily Allah doth see all that they do. If they refuse, be sure that Allah is your Protector—the Best to protect and the Best to help.

Anfal : 39-40

8. Emphasising the Need for the Immediate Restoration of Peace

But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in Allah: for He is the One that heareth and knoweth (all things). Should they intend to deceive thee,—verily Allah sufficeth thee: He it is that hath strengthened thee with His aid and with (the company of) the Believers.

And (moreover) He hath put affection between their hearts: not if thou hadst spent all that is in the earth, couldst thou have produced that affection, but Allah hath done it : for He is Exalted in Might, Wise.

Anfal: 61-63

9. On 'The Virtues of Patience and Perseverance'

'O Apostle! rouse the Believers to the fight. If there are twenty amongst you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred: if a hundred, they will vanquish a thousand of the Unbelievers: for these are a people without understanding.

For the present, Allah hath lightened your (task), for He knoweth that there is a weak spot in you: but (even so), if there are a hundred of you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred, and if a thousand, they will vanquish two thousand, with the leave of Allah; for Allah is with those who patiently persevere.

Anfal: 65-66

10. On 'Godly Help and Assistance'

Remember ye implored the assistance of your Lord, and He answered you: "I will assist you with a thousand of the angels, ranks on ranks." Allah made it but a message of hope, and an assurance to your hearts: (in any case) there is no help except from Allah: and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.

Remember He covered you with a sort of drowsiness, to give you calm as from Himself, and He caused rain to descend on you from heaven, to clean you therewith, to remove from you the stain of Satan, to strengthen your hearts, and to plant your feet firmly therewith.

Remember thy Lord inspired the angels (with the message): "I am with you: give firmness to the Believers: I will instil terror into the hearts of the unbelievers: smite ye above their necks and smite all their finger-tips off them."

Anfal: 9—12

11. On 'The Prisoners of War and the Receipt of Ransom'

It is not fitting for an Apostle that he should have prisoners of war until he hath thoroughly subdued the land. Ye look on the temporal goods of this world; but Allah looketh to the Hereafter; and Allah is Exalted in Might, Wise. Had it not been for a previous ordainment from Allah, a severe penalty would have reached you for the (ransom) that ye took. But (now) enjoy what ye took in war, lawful and good: but fear Allah: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Anfal: 67—69

12. On 'The Spoils of War'

They ask thee concerning (things taken as) spoils of war. Say: "(Such) spoils are at the disposal of Allah and the Apostle: so fear Allah, and keep straight the relations between yourselves: obey Allah and His Apostle, if ye do believe."

Anfal: 1

13. Addressing the Pagans after their Defeat

(O Unbelievers!) if ye prayed for victory and judgement, now hath the judgement come to you: if ye desist (from wrong), it will be best for you: if ye return (to the attack) so shall We. Not the least good will your forces be to you even if they were multiplied: for verily Allah is with those who believe.

Anfal: 19

14. About 'The Divine Hand in the Battle'

It is not ye who slew them; it was Allah: when thou threwest (a handful of dust), it was not thy act, but Allah's: in order that He might test the Believers by a gracious trial from Himself: for Allah is He Who heareth and knoweth (all things). That, and also because Allah is He Who makes feeble the plans and stratagems of the Unbelievers.

Anfal: 17—18

15. About 'The Role and Conduct of Satan'

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."

Anfal: 48

16. Counselling the Believers about Unity and Cohesion in their Ranks

The Unbelievers are protectors, one of another: unless ye do this, (protect each other), there would be tumult and oppression on earth, and great mischief.

Anfal: 73

17. About 'The Impact of the Divine Aid to the Believers'

O Apostle! Sufficient unto thee is Allah,—(unto thee) and unto those who follow thee among the Believers.

Anfal: 64

THE BATTLE OF OHAD: A CASE STUDY

Serial	Date and Time	Action by the Koraish	Action by the Muslims	Remarks
1.	11 March 625 AD	Set out from Mecca along with the neighbouring Pagan tribes with the intention of destroying the Muslim community in Medina.		The enemy had a total of 3,000 well-equipped men, of whom 700 had coats-of-mail. There were 3,000 camels and a cavalry force of 200 horses. The Koraish army was commanded by Abu Sufian.
2.	11—20 March	(a) Moving in easy marches close up with Medina. (b) Encamp some distance away from the city on 20 March	A scout brings information about the enemy strength and location to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him).	

3. 21 March

Abu Sufian sends a message to the Ansars urging them to withdraw their support from the Muhajirs. The Koraish messenger pleads with the Ansars that, other than their support for Muhammad, the Meccans have no cause for waging a war against the Medinites.

The Ansars reject the Koraish proposal with contempt.

4. 22 March
(Morning)

Encamp near Ohad and prepare for the ensuing battle.

(a) Hold a council of war to decide on the choice of the battlefield.

(b) The Holy Prophet, Abdullah Pro
Abdullah
Under the Jews, the city of Medina had been turned into a fortress which a defending force could occupy with great advan-

tage.

Bin Ubay, the Jewish leader and a confederate of the Muslims, and some Muslim elders express their preference to fight from within Medina.

(b) The younger Muslims looked upon it as an act of cowardice to allow the Koraish to lay siege to Medina.

(c) The younger Muslims, particularly those who had not participated in the battle of Badr, prefer giving fight to the enemy from outside the city.

(c) The • Medinite Muslims particularly favoured fighting from within the city. They told the Holy Prophet that, even prior to Islam, no invader had succeeded in over-coming them whenever they accepted the siege

(d) The younger group, being in majority, wins and it is decided to

give fight to the
Koraish from
Ohad, three miles
from Medina.

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|
| 5. 22 March
(Afternoon) | Prepare for the battle.
A festive and confident mood prevails in the Koraish camp. | After Friday prayers, move to Ohad with 1,000 men including 300 Jews under Abdullah Bin Ubay. | The Jews were under treaty obligations to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Muslims against an enemy invading Medina. |
| 6. Night 22/23
March | No significant development other than preparation for the battle. | Spend the night at a place called Shutt, midway between Ohad and Medina. | |
| 7. 23 March | Prepare to move to the battlefield. | (a) Get up early in the morning and prepare to move to the battlefield. | (a) Prior to the move, the younger/majority group had second thoughts and requested the Holy Prophet to return to the city and fight |
| | | (b) Prior to the move, Abdullah Bin | |

- Ubay, the Jew, deserts with his contingent of 300 men on the pretext that his advice of fighting from inside Medina was not heeded to by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him).
- (b) It is possible that this realisation dawned on the majority group before leaving Medina, the previous day.
- (c) The Muslim Army had, by then, suffered three psychological setbacks:-
- (1) A feeling of guilt amongst the majority group for insisting on fighting from
- (d) The Holy Prophet addresses the Muslims and ins-
- Seeing the Jews desert, the two Muslim tribes of Banu Salma and Banu Haritha also contemplate desertion but later give up the idea.

pires them to fight with total dedication and submission.

outside Medina.

(2) The desertion of the Jews.

(c) Using their superior knowledge of the ground, move to the battlefield unnoticed by the Koraish.

(3) The contemplated desertion of the two Muslim tribes.

8. 23 March (Morning)

Arrange their ranks for the battle. Place their cavalry on the flanks under Khalid Bin Walid with Akrama Bin Abu Jehl as his assistant.

Arrange ranks for the battle. Place 50 Archers under Abdullah bin Jabeer on a hillock to overlook an exposed flank. The Holy Prophet directs the Archers not to leave their post under any situation.

9. 23 March (0800—1500 hrs) The battle commences. One after another, eight Koraish warriors challenge the Muslims for single combats. All the Koraish challengers are killed by the Muslims; eight by Ali, two by Hamza. The battle commenced in the morning and lasted till afternoon. It is difficult to reconstruct the actual timings of each event. However, all effort has been made to list them in the sequence in which they took place.
10. 23 March After their failure in the duels, advance to charge the Muslims. Engage the Koraish in a general fight. The melee sways to and fro, and the battle-field presents a confused picture.
11. 23 March Fail to make any dent in the Muslim ranks. Fighting with their characteristic zeal and determination, the Muslim army launches determined and full-blooded attacks upon the Koraish. The

Archers hold fast to their post and repel repeated enemy cavalry attacks on them.

(a) "It was Badr again, the Muslims were invincible".
Glubb.

(b) "The Meccan forces withdrew before the Muslim onslaught, perhaps, even fled".
Watt.

Unable to withstand the Muslim charge, begin to fall back under pressure.

Having almost overpowered the Koraish, give themselves in to the temptation of booty and loot. Seeing them, the Archers are also tempted to

The Koraish fail to put up any meaningful resistance to the Muslims and their withdrawal shows indications of turning into a rout.

12. 23 March

13. 23 March

leave their station and join the loot but their commander dissuades them from taking that dangerous step. A discussion ensues amongst the Archers whether to leave their station of duty or not.

14. 23 March

The Koraish Army is in a condition of near-panic and is about to commence retreat.

43 out of 50 Archers decide to vacate their post and join the loot.

15. 23 March

Khalid sees the mound vacant, attacks and occupies it.

The seven remaining archers put up a brave fight but are overpowered and killed.

16. 23 March

With the mound in his hands, Khalid attacks the Muslim army from the flank and rear. Seeing that

The realisation that the mound was in the enemy hands and that they had been attacked from their flank and

spectacular development, the retreating Koraish take heart and rearrange their ranks.

rear subjects the Muslims to shock and surprise. Those in depth change their front to meet Khalid.

17. 23 March

Emboldened by Khalid's successful attack, the Koraish army stages a dramatic recovery, arranges its ranks and launches a successful counter-attack on the Muslim front.

The two-pronged attack causes a great deal of confusion amongst the Muslim ranks. The army gets divided into small pockets with its command structure almost shattered.

18. 23 March

The Koraish army intensifies its two-pronged attack.

A state of utter confusion grips the Muslim army. Some Muslim soldiers are seen fleeing from the battlefield.

After the three psychological set-backs received by Muslims prior to their move to the battlefield in the morning, this was the next, the fourth 'shock'.

19. 23 March

Someone from the Muslims show Fifth psychological

mixed reaction to the shock for the Muslims.

Koraish ranks shouts that Mohamad has been killed. The news travels fast, to the utmost joy of the Koraish. Delighted, the Koraish army puts fresh blood and vigour into the fighting.

Some are terror-stricken and leave the battlefield. Others gear up their energies and prepare to meet that grave challenge. Anees Bin Nazir shouts to the fugitives, "Why are we alive. Come, let us die like the Apostle has died" Anees charges the enemy until he falls with seventy honourable wounds on his body. On balance, however, those that are terror-stricken exceed those who remain firm.

20. 23 March The Koraish keep pressing their attacks By thistime, some sixty Muslims take shelter Muslims lay dead on

and have the Muslims on the run in all directions.

in the rocky slopes of the range of Ohad behind them. The Holy Prophet is heard calling out to the fugitives 'Rally round me, O men of God', but to no avail. However, a small band of Muslims fighting with the Holy Prophet remains firm.

21 23 March

No change

A Muslim warrior named Ka'ab Bin Malik recognizes the Holy Prophet and shouts to the Muslims that he is alive but the Holy Prophet signals him to keep quiet.

22 23 March

A Koraish contingent locates the Holy Prophet. Under the volley

Muslim soldiers defend the Holy Prophet (peace be upon

of their arrows, it closes up and charges him with intentions to kill him.

him) display exemplary courage and sacrifice to guard their Leader

23. 23 March

Ibn-e-Qaima, the leader of the Koraish charging party, succeeds in inflicting wounds upon the person of the Holy Prophet and announces with joy that he has killed Mohammad. A wave of jubilation passes through the Koraish ranks.

The Holy Prophet is wounded and falls on the ground. The muslim warriors stand guard on him to ward off fresh Koraish assaults.

(a) Few Muslims, other than those with the Prophet, know about the injury caused to him. The previous rumour that the Holy Prophet is killed is the latest information with them.

(b) Abn -e- Qaima's confirmation of the Holy Porphet's death brings in a relaxation in the Koraish attack.

24. 23 March The Koraish rejoice at the news of the death of the Holy Prophet.
25. 23 March A Koraish warrior named Ibn Abi Khalf overtakes the Prophet's party and challenges him to a duel.
26. 23 March Abu Sufian closes up to the mound of Ohad but the Muslims keep him at bay. Is shocked to learn that the Holy Prophet is alive. Sings the praises of Hubal and Azza and
- (a) Meanwhile, the Koraish engage in mutilating the Muslims killed in the battle.
- (b) Sixth psychological shock for the Muslims.
- The Muslims lift their wounded Leader and move him towards the rocky side of Ohad, in a sheltered hollow.
- The Holy Prophet accepts the challenge and, with a spear borrowed from one Harith, inflicts a wound upon him. Ibn Khalf dies later that day.
- The Holy Prophet orders Omar Farooq to accept the challenge.
- As promised, the Holy Prophet did take a war party to Badr, the following year, but Abu Sufian did not appear there.

challenges the Muslims to another fight in the following year at Badr.

27. 23 March

Abū Sufian returns to his camp, without seeking fight with the Muslims. The Koraish begin to dismantle their camp.

(a) The Holy Prophet sends a small party led by Ali to watch the Koraish activities and ascertain the direction of their next move. The party confirms that the Koraish were heading for Mecca.

(b) Directs the Muslims to be ready to give another fight to the Koraish if the latter choose to invade Medina.

(c) The Muslim army prepares itself for this eventuality.

28. Night 23/24
March

The Koraish reach a place called Hamra-al-Asad, some

The Holy Prophet orders over the situation and comes to the con-

eight miles from Medina, and camp there for the night.

clusion that, inspite of their military victory, the Koraish have failed to achieve their political object of destroying the Muslims. He apprehends that they might have second thoughts on the subject and return to attack Medina. He, therefore, issues orders that all available Muslims would, under his leadership, follow the Koraish the next morning.

29. 24 March

True to the Holy Prophet's appreciation, the Koraish hold a war council to decide whether or not to return to conquer

With lightning speed, the Holy Prophet appears around Hamra -al-Assad.

(a) On learning of the Muslim force, the Koraish retreat in haste. The battle of Ohad is over.

Medina. Some notable Koraish personalities counsel a return to invade Medina and occupy it.

(b) The Muslim defeat at Ohad had misled the enemy into believing that Islam was on its way to extinction. Accordingly, all of them assumed hostile posture towards them, in an attempt to destroy them finally. It is worthy of note that, despite this precarious situation, the Holy Prophet (peace to upon him) never let the initiative to pass to his adversaries. Instead, he wrested it com-

pletely two years
later, after the
Koraish defeat at
Khandaq.

The Divine Critique on Ohad

1. On 'The Dispute Regarding the Choice of the Battlefield'

And consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision, put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him). If Allah helps you, none can overcome you: if He foresakes you, who is there, after that, that can help you? In Allah, then, let the Believers put their trust.

Al-i-Imran: 159-160

2. On 'The Meditation of Cowardice by Bann Salma and Bann Haritha'

Remember: two of your parties meditated cowardice; but Allah was their protector, and in Allah should the Faithful (ever) put their trust. Allah had helped you at Badr, when ye were a contemptible little force; then fear Allah; thus may ye show your gratitude.

Al-i-Imran: 122-123

3. Referring to the Prophet's Address after the Defection of Jews

Remember thou saidst to the Faithful: Is it not enough for you that Allah should help you with three thousand angels (specially) sent down? "Yea,"—if ye remain firm, and act aright, even if the enemy should rush here on you in hot haste, your Lord would help you with five thousand angels making a terrific onslaught." Allah made it but a message of hope for you; and an assurance to your hearts (in any case) there is no help except from Allah the Exalted, the Wise: that He might cut off a fringe of the Unbelievers or expose them to infamy, and they should

then be turned back, frustrated of their purpose.

Al-i-Imran: 124-127

4. On The State of Confusion Caused by the Lust for Booty

Behold! ye were climbing up the high ground, without even casting a side glance at anyone, and the Apostle in your rear was calling you back. There did Allah give you one distress after another by way of requital, to teach you not to grieve for (the booty) that had escaped you and for (the ill) that had befallen you. For Allah is well aware of all that ye do.

Al-i-Imran: 153

5 Referring to Rumours Regarding the Death of the Holy Prophet

Muhammad is no more than an Apostle: many were the Apostles that passed away before him. If he died or were slain, will ye then turn back on your heels? If any did turn back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah; but Allah (on the other hand) will swiftly reward those who (serve Him) with gratitude. Nor can a soul die except by Allah's leave, the term being fixed as by writing. If any do desire a reward in this life, We shall give it to him; and if any do desire a reward in the Hereafter, We shall give it to him. And swiftly shall We reward those that (serve Us with) gratitude.

Al-i-Imran: 144-145

6. On 'The Disaster Caused by the Koraish Counter-Attack'

How many of the Prophets fought (in Allah's way), and with them (fought) large bands of godly men? But they never lost heart if they met with disaster in Allah's way, nor did they weaken (in will) nor give in. And Allah loves those who are firm and steadfast.

All that they said was: "Our Lord! forgive us our sins and anything we may have done that transgressed our duty; establish

our feet firmly, and help us against those that resist Faith." And Allah gave them a reward in this world, and the excellent reward of the Hereafter. For Allah loveth those who do good.

Al-i-Imran: 146—148

So lose not heart, nor fall into despair: for ye must gain mastery if ye are true in Faith. If a wound hath touched you, be sure a similar wound hath touched the others. Such days (of varying fortunes) We give to men and men by turns: that Allah may know those that believe, and that He may take to Himself from your ranks martyr-witnesses (to Truth). And Allah loveth not those that do wrong.

Allah's object also is to purge those that are true in Faith and to deprive of blessing those that resist Faith.

Al-i-Imran: 139—141

7. Addressing those who were Terror-Stricken Due to Enemy Action

Add if ye are slain, or die in the way of Allah, forgiveness and mercy from Allah are far better than all they could amass. And if ye die, or are slain, Lo! it is unto Allah that ye are brought together.

Al-i-Imran: 157—158

Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the Presence of their Lord; they rejoice in the Bounty provided by Allah The (martyrs) glory in the fact that on them is no fear, nor have they (cause to) grieve.

Al-i-Imran: 169-170

8. Addressing the 'Majority Group

Did ye think that ye would enter Heaven without Allah testing those of you who fought hard (in His Cause) and remained

steadfast? Ye did indeed wish for Death before ye met him: now ye have seen him with your own eyes (and ye flinch).

Al-i-Imran: 142-143

9. On 'The Causes of the Muslim Defeat'

Those of you who turned back on the day the two hosts met,—it was Satan who caused them to fail, because of some (evil) they had done. But Allah has blotted out (their fault): for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing.

Al-i-Imran: 155

What! When a single disaster smites you, although ye smote (your enemies) with one twice as great, do ye say?—"whence is this?" Say (to them): "It is from yourselves: For Allah hath power over all things"

Al-i-Imran: 165

What ye suffered on the day the two armies met, was with the leave of Allah, in order that He might test the Believers.

Al-i-Imran: 166

Allah did indeed fulfil His promise to you when ye with His permission were about to annihilate your enemy,—until ye flinched and fell to disputing about the order and disobeyed it after He brought you in sight (of the booty) which ye covet. Among you are some that hanker after this world and some that desire the Hereafter. Then did He divert you from your foes in order to test you, but He forgave you: for Allah is full of grace to those who believe.

Al-i-Imran: 152

10 On The Divine Will and Its Accomplishment

After the (excitement) of the distress, He sent down calm on a band of you overcome with slumber, while another band was stirred to anxiety by their own feelings, moved by wrong suspicions

of Allah—suspicions due to Ignorance. They said: "What affair is this of ours?" Say thou: "Indeed, this affair is wholly Allah's." They hide in their minds what they dare not reveal to thee.

They say to themselves: "If we had had anything to do with this affair, we should not have been in the slaughter here". Say: "Even if you had remained in your homes, those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death, but (all this was) that Allah might test what is in your breasts and purge what is in your hearts: for Allah knoweth well the secrets of your hearts.

Al-i-Imran: 154

11. About those who Pursued Abu Sufian on the day following Ohad

Of those who answered the call of Allah and the Apostle, even after being wounded, those who do right and refrain from wrong have a great reward. Men said to them: "A great army is gathering against you:" and frightened them: but it (only) increased their Faith. They said: "For us Allah sufficeth, and He is the best disposer of affairs."

Al-i-Imran: 172-173

12. On 'The Enemy Propaganda after the Battle'

O ye who believe! if ye obey the Unbelievers, they will drive you back on your heels, and ye will turn back (from Faith) to your own loss.

Al-i-Imran: 149

13. On 'The Future'

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

Al-i-Imran. 179

Soon shall We cast terror into the hearts of the Unbelievers,
for that they joined companions with Allah, for which He had sent
no authority: their abode will be the Fire: and evil is the home of
the wrong-doers.

Al-i-Imran 151

Appendix V

*The Holy Quran on Khandaq***1 On 'The Siege of Medina and Its Impact'**

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 ye imagined various (vain) thoughts about Allah.

In that situation were the Believers tried: they were shaken as by a tremendous shaking.

Ahzab: 10—11

2. On 'The Divine Grace on the Muslims'

O ye who believe! remember the Grace of Allah, (bestowed) on you, when there came down on you hosts (to overwhelm you): but We sent against them a hurricane and force that ye saw not. But Allah sees (clearly) all that ye do.

Ahzab: 9

3. About the Attitude and conduct of the Hypocrites

And behold! The Hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease (even) say: "Allah and His Apostle promised us nothing but delusion!"

Behold! A party among them said: "Ye men of Yathrib! Ye cannot stand (the attack)! therefore go back!" And a band of them ask for leave of the Prophet, saying, "Truly our houses are bare and exposed," though they were not exposed: they intended nothing but to run away. And if an entry had been effected to them from the sides of the (City), and they had been incited to sedition, they would certainly have brought it to pass, with none but a brief delay!

And yet they had already covenanted with Allah not to turn their backs, and a covenant with Allah must (surely) be answered for.

Ahzab: 12—15

4. On 'The Inevitability of Death'

Say: "Running away will not profit you if ye are running away from death or slaughter; and even if (ye do escape), no more than a brief (respite) will ye be allowed to enjoy!"

Ahzab: 16

5. On 'The Divine Punishment/Mercy'

Say: "Who is it that can screen you from Allah if it be His wish to give you punishment or to give you Mercy?" Nor will they find for themselves, besides Allah, any protector or helper.

Ahzab: 17

6. Analysing the Psychology of the Hypocrites

Verily Allah knows those among you who keep back (men) and those who say to their brethern, "Come along to us," but come not to the fight except for just a little while.

Covetous over you, then when fear comes, thou wilt see them looking to thee, their eyes revolving, like (those of) one over whom hovers death: but when the fear is past, they will smite you with sharp tongues, covetous of goods. Such men have no faith, and so Allah has made their deeds of none effect: and that is easy for Allah.

They think that the Confederates have not withdrawn; and if the Confederates should come (again), they would wish they were in the deserts (wandering) among the Bedouins, and seeking news about you (from a safe distance); and if they were in your midst, they would fight but little.

Ahzab: 18—20

7. On 'The Psychology of the Believers'

When the Believers saw the Confederate forces, they said: "This is what Allah and His Apostle had promised us, and Allah and His

Apostle told us what was true." And it only added to their faith and their zeal in obedience.

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: that Allah may reward the men of Truth for their Truth and punish the Hypocrites if that be His will, or turn to them in Mercy: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Ahzab: 22—24

8. Referring to the Fate of the Unbelievers

And Allah turned back the Unbelievers for (all) their fury: no advantage did they gain; and enough is Allah for the Believers in their fight. And Allah is full of Strength, Able to enforce His Will.

And those of the people of the Book who aided them—Allah did take them down from their strongholds and cast terror into their hearts, (so that) some ye slew, and some ye made prisoners.

And I made you heirs of their lands, their houses, and their goods, and of a land which ye had not frequented (before). And Allah has power over all things.

Ahzab: 25—27

9. On 'The Personality of the Holy Prophet'

Ye have indeed in the Apostle of Allah a beautiful pattern of (conduct) for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the praise of Allah.

Ahzab: 21

Appendix VI

The Divine Verdict on Hodaibiyya

1. About 'The Treaty of Hodaibiyya'

Verily We have granted thee a manifest Victory: that Allah may forgive thee thy faults of the past and those to follow; fulfil His favour to thee; and guide thee on the Straight Way; and that Allah may help thee with powerful help.

Fath: 1-3

2. On 'The Divine Grace Upon The Believers'

It is He Who sent down Tranquillity into the hearts of the Believers, that they may add Faith to their Faith;—for to Allah belong the Forces of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is full of Knowledge and Wisdom.

That He may admit the men and women who believe, to Gardens beneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein for aye, and remove their ills from them;—and that is, in the sight of Allah, the highest achievement (for man).

Fath: 4-5

While the Unbelievers got up in their hearts heat and cant—the heat and cant of Ignorance,—Allah sent down His Tranquillity to His Apostle and to the Believers, and made them stick close to the command of self-restraint; and well were they entitled to it and worthy of it. And Allah has full knowledge of all things.

Fath: 26

3. On 'The Punishment of the Hypocrites and the Polytheists'

And that He may punish the Hypocrites, men and women, and the Polytheists, men and women, who imagine an evil opinion of Allah. On them is a round of Evil: the Wrath of Allah is on

them: He has cursed them and got Hell ready for them: and evil is it for a destination.

Fath: 6

4. On 'The Pledge of God's Good Pleasure'

Verily those who plight their fealty to thee do no less than plight their fealty to Allah: the Hand of Allah is over their hands: then anyone who violates his oath, does so to the harm of his own soul, and anyone who fulfils what he has covenanted with Allah,—Allah will soon grant him a great Reward.

Allah's Good Pleasure was on the Believers when they swore Fealty to thee under the Tree: He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down Tranquillity to them, and He rewarded them with a speedy Victory.

Fath : 10, 18

5. About 'The Fulfilment of The Prophet's Vision'

Truly did Allah fulfil the vision for His Apostle: ye shall enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah wills, with minds secure, heads shaved, hair cut short, and without fear. For He knew what ye knew not, and He granted, besides this, a speedy victory.

Fath : 27

6. About 'The Holy Prophet and His Companions'

Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah; and those who are with him are strong against Unbelievers. (but) compassionate amongst each other. Thou wilt see them bow and prostrate themselves (in prayer), seeking Grace from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure. On their faces are their marks, (being) the traces of their prostration. This is their similitude in the Taurat; and their similitude in the Gospel is: like a seed which sends forth its blade, then makes it strong; it then becomes thick, and it stands on its own stem, (filling) the sowers with wonder and delight. As a result, it fills the Unbelievers with rage at him. Allah has promised those among them who believe and do righteous deeds Forgiveness, and a great Reward.

Fath : 29

Appendix VII

*The Quranic Revelations on Tabuk*1. **About those who Avoided the Command for Fighting**

O Ye who believe! What is the matter with you, then, when ye are asked to go forth in the Cause of Allah, ye cling heavily to the earth? Do ye prefer the life of this world to the Hereafter? But little is the comfort of this life, as compared with the Hereafter. Unless ye go forth, He will punish you with a grievous penalty, and put others in your place; but Him ye would not harm in the least. For Allah hath power over all things.'

Tauba: 38—39

2. **On 'Godly Help and Assistance'**

If ye help not (your Leader), (it is no matter): for Allah did indeed help him: when the Unbelievers drove him out: he had no more than one companion: they two were in the Cave, and he said to his companion, "Have no fear, for Allah is with us": then Allah sent down His peace upon him and strengthened him with forces which ye saw not, and humbled to the depths the word of the Unbelievers. But the Word of Allah is exalted to the heights: for Allah is Exalted in Might, Wise.

Tauba: 40

3. **On 'Exemption From Fighting'**

Allah give thee grace! Why didst thou grant them exemption until those who told the truth were seen by thee in a clear light, and thou hadst proved the liars?

Tauba: 43

Those who believe in Allah and the Last Day ask thee for no

exemption from fighting with their goods and persons: and Allah knoweth well those who do their duty.

Tauba: 44

Only those ask thee for exemption who believe not in Allah and the Last Day, and whose hearts are in doubt, so that they are tossed in their doubts to and fro.

Tauba: 45

If they had intended to come out, they would certainly have made some preparation therefor; but Allah was averse to their being sent forth; so He made them lag behind and they were told, "sit ye among those who sit (inactive)"

Tauba: 46

If they had come out with you, they would not have added to your (strength) but only (made for) disorder, hurrying to and fro in your midst and sowing sedition among you, and there would have been some among you who would have listened to them: but Allah knoweth well those who do wrong.

Tauba: 47

Indeed they had plotted sedition before, and upset matters for thee,—until the Truth arrived, and the Decree of Allah became manifest, much to their disgust. Among them is (many) a man who says: "Grant me exemption and draw me not into trial." Have they not fallen into trial already? And indeed Hell surrounds the Unbelievers (on all sides).

Tauba: 48—49

There is no blame on those who are infirm, or ill, or who find no resources to spend (on the Cause), if they are sincere (in duty) to Allah and His Apostle: no ground (of complaint) can there be against such as do right: and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Tauba: 91

Nor (is there blame) on those who came to thee to be pro-

vided with mounts, and when thou saidst, "I can find no mounts for you," they turned back, their eyes streaming with tears of grief that they had no resources wherewith to provide the expenses.

Tauba: 92

The ground (of complaint) is against such as claim exemption while they are rich. They prefer to stay with the (women) who remain behind: Allah hath sealed their hearts; so they know not (what they miss).

Tauba: 93

4. On 'The Divine Decision About Those Who Shirked Fighting'

Those who were left behind (in the Tabuk expedition) rejoiced in their inaction behind the back of the Apostle of Allah: they hated to strive and fight, with their goods and their persons, in the Cause of Allah: they said, "Go not forth in the heat." Say, "The fire of Hell is fiercer in heat." If only they could understand!

Let them laugh a little: much will they weep: a recompense for the (evil) that they do.

Tauba: 81—82

If, then, Allah bring thee back to any of them, and they ask thy permission to come out (with thee), say: "Never shall ye come out with me, nor fight an enemy with me: for ye preferred to sit inactive on the first occasion: then sit ye (now) with those who lag behind."

Tauba: 83

Nor do thou ever pray for any of them that dies, nor stand at his grave: for they rejected Allah and His Apostle, and died in a state of perverse rebellion.

Tauba: 84

Nor let their wealth nor their (following in) sons dazzle thee: Allah's Plan is to punish them with these things in this world,

and that their souls may perish in their (very) denial of Allah.

Tauba: 85

When a Sura comes down, enjoining them to believe in Allah and to strive and fight along with His Apostle, those with wealth and influence among them ask thee for exemption, and say: "Leave us (behind): we would be with those who sit (at home)." They prefer to be with (the women), who remain behind (at home): their hearts are sealed and so they understand not.

Tauba: 86—87

5. On 'The Divine Promise to the Believers'

Allah hath purchased of the Believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the Garden (of Paradise): they fight in His Cause, and slay and are slain: a promise binding on Him in Truth, through the Law, the Gospel, and the Quran: and who is more faithful to his Covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain which ye have concluded: that is the achievement supreme.

Tauba: 111

Summary of Major Conclusions

During the first twelve years of the Holy Prophet's Mission in Mecca, the Muslims had neither been proclaimed an Ummah nor had they been granted the permission to take recourse to war. After their migration to Medina, a divine revelation declared them an Ummah and assigned them the new Ka'aba in Mecca, replacing the one in Jerusalem. Soon after their proclamation as an Ummah, the Faithful were commanded to take up arms against the Pagans.

The mission assigned to the Ummah emphasised its moderation, justice, righteousness, practicality and universality. It laid the foundations of the political, social, economic and military philosophies of the New State, and formed the basis of its policy and strategy. It also set in train a chain of divine revelations pertaining to state policy. As a part of its philosophy of war, the Holy Quran gave the Muslims the causes and object of war; its nature, characteristics, dimensions and ethics. The Book also spelt out its concept of military strategy and laid down its own distinctive rules and principles for the conduct of wars.

"War", writes Edward Meade Earle, "is not an act of God. It grows out of what people, statesmen and nations do or fail to do." Meade's thesis is fully representative of the traditional thinking on the subject. The Quranic view on war is, however, altogether different. According to the Book, the very initiation of war is for the Cause of God. It is, therefore, controlled and conditioned by the 'Word of God' from its conception till culmination.

The Quranic philosophy of war is fully integrated into the total Quranic Ideology. The Ideology provides the environments and conditions for the operation and application of this philosophy. Given these conditions and environments, the philosophy is infinitely effective; without them, it tends to lose much of its sharpness and might become altogether blunt.

The Quranic approach to war is not narrow and one-sided; its causes, and effects embrace the entire human race. According to the Book, war is waged to end repression and to obtain immediate conditions of justice and peace. The Holy Quran provides a practical and workable methodology for the implementation of this aim. The methodology is liberal and broad-based; it makes maximum allowance to the opponent to cooperate in the restoration of peace. When permitted, war aims at preserving and promoting, and not destroying, the human dignity and values.

'Jehad', the Quranic concept of total strategy, demands the preparation and application of total national power and military instrument is one of its elements. As a component of the total strategy, the military strategy aims at striking terror into the hearts of the enemy from the preparatory stage of war while providing effective safeguards against being terror-stricken by the enemy. Under ideal conditions, Jehad can produce a direct decision and force its will upon the enemy. Where that does not happen, military strategy should take over and aim at producing the decision from the preparation stage. Should that chance be missed, terror should be struck into the enemy during the actual fighting. At all stages, however, military strategy operates as an integral part of the total strategy and not independent of it; then and then alone can it attain its designated objective.

The Quranic philosophy of war is immensely rich in its moral and humanitarian contents. The Book prohibits the Muslims from transgressing the divine limits during the conduct of war.

It forbids them from practising the savage and inhuman ways and methods of warfare practised during the Days of Ignorance. Though permitted to follow the Law of Equality and Reciprocity in their dealings with their enemies, the Faithful are always counselled to prefer restraint and tolerance.

Within its permissible purpose and limits, the Book does not visualise war being waged with 'kid gloves'. It gives us a distinctive concept of total war. It wants both, the nation and the individual, to be at war 'in toto', that is, with all their spiritual, moral and physical resources. The Holy Quran lays the highest emphasis on the preparation for war. It wants us to prepare ourselves for war to the utmost. The test of utmost preparation lies in our capability to instil terror into the hearts of the enemies.

The ability to strike terror into the enemy or to withstand the enemy attempts to terrorise us are ultimately linked with the strength of our Faith. Practised in their totality, the Quranic dimensions of war provide complete protection to the Muslim armies against any psychological breakdown. On the contrary, weaknesses in our Faith offer inroads to the enemy to launch successful psychological attacks against us. It is on the strength of our Faith, and the weakness of that of our adversary, that we can initiate plans and actions calculated to strike terror into the hearts of our adversaries.

War must be waged with all our persons, goods, might and main. Decisions pertaining to war should be arrived at after extensive and thorough consultations. Once chosen, the aim must be kept uppermost and pursued through constant striving and struggle, patience and perseverance, firmness and steadfastness, unity of thought and action, devotion and sacrifice, willing obedience and discipline, aggressiveness and domination, and prayers and submission to the Will of God.

Divine help and aid is implicit in a war fought for the divine cause on the condition that we come up to the divine

standards fixed for waging it. God helps only those who help themselves. He does not shower His bountiful blessings upon any community of people as a matter of routine. War is as much a means of imposing our will upon the enemy as of giving a proof of our undaunted faith and devotion.

Divine in its basic concept but human in its evolution and application, the Quranic philosophy of war consists of both constant and variable factors. The main strength of this philosophy lies in its 'constants' which, in turn, provide direction and guidance for the evolution and application of the 'variables'. And inherent lacuna in the modern military thought is that it has few, if any, constants to base its theory and philosophy upon. Even the principles of war, the very essence of modern military thought, suffer from lack of constancy. Within the confines of its constants, the Quranic Philosophy can absorb a great deal of the variables of the modern philosophies on war.

The only constant and immutable factor in war is the human factor; and the Quranic constants are built around it. The Quranic philosophy of war bestows upon each fighting man, leader or soldier, so firm and dominating a personality as to acquire, absorb and apply all knowledge of war effectively. It trains and prepares the man, physically, mentally and spiritually, to withstand all crises or contingencies in war. The Book wants knowledge and the human personality to flourish hand in hand; it thus strikes a happy and harmonious balance between both.

The military campaigns undertaken or initiated by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) are 'institutions' for learning the Quranic art of war. Time has only enhanced, not dimmed, their practical value for our training and mental and spiritual development. The smallness of the numbers with which they were fought and the primitive nature of arsenal used in them should not mislead us into believing that they have no relevance in our age. At stake, in each of these campaigns, were decisions and

actions of a magnitude that mankind has seldom faced before or since. From the relatively limited study conducted in them in the book, we have deduced that the political aim should be attained through a coordinated and integrated use of the military, spiritual and diplomatic instruments. The smaller adversaries should be dealt with through diplomacy and the strongest confronted with military might. In the planning and conduct of wars, the adoption of the line of maximum decision often pays greater dividends. A small force can, by an intelligent utilization of its geo-political and geo-strategical situation, adopt superior policies than that of its superior adversaries. Faith is the main and the ultimate strength of a fighting force.

Here then is a philosophy of war that is supreme and distinctive in all its angles and aspects. Its Cause is the Cause of Allah; it is the cause of the weak, the ill-treated, the persecuted and the oppressed. Its object is the attainment of justice, peace and faith; it is an object that ensures the acquisition, preservation, and promotion of supreme human values. Its dimensions take into account the purpose behind the creation of Man and his ultimate destiny; they equip him to conquer the hazards of war. It contains a code of conduct for dealing with the humanitarian problems involved in war. Not only is this code infinitely rich in its moral contents but its observance is assured under the command of God. It gives a strategy of war that penetrates deep down to destroy the opponent's faith and render his physical and mental faculties totally ineffective. Towards this end, it prescribes its own rules and principles of war for the conduct of war.

To shower its unlimited strength and blessings on us, the one and only condition that it imposes upon us is its total acceptance and application on our part.

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Chronology

Birth of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him)	...	570 AD
Abraha's attack on Mecca (Year of the Elephant)	...	570 AD
Declaration of the Holy Prophet's Mission (Nabuwwat)	...	610 AD
Proclamation of Herculius as Roman Emperor	...	610 AD
Persian invasion of the Roman Empire	...	610 AD
Persian Conquests against the Romans		
a. Antioch	...	611 AD
b. Aleppo	...	611 AD
c. Damascus	...	611 AD
d. Jerusalem	...	615 AD
e. Egypt	...	616 AD
f. Tripoli	...	616 AD
g. Asia Minor	...	616 AD
Roman Counter—Offensive against Persia	...	622 AD
Roman Conquests against Persia		
a. Trebizond	...	622 AD
b. Cilician Gates	...	622 AD
c. Cappadocia	...	623 AD
d. Cilicia	...	624 AD
e. Kazvin	...	624 AD
f. Ganzaca	...	625 AD
g. Nineveh	...	627 AD

Assassination of Chosroes Parvez	... 627 AD
Conclusion of Peace between the Persians and the Romans	... 628 AD
Muslim Migration to Medina (Hijra)	... 622 AD
Proclamation of Ummah	... 622 AD
Issuance of Divine Command for Fighting	... 622 AD
Battle of Badr	... 624 AD
Battle of Ohad	.. 625 AD
Siege of Medina	... 627 AD
Treaty of Hodaibiyya	... 628 AD (February)
Conquest of Khyber	... 628 AD (June)
Pilgrimage to Mecca	... 629 AD (February)
Battle of Muta	... 629 AD (September)
Conquest of Mecca	... 630 AD (January)
Battle of Hunain	... 630 AD (April)
Expedition to Tabuk	... 630 AD (September)
The Holy Prophet's Death	... 632 AD

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