

**DARUL ULOOM TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  
A CONCISE COMMENTARY COURSE OF  
THE HOLY QURAAAN (2001-2020)**

Surah Al Fath states in verse 15:

**15. Those who lagged behind will say, when you set forth to take the spoils, "Allow us to follow you," They want to change Allah's Words. Say: "You shall not follow us; thus Allah has said beforehand." Then they will say: "Nay, you envy us." Nay, but they understand not except a little.**

The above verse refers to the expedition taken by the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Sahabahs (companions) towards the township of Khaibar. This a town situated approximately 90 miles north of Madinah and was colonized by the Jews. The spoils (of war) mentioned in the verse refers to that of Khaibar. Allah had promised the Prophet (ﷺ) and those companions who were present at Hudaibiyah that He would grant them victory of Khaibar and also give them the spoils of war. (Tafseer Al Qurtubi vol.16 pg. 230 Maktaba Rasheediya Queta)

In the above verse, Allah informs the Prophet (ﷺ) that those who 'lagged behind' and did not accompany him to Hudaibiyah, would soon want to join him and the other Muslims when they undertake the expedition to Khaibar. Allah had already promised those who were with the Prophet (ﷺ) at Hudaibiyah that He will grant them the spoils of war at Khaibar in exchange for what they could have received of the spoils of Makkah when they travelled with the Prophet (ﷺ) to Makkah for Umrah, but were stopped at Hudaibiyah. (Tafseer An Nasafi vol.3 pg. 338 Dar Ibn Katheer Beirut 2022)

Those who did not join the previous expedition from among the Bedouins and hypocrites found out about this large booty which the Muslims will receive at Khaibar, and so, with the desire to receive a share in the spoils (of war), they got prepared and came forward to join the expedition saying to the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Muslims, '**Leave us, let us join the expedition and follow you (to Khaibar)**'. Thus, while they willingly left out the previous expedition, they came out fully prepared to join this other expedition to Khaibar since they knew that they will be able to achieve a handsome booty (spoils).

Allah revealed their hidden intention and said to the Prophet (ﷺ), '**They want to change Allah's words**'. It means that they wish to change Allah's promise which He made to the companions who were at Hudaibiyah, that He would grant them the spoils of Khaibar. As for those who were not present at Hudaibiyah, they were not included in this promise made by Allah. Yet, they entertained the desire of getting a share of those spoils. Therefore, through their actions and intention, it was evident that they wanted to change Allah's promise.

In order to re-inforce His will and decree, Allah revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) saying, '**Say (to them), You shall not follow us**'. Here, the Prophet (ﷺ) was ordered by Allah to make it clear to them that they must not follow him and the Sahabahs to Khaibar, and he will not grant them permission to accompany him on that expedition, since they will get no share of the spoils. The verse further states, '**Thus Allah has stated from before**'. It means that this is what Allah has decreed and commanded even from before the Companions returned to Madinah from Hudaibiyah. He promised that the spoils (booty) of Khaibar will be granted only to those companions who were present at Hudaibiyah with the Prophet (ﷺ) when they were stopped from performing Umrah in Makkah. (Tafseer Al Qurtubi vol.16 pg. 231 Maktaba Rasheediya Queta; Tafseer An Nasafi)

The verse further states, '**Then they will say, 'Nay you envy us**'. Here, the verse explains that when the hypocrites were refused permission to join the expedition to Khaibar, they said to the Muslims that this prohibition is not Allah's command, it is only on account of their jealousy/envy for them.

Allah refutes their statement and says, '**Nay, but they understand not except a little**'. Here, Allah makes it known to the Prophet (ﷺ) and the sincere Muslims, that the statement of the hypocrites against them that they were jealous of them, is totally false and baseless. The truth is that the hypocrites themselves, possess only a very little understanding, and that too is only about material gains and worldly matters. It is for this reason, their sole intention for joining the expedition to Khaibar was to get a share of the spoils, and it was not for the sake of Allah or propagating the religion of Allah. (Tafseer Al Qurtubi vol.16 pg. 231 Maktaba Rasheediya Queta).

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Surah Al Fath states in verse 16

**16. Say (O Muhammad) to the Bedouins who lagged behind: "You shall be called to fight against a people given to great warfare, then you shall fight them, or they shall surrender. Then if you obey, Allah will give you a fair reward, but if you turn away as you did turn away before, He will punish you with a painful torment."**

In this verse, Allah instructs the Prophet (ﷺ) to inform the Bedouins who lagged behind in Hudaibiyah of a forthcoming expedition or battle which they will be called upon to participate in. Allah says to the Prophet (ﷺ), **Say (O Prophet) to the Bedouins who did not join the expedition to Makkah for Umrah : 'You shall be called to fight against a people given to great warfare (who had great strength)'**.

It means, 'You (O Bedouins) will be called upon to fight against a people of immense strength, then you shall fight them, or they shall surrender'. It means that you will either fight them, or they may surrender to you without a fight and accept Islam.

The verse further states, '**Then if you obey, Allah will give you a fair reward, but if you turn away as you did turn away before, He will punish you with a painful torment.**' Here, the Bedouins are informed that when called upon to fight, if they obey Allah and His Messenger and come out to fight the enemies, then Allah will grant them His help and the spoils in this world, and will reward them with Paradise in the hereafter. However, if they turn away and refuse to go out in the expedition as they did at the time of Hudaibiyah, then Allah will punish them with a severe and painful torment in the fire of Hell.

With respect to the 'people' who is referred to as 'a people of great strength' in the above verse, the commentators of the Holy Quran have given different interpretations. It is narrated from Abdullah bin Abbas (R.A), Ata bin Abi Rabah and others that it refers to the Persians. Hasan Basri (A.R) states that it refers to the Persians and the Romans. Ikrimah has stated that it refers to the tribes of Hawazin and Thaqeef. Qatada (A.R) says that it refers to the day of Hunain when the Bedouins were called to fight the tribes of Hawazin and Thaqeef. Other great scholars like Imam Zuhri states that 'the people of immense strength' refers to Banu Hanifah from Yamamah who supported their tribesman, Musailamah Al Kadhab (the liar) who claimed to be a prophet. Regarding this, the companion, Rafi bin Khadeej (R.A) said, 'By Allah, we used to recite this verse, which states, 'You shall be called to fight against a people given to great warfare (of immense strength) but we did not know who were these people. However, when Abu Bakr (R.A) ordered us to fight against the Banu Hanifah and Musailamah (the false prophet) during his Khilafah, we understood that the people of immense strength mentioned in the verse referred to them'. (Tafseer Al Qurtubi vol.16 pg. 231Maktaba Rasheediya Queta; Tafseer At Tabari vol. 26 pg. 96, 97 Dar Ihya At Turath)

Most of the commentators of the Holy Quran have stated that 'the people of immense strength' mentioned in the verse refers to Banu Hanifah, a tribe from Yamamah. They supported Musailamah, the false prophet and believed that he was a prophet. Abu Bakr (R.A) as the Khalifah, sent the Muslim army comprising of many Sahabahs and the Bedouins to fight against them in order to stop the spread of this great fitnah (mischief). In this battle, Musailamah, the liar was killed and many people of Banu Hanifah accepted Islam.