

Surah 22. Al-Hajj

Asad: PERMISSION [to fight] is given to those against whom war is being wrongfully waged⁵⁷ - and, verily, God has indeed the power to succour them -:

Malik: Permission to fight back is hereby granted to the believers against whom war is waged and because they are oppressed (before this revelation, Muslims were not allowed to fight even for self defence); certainly Allah has power to grant them victory

Pickthall: Sanction is given unto those who fight because they have been wronged; and Allah is indeed Able to give them victory;

Yusuf Ali: To those against whom war is made permission is given (to fight) because they are wronged and verily Allah is Most powerful for their aid²⁸¹⁶

Transliteration: Othina lillatheena yuqataloona biannahum thulimoo wainna Allaha AAala nasrihim laqadeerun

Khatab:

Permission ?to fight back? is ?hereby? granted to those being fought, for they have been wronged.¹ And Allah is truly Most Capable of helping them ?prevail?.

Author Comments

57 - Lit., "inasmuch as they have been wronged". Connecting with the promise, in the preceding verse, that "God will ward off [all evil] from those who attain to faith", the present verse enunciates the permission to fight physically in self-defence. All relevant Traditions (quoted, in particular, by Tabari and Ibn Kathir) show that this is the earliest Qur'anic reference to the problem of war as such. According to Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas, it was revealed immediately after the Prophet left Mecca for Medina, i.e., at the beginning of the year 1 H. The principle of war in self-defence - and only in self-defence - has been further elaborated in Al-Baqarah, which was revealed about a year later (see {2: 190-193} and the corresponding notes).

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For over thirteen years, Muslims had not been allowed to fight back against the brutality of the Meccan pagans, leading to the emigration of the Prophet and many of his companions to Medina. As the hostilities continued, this verse was later revealed allowing Muslims to fight back in self-defence.

2816 - Several translators have failed to notice that yuqataluna (in the best-approved texts) is in the passive voice, "against whom war is made", -not "who take arms against the unbelievers" as Sale translates it. The clause "and verily...their aid" is parenthetical. Verse 40 connects on with "they are wronged". The wrong is indicated: 'driven by persecution from their home, for no other reason than that they worshipped the One True God'. This was the first occasion on which fighting-in self-defence-was permitted. This passage therefore undoubtedly dates from Madinah.

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