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BARĀ'A: A STUDY OF SOME QURANIC PASSAGES

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Sūra IX opens with the proclamation of the *barā'a*. H. Grimme[1] and R. Bell[2] have suggested that it was proclaimed by Muḥammad shortly before the conquest of Mecca. Its main object was the renunciation of the treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyya signed by Quraysh and Muḥammad in 6H/628. Bell pointed out that the announcement of the *barā'a* "preceded the resumption of hostilities with Mecca."[3] F. Buhl suggested that the opening passage of our sūra does not renounce but rather reaffirms all treaties made with Muḥammad's allies.[4] Similarly, J. Wansbrough recently advanced the view that the term *barā'a* is a "reflex of *berit*" (Hebrew: covenant). In his view, the whole passage "provided the *locus probans* for juridical theory on the scope of secular treaty relations." The role of this passage is "similar to the role of legalistic and cultic elements in the formulation of the Hebrew covenant tradition."[5]

None of these views seem to accord with the evidence of Muslim sources. Grimme and Bell must be rejected in the light of the fact that Muḥammad, before the submission of Mecca, never announced the renunciation of the truce of al-Ḥudaybiyya. On the contrary, he rather tried to promote the impression that he stuck to it, in order to conceal his military preparations to take Mecca by surprise.[6] The views of Buhl and Wansbrough cannot be accepted since they are based on a misinterpretation of the wording of our sūra.

In the present paper a scrutiny of the Quranic text as well as of the relevant ex-Quranic material is undertaken, in order to try and elucidate the true meaning of the *barā'a*.

1 *Mohammed*, Münster 1892, I, 128 ff.
2 "Muhammad's pilgrimage proclamation", *JRAS*, 1937, 233 ff.
3 Art. cit., 238.
4 F. Buhl, "Zur Ḳurānexegese", *Acta orientalia* III, 1924, 99.
5 J. Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, Oxford 1977, 11-12.
6 See al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-maghāzī*, ed. J.M.B. Jones, London 1966, II, 792: *fa-qāla rasūlu llāhi (s): "fa-naḥnu 'alā muddatinā wa-ṣulḥinā yawma l-ḥudaybiyya, lā nughayyiru wa-lā nubaddilu"*.

I

Verse 1 of sūra IX reads:

براءة من الله ورسوله إلى الذين عاهدتم من المشركين .

barā'a from Allāh and His apostle (is given) to the *mushrikūn* with whom you (i.e., the Muslims) made treaties.

Verse 2 of our sūra is addressed directly to the *mushrikūn*:

فسيحوا في الارض أربعة أشهر واعلموا أنكم غير معجزي الله وأن الله مخزي الكافرين .

And go about safely in the land for four months and know that you cannot frustrate Allāh, and that Allāh is about to humiliate the non-believers.

The term *barā'a*, which was translated by Bell as "renunciation",[7] was correctly explained by Ibn al-A'rābī (d. 231H/844), as quoted in *Lisān al-'Arab*.[8] He says that the *barā'a* of our verse is derived from *bari'a* in the sense of *a'dhara* and *andhara* (i.e., manifested an excuse, and gave warning). Therefore the *barā'a* here has the meaning of *i'dhār* and *indhār*.[9] Lane[10] translated this verse accordingly: "a manifestation of excuse, and a warning from God and his apostle."

The root *b.r.'.* may indeed occur in close association with the root *'.dh.r.*[11] Like *a'dhara, bari'a* may mean accomplishing of all that is required, end of one's responsibility, and hence one's being excused from any further

7 Art cit., 242. Thus also Grimme op. cit., 129, who translated it as "Lossagung". See also F. Buhl, *Das Leben Muhammeds*, translated by H.H. Schaeder, Heidelberg 1961, p. 337. W. Muir in his *The life of Muhammad* (ed. T.H. Weir, Edinburgh 1923, p. 452) rendered it as "discharge". And see also R. Paret, *Der Koran Kommentar und Konkordanz*, Stuttgart 1971, 194: "Der Ausdruck *barā'a* wird im allgemeinen als "Aufkündigung" (eines Vertrages — Verhältnisses oder dgl.) gedeutet." Paret also noted that the term *barā'a* occurs also in Quran LIV/43, where it has the meaning of "Freibrief", "Privileg", and suggested that the *barā'a* in our verse be translated in the same way, as had already been done by Blachère and others. In this manner, the meaning is supposed to be that Allāh grants a "Freibrief" to the allied *mushrikūn*. But the special usage of prepositions in our sūra (see below) indicates that the "Freibrief" rests rather with Allāh, not with the allies.

8 S.v. "b.r.'."

9 *wa-bari'a idhā a'dhara wa-andhara. wa-minhu qawluhu ta'ālā: "barā'atun mina llāhi wa-rasūlihi", ay i'dhārun wa-indhārun.*

10 *An Arabic English Lexicon*, s.v. "b.r.'."

11 E.g., al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Quran*, Būlāq 1323H/1905, repr. Beirut 1972, XXI, 93: *allāhumma innī abra'u ilayka mimmā ja'a bihi hā'ulā'i l-mushrikūna wa-a'tadhiru ilayka mimmā ṣana'a hā'ulā'i, ya'nī l-muslimīna.*

duties.[12] *Bari'a* in this sense, when attached to *ilā*, like in our sūra, means that one gives notice to somebody else, and warns him that one is about to repudiate all one's previous obligations.[13] As soon as such a warning is given the duty is accomplished.

The meaning of the above two verses is therefore that Allāh and His apostle are hereby declared excused from all previous obligations with regard to all those *mushrikūn* who had treaties with the Muslims. These allied *mushrikūn* are given a four months notice to decide either to embrace Islam or to be "humiliated" by Allāh. In other words, the *barā'a* is a proclamation of the unilateral repudiation of all the treaties which Muḥammad signed with *mushrikūn*; these are to expire after a respite of four months. The immediate consequence of the repudiation of these treaties is that Muḥammad's former allies are left with no protection whatsoever. Therefore, the *barā'a* in our sūra is also explained as *inqiṭā' al-'iṣma*.[14]

This meaning of the *barā'a* was preserved in some-exegetic traditions. A tradition traced back to Ibn 'Abbās says that "Allāh allotted four months to those who entered into alliance with His apostle, to go about safely wherever they liked..."[15] A further tradition traced back to Ibn 'Abbās says that "Allāh fixed a period of four months for those who had had a treaty before the *barā'a* was delivered. He ordered them to go about safely for four months... Consequently, there was no (valid) treaty left for them, and no protection..."[16] According to al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim (d. 105H/723), Muḥammad had made alliances before the *barā'a* with some people of the *mushrikūn* from Mecca and elsewhere. Thereafter the *barā'a* was given by Allāh "to everyone who made a treaty with you from among the *mushrikūn*. I hereby repudiate the pact between you and them, and allot them a period of four months... The Prophet was ordered to fight them at the end of this period till they embraced Islam...."[17] Likewise, al-Suddī (d. 128H/745) explained that when the *barā'a* was announced, Muḥammad repudiated every treaty of the *mushrikūn*, and afterwards he made no more

12 E.g., al-Wāqidī, op. cit., II, 628: *qad bari'a Muḥammadun; mā kāna 'alā Muḥammadin aktharu mimmā ṣana'a*. Ibid., I, 288: *shudda 'alā yadī l-sayfa thumma bari'ta*.

13 Cf. e.g., al-Wāqidī, op. cit., I, 348: *thumma bari'ū ilayhi min jiwārihim*.

14 E.g., Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, Cairo 1328H/1910, V, 4; al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Quran*, Beirut 1961, X, 7; al-Khāzīn, *Libāb al-ta'wīl fī ma'ānī l-tanzīl*, Cairo 1317H/1899, II, 238; al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, Cairo n.d., repr. Tehran n.d., XV, 217.

15 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 43.

16 Loc. cit. And see also al-Ṭabarsī, X, 14.

17 al-Ṭabarī, loc. cit.

alliances (with other *mushrikūn*). He allotted all of them their *mudda* (see below), "and go about safely in the land for four months..."[18]

Verse 3 of our sūra contains another proclamation, the *adhān*, with which I have dealt elsewhere.[19] Its main object was to announce the end of the pre-Islamic sacredness of the holy months, and to declare a total war against all non-Muslims in whatever time or territory. The *adhān* which refers to the non-Muslims as a whole, is complementary to the *barā'a* which deals with just those non-Muslims who had made an alliance with the Prophet.

Verse 4 takes us back to the *barā'a*. It reads:

إلا الذين عاهدتم من المشركين ثم لم ينقصوكم شيئاً ولم يظاهروا عليكم أحداً ، فأتموا اليهم عهدهم إلى مدتهم . إن الله يحب المتقين .

> Except those *mushrikūn* with whom you made treaties, who thereafter have not come short in anything in regard to you, and have not supported anyone against you. As for them, respect their treaty till the end of their respite. God loves those who obey.

This exceptive sentence excludes the *mushrikūn* who had treaties with Muḥammad from the general *adhān* of the preceding verse. It means that the protection of the holy months is withdrawn from all non-Muslims except from those who had treaties, provided that they remained inoffensive. The latter shall retain the protection provided by their treaties until the end of their respite, *ilā muddatihim*. The term *mudda* is derived from *maddahu* in the sense of "granted him a delay, or respite."[20] *Mudda* is, therefore, a respite during which any hostile acts against each of the parties involved are forbidden, or rather delayed.[21] The *mudda* allotted to the inoffensive *mushrikūn* can only be the four months mentioned in verse 2. This is stated explicitly in a tradition traced back to Ibn 'Abbās.[22]

The whole passage concludes with verse 5:

فإذا انسلخ الأشهر الحرم فاقتلوا المشركين حيث وجدتموهم وخذوهم واحصروهم واقعدوا لهم كل مرصد . فإن تابوا وأقاموا الصلوة وآتوا الزكوة فخلوا سبيلهم . إن الله غفور رحيم .

18 Ibid., X, 44.

19 See "The great pilgrimage of Muḥammad", *JSS*, XXVII, 1982, 241 ff.

20 See Lane, op. cit., s.v., "m.d.d."

21 Several *muddas* were agreed upon between Muḥammad and the *mushrikūn*. One such *mudda* was fixed in the well-known treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyya. Another *mudda* was established between Muḥammad and 'Uyayna b. Ḥiṣn. See al-Ḥalabī, *al-Sīra al-Ḥalabiyya*, Cairo 1320H/1902, repr. Beirut n.d., II, 289 (reference from M. Lecker).

22 Abū Ḥayyān, op. cit., V, 8: *wa-'anhu ayḍan: "ilā muddatihim" — ila l-arba'ati l-ashhuri llatī fī l-āya.*

> And when the sacred months are over, kill the *mushrikūn* wherever you find them, and take them and surround them, and lie for them in wait in every spot. If they repent, and observe the *ṣalāt* and pay the *zakāt*, then leave them alone. Allāh is forgiving, compassionate.

This verse indicates that the respite allotted to the allied *mushrikūn* is to expire by the end of the sacred months of the year in which the *barā'a* was proclaimed. This is quite conceivable in the light of the fact that the number of the sacred months in the Arab calendar is indeed four (Sūra IX/36). It follows that the sacred months of verse 5 must be identified with the four months of verse 2. A tradition to this effect is recorded by al-Ṭabarī on the authority of Mujāhid (d. 104H/722).[23]

To sum up, in the verses just quoted the Quran proclaims total war against all Muḥammad's non-Muslim allies, which meant that by the end of the sacred months, when the respite was over, they must embrace Islam. Ibn Zayd (d. 182H/798) as quoted by Ibn Wahb (d. 197H/812) says: "Allāh allotted to them (i.e., to the allies) a respite of four months, and announced Himself clear of all the rest of the *mushrikūn*. Then He ordered: 'when these sacred months are over fight the *mushrikūn* wherever you find them.'"[24]

II

The proclamation of the *barā'a* marks a fundamental change in Muḥammad's attitude towards non-Muslims. In previous stages he was quite willing to establish close alliances with non-Muslims, even though they did not accept his religion.[25] Muḥammad signed with them various treaties which stipulated mutual defence and military cooperation. These non-Muslim allies took an active part in Muḥammad's raids, and had their own share in the booty. Allied Arab polytheists used to get a share according to what had been agreed upon before the battle.[26] Al-Zuhrī (d. 124H/742) relates that the Jews also used to participate in Muḥammad's expeditions, and their share in the booty was the same as that of the Muslims.[27] The proclamation of the *barā'a* indicates that at a certain stage, Muḥammad decided that all allies had to become full-scale Muslims. Islam was to substitute for the previous alliances as the sole basis for security and protection. Embracing Islam meant performance of *ṣalāt* and especially payment of *zakāt*.[28] *Ahl al-kitāb*, however, were exempted from becoming

[23] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 56-57.

[24] Ibid., X, 57 supra.

[25] Cf. for instance, M. Shaban, *Islamic history*, Cambridge 1977, I, 11 ff.

[26] 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A'ẓamī, Beirut, 1970, V, 189.

[27] Ibid., V, 188. Cf. al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ* (in al-Mālikī's *'Āriḍat al-aḥwadhī*) VII, 49.

[28] And see Shaban, op. cit., 14.

Muslims, provided that they paid the *jizya* which is mentioned in our very sūra (verse 29).

When the *barā'a* was proclaimed, all Quranic verses prescribing friendly relations with inoffensive non-Muslims were abrogated. Friendly relations with infidels, offensive and inoffensive alike, were forbidden. The only reward for the loyalty of the allied non-Muslims was a four months respite, after which they had to become full-scale Muslims.

One of these abrogated verses is II/190:

وقاتلوا في سبيل الله الذين يقاتلونكم ولا تعتدوا . إن الله لا يحب المعتدين .

Wage war in the way of Allāh (only) against those who wage war against you, and do not assail. Allāh does not like those who assail.

According to al-Rabī' b. Anas al-Bakrī (d. 139H/756), this was the first verse about war which was revealed to Muḥammad in al-Madīna. Thereby Muḥammad used to fight only those who waged war against him, and refrained from attacking those who did not attack him. Such was his conduct till the *barā'a* was revealed.[29] Ibn Zayd as well related that the above verse was abrogated by the opening passage of Sūra IX.[30] That was also the opinion of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110H/728) who said that when this verse was abrogated, all non-Muslims were given a respite of four months. When that period was over (Allāh) made it lawful to shed the blood of all of them, those who had treaties as well as the others.[31]

Another abrogated verse is VIII/61:

و إن جنحوا للسلم فاجنح لها . . .

And if they tend to peace, then tend to it...

Commenting on this verse, Qatāda (d. 118H/736) says: "...Each treaty mentioned in this as well as in other sūras, and each peace agreement which the Muslims had concluded with the *mushrikūn* in which they became allies, is abrogated by the *barā'a*. (Allāh) ordered to fight them in any case till they say: 'there is no God but Allāh'."[32]

Another verse which was abrogated by the *barā'a* is IV/90:

. . . فإن اعتزلوكم فلم يقاتلوكم وألقوا إليكم السلم فما جعل الله لكم عليهم سبيلا .

29 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, II, 110.

30 Loc. cit.

31 al-Khāzīn, op. cit., II, 239.

32 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 24: *...wa-kullu 'ahdin kāna fī hādhihi l-sūrati wa-fī ghayrihā wa-kullu ṣulḥin yuṣāliḥu bihi l-muslimūna l-mushrikīna, yatawāda'ūna bihi, fa-inna barā'ata jā'at bi-naskhi dhālika, fa-umira bi-qitālihim 'alā kulli ḥālin ḥattā yaqūlū: 'lā ilāha illā llāhu'.*

> And if they keep away from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allāh has not given you the right to assail them.

According to 'Ikrima (d. 105H/723) and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, this verse was abrogated by the first five verses of our sūra; Allāh "gave them four months to go about freely in the land, and abolished all that had been (concluded) previously."[33] According to Ibn Zayd, all that is stated in the above verse was abrogated by the order of *jihād*. Allāh allotted to them four months to decide either to embrace Islam or to be subjected to *jihād*.[34]

Another suspended verse is LX/8:

لا ينهاكم الله عن الذين لم يقاتلوكم في الدين ولم يخرجوكم من دياركم أن تبروهم وتقسطوا إليهم . إن الله يحب المقسطين .

> God does not forbid that you be loyal and righteous towards those who did not fight you in religion and did not drive you out from your abode. God loves those who are righteous.

According to Ibn Zayd, this verse was abrogated when the Muslims were ordered to turn their swords against the *mushrikūn*. Allāh allotted them a respite of four months to choose between being slaughtered and embracing Islam.[35]

A further abrogated verse is to be found in sūra IX, the very sūra of the *barā'a*. this verse, 7, seems to be earlier than the *barā'a*, although located after it.[36]

Verse 7 reads:

... إلا الذين عاهدتم عند المسجد الحرام ، فما استقاموا لكم فاستقيموا لهم . إن الله يحب المتقين .

> Except those with whom you have made a treaty near the sacred mosque (i.e., the Ka'ba). As long as they remain loyal to you, you have to remain loyal to them. Allāh loves those who obey.

According to Ibn Zayd, this verse refers to Quraysh. It was abrogated by the (four) months which were allotted to them. But they had embraced Islam long before the respite expired.[37]

33 Ibid., V., 126.

34 Loc. cit.

35 Ibid., XXIII, 43.

36 See e.g., al-Suhaylī, *al-Rawḍ al-unuf*, ed. 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Sa'd, Cairo 1973, IV, 201: "The scholars of *tafsīr* say that the end of this sūra was delivered before its beginning." According to Mujāhid, the earliest verse of our sūra is 25. See Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, Islamabad n.d., I, 275.

37 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 59.

Inoffensive and allied *mushrikūn* were deprived not only of the protection of their treaties but also of the protection of the *ḥaram* and the sacred months, which actually had been removed from all non-Muslims when the *adhān* was proclaimed (see above). Sūra II/191 reads:

... ولا تقاتلوهم عند المسجد الحرام حتى يقاتلوكم فيه . فإن قاتلوكم فاقتلوهم ...

> And do not fight them at the sacred mosque till they fight you there; if they fight you, then kill them.

Commenting on this verse, Qatāda says: 'Allāh ordered His prophet not to fight them near the sacred mosque, unless they were first to start fighting. Then Allāh abolished it through the verse: "And when the sacred months are over, kill the *mushrikūn* wherever you find them..." Allāh ordered His prophet to fight them, by the end of the respite, in the *ḥill* as well as in the *ḥaram* and near the House, till they confess."[38]

Verse 5 of our sūra, which was adduced by Qatāda in the tradition just quoted, is indeed most crucial. This verse is known as *āyat al-sayf* or *āyat al-qitāl*. According to al-Ḍaḥḥāk, this verse repealed all sorts of pacts between Muḥammad and the *mushrikūn* as well as all contracts and all truce agreements.[39]

III

The announcement of the *barā'a* could have taken place only in a relatively late phase in Muḥammad's career, when most of his military projects in the Meccan vicinity had already been accomplished. When Mecca was conquered in 8H/630, there were still some great objectives ahead of him; the expeditions to Ḥunayn and al-Ṭā'if were yet to be made, as well as raids on the great tribes of Tamīm, Khath'am, Kilāb and others.[40] Once these military projects had been accomplished, the importance of Muḥammad's treaties with several pagan tribes of the Meccan vicinity was considerably reduced. Muḥammad was no longer dependent on the cooperation of these allies, and thus the way was finally open to terminate all treaties with those allied tribes who, under the protection of their treaties, still refrained from becoming full scale Muslims.

The immediate circumstances in which the *barā'a* was announced can be deduced from some instructive reports preserved in Muslim sources. A

38 Ibid., II, 112.

39 Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Quran al-'aẓīm*, repr. Dār al-Fikr n.d., II, 336; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, Cairo 1314H/1896, repr. Beirut n.d., III, 213. Cf. Wansbrough, op. cit., 184-185.

40 For the chronology of these expeditions see al-Wāqidī, op. cit., I, 6-7.

passage in al-Rāzī[41] and al-Khāzin[42] reads:

> It is related that when the Prophet set out to the raid on Tabūk and the *munāfiqūn* stayed behind and spread bad rumours, the polytheists started breaking their treaty, therefore the apostle of Allāh repudiated their treaty.[43]

Not less instructive is the way in which al-Suddī interpreted the *barā'a*. He says that verse 4 of our sūra refers to Banū Ḍamra and Banu Mudlij; they were two clans from Banū Kināna. They were Muḥammad's allies in *ghazwat al-'usra* (= Tabūk). The phrase "*fa-atimmū ilayhim 'ahdahum ilā muddatihim*" refers to their respite which you (i.e., the Muslims) allotted to them ("*ajaluhumu llādhī sharaṭtum lahum*"). Al-Suddī concludes his interpretation with the statement that from that time onwards, the prophet made no more treaties with anybody.[44]

The conclusion to be drawn from the passages just quoted is that the *barā'a* was announced as a result of some events connected with Muḥammad's expedition to Tabūk. Among those allies whose treaties were then terminated were the tribes of Ḍamra and Mudlij. These tribes had special relations with Muḥammad. Watt's *Muhammad at Medina* contains a passage about these two tribes:

> In the first year or two after the Hijrah Muḥammad's chief aim must have been to gain friends, so that, when he and his followers went on expeditions, they could move about freely without fear of being molested. On an expedition in 623/2 he is said to have made a treaty with Mudlij[45] and Ḍamrah.[46] These two parts of Kinānah were presumably disaffected towards the Meccans, and therefore ready to undertake not to attack the Muslims. They may also have helped Muḥammad by passing on information.[47]

These tribes were quite eager to maintain their treaties. During the expedition of Badr al-mī'ād (4H/626) the representative of Ḍamra who had signed the treaty with Muḥammad reaffirmed his adherence to it, in order to ensure the protection of his tribe against Muḥammad's attack.[48]

41 Op. cit., XV, 217.

42 Op. cit., II, 238. See also Abū Ḥayyān, op. cit., V, 5.

43 *wa-ruwiya anna l-nabiyya (ṣ) lammā kharaja ilā ghazwati Tabūk wa-takhallafa l-munāfiqūna wa-arjafū bi-l-arājīfi, ja'ala l-mushrikūna yanquḍūna l-'ahda, fa-nabadha rasūlu llāhi (ṣ) l-'ahda ilayhim.*

44 al-Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 212. The text of al-Suddī's interpretation of verse 4, as recorded by al-Ṭabarī (*Tafsīr*, X, 55), is very concise: "*fa-atimmū ilayhim 'ahdahum ilā muddatihim*" — *yaqūlu: ilā ajalihim.*

45 Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, Beirut 1960, II, 10.

46 Ibid., II, 8; al-Wāqidī, op. cit., I, 12.

47 W.M. Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, Oxford 1956, 84, and see also Buhl, op. cit., 235-236.

48 al-Wāqidī, op. cit., I, 388.

Members of Ḍamra took part in Muḥammad's expeditions to Mecca,[49] Ḥunayn,[50] and Tabūk.[51] The loyalty of these tribes to Muḥammad was demonstrated particularly shortly before the conquest of Mecca, when Khuzā'a, Muḥammad's allies, were attacked by Banū Bakr. It is reported that Mudlij refrained from taking part in this attack, thus remaining faithful to the truce of al-Ḥudaybiyya.[52] The text of Muḥammad's treaty with Ḍamra has been preserved by Ibn Sa'd.[53] It is mainly a defence agreement providing for military cooperation, signed for an unlimited time, with no traces of any religious obligations. The agreement applied to those members of Ḍamra who were "loyal and obedient (to the terms of the treaty)".[54]

The above-quoted passages about Tabūk indicate that about the time of this expedition, Muḥammad repudiated the treaties of the above-mentioned allies. The reason for this decisive step can be deduced from the reports about this expedition. Tabūk is located on the Syrian border, and Muḥammad's raid on it which is dated to 9H/631, seems to have been one of the first far reaching raids on foreign forces outside Arabia. In this case the intention was to fight the Byzantines.[55] Large passages in sūra IX are devoted to this expedition. In these passages mention is made of those who "stayed behind" and of those who tried to excuse themselves from coming to Tabūk (see especially verses 38-39; 42 ff; 81 ff; 90 ff; 117 ff). These were various groups from al-Madīna as well as from Arab tribes from its vicinity. Verse 90 speaks of A'rāb who are labeled as *mu'adhdhirūn*, i.e. those who try to excuse themselves. According to Mujāhid and Ibn 'Abbās, they were a group from the clan of Ghifār, and the Prophet did not accept their excuse.[56] Ghifār is a great sub-division of Ḍamra; it is also mentioned alongside Juhayna, Aslam and Ashja' in the interpretations of verse 101

49 Ibid., II, 799, 820.

50 Ibid., III, 896.

51 Ibid., III, 990.

52 E.g., ibid., II, 783.

53 Op. cit., I, 274-275. See also Watt, op. cit., 354; M. Hamidullah, *Majmū'at al-wathā'iq al-siyāsiyya*, Cairo 1941, 143-144; idem., *Le Prophète de l'Islam*, Paris 1959, 284.

54 "*alā man barra minhum wa-ittaqā*", the verb *ittaqā*, like *barra*, denotes faithfulness to oaths and treaties. See Quran, III/76: "*man awfā bi-'ahdihi wa-ittaqā*". See further M.M. Bravmann, *The spiritual background of early Islam*, Leiden 1972, 117. Watt's translation of this clause ("for whoever of them is just and pious") seems to be erroneous.

55 For this expedition see for instance, Buhl, op. cit., 322 ff.

56 See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 144; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq al-tanzīl*, Cairo 1385H/1966, II, 207; al-Ṭabarsī, op. cit., XI, 117; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li-aḥkām al-Qurān*, Cairo 1967, VIII, 225; al-Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 266-267; and see also Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, ed. al-Saqqā al-Abyārī, Shalabī (I-IV), repr. Beirut 1971, IV, 162; al-Wāqidī, op. cit., III, 995.

which speaks of the A'rāb who were *munāfiqūn*.[57] Some members of Ghifār as well as of their confederates from Aslam, were actually absent from Tabūk, and Muḥammad expressed his dismay at their absence.[58]

It seems that the reluctance to come to Tabūk, as well as the actual absence of some of Muḥammad's best allies, brought about his decision to repudiate their treaties through the *barā'a*. Allied *mushrikūn* were to become full-scale Muslims. As such they would have to submit to Muḥammad's authority in all respects, and supply warriors, whenever demanded to do so, to all expeditions in whatever territories. In a way, the proclamation of the *barā'a* may be regarded as a preparation for a new phase in the Muslim expansion, far beyond the surroundings of Mecca and al-Madīna. The *barā'a* was intended to tighten the relations of all groups with the Muslim *umma*, and concentrate all these forces for the new goals of Islam.

Another remarkable interpretation of the *barā'a* is that of Mujāhid. Commenting on verse 4 he says: "Banū Mudlij and Khuzā'a had a treaty, and this is referred to in the verse 'and complete their treaty up to the end of their respite.'"[59] Hence it is clear that among those to whom a respite of four months was allotted, was also the tribe of Khuzā'a. This is corroborated in the interpretation of Muqātil (d. 150H/767) of verse 1. He says that the *mushrikūn* (to whom the *barā'a* was given) were of three tribes: Khuzā'a, Mudlij and Khuzayma.[60] The name of Khuzā'a recurs also in some interpretations of Quran XL/8 which, as seen above, was abrogated by the *barā'a*. According to Ibn 'Abbās, the two Muqātils (i.e., Ibn Sulaymān and Ibn Ḥayyān), and al-Kalbī (d. 146H/763), the abrogated verse refers to Khuzā'a. "They had made a treaty with the Prophet in which they undertook not to fight him and not to drive him out. The Prophet was ordered to be loyal till the end of the time of their respite."[61]

[57] See al-Zamakhsharī, op. cit., II, 211; al-Ṭabarsī, op. cit., XI, 130; al-Qurṭubī, op. cit., VIII, 240; al-Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 271. And see also R.B. Serjeant, "The Sunna Jāmi'ah" *BSOAS*, XLI (1978) p. 12. These tribes are mentioned also among the *mukhallafūn* of al-Ḥudaybiyya. See e.g., al-Wāqidī, op. cit., II, 574, 619; see also the commentaries on sūra XLVIII/11-16. On the other hand, the tribes of Ghifār, Aslam, Muzayna, Juhayna and Ashja' are mentioned also in laudatory traditions ascribed to the Prophet, which might indicate that in other cases the Prophet had every reason to be satisfied with the conduct of these tribes. For these traditions see al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Cairo 1958, IV, 220 ff.; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Cairo 1334H/1915, VII, 176 ff.

[58] Ibn Hishām, op. cit., IV, 173; al-Wāqidī, op, cit., IV, 1002; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, repr. Beirut 1974, V, 19.

[59] al-Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 212 (from Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

[60] Abū Ḥayyān, op. cit., V, 5. Khuzayma, like Mudlij and Ḍamra, is a clan of Banū Bakr of Kināna. See e.g., al-Ṭabarsī, op. cit., X, 20; al-Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 212. It is sometimes written Jadhīma, instead of Khuzayma. See e.g., al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 58.

[61] al-Rāzī, XXIX, 304: *...wa-hum Khuzā 'a, kānū 'āhadū l-rasūla (ṣ) 'alā an lā yuqātilūhu wa-lā yukhrijūhu, fa- umira al-rasūlu 'alayhi-l-salāmu bi-l-birri wa-l-wafā'i ilā muddati ajalihim.*

The nature of the relations between Khuzā'a and Muḥammad can be gauged from the following statement of al-Wāqidī: "They (i.e., Khuzā'a) were Muḥammad's confidential advisers in the Tihāma (i.e., the vicinity of Mecca and al-Madīna), some of them being Muslims, others being (just) allied, and they did not hide from him anything happening in the Tihāma."[62] The alliance between Khuzā'a and Muḥammad was based on an ancient treaty which was said to have been made between Khuzā'a and 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Muḥammad's grandfather. In this treaty both parties had undertaken to support each other for ever. The document of the treaty had been signed in Dār al-nadwa and was kept in the Ka'ba.[63] This very document was brought by Khuzā'a to Muḥammad at al-Ḥudaybiyya, and Muḥammad ratified it.[64] When Khuzā'a, who joined the truce of al-Ḥudaybiyya as Muḥammad's allies, were attacked by Bakr, shortly before the submission of Mecca, a representative of Khuzā'a came to al-Madīna and asked for Muḥammad's support in accordance with the ancient treaty of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib.[65] That Muḥammad was greatly interested in bringing all the sections of Khuzā'a into Islam, not being content with the already existing treaty of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, is indicated in a letter he wrote to Budayl Ibn Warqā', Khuzā'a's chief, who dwelt in Mecca. In this letter, Muḥammad made clear to Budayl that he had never violated their covenant and urged him and his tribe to become *muhājirūn*. He stressed that Khuzā'a were the most honourable and closest to him in blood relations of all the people of the Tihāma.[66] Al-Wāqidī, although stating that already after al-Ḥudaybiyya (6H/628) all members of Khuzā'a embraced Islam,[67] reports at the same time that the letter to Budayl was written as late as Jumādā l-ākhira, 8H/630, which means that shortly before the conquest of Mecca, large sections of Khuzā'a were still regarded as *mushrikūn*, hence the letter urging them to embrace Islam.[68] According to al-Zuhrī, Budayl

62 al-Wāqidī, op. cit., II, 593, 730; Ibn Hishām, op. cit., III, 326. On Khuzā'a see further M.J. Kister, s.v. "Khuzā'a", *EI* (new ed.).

63 See Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Munammaq fī akhbār Quraysh*, Hyderabad 1924, 88 ff.; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, ed. M. Hamidullah, Cairo 1959, I, 70-71; Ibn Sa'd, op. cit., I, 85; Hamidullah, *Wathā'iq*, 151-152; idem., *Le Prophète*, 299 ff.

64 al-Wāqidī, op. cit., II, 781-782; al-Ḥalabī, op. cit., III, 70-71.

65 E.g., Ibn Hishām, op. cit., IV, 36; al-Wāqidī, op. cit., II, 789; Ibn Sa'd, op. cit., IV, 294; al-Balādhurī, op. cit., I, 353.

66 al-Wāqidī, op. cit., II, 749-750; Ibn Sa'd, op. cit., I, 272-273; Hamidullah, *Wathā'iq*, 153; idem., *Le Prophète*, 306. Muḥammad's letter was reportedly handed down by Budayl to his posterity. See Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥāba*, ed. al-Bijāwī, Cairo 1972, I, 277.

67 al-Wāqidī, op. cit., II, 749.

68 See also Ibn Sa'd, op. cit., IV, 294: *kataba ilayhi l-nabiyyu (ṣ) wa-ilā Bushr b. Sufyān yad'ūhumā ilā l-islām*.

himself embraced Islam only on the submission of Mecca.[69] The above traditions about the *barā'a* lead to the conclusion that quite a considerable time after Mecca had been conquered, at least some sections of Khuzā'a were still *mushrikūn*, to whom the *barā'a* was finally given.

IV

The proclamation of the *barā'a* is recorded in the Quran in close association with the *adhān* (verse 3). This brought about the creation of numerous traditions relating that both the *barā'a* and the *adhān* were announced on one and the same occasion, i.e., on *yawm al-ḥajj al-akbar*, which is mentioned in the Quran as the time for the *adhān*. The respite of four months was counted from that *ḥajj* onwards.[70] In a separate paper[71] I have tried to show that *al-ḥajj al-akbar* stands for Muḥammad's farewell pilgrimage (10H/632). Some traditions dealing with the proclamation of the *adhān* during that pilgrimage, mention also the *barā'a*. The *ṣaḥābī* Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī related that Muḥammad had proclaimed: "No one will enter paradise except a Muslim, and no naked man will perform the *ṭawāf*, and no *mushrik* will approach the sacred mosque when this year is over. Whoever has been given a respite by the prophet, his respite (shall be fulfilled) to (the end of) his allotted period."[72]

However, the greater part of the traditions relate that the *adhān* as well as the *barā'a* were proclaimed not by Muḥammad himself, but rather by other persons who acted in his name. This was reportedly carried out already during an earlier pilgrimage, the one conducted by Abū Bakr in 9H/631. This dating of *al-ḥajj al-akbar* is secondary, but as far as the *barā'a* is concerned, it is more accurate, being closer in time to Muḥammad's expedition to Tabūk. The following tradition about Abū Bakr's *ḥajj* was recorded by al-Bukhārī: "...Abū Bakr terminated the treaties of the people in that year, and in the year of *ḥajjat al-wadā'*, during which the prophet made his pilgrimage, no *mushrik* performed the *ḥajj*."[73]

69 Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī'āb fī ma'rifat al-aṣḥāb*, ed. al-Bijāwī, Cairo 1960, I, 150. And see further Hamidullah, *Le Prophète*, 307.

70 The respite was counted from the 10th of Dhū l-ḥijja (= *yawm al-naḥr)* till the 10th of Rabī' al-ākhar. This period was said to be "sacred", because fighting against the *mushrikūn* was then forbidden. The end of the proper sacred months was said to mark the end of a 50 days respite, allegedly allotted to the rest of the *mushrikūn*. See e.g., al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 42 ff., 44, 56-57. According to al-Zuhrī, however, the *barā'a* had already been proclaimed before the "great *hajj*", so that the respite of four months was to expire at the end of the proper sacred months, that is, the end of Muḥarram. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 44-45; al-Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 211.

71 See above, note 19.

72 al-Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 227.

73 al-Bukhārī, op. cit., IV, 124. See also Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-bārī sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Būlāq, 1310H/1883, repr. Beirut n.d., VIII, 241; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, V, 37-38; al-Suyūṭī,

Shī'ī traditions assign the proclamation of the *barā'a* to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. He was reportedly ordered by Muḥammad to follow Abū Bakr and his fellow pilgrims and perform the task himself. The following tradition was also recorded by al-Bukhārī:[74] Abū Hurayra is said to have related: "Abū Bakr sent me among heralds which he sent during that pilgrimage, on *yawm al-naḥr*, to announce at Minā that no *mushrik* would perform the *ḥajj* after that year, and that no naked person would perform the *ṭawāf*. Meanwhile, the Prophet sent after us 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, having ordered him to announce the *barā'a*..."

In some further traditions 'Alī's proclamation is recorded in more detail. These versions preserve the original meaning of the *barā'a*, being a proclamation reducing all treaties of Muḥammad's allies to a respite of four months. One of these traditions was recorded by al-Ṭabarī on the authority of al-Sha'bī (d. 103H/721). It is traced back to Abū Hurayra who reportedly said: "I was with 'Alī when the Prophet sent the *barā'a* with him to the people of Mecca. I was shouting till I lost my voice... We were ordered to announce that no one except a believer would enter paradise, and that whoever had a treaty with the Prophet, his respite would last for four months (*fa-ajaluhu ilā arba'ati ashhurin*), and when this period was completed, Allāh would be clear of the polytheists, and also His messenger..."[75] Another version was recorded by al-Bayhaqī in his *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, on the authority of 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr (d. 94H/713). This tradition runs as follows: "The messenger of Allāh sent Abū Bakr as leader of the *ḥajj* in the ninth year, and he wrote for him the laws of the pilgrimage. He sent 'Alī with verses from the *barā'a* and ordered him to proclaim at Mecca, at Minā, at 'Arafa and at all the stations that the protection of the Prophet was withdrawn from every *mushrik* who made the pilgrimage after that year, or made the *ṭawāf* naked, and that the respite allotted to those who had treaties was four months (*wa-ajalu man kāna baynahu wa-bayna rasūli llāhi (ṣ) 'ahdun arba'atu ashhurin*)".[76] A different version of quite a similar sense

Durr, III, 211; al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ 'alā l-mawāhib al-laduniyya li-l-Qasṭallānī*, Cairo 1329H/1911, repr. Beirut n.d., III, 92.

74 Op. cit., VI, 81.

75 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 46. See also al-Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 209; al-Suhaylī, op. cit., IV, 200; al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak 'ala l-ṣaḥīḥayni*, Hyderabad 1342H/1923, II, 331; al-Ṭabarsī, op. cit., X, 10; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, II, 333; Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, VIII, 241. In an additional version of the tradition of al-Sha'bī, the four months are not mentioned explicitly. 'Alī is said to have proclaimed that whoever made a treaty with Muḥammad, his treaty would continue up to his allotted respite (*fa-'ahduhu ilā ajalihi*). See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 46. In another version of 'Alī's proclamation, the clause referring to the treaty is: *fa- ajaluhu ilā muddatihi* (ibid. 46-47, 53).

76 al-Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 210 (from al-Bayhaqī).

was recorded by al-Tirmidhī.[77] It is traced back to Ibn 'Abbās. 'Alī reportedly declared that the protection of Allāh and His apostle was withdrawn from all polytheists, and "go about safely in the land for four months", and that "no *mushrik* would perform the *ḥajj* after that year..."

Some traditions about 'Alī's proclamation have preserved also the names of the tribes to whom the *barā'a* was given. A tradition of Mujāhid which is transmitted through Ibn Jurayj (d. 150H/767) runs as follows: "The *barā'a* of Allāh and His messenger (was given) to the allies, Mudlij and the Arab allies. The Prophet returned from Tabūk after having finished (the raid on it), with the intention to perform the *ḥajj*. Thereupon he said: 'the *mushrikūn* approach the House in performing the *ṭawāf* naked; I do not wish to make the *ḥajj* before this is stopped.' Thereby he sent Abū Bakr and 'Alī and they wandered among the people at Dhū l-majāz and at their places where they used to trade and perform the rites of the pilgrimage; they declared to the allies that they would be secure during four months — these were the following sacred months, from the tenth of Dhū l-ḥijja until the tenth of Rabī' al-ākhar — afterwards they would no longer have a treaty. They proclaimed war against the people as a whole unless they became believers. Thereupon, all the people became believers, and no one used the respite."[78]

The last clause in this tradition suggests that the proclamation of the *barā'a* brought about the subsequent Islamization of Muḥammad's pagan allies. Since Mecca and its surroundings came under Muḥammad's full control, they had no other choice.[79]

In a second version of Mujāhid's tradition, as transmitted through Ibn Abī Najīḥ (d. 131H/748) it is stated that the *barā'a* was given to Khuzā'a, Mudlij and others.[80]

V

The *barā'a* deals with the alliances which Muḥammad had made with various non-Muslim tribes. It announces the unilateral repudiation of these alliances. Some scholars of early Islam could not accept the idea that the Quran indeed contained a declaration of this total and extreme nature. The view of Muslim scholars was that tolerance towards inoffensive *mushrikūn* was always recommended, and that the Quranic verses to that effect

77 Op. cit., XI, 232.

78 *Wa-lam yasiḥ aḥadun* — literally: "no one went about safely" (al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 44).

79 According to al-Suddī, the *mushrikūn*, upon hearing 'Alī's proclamation, intended to declare war against Muḥammad, but then said to each other: "what can we actually do, now that Quraysh have embraced Islam?" Thereupon they also embraced Islam. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 47.

80 Mujāhid, *Tafsīr*, I, 271; al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 44; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, II, 332.

were never abrogated.[81] Not only was it recommended to spare the lives of inoffensive women, children etc., but also to adhere to the treaties with non-believers, as long as the latter remained inoffensive. This view was based on a famous precedent in Muḥammad's own career, namely the treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyya (6H/628).The fact that Muḥammad made a treaty with Quraysh when they were still *mushrikūn*, led Muslim scholars to hold that it always remained lawful to make treaties with inoffensive *mushrikūn*, provided that they were to the benefit of the Muslims and concluded for only a specified period, as was the treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyya.[82]

In order to bear out this concept, the *barā'a* had to be supplied with a new, more adequate meaning, which would be applicable to the case of al-Ḥudaybiyya. In the following interpretation which is traced back to Qatāda, the *barā'a* is presented as though referring to this particular treaty, urging the Muslims to respect this treaty to its full extent. Qatāda reportedly said: "The Prophet made a treaty with the *mushrikūn* of Quraysh at the time of al-Ḥudaybiyya, and on *yawm al-naḥr* (= the day of the great pilgrimage) there remained four months of their *mudda*. Allāh commanded His prophet to respect their treaty until the (end of) their *mudda*... He repudiated the treaties of each of his allies, and ordered to fight them till they testified that there was no God except Allāh and that Muḥammad was His apostle. He would not agree to anything less than that."[83] In this interpretation, it is suggested that although the *barā'a* marked the end of the treaties of all Muḥammad's non-Muslim allies, the treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyya was not repudiated. The respite of four months was in fact, the remaining portion of the original *mudda* of this truce.

Qatāda's solution was not sufficient. The treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyya had been signed before the conquest of Mecca, and when the *barā'a* was announced in 9H/631, Quraysh were already converted.[84] Therefore it was necessary to find a more flexible meaning which would present the *barā'a* as though prescribing the full adherence to all other temporary treaties, not just to the one of al-Ḥudaybiyya. Eventually it was contended that the *mudda* of the *mushrikūn*, as mentioned in verse 4, represented the specified period of any treaty which was due to expire in either less or more than four months. Thus, a tradition traced back to Mujāhid and other unnamed authorities, which interprets verse 4, says that the Prophet made treaties

81 See e.g., al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, XXVIII, 43 (on sūra XL/8); II, 110-111 (on II/190).

82 The treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyya was signed for 10, 2, 3 or 4 years. See Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, V, 251; al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, Beirut 1960, II, 54.

83 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 43, 55. The same interpretation is also traced back to Ibn 'Abbās. See al-Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 212,

84 See further Abū Ḥayyān, op. cit., V, 9.

with some people for a certain specified period, and he was ordered by Allāh to be faithful to these treaties.[85] This meaning of verse 4 seems to form the *ijmā'* of Muslim exegetes, and in some commentaries this is the only interpretation given.[86] Modern scholars also conceived the *mudda* in the same manner. Grimme translated: "...ihnen haltet ihre Verträge bis zu ihren Frist," and explains that "Gott erklärt, nichtsdestoweniger allen andern Heiden ihre Verträge zu halten."[87] Similarly, Bell translated: "Their covenant fulfill up to (the end of) its period."[88] It seems that these scholars were unaware of the fact that if the *mudda* really denoted the time of the treaty itself (*'ahdahum*), the Quran would have rather had *ilā muddatihi* (to its period), not *ilā muddatihim*, as it actually has. Besides, as seen above, the treaties of Muḥammad's pagan allies were not temporary ones, but rather unlimited in time.

The view that verse 4 recommends the fulfillment of the treaties to their full extent, leaves unsolved the question to whom the four months mentioned in verse 2 were allotted. Muslim exegetes tried to answer it in various ways. According to Ibn Isḥāq (d. 150H/767) verses 1-2 deal with *mushrikūn* who had unlimited (*'āmm*) treaties with Muḥammad, to whom a respite of four months was allotted. Verse 4 deals, according to Ibn Isḥāq, with *mushrikūn* who had limited (*khāṣṣ*) treaties, signed each for a specified period. Their treaties were all to be completely fulfilled.[89]

This explanation of Ibn Isḥāq still suggests that the treaties of at least part of the allies were arbitrarily reduced to a respite of four months. Therefore, this interpretation could not survive. According to Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 146H/763), verses 1-2 refer only to those *mushrikūn* who had treaties signed for less than four months. Their treaties were extended to four months. As for the rest of the allies, each of their treaties was to be completed to its specified term (verse 4).[90]

The final solution was arrived at by the division of the non-Muslim allies into two groups: offensive and inoffensive. The *barā'a*, i.e., the respite, was said to have been given to the former, to the exclusion of the latter. In other words, the *barā'a* was said to have repudiated only the treaties of those non-Muslims who had violated them, whereas the treaties of those who

85 Ibid., 8: *qāla Mujāhid wa-ghayruhu: hum qawmun kāna baynahum wa-bayna l-rasūli (ṣ) 'ahdun li-muddatin fa- umira an yafiya lahum.*

86 E.g., al-Ṭabarsī, op. cit., X, 14: *"ilā muddatihim": ay, ilā inqiḍā'i muddatihim allatī waqa'ati l-mu'āhadatu baynakum ilayhā.* And see also al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta'wīl* Cairo 1955, I, 192.

87 Grimme, op. cit., 130 in the footnote.

88 Bell, art. cit., 242.

89 Ibn Hishām, op. cit., IV, 188; al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 42.

90 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 45.

were loyal, remained valid to their full extent. In this manner, the exceptive sentence of verse 4 was detached from verse 3 (the *adhān*) and was connected, instead, with verse 2. Al-Zajjāj (d. 311H/923) says: "This sentence (i.e., verse 4) is related to the *barā'a* (verses 1-2), and the meaning is: *barā'a* is given by Allāh and His messenger to the allied *mushrikūn*, except those who have not violated their treaty."[91] Explaining the term *barā'a*, al-Zajjāj says: "This means that Allāh and His apostle are exempt from the duty to be faithful to the treaties (of the *mushrikūn*), because the latter have violated them."[92] The distinction between inoffensive and offensive *mushrikūn* underlies the following tradition which is recorded on the authority of Ibn Sa'd, being traced back to Ibn 'Abbās. It reads: "The period allotted to those who had had treaties before the *barā'a* was revealed, consisted of four months... if they violated their treaties and supported an enemy (against Muḥammad), there was to be no treaty for them (after the four months). If they remained loyal to their treaty with the Prophet, and did not support anyone against him, the Prophet was ordered to respect their treaty and be loyal to it."[93] Al-Ṭabarī supports this view. He states that the respite of four months was meant for those allied *mushrikūn* who violated their treaties, whereas the treaties of those who remained loyal were to be fulfilled completely.[94] This opinion was adopted also by later commentators.[95]

Tribes like Ḍamra and Mudlij fell, of course, under the sub-division of inoffensive allies, due to the numerous reports about their special relations with the Prophet (see above). But the view that the *barā'a* was confined only to offensive allies entailed the exclusion of precisely these tribes from the *barā'a*. Al-Farrā' (d. 207H/822) says: "Allāh excluded from His *barā'a* and from the *barā'a* of Muḥammad tribes of Kināna and Ḍamra; there remained nine(!) months of their treaty, and Allāh ordered to fulfill this portion, because they did not support anyone against the believers and did not violate the treaty of the Prophet."[96] Similarly, a tradition traced back to Ibn 'Abbās relates that when 'Alī proclaimed the *barā'a*, he told Banū

91 al-Rāzī, op. cit., XV, 223. And see further Abū Ḥayyān, op. cit., V, 8.

92 al-Ṭabarsī, op. cit., X, 8: *qāla l-Zajjāju: ma'nāhu: qad bari'a llāhu wa-rasūluhu min i'ṭā'ihim l-'uhūda wa-l-wafā'i lahum bihā, idh nakathū.* See also al-Zamakhsharī, op. cit., II, 172; al-Khāzīn, op. cit., II, 238; al-Bayḍāwī, op. cit., I, 192.

93 See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 55. And see also al-Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 212, where only the second part of this tradition is recorded.

94 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 45.

95 E.g., al-Zamakhsharī, op. cit., II, 174, who explains the exception of verse 4 as follows: *...wa-l-istithnā'u bi-ma'nā l-istidrāki, ka-annahu qīla ba'da an umirū fī l-nākithīna: wa-lākin alladhīna lam yankuthū, fa-atimmū ilayhim 'ahdahum wa-lā tujrūhum mujrāhum wa-lā taj'alū l-wafiyya ka-l-ghādiri.*

96 al-Ṭabarsī, op. cit., X, 13-14 (from al-Farrā'). The same interpretation is also traced

Ḍamra, Kināna and Sulaym that Allāh excluded them.[97] Likewise, the only interpretation quoted by al-Zamakhsharī,[98] al-Bayḍāwī,[99] al-Rāzī[100] and al-Ālūsī[101] concerning the *barā'a* is that Muḥammad made treaties with the *mushrikūn* of Mecca and with others, and they all violated their treaties except Ḍamra and Kināna. Therefore, Muḥammad denounced the treaties of those who had violated them, and gave them a respite of four months. Thus, a meaning which is just the opposite of the original one has been adopted by most commentators.

The same process of re-interpretation of the *barā'a* may be detected in additional versions of the proclamation ascribed to 'Alī. In some of these versions the respite of four months is isolated from the *mudda* of verse 4, which is taken to signify the original time of each treaty. In a tradition recorded by Ibn Isḥāq on the authority of Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn it is stated that 'Alī allotted to the people a respite of four months, except to those who had treaties signed for a specific period. The treaties of the latter were to be fulfilled to the end of their period.[102] This tradition reflects the principle of distinction between unlimited (*'āmm*) and limited (*khāṣṣ*) treaties (see above). The following version reflects the same solution. 'Alī reportedly stated that whoever had a (treaty of) a specified time will have his time completed, and whoever did not have (a treaty of) a specified time, his time will be four months.[103]

Other versions simply omit all reference to the respite of four months, and thus the Quranic *mudda* might be taken as though signifying just the original specified period of each treaty. According to a version quoted by al-Ṭabarī from several authorities, 'Alī proclaimed: "whoever had a treaty with Muḥammad, his treaty will last until the end of its *mudda* (*"fa-'ahduhu ilā muddatihi"*).[104] In the following version even the quranic *mudda* is

back to Ibn 'Abbās. See al-Zamakhsharī, op. cit., II, 175. And see also al-Khāzin, II, 242; al-Rāzī, op. cit., XV, 224; Abū Ḥayyān, op. cit., V, 8.

97 Abū Ḥayyān, loc. cit.

98 Op. cit., II, 172.

99 Op. cit., I, 192.

100 Op. cit., XV, 218.

101 al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī*, repr. Beirut n.d., X, 42.

102 Ibn Hishām, op. cit., IV, 190-191. Cf. al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 47.

103 al-Ṭabarsī, op. cit., X, 10: *wa-man kāna lahu muddatun fa-huwa ilā muddatihi, wa-man lam yakun lahu muddatun fa-muddatuhu arba'atu ashhurin.* In a similar version, 'Alī is said to have proclaimed that whosoever had a treaty with Muḥammad, his treaty should be fulfilled to its period, and he who did not have a treaty, his respite was four months. See al-Tirmidhī, op. cit., XI, 233-234; al-Ṭabarsī, op. cit., X, 10; al-Khāzin, op. cit., II, 240; Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, VIII, 239; al-Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 210. The last clause in this version is somewhat awkward, as it suggests that the four months were allotted to those who did not have any treaty at all, which does not tally with the wording of verse 1.

104 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 45, 46, 47, 53; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, II, 331 said of this version: *wa-hādhā aḥsanu l-aqwāli wa-aqwāhā.*

completely missing. This version is traced back to the *ṣaḥābī* Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ. According to this version, 'Alī declared: "whoever made a treaty with Muḥammad, will continue to have his treaty" ("*fa-huwa ilā 'ahdihi*").[105] The following version is the most straightforward. 'Alī was reportedly ordered to fulfill the treaties of all allies ("*wa-an yutimma ilā kulli dhī 'ahdin 'ahdahu*").[106] This tradition is the one that was preferred by later exegetes, and in some commentaries this is the only tradition cited.[107]

By thus re-interpreting the *barā'a* and reshaping the proclamation of 'Alī, Muslim *tafsīr* completed its task. Sūra IX was finally presented as prescribing the declaration of war against allied *mushrikūn* on two conditions only: a. when the allies violate their treaties, these treaties should be abrogated after a respite of four months; b. when the allies remain loyal to their treaties, war may be waged on them only when the original term of their treaty is over.[108]

[105] al-Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 209. The same version is traced back to Abū Hurayra as well (ibid., 209).

[106] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, X, 47.

[107] al-Zamakhsharī, op. cit., II, 172-173; al-Bayḍāwī, op. cit., I, 192; al-Rāzī, op. cit., XV, 218.

[108] Sometimes a third condition is added: declaration of war may abrogate treaties with *mushrikūn*, if it had been previously agreed that the treaty may be brought to an end through a special divine revelation. For the three conditions see e.g., at-Ṭabarsī, op. cit., X, 8; al-Rāzī, op. cit., XV, 218.