

- 2:84. And remember We took your covenant [saying]: Do not shed one another's blood or drive one another from your homes, and you confirmed it, and you bear witness to that.
- 2:85. Yet here you are, killing one another and driving a group of your own people out of their homes, helping their enemies against them, in sin and transgression; and if they come to you as captives, you ransom them, when it was forbidden for you to expel them in the first place! Do you believe only in part of the Book and deny another part of it? The punishment for those among you who do this will be nothing but disgrace in this world and on the Day of Resurrection they will be condemned to the harshest punishment. For Allah is not unaware of what you do.
- 2:86. These are the people who buy the life of this world at the cost of the hereafter; their penalty will not be reduced nor will they be helped.
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The deeds referred to in these verses are the deeds of those who lived in Madinah at the time of the revelation. Before the Prophet's mission began, al-Aws and al-Khazraj – who became the *Anṣār* – were polytheists who used to fight one another according to the customs of the *jāhiliyah* (pre-Islamic period). Three Jewish tribes – Banu Quraydhah, Banu an-Naḍeer and Banu Qaynuqâ' – came and settled there, and each of these tribes became allies of a group of the people of Madinah.

When they fought, each Jew would help his ally against his opponents, who had the help of another Jewish group. So one Jew might kill another or expel him from his home, in the event of expulsion and plunder. Then, when the war ended and there were prisoners on both sides, they would ransom one another.

These three things were enjoined upon them: they were instructed not to shed one another's blood or expel one another, and if there were