

mean: if you fight them in the sacred month, but they are the ones who started the fight and were the aggressors, then you are not to be blamed for fighting back.

According to this understanding, the words «violation of any sanctity calls for fair retribution» come under the heading of stating a general principle after a specific one. In other words, with regard to everything that is to be venerated, whether it is a sacred month, a sacred land, being in the state of *ihrām* or anything more general than that, everything that Sharia enjoins us to venerate, if anyone transgresses against it, then there should be retribution against him. The one who fights during the sacred month is to be fought; the one who violates the sacred city should be subjected to the *ḥadd* punishment and has no protection in the sacred place; the one who kills his peer is to be killed in return; the one who wounds another or severs his limb is to be subjected to legal retribution; the one who takes the wealth of another unlawfully should have an equivalent amount taken from him.

But can the one who is in the right take as much as he is entitled to, or not? There is a difference of scholarly opinion concerning this matter; the correct view is that if the reason for him having this right is obvious, such as a guest who is not offered hospitality, or when a man refuses to spend on a wife or relative on whom one is obliged to spend. In such cases it is permissible to take one's right from that person's wealth. But if the reason is not obvious, such as one who denied a debt that he owed to another, or betrayed a trust that he was given, or he stole something, and so on, in such cases it is not permissible for him to take compensation from (the wrongdoer's) wealth, so as to reconcile between the evidence. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says, emphasising the above: «So if anyone transgresses against you, then attack him as he attacked you». This explains how to settle scores, namely like for like.