

## Sūrah 8: al-Anfāl

### The Period of Revelation

It was revealed in 2 A.H. after the Battle of Badr, the first battle between Islām and Kufr (disbelief). As it contains a detailed and comprehensive review of the Battle it appears that most probably it was revealed all at once at the same time. But it is also possible that some of the verses concerning the problems arising as a result of this Battle might have been revealed later and incorporated at the proper places to make it a continuous whole.

### Historical Background

Before reviewing the Sūrah it is worthwhile to consider the events that led to the Battle of Badr. During the first decade or so of the Prophethood at Makkah the Message had proved its firmness and stability. This was the result of two things. First the Messenger who possessed the highest qualities of character was performing his Mission with wisdom foresight and magnanimity. He had shown by his conduct that he had made up his mind to carry the movement to a successful end and therefore was ready to face all sorts of dangers and obstacles in the way. Secondly the Message was so charming that it attracted the minds and hearts of the people irresistibly towards itself. So much so that all obstacles of ignorance superstition and petty prejudices failed to check its advance. That is why the Arab upholders of the ways of 'ignorance' who looked down upon it in its initial stages had begun to reckon it as a serious menace during the last period of the stay of the Prophet at Makkah and were bent on crushing it with all the force at their command. But in spite of the above-mentioned strength the movement still lacked certain things to lead it to victory.

First, it had not yet been fully proved that it had gathered round it a sufficient number of such followers who not only believed in its truth but also had such an intense devotion to its principles that they were ready to expend all their energies and all that they possessed in the struggle for its success and establishment. So much so that they were ready to sacrifice their lives in the fight against the whole world itself even though they should be their own nearest relative. It is true that the followers of Islām had endured the severest persecutions at the hands of the Quraysh of Makkah and had given a good proof of the firmness of their faith and their strong relation with Islām yet further trials were required to show that Islām had succeeded in acquiring such a band of followers which considered nothing dearer than its ideal and was ready to sacrifice life for it.

Secondly though the voice of Islām had reached every part of the country its effects were yet scattered and its acquired strength was spread here and there: it had not yet gathered sufficient force essential for a decisive conflict with the old established order of 'ignorance'.

Thirdly Islām had yet no home of its own and had not established itself firmly anywhere in the land where it could consolidate its power and make it a base for further action. For the Muslims were scattered all over the country and were living among the unbelievers as aliens whom their bloodthirsty enemies wanted to uproot from their own homes.

Fourthly, the Muslims had not yet had an opportunity to demonstrate practically the blessings of the system of life based on Islām. There was neither any Islāmic culture, nor any social, economic or political system; nor were there any established principles of war and peace for their guidance. Therefore the Muslims had no opportunity for demonstrating those moral principles on which they intended to build their entire system of life; nor had it been proved on the touchstone of trial that the Muslims as a community were sincere in the proclamation of the Message. God created opportunities for making up these deficiencies. During the last four years of the Prophet's stay at Makkah, the voice of Islām had been proving effective at Yathrib (Madinah) and the people for various reasons had been accepting the message more readily than other clans of

Arabia. So much so that in the twelfth year of Prophethood on the occasion of Hajj a deputation of 75 people met the Prophet in the darkness of night. These people not only accepted Islām, but also offered to give him and his followers a home. As this was a most epoch making opportunity provided by God, the Prophet took advantage of it. The significance of this offer was quite clear to the people of Yathrib, and they fully realized that this was not an invitation to a mere fugitive, but to the Messenger of God so that he should become their leader and ruler. Likewise they knew that they were not inviting the Muslim refugees to give them shelter from persecution but to assemble them from all over the country for their integration with themselves to form an organized community. Thus the offer of the people of Yathrib was to make Yathrib the “City of Islām.” Accordingly the Prophet accepted their invitation and made it the first “City of Islām” in Arabia. And the people of Yathrib were fully aware of the implications of this offer. It was indeed a declaration of war against the whole of Arabia, and an invitation to their own social and economic boycott as well. And when the Ansār from Yathrib declared their allegiance to the Prophet at Aqabah, they knew fully well its consequences. During the course of the formal declaration of allegiance, Asad bin Zurarah, the youngest of all the delegates from Yathrib, stood up and said, “*O people of Yathrib! Just listen to me and consider the matter carefully in all its aspects. Though we have come to him, regarding him only as a Messenger of God, we should know that we shall be inviting the enmity of the whole of Arabia. For when we take him away to Yathrib, we shall be attacked and our children may be put to the sword. Therefore if you have the courage in your hearts to face it, then and then only, you should declare your allegiance to him and God will give you its reward. But if you love your lives more than him and his Message, then leave this matter and frankly excuse yourselves, for at this time God may accept your excuses.*”

Abbas bin Ubadah bin Naalah, another member of the delegation, reiterated the same thing, saying, *Do you understand the implication of the declaration of your allegiance to this person?* (Voices, “Yes, we know it.”) “*You are challenging the whole world to war by your declaration of allegiance to him. There is every likelihood of a serious menace to your lives and properties. Therefore consider it well. If you have any idea lurking in your minds that you will then hand him over to his enemies, it is much better to leave him alone now, because that conduct shall bring shame and disgrace to you in this world and the next. On the other hand, if you have sincerely resolved that you will endure all kinds of consequences that will follow as a result of this invitation, then it would be the best thing to take the oath of allegiance to him because, by God, this will surely bring good to you in this world as well as in the next world.*” At this all the members of the delegation cried with one voice, “*We are ready and prepared to risk all our wealth and our noble kith and kin for his sake.*” It was then that the famous oath of allegiance, which is known as the “Second Oath of Allegiance at Aqabah” was taken.

On the other side, the people of Makkah also understood fully well the implications of this matter from their own point of view. They realized that Muhammad, who they knew well, had a great personality and possessed extraordinary abilities, was going to gain a strong footing, by this allegiance. For this would help integrate his followers, whose constancy, determination, and unwavering faithfulness to the Messenger had been tried, into a disciplined community under his wise leadership and guidance. And they knew that this would spell death for their old ways of life. They also realized the strategic importance of Madinah to their trade, which was their chief means of livelihood. Its geographical position was such that the Muslims could strike with advantage at the caravans traveling on the trade route between Yemen and Syria, and thus strike at the root of their economy and that of other pagan clans very effectively. The value of the trade done by the people of Makkah alone on this route, not to count that of tā’if and other places, amounted to about two hundred thousand dinars annually. As the Quraysh were fully aware of the implications of the oath of allegiance at Aqabah, they were greatly agitated when they got wind of it the same night. At first they tried to win over the people of Madinah to their side. But when they saw that the Muslims were migrating to Madinah in small groups, they realized that the Prophet was also going to emigrate soon from there. Then they decided to adopt an extreme measure to prevent this danger. A few days before his migration, the Quraysh held a council to consider the matter. After a good deal of argument; they decided that one person should be taken from each of the families of Quraysh other than that of Banu Hashim to put an end to the life of the Prophet. This was to make it difficult for the family of the Prophet to fight alone with all the other families of the Quraysh and thus to force them to accept blood-money for his murder instead of taking revenge from them, but by the grace of God their plot against the life of the Prophet failed because of his admirable foresight and full trust in God, and he reached Madinah safe and sound. When they could not prevent his emi-

gration, it occurred to them to exploit Abdullah bin Ubay who had begun to cherish a grievance against the Prophet since his arrival at Madinah. He was an influential chief of Madinah and the people had agreed to make him their king. But when the majority of Aws and Khazraj clan became Muslims and acknowledged the Prophet as their leader, guide and ruler, all his hopes of becoming a king came to an end. Therefore the Quraysh wrote to him, *“As you have given shelter to our enemy, we tell you plainly that you should either fight with him yourself or exile him from your city otherwise we swear by God that we will invade your city, kill your males and make your females our slave girls.”* This letter added fuel to the flames of his jealousy and he was inclined to do some mischief, but the Prophet took timely precautions and defeated his evil designs. The Quraysh got another opportunity to hold out a threat. When Sa'ad bin Mu'adh, another chief of Madinah, went to Makkah to perform Umrah, Abu Jahl interrupted him at the very door of the Ka'bāh, saying, *“Do you think we will let you perform Umrah in peace when you give shelter and help to renegades from us? Had you not been a guest of Ummayyah bin Khalf, you would not have gone alive from here.”* Sa'ad replied, *“By God, if you prevent me from this, I will retaliate in a worse manner and block your route near Madinah.”* This incident virtually led to a declaration from the people of Makkah that they would prevent the Muslims from a pilgrimage to the Ka'bāh, and from the people of Madinah that as a retaliation they would block their trade route to Syria against the opponents of Islām. As a matter of fact there was no other alternative for the Muslims than to keep a strong hold on this route so as to force the Quraysh, and the other clans, whose interests were vitally bound with this route, to reconsider their hostile and antagonistic attitude towards them. That is why the Prophet attached the greatest importance to this problem. As soon as he was free from making the preliminary arrangements for organizing the newly formed Muslim Community and settling peace terms with the neighboring Jewish tribes, he adopted two measures in this connection.

First, he entered into negotiations with those clans who lived between the Red Sea and this route so as to make alliances with them or at least to persuade them to make treaties of neutrality with the Muslims. He was successful in this, and he entered into a treaty of non-alignment with Juhainah, which was a very important clan of the hilly tract near the sea coast. Then, at the end of the first year of Hijrah, he made a treaty of defensive alliance with Bani Damrah. In 2 A.H. Bani Mudlij also joined the alliance, as they were the neighbours and allies of Bani Damrah. Then it so happened that quite a large number of these people were reverted to Islām as a result of the missionary work done by the Muslims.

Secondly, he successively sent small bands of his men on this route to serve as a warning to the Quraysh, and himself accompanied some of them. In the first year of Hijrah, four expeditions were sent there, that is, the expedition under Hamza, the expedition under Ubaidah bin Harith, the expedition under Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas and the Al-Abwa expedition under the Prophet himself. In the first month of the second year two more incursions were made on the same route. These are known as Buwat Expedition and Zawal Ushairah Expedition. Two things about all these expeditions are noteworthy. First, no blood was shed and no caravans were plundered in any of these expeditions. This proves that the real object of these expeditions was to show to the Quraysh which way the wind was blowing. Secondly, not a single man from the people of Madinah was sent by the Prophet on any of these incursions. All the bands consisted purely of the immigrants from Makkah so that the conflict should remain between the people of the Quraysh themselves and should not further spread by the involvement of other clans. On the other side, the Quraysh of Makkah tried to involve others also in the conflict. When they sent bands towards Madinah, they did not hesitate to plunder the people. For instance, an expedition under the leadership of Kurz bin Jabir al-Fihrl plundered the cattle of the people of Madinah from the very vicinity of the city to show what their real intentions were.

This was the state of affairs when, in Sha'aban, 2 A.H. (February or March, 623 A.D.) a big trade caravan of the Quraysh, carrying goods worth about £50,000, with only a guard of thirty to forty men, on its way back from Syria to Makkah, reached the territory from where it could be easily attacked from Madinah. As the caravan was carrying trade goods worth thousands of pounds, and was scantily guarded, naturally Abu Sufyan, who was in charge of it, from his past experience feared an attack from the Muslims. Accordingly, as soon as he entered the dangerous territory, he despatched a camel rider to Makkah with a frantic appeal for help. When the rider reached Makkah, he, following an old custom of Arabia, tore open the ears of his ca-

mel, cut open his nose and overturned the saddle. He began to cry aloud at the top of his voice, “*O people of Quraysh despatch help to protect your caravan from Syria under the charge of Abu Sufyan, for Muhammad with his followers is in pursuit of it; otherwise I don’t think you will ever get your goods. Run, run for help.*” This caused great excitement and anger in the whole of Makkah and all the big chiefs of the Quraysh got ready for war. An army, consisting of 600 armoured soldiers and cavalry of 100 riders with great pomp and show marched out for a fight. They intended not only to rescue the caravan but also to put to an end, once for all, the new menace from the Muslims who had consolidated themselves at Madinah. They wanted to crush that rising power and overawe the clans surrounding the route so as to make it absolutely secure for future trade. Now the Prophet, who always kept himself well informed of the state of affairs, felt that the decisive hour has come and that was the right time when he must take a bold step; otherwise the Islāmic Movement would become lifeless for ever and no chance would be left for it to rise again. For if the Quraysh invaded Madinah, the odds would be against the Muslims. The condition of the Muslim Community was still very shaky because the Muhajirin (immigrants) had not been able to stabilize their economy during the short period (less than two years) of their stay at Madinah; their helpers, the Ansār had not yet been tried; and the neighbouring Jewish clans were antagonistic. Then there was a strong group of hypocrites and polytheists in Madinah itself; above all, the surrounding clans lived in awe of the Quraysh and had all their religious sympathies with them. The Prophet, therefore, felt that the consequences of this possible invasion would not be favorable to the Muslims. The second possibility was that they would not invade Madinah but try only to escort their caravan safely and securely by a mere show of force. In that case, too, if the Muslims remained inactive, it would affect their reputation adversely. Obviously, this weak stand in the conflict would embolden the other Arabs also and make the position of the Muslims very insecure in the country and the surrounding clans would, at the instance of the Quraysh, start hostilities against them. And the Jews, the hypocrites and the polytheists of Madinah would openly rise against them and not only endanger their security of life, property and honour but make it difficult for them even to live there. The Muslims would not be able to inspire the enemy with awe so as to keep safe from them their life, property and honour. A careful study of the situation led the Prophet to make up his mind to take a decisive step and go into the battle with whatever little strength he could muster, for thus and thus only could he show whether the Muslim Community had the right to survive or was doomed to perish.

When he arrived at this momentous decision, he called the Muhajirin and the Ansār together and placed the whole position before them, without any reservation. He said, “*God has promised that you will confront one of the two, the trade caravan coming from the north or the army of the Quraysh marching from the south. Now tell me which of the two you want to attack!*” A large majority of the people replied that they wanted to attack the caravan. But the Prophet who had something else before him, repeated the same question. At this Miqdad bin ‘Amr, a Muhajir, stood up and said, “*O Messenger of God! Please march to the side to which your Lord commands you; we will accompany you wherever you go. We will not say like the Israelites, ‘Go and let you and your Lord fight we will wait’. In contrast to them we say, ‘Let you and your Lord fight; we will fight by your side to our last breath’.*” Even then he did not announce any decision but waited for a reply from the Ansār who had not yet taken any part in any battle of Islām. As this was the first opportunity for them to prove that they were ready to fulfill their promise of fighting for the cause of Islām, he repeated the question without directly addressing them. At this, Sa’ad bin Mu’adh, an Ansār, stood up and said, “*...it appears that you are putting the question to us.*” When the Prophet said, “*Yes,*” the Ansār replied, “*We have believed in you and confirmed that what you have brought is the Truth, and have made a solemn pledge with you that we will listen to you and obey you. Therefore, O Messenger of God, do whatever you intend to do. We swear by God Who has sent you with the Truth that we are ready to accompany you to the sea shore and if you enter it, we will plunge into it. We assure you that not a single one of us will remain behind or forsake you, for we will not hesitate at all to go to fight, even if you should lead us to the battlefield tomorrow. We will remain steadfast in the battle and sacrifice our lives in the fight. We do hope that by the grace of God our behavior will gladden your heart. So, trusting in God’s blessing, take us to the battlefield.*” After these speeches it was decided that they should march towards the army of the Quraysh and not towards the trade caravan. But it should be noted that the decision was of an ordinary nature. For the number of people, who came forward to go to the battlefield, was only a little more than three hundred (86 Muhajirs, 62 from Aws and 170 from Khazraj). Then the little army was ill-armed and hardly equipped for battle. Only a couple of them had horses to ride and the others had to take their turn in threes and fours on the

back of a camel, out of the 70 they had in all. Above all, they had not got enough weapons for the battle; only 60 of them had armor. It is, therefore, no wonder that with the exception of those who were prepared to sacrifice their lives for the cause of Islām, the majority of those who had joined the expedition, were so filled with fear that they felt as if they were knowingly going into the jaws of death. Then there were people who always looked at things from a selfish point of view. Though they had embraced Islām, they did not realize that their faith would demand the sacrifice of their lives and properties from them; they were of the opinion that it was a mad expedition prompted by irrational enthusiasm for religion. But the Prophet and the true Believers had realized the urgency of that critical hour which required the risk of life: therefore they marched straight to the south-west, wherefrom the army of the Quraysh was coming. This is a clear proof of the fact that from the very beginning they had gone out to fight with the army and not to plunder the caravan. For if they had aimed at plundering the caravan they would have taken the north-westerly direction and not the south-westerly one.

The two parties met in combat at Badr on the 17th of Ramadan. When the two armies confronted each other and the Prophet noticed that the Quraysh army outnumbered the Muslims by three to one and was much better equipped, he raised his hands up in supplication and made this earnest prayer with great humility: “O God! Here are the Quraysh proud of their war material: they have come to prove that Thy Messenger is false. O God! now send that succor that Thou hast promised to give me. O God! If this little army of Thy servants is destroyed, then there will be left none in the land to worship Thee.” In this combat the emigrants from Makkah were put to the hardest test for they had to fight against their own near and dear relatives and put to the sword their fathers, their sons, their paternal and maternal uncles and their brothers. It is obvious that only such people could have come out successful in this hardest of tests as had accepted the Truth sincerely and cut off all relations with falsehood. And in another way the test to which the Ansār were put was not less hard. So far they had only alienated the powerful Quraysh and their allies by giving shelter to the Muslims against their wishes but now, for the first time, they were going to give fight to them and to sow the seeds of a long and bitter war with them. This was indeed a very hard test for it meant that a small town with a population of a few thousand inhabitants was going to wage a war with the whole of Arabia. It is obvious that only such people could take this bold step who believed in the Truth of Islām so firmly that they were ready to sacrifice every personal interest for its sake. So God accepted the self-sacrifices of the Muhajirin and the Ansār because of their true faith, and rewarded them with His succor. The proud, well-armed Quraysh were routed by these ill-equipped devotees of Islām. Seventy men of their army were killed and seventy captured as prisoners and their arms and equipment came into the hands of the Muslims as spoils of war. All their big chiefs, who were their best soldiers and who had led the opposition to Islām, were killed in this Battle. No wonder that this decisive victory made Islām a power to be reckoned with.

### Topics of Discussion

The moral lesson of the conflict between the Truth and falsehood has been enunciated and the qualities which lead to success in a conflict have been explained. The Sūrah gives instructions in regard to the spoils of war. The Muslims have been told not to regard these as their right but as a bounty from God. Therefore they should accept with gratitude the share that is granted to them out of it and willingly accede to the share which God sets apart for His cause and for the help of the needy. Then it also gives normal instructions concerning the laws of peace and war for these were urgently needed to be explained at the stage which the Islāmic Movement had entered. It enjoined that the Muslims should refrain from ways of “ignorance” in peace and war and thus should establish their moral superiority in the world. It also meant to demonstrate to the world in actual practical life the morality which it had been preaching to the world from the very beginning of Islām and had been enjoining that practical life should be based on the same. It also states some articles of the Islāmic Constitution which help differentiate the status of the Muslims living within the limits of Dar-ul-Islām (the Abode of Islām) from that of the Muslims living beyond its limits.

**Sūrah 8: al-Anfāl**<sup>399</sup>

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate,  
the Most Merciful

1. They ask you, [O Muhammad], about the bounties [of war]. Say, "The [decision concerning] bounties is for God and the Messenger." So fear God and amend that which is between you and obey God and His Messenger, if you should be believers.
2. The believers are only those who, when God is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely -
3. The ones who establish prayer, and from what We have provided them, they spend.
4. Those are the believers, truly. For them are degrees [of high position] with their Lord and forgiveness and noble provision.
5. [It<sup>400</sup> is] just as when your Lord brought you out of your home [for the battle of Badr] in truth, while indeed, a party among the believers were unwilling,
6. Arguing with you concerning the truth after it had become clear, as if they were being driven toward death while they were looking on.
7. [Remember, O believers], when God promised you one of the two groups<sup>401</sup>
8. That He should establish the truth and abolish falsehood, even if the criminals disliked it.
9. [Remember] when you asked help of your Lord, and He answered you, "Indeed, I will reinforce you with a thousand from the angels, following one another."
10. And God made it not but good tidings and so that your hearts would be assured thereby. And victory is not but from God. Indeed, God is Exalted in Might and Wise.
11. [Remember] when He overwhelmed you with drowsiness [giving] security from Him and sent down upon you from the sky, rain by which to purify you and remove from you the evil [suggestions] of Satan and to make steadfast your hearts and plant firmly thereby your feet.
12. [Remember] when your Lord inspired to the angels, "I am with you, so strengthen those who have believed. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieved, so strike [them] upon the necks and strike from them every fingertip."<sup>402</sup>
13. That is because they opposed God and His Messenger. And whoever opposes God and His Messenger - indeed, God is severe in penalty.

<sup>399</sup> *Al-Anfāl*: The Bounties, meaning those things acquired in addition to victory, i.e., the spoils of war.

<sup>400</sup> Referring to a dispute which occurred among the Muslims over distribution of war booty.

<sup>401</sup> i.e., either the caravan of Quraysh or their army.

<sup>402</sup> By which they grasp and manipulate their weapons. Also interpreted as "all extremities," i.e., their hands and feet.

14. “That [is yours], so taste it.” And indeed for the disbelievers is the punishment of the Fire.
15. O you who have believed, when you meet those who disbelieve advancing [for battle], do not turn to them your backs [in flight].
16. And whoever turns his back to them on such a day, unless swerving [as a strategy] for war or joining [another] company, has certainly returned with anger [upon him] from God, and his refuge is Hell - and wretched is the destination.
17. And you did not kill them, but it was God who killed them.<sup>403</sup> And you threw not, [O Muhammad], when you threw, but it was God who threw<sup>404</sup> that He might test the believers with a good test.<sup>405</sup> Indeed, God is Hearing and Knowing.
18. That [is so], and [also] that God will weaken the plot of the disbelievers.
19. If you [disbelievers] seek the decision [i.e., victory] - the decision [i.e., defeat] has come to you. And if you desist [from hostilities], it is best for you; but if you return [to war], We will return, and never will you be availed by your [large] company at all, even if it should increase; and [that is] because God is with the believers.
20. O you who have believed, obey God and His Messenger and do not turn from him while you hear [his order].
21. And do not be like those who say, “We have heard,” while they do not hear.
22. Indeed, the worst of living creatures in the sight of God are the deaf and dumb who do not use reason [i.e., the disbelievers].
23. Had God known any good in them, He would have made them hear. And if He had made them hear, they would [still] have turned away, while they were refusing.
24. O you who have believed, respond to God and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. And know that God intervenes between a man and his heart and that to Him you will be gathered.
25. And fear a trial<sup>406</sup> which will not strike those who have wronged among you exclusively, and know that God is severe in penalty.
26. And remember when you were few and oppressed in the land, fearing that people might abduct you, but He sheltered you, supported you with His victory, and provided you with good things - that you might be grateful.
27. O you who have believed, do not betray God and the Messenger or betray your trusts while you know [the consequence].

<sup>403</sup> i.e., Your strength was insufficient to overcome them, but God supported you and gave you victory.

<sup>404</sup> When the Prophet threw a handful of dust into the faces of the disbelievers, God caused it to fill the eyes and nose of every soldier, preventing their advance.

<sup>405</sup> So that they would appreciate God’s favour to them.

<sup>406</sup> i.e., an affliction or punishment during life upon this earth. When corruption spreads among a people, its consequences will affect everyone.

28. And know that your properties and your children are but a trial and that God has with Him a great reward.
29. O you who have believed, if you fear God, He will grant you a criterion<sup>407</sup> and will remove from you your misdeeds and forgive you. And God is the possessor of great bounty.
30. And [remember, O Muhammad], when those who disbelieved plotted against you to restrain you or kill you or evict you [from Makkah]. But they plan, and God plans. And God is the best of planners.
31. And when Our verses are recited to them, they say, “We have heard. If we willed, we could say [something] like this. This is not but legends of the former peoples.”
32. And [remember] when they said, “O God, if this should be the truth from You, then rain down upon us stones from the sky or bring us a painful punishment.”
33. But God would not punish them while you, [O Muhammad], are among them, and God would not punish them while they seek forgiveness.
34. But why should God not punish them while they obstruct [people] from al-Masjid al-Harām and they were not [fit to be] its guardians? Its [true] guardians are not but the righteous, but most of them do not know.
35. And their prayer at the House [i.e., the Ka’bāh] was not except whistling and handclapping. So taste the punishment for what you disbelieved [i.e., practiced of deviations].
36. Indeed, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to avert [people] from the way of God. So they will spend it; then it will be for them a [source of] regret; then they will be overcome. And those who have disbelieved - unto Hell they will be gathered.
37. [This is] so that God may distinguish the wicked from the good and place the wicked some of them upon others and heap them all together and put them into Hell. It is those who are the losers.
38. Say to those who have disbelieved [that] if they cease, what has previously occurred will be forgiven for them. But if they return [to hostility] - then the precedent of the former [rebellious] peoples has already taken place.<sup>408</sup>
39. And fight them until there is no fitnah<sup>409</sup> and [until] the religion [i.e., worship], all of it, is for God.<sup>410</sup> And if they cease - then indeed, God is Seeing of what they do.
40. But if they turn away - then know that God is your protector. Excellent is the protector, and Excellent is the helper.
41. And know that anything you obtain of war booty - then indeed, for God is one fifth of it and for the Messenger<sup>411</sup> and for [his] near relatives<sup>412</sup> and the or-

<sup>407</sup> By which to judge between truth and falsehood. Also interpreted as a “way out” of difficulties.

<sup>408</sup> This is a warning that punishment is always the result of rebellion against God and His messengers.

<sup>409</sup> Persecution. See footnote to 2:193.

<sup>410</sup> i.e., until polytheism is no longer dominant.

<sup>411</sup> To be sent in God’s cause.

<sup>412</sup> The tribes of Banū Hāshim and Banū Mutṭalib, who were not eligible for *ṣakāh*.



- phans, the needy, and the [stranded] traveler,<sup>413</sup> if you have believed in God and in that which We sent down to Our Servant<sup>414</sup> on the day of criterion [i.e., decisive encounter] - the day when the two armies met [at Badr]. And God, over all things, is competent.
42. [Remember] when you were on the near side of the valley, and they were on the farther side, and the caravan was lower [in position] than you. If you had made an appointment [to meet], you would have missed the appointment. But [it was] so that God might accomplish a matter already destined - that those who perished [through disbelief] would perish upon evidence and those who lived [in faith] would live upon evidence; and indeed, God is Hearing and Knowing.
43. [Remember, O Muhammad], when God showed them to you in your dream as few; and if He had shown them to you as many, you [believers] would have lost courage and would have disputed in the matter [of whether to fight], but God saved [you from that]. Indeed, He is Knowing of that within the breasts.
44. And [remember] when He showed them to you, when you met, as few in your eyes, and He made you [appear] as few in their eyes so that God might accomplish a matter already destined. And to God are [all] matters returned.
45. O you who have believed, when you encounter a company [from the enemy forces], stand firm and remember God much that you may be successful.
46. And obey God and His Messenger, and do not dispute and [thus] lose courage and [then] your strength would depart; and be patient. Indeed, God is with the patient.
47. And do not be like those who came forth from their homes insolently and to be seen by people and avert [them] from the way of God. And God is encompassing<sup>415</sup> of what they do.
48. And [remember] when Satan made their deeds pleasing to them and said, "No one can overcome you today from among the people, and indeed, I am your protector." But when the two armies sighted each other, he turned on his heels and said, "Indeed, I am disassociated from you. Indeed, I see what you do not see; indeed I fear God. And God is severe in penalty."
49. [Remember] when the hypocrites and those in whose hearts was disease [i.e., arrogance and disbelief] said, "Their religion has deluded those [Muslims]." But whoever relies upon God - then indeed, God is Exalted in Might and Wise.
50. And if you could but see when the angels take the souls of those who disbelieved...<sup>416</sup> They are striking their faces and their backs and [saying], "Taste the punishment of the Burning Fire.
51. That is for what your hands have put forth [of evil] and because God is not ever unjust to His servants."

<sup>413</sup> The remaining four fifths are divided among the soldiers.

<sup>414</sup> Prophet Muhammad.

<sup>415</sup> In knowledge. See footnote to 2:19.

<sup>416</sup> This sentence is left incomplete for additional effect. Its conclusion is left to the imagination of the reader or listener and estimated as "... you would see a dreadful sight."

52. [Theirs is] like the custom of the people of Pharaoh and of those before them. They disbelieved in the signs of God, so God seized them for their sins. Indeed, God is Powerful and severe in penalty.
53. That is because God would not change a favor which He had bestowed upon a people until they change what is within themselves. And indeed, God is Hearing and Knowing.
54. [Theirs is] like the custom of the people of Pharaoh and of those before them. They denied the signs of their Lord, so We destroyed them for their sins, and We drowned the people of Pharaoh. And all [of them] were wrongdoers.
55. Indeed, the worst of living creatures in the sight of God are those who have disbelieved, and they will not [ever] believe -
56. The ones with whom you made a treaty but then they break their pledge every time, and they do not fear God.
57. So if you, [O Muhammad], gain dominance over them in war, disperse by [means of] them those behind them that perhaps they will be reminded.<sup>417</sup>
58. If you [have reason to] fear from a people betrayal, throw [their treaty] back to them, [putting you] on equal terms.<sup>418</sup> Indeed, God does not like traitors.
59. And let not those who disbelieve think they will escape. Indeed, they will not cause failure [to God].
60. And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war<sup>419</sup> by which you may terrify the enemy of God and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know [but] whom God knows. And whatever you spend in the cause of God will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged.
61. And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon God. Indeed, it is He who is the Hearing, the Knowing.
62. But if they intend to deceive you - then sufficient for you is God. It is He who supported you with His help and with the believers
63. And brought together their hearts. If you had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have brought their hearts together; but God brought them together. Indeed, He is Exalted in Might and Wise.
64. O Prophet, sufficient for you is God and for whoever follows you of the believers.
65. O Prophet, urge the believers to battle. If there are among you twenty [who are] steadfast, they will overcome two hundred. And if there are among you one hundred [who are] steadfast, they will overcome a thousand of those who have disbelieved because they are a people who do not understand.

<sup>417</sup> i.e., kill them and make an example of them to discourage those who follow them.

<sup>418</sup> When you see signs of treachery from those with whom you have made a treaty, announce to them its dissolution so they will know exactly where they stand.

<sup>419</sup> Or equipment which serves the same purpose.

66. Now, God has lightened [the hardship] for you, and He knows that among you is weakness. So if there are from you one hundred [who are] steadfast, they will overcome two hundred. And if there are among you a thousand, they will overcome two thousand by permission of God. And God is with the steadfast.
67. It is not for a prophet to have captives [of war] until he inflicts a massacre [upon God's enemies] in the land. You [i.e., some Muslims] desire the commodities of this world,<sup>420</sup> but God desires [for you] the Hereafter. And God is Exalted in Might and Wise.
68. If not for a decree from God that preceded,<sup>421</sup> you would have been touched for what you took by a great punishment.
69. So consume what you have taken of war booty [as being] lawful and good, and fear God. Indeed, God is Forgiving and Merciful.
70. O Prophet, say to whoever is in your hands of the captives, "If God knows [any] good in your hearts, He will give you [something] better than what was taken from you, and He will forgive you; and God is Forgiving and Merciful."
71. But if they intend to betray you - then they have already betrayed God before, and He empowered [you] over them. And God is Knowing and Wise.
72. Indeed, those who have believed and emigrated and fought with their wealth and lives in the cause of God and those who gave shelter and aided - they are allies of one another. But those who believed and did not emigrate - for you there is no guardianship of them until they emigrate. And if they seek help of you for the religion, then you must help, except against a people between yourselves and whom is a treaty. And God is Seeing of what you do.
73. And those who disbelieved are allies of one another. If you do not do so [i.e., ally yourselves with other believers], there will be fitnah [i.e., disbelief and oppression] on earth and great corruption.
74. But those who have believed and emigrated and fought in the cause of God and those who gave shelter and aided - it is they who are the believers, truly. For them is forgiveness and noble provision.
75. And those who believed after [the initial emigration] and emigrated and fought with you - they are of you. But those of [blood] relationship are more entitled [to inheritance] in the decree of God.<sup>422</sup> Indeed, God is Knowing of all things.

<sup>420</sup> i.e., material benefit, such as the ransom paid for prisoners.

<sup>421</sup> Three interpretations of the "decree" are given: that by which the companions of Badr were forgiven, that by which indeliberate errors in judgement by believers are not punished, and that which made lawful the spoils of war.

<sup>422</sup> This applies to Muslim relatives only. Others may be given by bequest. See 4:11.