42. And know that "whatever you take as spoil in war, a fifth thereof shall go to Allah and to the Messenger and to the kindred and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, if you believe in Allah and in what We sent down to Our servant on the Day of Distinction,— the day when the two armies met—and Allah has the power to do all things.\textsuperscript{1130}

\textsuperscript{1130} Commentay: 
This verse (see also 8:2) relates to the division of the spoils of war. One fifth of such property was to be set apart, and the remainder was to be divided among the soldiers (who received no pay). In pre-Islamic Arabia, the practice was that first of all the commander chose from the booty any thing he liked. This was known as مصنة i.e. the thing chosen. Of the remainder he took خس (one fifth) in addition to مصنة (the chosen thing). Islam abolished the practice of مصنة (sajiyah) and the fifth part also was not to go entirely to the commander, but was to be shared by others. In the life-time of the Holy Prophet the practice was that of the خس i.e., the fifth part, the Prophet took only a portion, and divided the remainder among his kinsmen, the orphans, the poor and the wayfarers. By 'kinsmen' were meant the descendants of Hāshim and 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the two near ancestors of the Holy Prophet. After the death of the Holy Prophet, the fifth part went to the Khalifa or Imām who was to divide it among himself, the kinsmen of the Holy Prophet, the orphans, the poor and the wayfarers. According to Imām Mālik, the division need not necessarily be made into equal portions, but is to be left to the discretion of the Imām, who is to divide it as circumstances and the need of the hour demand. Such was also the practice of the Holy Prophet and his four rightly-guided Successors.

The words, \textit{if you believe in Allah}, are meant for the \textit{Imām} or the commanders, and serve as a reminder to them that they are not to appropriate the whole خس (fifth portion) for themselves but should also give to other classes of men their due, as directed in the verse.

The words, \textit{if you believe in Allah and in what We sent down to Our servant on the Day of Distinction}, serve a two-fold purpose. \textit{Firstly} they are meant to show that the qualification implied in the words, \textit{if you believe}, does not relate to the Holy Prophet. \textit{Secondly}, they serve to remind Muslims that since God helped them against disbelievers at Badr, when all material factors were against them, they should trust in His help and accept all His commandments regarding the distribution of spoils, etc. willingly and cheerfully.

The Battle of Badr is called برم الفتن (Day of Distinction) because on that day God brought into being extraordinary circumstances to give victory to His Prophet, and to make it clear which party was fighting in the cause of God and which in the cause of Satan. Thus the words برم الفتن (Day of Distinction) are here intended to hint that when a Muslim commander or an Imām gains a victory over his enemies, he should bear in mind that it is due to God's assistance and therefore he should not hesitate to divide the booty in accordance with His command.
43. When you were on the nearer bank of the valley, and they were on the farther bank, and the caravan was below you. And if you had to make a mutual appointment, you would have certainly differed with regard to the appointment. But the encounter was brought about that Allah might accomplish the thing that was decreed; so that he who had already perished through a clear Sign might perish, and he who had already come to life through a clear Sign might live. And certainly Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.  

44. When Allah showed them to thee in thy dream as few; and if He had shown them to thee as many, you would have surely faltered and would have disagreed with one another about the matter; but Allah saved you. Surely, He has full knowledge of what is in your breasts.

1131. Commentary:
In this verse and those that follow, the Quran describes how God arranged and planned to bring about an encounter at Badr between believers and disbelievers, so that He might thereby crush the power of the enemy and show a Sign in support of Islam.

The verse begins with a graphic picture of the situation of the different parties at Badr and then proceeds to say that, if it had been left to the Muslims to appoint the time of the encounter, they would certainly have differed with regard to it and would have preferred to postpone the date of the first clash, for at that time they did not feel strong enough to meet their much more powerful and far better-equipped enemy in a field of battle. As, however, God's object was to show a powerful Sign, so He brought about the encounter at a time when the Muslims were still very weak and the enemy very strong. This was done so that the party which had been proved to be in error and to be spiritually dead by means of clear reasons and arguments might perish and the party which had been proved to be spiritually alive and established on the firm basis of truth might survive and live.

The Quran has mentioned, more than once, the divine attribute of "All-Hearing" in connection with the Battle of Badr, in order to allude to the fact that prayers had played a great part in bringing about the victory and that they can play a similar part again.

1132. Important Words:

\( \text{رَمَعَ} \) (dream) is derived from \( \text{رَمَعَ} \) i.e. he slept. \( \text{رَمَعَ} \) means, sleep; place where one sleeps; dream (Aqrab).
45. And when at the time of your meeting in battle, He made them appear to you as few in your eyes, and made you appear as few in their eyes, that Allah might bring about the thing that was decreed. And to Allah are all affairs referred for final decision.  

46. O ye who believe! when you encounter an army, remain firm, and remember Allah much that you may prosper.

Commentary:

While on his way to Badr, the Holy Prophet was shown the Meccan army in a dream to be less in number than they actually were (Jarir, x. 9). In the language of dreams, this meant that the Meccan force, in spite of their superior numbers and equipment, would be overcome by the Muslims. On the other hand, if the enemy had been shown in a dream to be in large numbers, the interpretation of the dream would have been that the party to which the dreamer belonged would lose heart and would be overpowered by the enemy.

1133. Commentary:

Whereas the preceding verse referred to the appearance of the enemy in a dream, the present verse refers to its actual appearance on the battle-field. What happened was that the enemy had kept one-third of their number behind mounds so that, when both parties came face to face, Muslims saw only two-thirds of their army. The Meccan army, about 1,000 strong, was more than three times the number of the Muslims who were only 313, but it so happened that the latter saw them to be only twice their own number. This naturally made the Faithful more hopeful. As hinted above, the enemy had concealed one-third of their number from the Muslims so that (as they thought) the latter might not be overawed and flee from the battle-field. This ruse was meant by them as an enticement to the Muslims so that the latter might be encouraged to give them battle and consequently be annihilated. Indeed, the Muslims were so weak at that time that the Meccans were anxious to get them within their grip, so that they might wipe them out of existence and thus extirpate Islam. The weakness of the Muslims became all the more apparent when the Meccans actually saw them, for they saw them smaller than their actual number, and both these impressions helped to encourage either party to come to grips with the opposing party, with the result that the “thing decreed” was miraculously brought about.

1134. Commentary:

Muslims are here told that they should not think that war with disbelievers had ended with the battle of Badr. The enemy was to return to the attack repeatedly and with larger and still larger forces. So Muslims are exhorted to remain firm and not to waver before the repeated onslaughts of the enemy.

The words, remember Allah much, imply that as the enemy will call his allies to his aid, so the Faithful too should call God to their help by constantly praying to Him.
47. And obey Allah and His Messenger and dispute not with one another, lest you falter and your power depart from you. And be steadfast; surely, Allah is with those who are steadfast.\(^{1135}\)

48. And be not like those who came forth from their homes boastfully, and to be seen of men, and who turn men away from the path of Allah, and Allah encompasses all that they do.\(^{1136}\)

The secret of success is stated here to lie in two things: (1) that Muslims should never feel secure from the attacks of the enemy and should always be prepared for them, and (2) that they should be always invoking God's help.

1135. **Important Words:**

- رَجُلٌ (power) is derived from رَجَحُ, i.e. it (a day) was violently windy; or it was or became cool and pleasant by means of the wind.
- رَجَحُ الْحَجَر (i.e. the air that is between heaven and earth; the breath of the air, or, in like manner, of anything (said to be so called because it generally brings rest or ease); puff or gust of wind; also predominance or prevalence; power or force; aid against an enemy; victory or conquest; a turn of good fortune. One would say رَجَحُ مَهْدِي, i.e. their turn of good fortune had departed. رَجَحُ رَجُمَ, means, your predominance and power would depart (Lane).

Commentary:

The verse mentions three ways by following which Muslims could remain firm and become successful. Firstly, they are bidden to obey the commandments of God and His Messenger. Secondly, they are enjoined not to dispute with one another but to remain united. Thirdly, they are commanded to remain patient and steadfast.

1136. **Important Words:**

- بَلَاءٌ (boastfully). بَلْ ارَجَل means, the man exulted or exulted excessively; or he behaved insolently and ungratefully; or he behaved with pride and boastfulness; or he became stupefied and confounded with his wealth (and power), bearing it in an evil manner and turning it to a wrong purpose; or he regarded a thing with hatred and dislike, without its deserving to be so regarded; or he walked with a proud and conceited gait (Lane).

Commentary:

Boastfulness and the desire to be seen of, and praised by others have always been a source of weakness in man, and the verse condemns them in the strongest terms. Again, in the field of religion, true service lies in opposing the enemy not only with fervour and zeal but with a view to helping and advancing
49. And when `satan made their deeds seem fair to them and said, 'None among men shall prevail against you this day, and I am your protector.' But when the two armies came in sight of each other, he turned on his heels, and said, 'Surely, I have nothing to do with you; surely, I see what you see not. Surely, I fear Allah; and Allah is severe in punishing.'

The cause of truth. Those who are truly brave do nothing from motives of selfishness or self-display; their only motive is to seek the pleasure of God. The verse gives a description of the Meccan army under Abî Jahl which came forth from Mecca in proud exultation, and the Muslims are warned against following their example.

1137. Important Words:

- بَارَ (protector) is derived from بَارَ which means, he declined or deviated. بَارَ also means, he became his neighbour, or he lived in his neighbourhood. بَارَ also means, he bound himself to him by a covenant to protect him. بَارَ means, a neighbour; a person whom one protects; one who seeks protection; also a protector (Lane).

- تَكَسَّمَ (he turned). تَكَسَّمَ is twenty-eight times in the Qur'ân: it means, he receded or retired or drew back from the thing or the affair; or he recoiled or shrank from it in fear. تَكَسَّمَ also means, he turned back from a thing to which he had applied himself (Lane).

Commentary:

For the meaning of the word `satan' see 2:15. The word here means, one who misleads or gives evil advice. The person referred to in the verse is reported to be Surâqa bin Mâlik bin Ju'sham who incited the Meccans against the Muslims but who afterwards embraced Islam.

The Meccan army was still at Mecca when some of the Quraishite leaders gave expression to the fear that Banû Bakr, a branch of Banû Kanâna, who were hostile to the Quraish, might surprise Mecca during their absence or attack the Meccan army from the rear. Their fears were allayed by Surâqa, a chief of Banû Kanâna, who assured them that his tribesmen would do them no harm (Jarir, x. 13).

The words, I see what you see not, signify that when Surâqa saw the grim determination of the Muslims, fear took hold of him; for on seeing them he was convinced that the Muslims would win or die. This was exactly what 'Utba and 'Umair also saw and felt when they told the Meccans that the Muslims looked like so many "seekers of death" (Tabari). Surâqa uttered the words, I fear Allah, not because he really feared God at that time but because he wished to find an excuse to flee from the battlefield.
50. When the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease said, "Their religion has deluded these men". And who so puts his trust in Allah, then surely Allah is Mighty, Wise.\textsuperscript{1138}

51. And if thou couldst see, when the angels take away the souls of those who disbelieve, smiting their faces and their backs and saying: "Taste ye the punishment of burning."\textsuperscript{1139}

52. That is because of that which your hands have sent on before yourselves and know that "Allah is not at all unjust to His servants."\textsuperscript{1140}


\textbf{1138. Commentary:}\n
The words, the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease, here refer to those men in the Meccan army who had embraced Islam in Mecca, but who, being weak, remained with disbelievers out of fear, and had now come forth with the Meccan army in order to fight the Muslims. There were four or five such men who, when they saw the small band of Muslims arrayed in battle-order against a well-equipped army of Meccan warriors, thought it foolhardy on the part of the former to take their stand against the overwhelming odds and made the remark mentioned in the verse. To this remark the verse gives the reply that the small band of Muslims faced the heavy odds not because their religion had deluded them but because they had put their trust in God Who was both Mighty and Wise and Who had promised to help them. The last words of the verse are thus also intended to reprimand the weak-hearted Muslims of Mecca and to remind them that their hypocritical policy resulted from the fact that they had no trust in the power and might of God.

\textbf{1139. Commentary:}\n
The verse signifies that angels will smite the faces and the backs of disbelievers as a fitting punishment for their evil actions. The punishment corresponded with the actions of disbelievers, because the latter used to confront the believers and meet them face to face when fighting them. Again, they used to turn their backs disdainfully when truth was preached to them. So both faces and backs would receive punishment.

\textbf{1140. Commentary:}\n
This verse further explains and provides a reason for the idea expressed in the preceding verse.
53. *Their case is like the case of the people of Pharaoh and those before them: they disbelieved in the Signs of Allah; so Allah punished them for their sins. Surely, Allah is Powerful and severe in punishing.*

54. This is because *Allah would never change a favour that He has conferred upon a people until they change their own condition, and know that Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.*

55. *Their case is like the case of the people of Pharaoh and those before them; they rejected the Signs of their Lord, so We destroyed them for their sins. And We drowned the people of Pharaoh, for they were all wrongdoers.*

1141. **Commentary:**

The verse signifies that Allah has dealt with the opponents of Islam just as He dealt with the people of Pharaoh. The reference is to the Battle of Badr, where God destroyed Abū Jahl and his host as He destroyed Pharaoh and his people in the sea. The verse thus points to the similarity between the Holy Prophet and Moses (see Deut. 18:18).

1142. **Commentary:**

The word ذَلِكَ (this) refers to the punishment spoken of in the previous verse. The disbelievers rejected the Signs of Allah, so Allah destroyed them for their rebellion and sins. God sent His punishment on the people because they had brought about a change in their hearts. The verse states a general law of God which is to the effect that God never deprives a people of a favour which He had conferred upon them until there is first a change in their own hearts for the worse. For instance, if God grants a people dominion and power, He does not take it away from them until they lose their virtues and become wicked. The verse should also prove an eye-opener for present-day Muslims from whom God has definitely withdrawn His favour.

1143. **Commentary:**

The verse repeats the subject-matter of 8:53 above, with the change that here (1) the words *أَهَلَ‌الْخَمْرُِ (Allah punished them, lit. Allah seized them)* have been changed to *أَهَلَ‌الْخَمْرُ (We destroyed them)*; and (2) the words, *We drowned the people of Pharaoh, etc.* have been added. This is to point to the severity of the punishment and the total destruction of the disbelievers.
56. Surely, the worst of beasts in the sight of Allah are those who are ungrateful. So they will not believe.\textsuperscript{1144}

57. Those with whom thou didst make a covenant; then they break their covenant every time, and they do not fear God.\textsuperscript{1144A}

58. So, if thou catchest them in war, then by routing them strike fear in those that are behind them, that they may be admonished.\textsuperscript{1145}

\textsuperscript{1144. Commentary:}
This verse explains 6:39, which says that the animals that move on the earth and the birds that fly in the air are better than the disbelievers; for, whereas animals and birds do not understand, because they lack the power of understanding, the disbelievers possess the power to understand and yet they fail to do so. See also 8:23.

\textsuperscript{1144A. Commentary:}
This verse qualifies and explains the one that precedes it.

\textsuperscript{1145. Important Words:}
\textbf{شدّ (strike fear)} is derived from \textit{شدّ} (\textit{sharada}) which means, he (a horse, etc.) took fright and fled or ran away at random; or simply he fled or ran away. \textbf{شدّ ب} or \textbf{شدّ} (\textit{sharrada}) means, he made him take fright and flee or run away at random; or he drove him away. \textbf{شدّ B} also signifies the act of dispersing or scattering. \textbf{شدّ B} also means, he rendered him notorious by exposing his vices or faults. \textbf{شدّ B من خُلَفْهُ} means, disperse or scatter by them or through them those who are or who shall come, after them; or terrify by or through them those who are, or who shall come, after them; or make them notorious to those who are, or who shall come, after them (Tāj).

\textbf{Commentary:}
The Quran uses the word \textit{تقفّنهم} (for which see 2:192) meaning "thou catchest them" with a view to pointing to the fact that when a disbeliever meets a believer on a field of battle, the former is, as it were, in the very grip of the latter. Thus when believers have to fight, they are expected to fight like valiant men and the enemy who opposes them should be considered as having come within their grasp and should not be able to escape from their hands. The expression \textbf{شدّ B من خُلَفْهُ} (striking fear) has also been used to point to the same truth. A believer is always slow to take up arms; but when he does so, he fights so valiantly that he not only takes the enemy in his iron grip but deals such blows to him as may strike terror in the hearts of those that are behind the enemy, as well as those that may come after him. A feebly-pursued and lingering war is never a good policy. If there is to be a war, it should be swift and exemplary. This is why the verse enjoins that, when forced to fight, Muslims should fight the enemy so valiantly that not
59. And if thou fearest treachery from a people, throw back to them their covenant with equity. Surely, Allah loves not the treacherous.

60. And let not those who disbelieve think that they have outstripped Us. Surely, they cannot frustrate God's purpose.

only those who are actually engaged in fighting should be routed, but even their supporters who are behind them should be struck with terror. In fact, Islam not only requires its followers to excel others in things moral and spiritual but also expects them to surpass others even in the physical sphere. They have to set the highest example in all matters. If they must fight, they should excel others in fighting as well.

1146. *Commentary:*
If a people with whom Muslims have entered into a covenant begin to commit acts of hostility towards them and it is feared that they are going to play false, then it should be openly and plainly declared to them that the covenant between them and the Muslims had come to an end. Then if, after such a declaration, they should fight the Muslims, the latter should also fight them. Thus Muslims are not allowed to make a surprise attack on any people without due notice. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said, *Do not exceed the bounds in fighting, nor make a surprise attack on the enemy.* Even in war Islam enjoins strict justice and mercy.

1147. *Commentary:*
This verse contains the great prophecy that the enemies of Islam who had waged war against the Muslims would never prevail. Such a prophecy could not be made by a human being in the circumstances in which it was made; for it is an established historical fact that at the time when this prophecy was made the Muslims were extremely weak both in number and equipment and no mortal could predict that such a weak and ill-equipped community could vanquish their numerous and powerful enemies. Only God, Who is Almighty and Omniscient, could predict victory for the Muslims in such circumstances; and the promised victory did actually come to pass.
61. And `make ready for them whatever you can of force and of mounted pickets at the frontier, whereby you may frighten the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you know not, but Allah knows them. And `whatever you spend in the way of Allah, it shall be repaid to you in full and you shall not be wronged.

62. And if they incline towards peace, incline thou also towards it, and put thy trust in Allah. Surely, it is He Who is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

1148. Important Words:

> راتب الخيل (mounted pickets at the frontier).

For راتب see 3:201. خيل is derived from خال i.e. he thought or fancied. خال means, he was proud and haughty. خيل means, horses collectively, so called because of the pride and conceit in their gait; also horsemen (Lane).

Commentary:

This verse teaches Muslims that efficient preparation is the best means of preventing war. It teaches them that they should not only keep a sufficient fighting force in the country but also an adequate number of troops on the frontier so that the enemy might refrain from attack, thus enabling the Faithful to live in peace. The verse also points to the necessity of spending freely in war.

It is worthy of note that the verse does not simply say “your enemy” but the enemy of Allah and your enemy, thus hinting that disbelievers had become hostile to Muslims for the sole reason that the latter had accepted Islam, the religion of God. These words throw interesting light on the causes of early Islamic wars.

The verse further informs Muslims that the pagan Arabs were not the only enemies of Islam. There were other nations also which would attack Muslims in the future, as the Arabs had already done. So Muslims were told to keep their frontiers strong and well-protected and to spend freely in the cause of Allah. This prophecy referred to the Greeks and the Persians with whom Muslims came in contact soon after the death of the Holy Prophet.

1149. Commentary:

This verse, besides embodying an important principle about the formation of peace-treaties throws interesting light on the character of the wars undertaken by Islam. Muslims did not resort to war to force men to embrace Islam, but simply to maintain peace. Hence, if any people after making war against Muslims sued for peace, the latter were enjoined to desist from war and make peace with them, in spite of their being disbelievers. Even the consideration that the enemy might
63. And if they intend to deceive thee, then surely Allah is sufficient for thee. He it is Who has strengthened thee with His help and with the believers; 1150

64. And He has put affection between their hearts. If thou hadst expended all that is in the earth, thou couldst not have put affection between their hearts, but Allah has put affection between them. Surely, He is Mighty, Wise. 1161

65. O Prophet, Allah is sufficient for thee and for those who follow thee of the believers. 1152

66. O Prophet, urge the believers to fight. If there be of you twenty who are steadfast, they shall overcome two hundred; and if there be a hundred of you, they shall overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve, because they are a people who do not understand. 1153

be suing for peace simply to deceive the Muslims and to gain time was not to deter them from making peace. This shows that what the Muslims desired was nothing but peace, and they were bidden to welcome it at all hazards. See also the verse that follows.

1150. Commentary:
An offer of peace by the enemy must be accepted, even if there is the risk of his playing false. See note on the preceding verse.

1151. Commentary:
The verse is intended to meet any possible demur on the part of believers in the matter of accepting a peace offer made by the enemy. It is no favour of the believers upon God or His Messenger, if they have helped the Prophet; on the other hand, it is God's favour upon them that He has put affection "between their hearts," for before their acceptance of Islam they too were enemies of one another.

1152. Commentary:
The words من اتبعك (those who follow thee) are grammatically in apposition to the pronoun (thee) in حسبك (sufficient for thee). It is thus wrong to translate the verse as "Allah is sufficient for thee and so are those who follow thee." The sufficing of God relates both to the Prophet and his followers.

1153. Commentary:
As disbelievers were not going to desist from
67. For the present Allah has lightened your burden, for He knows that there is weakness in you. So, if there be a hundred of you who are steadfast, they shall overcome two hundred; and if there be a thousand of you, they shall overcome two thousand by the command of Allah. And Allah is with those who are steadfast.  

fighting, as they were invited to do (8: 20, & 8: 39 above), but were determined to carry on war of aggression against Islam, therefore the Holy Prophet has been asked in this verse to urge Muslims also to fight in self-defence.

The verse promises victory to Muslims over an enemy ten times their number because they are a people who do not understand. Fighters should understand the purpose of their fighting. They should look upon the war, they are engaged in, as their own. They should know the advantages which will accrue to their community if they win, and they should also know the losses which they will have to suffer if they are defeated. Mere hirelings or men, who are blindly led to war by their leaders but who do not understand its object and feel no personal interest in it, cannot win. The forces that fought against Islam were mostly composed of men who took part in the war merely because they were called upon to do so by their mischievous leaders—the wicked and avowed enemies of Islam. They felt no personal interest in the war against the new religion.

Religiously speaking also, they were a people who did not “understand”, whereas Muslims did understand what faith meant. They were moved by a love for their God, their Prophet and their religion. Disbelievers, on the other hand, were not as devoted to their idols as the Faithful were to their God, in Whom they had a living faith.

The verse gives the number twenty as the minimum number for Muslims to win sure victory over their enemy because that was the least number that made a regular fighting party. If the number of men was less than twenty, it was not to be regarded as a fighting force and the laws relating to war did not apply to them.

Thus, a party of twenty persons, the minimum comprising a fighting unit, was bound to fight if they met an enemy as many as ten times their strength, and they were forbidden to flee. The question of retiring before the enemy is not to be decided by the men but by their officers, who may act as they may think best in the interest of war. See also 8: 16.

1154. Commentary:

This verse does not abrogate the previous verse but only temporarily relieves Muslims in view of the then existing condition of their faith. Their faith, though sincere and true, was “weak” as compared with its future condition when it was to grow stronger by their witnessing more and more heavenly Signs and by their becoming more and more organized.

The words, For the present Allah has lightened your burden, show that the previous verse contains not a prophecy but a commandment. It does not announce by way of prophecy that Muslims will prevail over an enemy ten times their number; it simply gives the injunction that if twenty believers have to face two hundred disbelievers, they must fight them, and that
68. aIt does not behove a Prophet that he should have captives until he engages in a regular fighting in the land. bYou desire the goods of the world, while Allah desires for you the Hereafter. And Allah is Mighty, Wise.

if they turn back in flight, they will be sinners. In the present verse, however, in view of the then weak condition of Muslims, the limit of disparity has been reduced to twice the number of the believers.

History tells us that in later times Muslims had sometimes to fight an enemy even more than ten times their number and still they were victorious. Thus at the Battle of Yarmūk the Muslim army numbered 30,000, according to the lowest calculation, while the enemy numbered at least 600,000 (the highest figures being respectively 60,000 and 1,000,000) and the battle ended in a decisive victory for the Muslims.

1155. Important Words:

امرأى (captives) is the plural of امرأة (a captive) which is derived from امرأة i.e. he bound or tied him, or he made him a captive or took him a prisoner. امرأة means, one shackled or imprisoned; a captive (Lane).

اختلف (he engages in a regular fighting) is derived from اختلف (thakhuna) or اختلف (thakhana) which means, it was thick or coarse or hard. ا المختلف means, he rendered it thick; or he rendered him heavy or languid or enervated; or he overcame him and inflicted many wounds on him. اختلف في المقدور means, he made a great slaughter or a great wounding among the enemy. اختلف في الأرض means, he made much slaughter in the earth or the land; or he fought vehemently in the earth (Lane). The expression حتي اختلف في الأرض would thus mean, till he (the Prophet) has had a regular fighting in the land, inflicting wounds on the enemy.

Commentary:

It was a practice among pre-Islamic Arabs (and it is regrettable that the practice still continues in some parts of the world) to take men captives even if there was no war and no fighting, and then to make them slaves. The verse abolishes this evil custom and lays down in clear words that it is only in war and after regular fighting that enemy combatants can be taken prisoner and that it is not lawful to take any person captive when there is no war and there has been no fighting.

The verse has been very wrongly interpreted. It is said that when the Muslims took some men of the Meccan army captives at Badr, the Holy Prophet took counsel with his Companions as to what should be done with them. ‘Umar suggested that they should be put to death, while Abī Bakr proposed that they should be released after accepting ransom from them. The Holy Prophet accepted the suggestion of Abī Bakr and the prisoners were released for ransom. But it is alleged that by revealing this verse, God expressed His disapproval of the Holy Prophet’s action, declaring that the captives ought to have been put to death and no ransom should have been taken for them. This interpretation, however, is obviously wrong; firstly, because God had so far sent down no commandment forbidding the release of
69. Had there not been a decree from Allah which had gone before, great distress would have surely overtaken you in connection with that which you took.\textsuperscript{1156}

70. So eat, of that which you have won in war, as lawful and good, and fear Allah. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.\textsuperscript{1157}

\textsuperscript{a8:42.}

prisoners for ransom and therefore He could not reprove the Holy Prophet for accepting ransom; \textit{secondly}, because the Holy Prophet had already accepted ransom for two persons taken captive at Nakhla prior to the Battle of Badr, and God had not disapproved of this action of his; \textit{thirdly}, because only two verses later God permits Muslims to eat of that which you have won in war as lawful and good (8:70). It is simply inconceivable that God should have reproved the Holy Prophet for having accepted ransom and then at the same time declared the money so taken to be lawful and good. This interpretation is, therefore, obviously wrong and the verse is only intended to lay down a general rule that captives should not be taken until there has been regular fighting and the enemy has been overpowered by the infliction of wounds.

\textbf{1156. Commentary:}

In the previous verse it was said that Muslims should not be hasty in taking captives from among the enemy. The verse under comment hints that kindness should be shown to prisoners and that they should be treated with mercy. The verse says that it is only through the assistance of God, which He had ordained for Muslims, that they have gained an easy victory and obtained much booty, and that if it had not been for the help which God had promised them beforehand they would not have obtained the booty without being severely handled by the enemy and suffering great loss at his hands. The words, \textit{a decree from Allah which had gone before}, obviously refer to the word of God which had already conveyed the promise of help to the Holy Prophet (see 8:6 above). The words “great distress” thus signify distress caused by the enemy and not affliction from God. The verse purports to say that when by the help of God the Muslims have gained so easy a victory, they should feel grateful for it and should show kindness to the prisoners who have fallen into their hands.

\textbf{1157. Commentary:}

The conjunction “so”, placed in the beginning of the verse, indicates that the commandment that follows it, is connected with, and is the result of, what has been said in the previous verses. As the booty taken was obtained after regular fighting and the victory came as a result of God’s help, so the booty taken in the battle and the ransom-money realized from the enemy-prisoners are both “lawful and good”. God has been here spoken of as “Forgiving” because He covered up the weaknesses of Muslims and made them appear strong in the sight of the enemy; and He has been spoken of as “Merciful” because He granted Muslims a decisive victory against overwhelming odds.
R. 10 71. O Prophet, say to the captives who are in your hands, ‘If Allah knows any good in your hearts, He will give you better than that which has been taken from you, and will forgive you. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful’. 1158

72. And if they intend to deal treacherously with thee, they have already dealt treacherously with Allah before, but He gave thee power over them. And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise. 1159

1158. Commentary:
The words of this verse, addressed to the Meccan prisoners in the hands of the Muslims are meant by way of consolation. If they have been made to pay ransom for their release, they should not grieve, for if God sees some good in their hearts, He will not only forgive them their past errors but will also amply repay them for their financial loss. One of the prisoners taken at Badr was ‘Abbās, an uncle of the Holy Prophet. Some Muslims recommended him to the Holy Prophet for free release in consideration of his near relationship to the Prophet and of his being a believer at heart, but the Holy Prophet refused to make any exception in his favour and declared that like other prisoners, he too should pay ransom for his release. When, however, he subsequently embraced Islam openly and came over to the Holy Prophet, he requested, on the basis of the verse under comment, that as God had promised to give the prisoners more than was taken from them as ransom, the promise may be fulfilled in his case, and the Holy Prophet granted his request (Jarir, x. 31).

1159. Commentary:
The treacherous dealing mentioned here is that disbelievers should do evil in return for the kindness shown to them. As was the custom in Arabia, pre-Islamic Arabs used to slay their powerful enemies, whenever they fell into their hands. The verse therefore signifies that if the enemies of Islam proved treacherous, God would give Muslims power over them again; so it is not necessary for Muslims to put their prisoners to death as pre-Islamic Arabs used to do.

God knew that the time was soon coming when the disbelievers would embrace Islam, hence the injunction to spare their lives and to treat them with kindness, for was not God “All-Knowing, Wise”? 
73. Surely, those who have believed and fled from their homes and striven with their property and their persons for the cause of Allah, and those who have given them shelter and help—these are friends one of another. But as for those who have believed but have left not their homes, you are not at all responsible for their protection until they leave their homes. But if they seek your help in the matter of religion, then it is your duty to help them, except against a people between whom and yourselves there is a treaty. And Allah sees what you do.\(^{1160}\)

1160. **Important Words:**

- **آروا** (gave shelter) is derived from اروا. They say اروا لله, i.e. he betook himself to it; or he repaired to it for lodging, covert or refuge; or simply he betook himself to it or repaired to it; or he returned to it. اروا means, he gave or afforded him lodging, covert, refuge or asylum; or he sheltered, protected or harboured him. اروا لله means, he felt compassion or pity for him. اروا means, he gave or afforded him lodging, covert, refuge or asylum; or he sheltered, protected or harboured him (Lane).

**Commentary:**

The verse enunciates a great principle which should govern the social relations of Muslims. It lays down that those Muslims who live in the same country and under the same administration, whether as immigrants or as original citizens, are bound to help one another in the hour of need. If one of them is wronged the others must come to his help. But as regards those Muslims who have not emigrated to a Muslim country and prefer to live apart, they have no claim on the assistance of these Muslims in worldly matters. But if they seek their help in the matter of religion, e.g., when they are persecuted for the sake of their religion, then they must be helped. If, however, they are living under a non-Muslim Government, with whom Muslims have entered into a treaty of peace, then no help should be rendered them even in matters of religion; and in this case the only way open to them is to emigrate from the non-Muslim country. The reader should note what high regard for compacts and treaties the Quran inculcates in its followers. It is to warn Muslims against a violation of compacts that the verse fittingly ends with the words, *And Allah sees what you do.*
74. And those who disbelieve—they are friends one of another. If you do it not, there will be mischief in the land and great disorder.\textsuperscript{1161}

75. And \textit{those who have believed and left their homes and striven for the cause of Allah, and those who have given them shelter and help—these indeed are true believers. For them is forgiveness and an honourable provision.}\textsuperscript{1162}

\textsuperscript{1161} Commentary:
The pronoun “it” in قطِلَهُ (you do it not) refers to what has been said in the previous verse i.e. helping oppressed Muslims as well as fulfilling compacts with non-Muslims. The verse purports to say that if this teaching is not observed by Muslims, the result will be oppression and disturbance in the earth.

\textsuperscript{1162} Commentary:
Two classes of believers have been commended here: \textit{firstly}, those who being persecuted, flee from a country where they do not free to follow their faith; \textit{secondly}, those who give shelter to and help the immigrants. The Muslims of the former class are called \textit{Muhājirin} (Refugees), while those of the second class are known as \textit{Anṣār} (Helpers). Both these classes have been called true believers, for both are active believers and make sacrifices for the cause of religion; and the verse promises them forgiveness and honourable provision. This also shows that those who do not emigrate from their homes where they do not enjoy religious freedom and set worldly good above religion do not have an “honourable provision” i.e. their worldly gains are not honourable in the sight of God. Similarly, the verse hints that those who help and give shelter to the immigrants will, in spite of freely spending on their needy brethren, find their possessions ever increasing, and God will continue to grant them honourable provision.
76. And those who have believed since and left their homes and striven for the cause of Allah along with you,—these are of you; and "as to blood relations, they are nearer one to another in the Book of Allah. Surely, Allah knows all things well.\textsuperscript{1163}

\textbf{1163. Important Words:}

\textit{اول} (nearer) means more entitled or having a better right or more deserving or more worthy. It also means, more regardful or more considerate. See 4:136.

\textbf{Commentary:}

The verse purports to say that the promise of "forgiveness and honourable provision" given to emigrants (see preceding verse) is not confined to the early emigrants only. It extends to the later emigrants also and is meant to continue while persecution or, for that matter, sincerity of faith continues.

The verse gives another injunction also. As all Muslims were declared to be brothers one to another (8:73), some persons might have been led to think that they might also inherit one another's property; so the verse fittingly declares that only blood relations are entitled to inheritance and that other Muslims are only brothers in faith, but not heirs.
1. *This is a declaration of complete absolution on the part of Allah and His Messenger from all obligation to the idolaters whom you had made promises.*

1164. *Important Words:*

- براءة (a declaration of absolution) is the noun-infinitive from برى which means, he was or became clear or free from a thing; or he was or became immune, secure or safe. برى من المرض means, he became free from the disease or malady. برى الجرح means, the wound healed or was healing. برى من الأمر means, he was free from the thing or quit thereof; or he was guiltless of it and was not responsible for it. They say برى من الين i.e. he became clear or quit of debt; or he became exempt from the demand. برى الإبه من حقك means, he was or became clear or quit to thee of thy claim or due or right; or he was or became exempt from thy demand. براءة being the noun-infinitive from برى gives all the meanings derived from the verbal uses of the words given above. It particularly means, a declaration of granting or conferring or announcing immunity or exemption or absolution from a fault or responsibility; freedom from blame; exemption or absolution from a demand, etc. (Tāj & Aqrab). See also 3:50.

- عهدتم (you made promises). عهد is derived from عهد for which see 2:41. The word عهد is here used not in the sense of entering into a treaty or a compact but making a promise, or making a solemn promise by which one binds oneself. They say عهدت الله ان لا اخل كذا i.e. I have made a promise to God that I will not do such a thing (Lisan).

**Commentary:**

This Sūra does not begin with the usual formula of بسم الله (In the name of God) for the reason of which see Introductory Note to Chapter Anfāl.

The first verse of this Sūra refers to all the idolaters of Arabia including the dhimmis i.e. those disbelievers who lived under the protection of Muslims as well as those non-Muslim Arab tribes with whom Muslims had treaty relations.

The verse declares the complete freedom of God and the Holy Prophet from all demand or blame, meaning thereby that all promises made by God and His Messenger had been fulfilled and their truthfulness fully established and therefore the idolaters to whatever class they belonged, could bring no charge against God and His Prophet. Prophecies about the defeat and discomfiture of infidels and the ultimate success and triumph of Islam had been repeatedly made, and, now that all these prophecies had been fulfilled, the infidels of Arabia could no longer say that the declarations of the Prophet about the final triumph of Islam were mere empty promises. By the fulfilment of these promises, the verse says, God and His Messenger had proved their absolute freedom from the charge of making false promises.
2. So go about in the land for four months, and 
\(^a\)know that you cannot frustrate the plan of Allah and that Allah will humiliate the disbelievers.\(^{1166}\)

3. And this is a proclamation from Allah and His Messenger to the people on the day of the Greater Pilgrimage, that Allah is clear of the idolaters, and so is His Messenger. So if you repent, it will be better for you; but if you turn away, then 
\(^b\)know that you cannot frustrate the plan of Allah. And 
\(^c\)give tidings of a painful punishment to those who disbelieve,\(^{1166}\)

\(^{a6:135;11:21.\ b}\text{See }9:2.\ c4:139.\)

1165. Commentary:
This verse particularly refers to the fulfilment of the prophecy contained in 54:2. Disbelievers are told to travel throughout the length and breadth of Arabia for four months (the period ordinarily required in the Prophet's time for such travel) and see whether there has remained any vestige of infidel rule and dominion in any part of the country. The infidels of Arabia opposed and persecuted the Prophet and his followers and spared no pains to crush and extirpate Islam. But Almighty God promised help to His Messenger with the result that the cause of Islam triumphed and all opposition was swept away.

1166. Important Words:
إذان (proclamation) is derived from إذان which means, he gave ear or listened; he permitted or allowed; he knew or he became informed, etc. إذان means, he informed, or notified or announced. إذان means, notification, announcement or call.
\(^{4}\text{clear}\) see 9:1 above. But whereas in that verse the word signifies absolution from obligations and from fulfilment of promises made by Islam, in the present one it simply signifies being clear of a person or a thing i.e. having nothing to do with him or it (Lane).

Commentary:
The declaration, contained in this verse and the one that follows, is different from that embodied in 9:1 & 2 above, for whereas vv. 9:1 & 2 relate to absolution from the fulfilment of promises made to idolaters, the present verse pertains to the severance of connections with them. This severance, however, should not be taken to mean that the verse declares Islam to be free from all treaty obligations; for, as the following verse makes it clear, treaties are to be respected in all cases and must not be violated.

It is related that on his return from Tabuk in the ninth year of the Hijra, the Holy Prophet sent Abü Bakr to Mecca to announce, on the occasion of the Greater Pilgrimage, that henceforward no one would be allowed to perform the circuit of the Ka'ba naked or unclothed. Immediately afterwards the first portion of this Sura was revealed. Upon
4. *Excepting those of the idolaters with whom you have entered into a treaty and who have not subsequently failed you in any thing nor aided anyone against you. So fulfil to these the treaty you have made with them till their term. Surely, Allah loves those who are righteous.*

he Holy Prophet sent 'Ali to Mecca, and he, as his cousin and representative, after reciting the opening verses of this Sûra, made a proclamation containing the following two announcements before the pilgrims who had gathered at Mecca from all parts of Arabia:

1. No idolater shall approach the House of God after this year.

2. Treaties and engagements made by the Holy Prophet with idolatrous tribes shall stand and be faithfully respected till the end of their term. The idolaters of Arabia and the hypocrites of Medina had, by their plots and conspiracies against Muslims and by their persistent treacherous conduct, lost all claim to the clemency of the Holy Prophet. When he was absent on the expedition to Tabûk, they spread the false rumour that the whole Muslim army had been captured and the Prophet was dead. Moreover, Abû 'Āmir, a mischievous Arab leader, had gone to Syria to bring a Christian army to attack Muslims; and in Arabia itself secret preparations had begun for a general rising. But for the timely return of the Holy Prophet, these plots would have resulted in great disturbance and heavy loss of life. When, on his return, the Holy Prophet learnt of the great mischief set on foot in his absence and the plots hatched to deal a death-blow to Islam, he, with a view to preventing a recrudescence of such mischief, ordered that henceforth no idolater could stay in the Hijaz with the exception of those with whom he had entered into a treaty, and these too were allowed to stay only till the expiry of the term of their treaty. The order was justified not only by the persistently treacherous conduct of the idolaters, but also by other political and cultural considerations which demanded its promulgation. The Hijaz had now become the religious as well as the political centre of Islam, and its interests demanded that it should be purged of all foreign and harmful elements likely to endanger its integrity and prove dangerous to the nascent Muslim community which had been brought into being to carry the message of the New Faith to the four corners of the earth.

1167. Commentary:

The verse makes an exception of such idolatrous tribes as had entered into a treaty with Muslims. These tribes were Banû Khuzâ‘a, Banû Mudlij, Banû Bakr, Banû Ḟumra and some of the Banû Sulaim tribes. The verse incidentally throws interesting light on the sanctity that Islam attaches to treaties and agreements. It requires its followers to respect their inviolability at all costs, and declares that faithfulness to the plighted word is an act of piety which earns the love of God.
And when the forbidden months have passed, kill the idolaters wherever you find them and take them prisoners, and beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they repent and observe Prayer and pay the Zakāt, then leave their way free. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.

1168. Commentary:

The term आच्छेदन प्रथम is generally applied to the four sacred months of Shawwāl, Dhū'л-Qa'da, Dhū'л-Ηjja and Rajab, the first three being the months of the Greater Pilgrimage, while in the last the Arabs generally performed the Lesser Pilgrimage or ‘Umra (see notes on 2:195 and 2:218). In this verse, however, the words आच्छेदन प्रथम signify not the “sacred months” but “forbidden months” and refer to the four months mentioned in 9:2 above. These were meant to grant a respite to idolaters to travel through the land in safety and see whether Islam had not triumphed and whether the word of God had not proved true. At the end of this period, during which all hostilities were to be suspended, war was to be resumed against the idolatrous Arabs with the exception, of course, of such as had entered into a treaty with Muslims, and the treacherous and faithless idolaters already at war with Muslims were to be captured and killed wherever found. It should, however, be remembered that the command to wage war after the expiry of the four forbidden months did not apply to all idolaters without discrimination but was directed only against such avowed enemies of Islam as had themselves started hostilities against Islam and had broken their plighted word and plotted to expel the Holy Prophet from the city. The reason for this ultimatum is given in the following few verses, viz. 9:8-13. As for those idolaters who had not been guilty of faithlessness and treachery, they were to be protected (see 9:4, 7). It is highly regrettable, however, that, divorcing this commandment from its context, some critics have made this verse the basis for an attack against Islam, alleging that it inculcates the destruction of all non-Muslims. The Quran and history belie that baseless allegation.

The words, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush, mean that a strict watch should be kept over the movements of the enemy that he may not be able to create mischief and carry on malicious propaganda against Muslims. The very words of the verse point to the existence of a great danger. These times were indeed very hard for Muslims. On the one hand, the Eastern Roman Empire was preparing to attack them and, on the other, the internal enemies of Islam were hatching plots to bring about its downfall.

The words, But if they repent ... , show that even those enemies of Islam at whose hands Muslims had suffered such grievous losses were to be forgiven if they repented and accepted Islam of their own free will. That no compulsion was to be used is clear from the very next verse, as also from the fundamental injunction laid down in 2:257. The truth is that there was a large number of men among the idolaters who, in their heart of hearts, believed in the truth of Islam, but who, either through pride or for fear of others or for other reasons, refrained from
6. And if any one of the idolaters ask protection of thee, grant him protection so that he may hear the word of Allah; then convey him to his place of security. That is because they are a people who have no knowledge.¹¹⁶⁹

making an open confession of faith. This verse was intended to convey to such people that, if any one of them declared his faith in Islam even during the war, his confession would not be taken as hypocritical or as made to save his skin. A conclusive proof of the fact that there were many among idolaters who were at heart inclined to Islam but were afraid to declare their faith openly owing to fear of persecution is that whenever war ceased, there was a rush for conversion to Islam. The two years of peace that followed the Treaty of Hudaibiya brought over a very large number of disbelievers to Islam. They could not have joined Islam in such large numbers, if they had not been believers in their hearts, having been held back only by fear of persecution. There are even cases on record of men accepting Islam in the thick of battle. Muslims did not at first spare such men, thinking that they had done so merely to save their lives. The Holy Prophet, however, took such Muslims severely to task, asking them if they had torn open the hearts of those people and had satisfied themselves that they were really devoid of sincerity. It is for this reason that the Quran directs Muslims not to harm such men from among the idolaters as profess their faith in Islam and observe the commandments of God, for only God knows whether they are true Muslims or not.

The divine attributes of “Forgiving” and “Merciful” at the end of the verse show that the conduct of idolaters had been such as to make them deserving of the severest of punishments, and that to extend forgiveness to them even on their abandonment of idolatry was really an act of mercy.

¹¹⁶⁹. **Commentary:**

This verse clearly establishes the fact that war with idolaters was not undertaken to force them to embrace Islam, because, according to it, even when a state of war existed idolaters were to be permitted to come to the Muslim camp or the Muslim headquarters if they desired to investigate the truth. Then, after the truth had been preached to them and they had been acquainted with the teachings of Islam, they were to be safely conveyed to their place of security, if they did not feel inclined to embrace the New Faith. In the face of such clear teachings, it is the height of injustice to accuse Islam of intolerance or of allowing compulsion for the propagation of its teaching.
7. How can there be a treaty of these idolaters with Allah and His Messenger, except those with whom you entered into a treaty at the Sacred Mosque? So, as long as they stand true to you, stand true to them. Surely, Allah loves those who are righteous.  

8. How can it be when, if they prevail against you, they would not observe any tie of relationship or covenant in respect of you. They would please you with their mouths, while their hearts refuse, and most of them are perfidious.

1170. Commentary:

The words, So, as long as they stand true to you, stand true to them, show that war was permissible only against such non-Muslims as were faithless to their covenants and attacked Muslims treacherously. As for the rest, Muslims have been bidden to observe their engagements strictly and faithfully with them. It will be noted that, like 9:4, this verse describes the observance of covenants and treaties as an act of piety and righteousness which is pleasing in the sight of God. No wonder that the Quran repeatedly exhorts Muslims to be faithful to their treaties.

1171. Important Words:

الن (tie of relationship) 1 means, he pierced him with a bright javelin. They say العولمة لفعل i.e. the horse went quickly, making itself prominent. الالون means, the colour became clear and bright. 2l means, relationship, or nearness with respect to kindred; good origin; a compact or covenant; a promise or an assurance of safety or security; a neighbour; a visible state of relationship or of compact (Lane, Aqrap & Mufradat).

ذمة (covenant) is the noun-infinitive from ذمة. They say ذمة i.e. he blamed or found fault with him. ذمة means, he did or said that for which he should be blamed or found fault with. ذمة also means, he protected him or granted him refuge or protection. ذمة means, he took or obtained a promise or an assurance of security or a covenant in his favour. ذمة means, a compact, covenant, treaty, engagement, obligation or responsibility; a right or due for the neglect of which one is to be blamed. The expression ذمة is used for those non-Muslim people with whom the Muslim State has made a compact and who pay poll-tax to the State, in return for which the State is responsible for their security and freedom (Lane & Aqrap).

Commentary:

This verse makes it further clear that the commandment to wage war is meant only
9. ُThey barter the Signs of Allah for a paltry price and turn *men* away from His way. Evil indeed is that which they do.1172

10. ُThey observe not any tie of relationship or covenant in respect of any one who trusts *them*. And it is they who are transgressors.1173

11. ُBut if they repent, and observe *Prayer* and pay the *Zakat*, then they are your brethren in faith. And We explain the Signs for a people who have knowledge.1174

about such disbelievers as had not only been the first to open hostilities against Islam but were, at the same time, perfidious and treacherous, paying no respect either to ties of relationship or to compacts and covenants.

1172. Commentary:
See note on 2 : 42.

1173. Important Words:

(one who trusts) is the active participle from *امْن* which is derived from *امْن* which means, he was or became safe or secure or free from fear. *امْن* means, he trusted him in respect of such a thing. *امْن* means, he rendered him safe or secure or free from fear; he trusted or confided in him. *امْن* therefore, means, a believer; a faithful person; a person who trusts or confides in others; one who affords security and protection. *امْن* is also one of the attributes of God, meaning, He Who grants security and protection to His creatures (Lane).

Commentary:
This verse emphasizes the heinousness of the crime of disbelievers by adding the word *امْن* (one who trusts). These disbelievers would not be true even to those who trusted them. Thus the present and the preceding two verses mention the reasons why Muslims were commanded to wage war against these idolaters in 9 : 5. These reasons are: (1) they were treacherous and perfidious; they professed to be friendly to Muslims, but as soon as they found an opportunity to injure them, they broke their plighted word and this in spite of the fact that Muslims trusted them (9 : 8 and the present verse); (2) they even disregarded the ties of relationship and killed their own kinsmen merely because the latter had embraced Islam (9 : 8); (3) their object in making war was to prevent men from embracing Islam (9 : 9); and (4) they were transgressors i.e. the first to attack Muslims (the present verse).

1174. Commentary:
The words, *they are your brethren in faith*, mean that not only should all hostilities cease against such disbelievers as repent but they are to be looked upon as brethren and treated as such. See also note on 9 : 5, above.
12. And if they break their oaths after their covenant, and attack your religion, then fight these leaders of disbelief,—surely, they have no regard for their oaths—that they may desist.\footnote{1175}

13. Will you not fight a people who have broken their oaths, and who plotted to turn out the Messenger, and they were the first to commence hostilities against you? Do you fear them? Nay, Allah is most worthy that you should fear Him, if you are believers.\footnote{1176}

\footnote{1175. Commentary:} This verse leaves no doubt as to the fact that Muslims were bidden to fight disbelievers only if they broke their covenant and attacked Islam with a view to injuring it. It also makes it clear that the object in fighting disbelievers was to make them "desist" from transgression.

The words طمنوا في دينكم (attack your religion) do not refer to mere verbal taunts and reproaches but to actual attacks meant to injure the vital interests of Islam; the word طمن literally meaning "to pierce with a spear".

The epithet, these leaders of disbelief, is here applied not to a few leading individuals but to the whole people to whom this commandment to fight referred. They are called ائه (leaders) because firstly they were among the first and the foremost to clash with Muslims and their example encouraged others; and, secondly, their hostility towards Islam was so inveterate and inescapable that they served, as it were, as evil models in this respect.

\footnote{1176. Commentary:} The words, they were the first to commence hostilities against you, also refer not to the Meccans but to those infidels, whether open or secret, who lived in and about Medina. The words provide conclusive proof of the fact that, far from being the transgressor, Islam was transgressed against. It was the infidels who first began hostilities against it. They acted most treacherously and resorted to all sorts of foul means to annihilate it. It was only such men that Muslims had been commanded to fight. Christian critics of Islam will do well to compare the wars of Islam with the wars of their great Law-giver, Moses, against a
14. Fight them, that Allah may punish them at your hands, and humiliate them, and help you to victory over them, and relieve the minds of a people who believe; 1177

15. And that He may take away the wrath of their hearts. And Allah turns with mercy to whomsoever He pleases.

And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise. 1178

people who had never taken up arms against him and had done nothing to offend him. Yet these people were ruthlessly butchered and even their women and children were not spared (Deut. 20:16, 17). As compared with this, the Holy Prophet took up arms only against those who first started hostilities, and even then he directed that their women and children and their religious devotees, as well as their churches, should be spared (Muslim, Tāhāwī & Dāwūd). Those who regard the wars of Moses as holy have certainly no reason to criticize the wars of the Holy Prophet of Islam.

1177. Important Words:

- relieve (شفاء) is derived from شفاء. They say "I cured him of disease" and restored him to convalescence. It means, I relieved him from doubt. "I relieved him from doubt respecting the question." It means, he will please thee if he speaks i.e., his speech will please thee (Lane).

Commentary:

The verse shows that the enemies of Islam had made themselves deserving of divine punishment by their treacherous and wrongful conduct; and fighting was only a form of divine punishment that had been prescribed for them and it was inflicted on them after they had themselves started hostilities. It was most certainly not resorted to in order to compel them to embrace Islam.

1178. Commentary:

The pronoun "their" in the words, the wrath of their hearts, refers to disbelievers, and the sentence means that God may thereby do away with the wrath that had been kindled in the hearts of disbelievers against Muslims. This could be done in two ways: (1) by crushin their power completely and for ever; or (2) by making them accept Islam. Both of these means are intended here, for there were some who were destroyed and their power crushed and there were others who saw the light and voluntarily embraced Islam. The following words, i.e., And Allah turns with mercy to whomsoever He pleases, obviously refer to the latter class.
16. *Do you think that you would be left alone, while Allah has not yet known those of you who strive in the cause of Allah and *do not take anyone for an intimate friend besides Allah and His Messenger and the believers. And Allah is well aware of what you do.  

1179. **Important Words:**

(
inte
timate friend) is derived from 

They say 

i.e. he entered the house. 

means, he caused it or him to enter; he inserted it. 

means, anything that is introduced or inserted into another thing; an intimate friend or associate; one whom a person takes to rely upon, not being of his family (Lane).

**Commentary:**

This verse hints that the trials of Muslims were not yet over. They had still to face more grievous dangers and greater trials, and only those who were true and sincere believers would be able to stand them. The verse thus warns believers to be prepared for still severer tests and yet greater sacrifices. Muslims had indeed been already tried at Badr and Uḥud and at the Battle of the Ditch, and had stood the test. But as a new era was now dawning for them with the expedition to Tabuk on the border of Syria, the verse calls upon them to make yet greater preparations. The trials and tribulations through which Muslims had already passed were indeed little as compared with the ordeals they had yet to face. The later dangers were far more terrible and grievous than anything they had yet experienced.

The words, *and do not take anyone for an intimate friend besides Allah and His Messenger and the believers,* are also intended as a warning to Muslims to become yet more united and to allow no foreign element to split their ranks in the coming days of trial and sacrifice.

1180. **Commentary:**

This verse relates to idolatrous pilgrims and serves as an introduction to the announcement contained in 9:28 below. No idolater was henceforth to be allowed to approach the Ka'ba, as announced by 'Ali to the pilgrims assembled at Mecca on the occasion of the Greater Pilgrimage of the year 9 A.H. (see note on 9:3 above). The verse under comment gives the reason for that prohibition. The Ka'ba being a temple dedicated to the worship of the One God, idolaters had nothing to do with it. They were declared enemies of God's Unity who bore witness to their own idolatrous beliefs and thus stood condemned by
18. He alone can keep the Mosques of Allah in a good and flourishing condition who believes in Allah, and the Last Day, and observes Prayer, and pays the Zakât, and fears none but Allah; so these it is who may be among those who reach the goal.1181

19. Do you hold the giving of drink to the pilgrims, and the maintenance of the Sacred Mosque as equal to the works of him who believes in Allah and the Last Day and strives in the path of Allah? They are not at all equal in the sight of Allah. And Allah guides not the unjust people.1182

their own confession. Moreover, while performing the Pilgrimage, idolaters, instead of declaring God's Oneness, attributed co-partners to Him, for it is on record that, while reciting the prescribed formula "Here I am, O my Lord, here I am; Thou hast no co-partner", they used to add the words "except him whom Thou hast Thyself made Thy co-partner". The words, while they bear witness against themselves to disbelief, beside being general in their significance, may also refer to this practice of idolaters.

1181. Important Words:

( may be) is meant to express desire or hope of obtaining something good or to express fear lest one should fall into an evil way (Aqrab). The word thus implies either desire or hope of good or fear of evil. They say i.e. Zaid is near to standing; or I eagerly desire or I hope that Zaid may be performing the act of standing; or it may be that Zaid is, or will be, standing. may thus be explained as meaning, it may be that, or simply may be. When uttered by God, the word is expressive of an event of necessary occurrence (Lane). See also the meaning of the word under 2:22. Though desire or hope are not attributable to God, yet the words and are used by God to point to the fact that a certain thing is such that people may base their desire or hope on it (Mufradât).

Commentary:

The prosperity of a Mosque of God, and for that matter of the Ka'ba itself, lies in the fulfilment of the noble object for which it is built. This object is the glorification and the remembrance of the name of God in it; and certainly this object is much the better realized by prohibiting those from visiting it who, instead of glorifying, God, attribute co-partners to Him, and by encouraging and exhorting true believers to frequent it.

The words, these it is who may be among those who reach the goal, signify that, since believers are destined to prosper, even the material prosperity of the Ka'ba will not suffer from the exclusion of infidels; for believers will go on pilgrimage to it in ever-increasing numbers.

1182. Commentary:

The outward and physical service of the Ka'ba, though in itself a meritorious act, is
20.  Those who believe and emigrate from their homes for the sake of God and strive in the cause of Allah with their property and their persons have the highest rank in the sight of Allah. And it is they who shall triumph.\textsuperscript{1183}

21. Their Lord gives them glad tidings of mercy from Him, and of His pleasure, and of Gardens wherein there shall be lasting bliss for them;

22. They will abide therein for ever. Verily, with Allah there is a great reward.

23. O ye who believe! take not your fathers and your brothers for friends, if they prefer disbelief to faith. And whoso befriends them from among you, it is they that are wrongdoers.\textsuperscript{1184}

as nothing compared with the spiritual service thereof, which only a true Muslim can perform. If the preservation of the true faith were to involve the temporary destruction of the building of the Ka'ba, the Quran would unhesitatingly endorse such destruction, because it is the preservation of the faith and not the preservation of a house, however sacred it may be, which is the aim and object of Islam. The verse thus also implies an effective answer to the baseless view that Islam attaches greater importance to the outward form of its ordinances than to the spirit underlying them. It may also be noted here that, according to the teachings of Islam, even the life of a true believer has greater sanctity than the House of God. Says the Holy Prophet: “A believer possesses greater sanctity than the Ka’ba” (Majah).

1183. Commentary:
In the previous verse it was pointed out that disbelievers could not be equal to believers, even if the former outwardly served the Ka’ba and aided pilgrims. In this verse it is added that believers are not all alike, some of them possessing a higher spiritual rank than others.

1184. Commentary:
This verse deals with that class of idolaters who were actively hostile to Islam and strove hard to exterminate it. They had declared war on innocent Muslims, and such was their hatred of Islam that they even disregarded the ties of relationship with a view to harming them. It was with such implacable enemies of Islam that Muslims were forbidden to make friends, for such an act on their part would have amounted to treachery to Islam and would
24. Say, if your fathers, and your sons, and your brethren, and your wives, and your kinsfolk, and the wealth you have acquired, and the trade whose dullness you fear, and the dwellings which you love are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah comes with His judgement; and Allah guides not the disobedient people.\textsuperscript{1185}

25. Surely, "Allah has helped you on many a battlefield, and on the day of Hunain, when your great numbers made you proud, but they availed you nought; and the earth, with all its vastness, became straitened for you, and then you turned your backs retreating.\textsuperscript{1186}

certainly have done it incalculable harm. As for other disbelievers who were not at war with Muslims, the Quran exhorts Muslims to be benevolent and kind to them (see 60:9,10). As a matter of fact, Islam attaches greater importance to the spiritual welfare of man than to his material well-being, and it is evident that friendly relations with men who prefer disbelief to faith are bound to exercise a baneful influence on spiritual growth.

1185. Commentary:
The idolaters were closely connected with Muslims by ties of blood and relationship. Muslims are plainly told in this verse that these relationships and other worldly considerations of wealth, trade and property should not be allowed to stand in the way when a dearer relationship and a nobler cause and more vital considerations demanded their sacrifice. Love of kith and kin and worldly possessions should not be permitted to hinder the Faithful from serving the cause of Islam. The judgement of God mentioned at the end of the verse came after the death of the Holy Prophet when "the disobedient people" i.e., those who had joined the fold of Islam for worldly considerations, revolted and were punished by God through Abū Bakr, the First Khalifa.

1186. Important Words:
- موالَّة (battle-fields) is the plural of موالَّة which is derived from موالَّة i.e. he dwelt or resided or settled in the place. موالَّة means, the place of one’s abode or residence; place of permanent residence; home; place where cattle are tied or kept. موالَّة means, place of residence; a scene of battle or a battle-field (Aqrab).
- حنين (Hunain), scene of an important battle between the Holy Prophet and certain pagan tribes of Arabia in A.H. 8. The place lies to the south east of Mecca about 18 miles from it.
26. Then Allah sent down His peace upon His Messenger and upon the believers, and He sent down hosts which you did not see, and He punished those who disbelieved. And this is the reward of the disbelievers.¹¹⁸⁷

In this battle a number of the newly subdued disbelievers of Mecca took part on the side of the Muslims.

Commentary:

Muslims are here reminded of the great truth that mere numbers do not count much and that they should not think that the presence of disbelievers would contribute to their strength or prosperity. Their attention is drawn to their temporary reverse at the battle-field of Hunain which was due to the presence of 2,000 Meccans who, though professing to be Muslims, were but newly converted and were not yet well established in faith, 80 of them actually being idolaters. (Zurqanī, iii. 6).

After the fall of Mecca, the powerful tribes of Hawazin and Thaif, fearing lest Islam should become established in the Hijāz, joined forces and advanced to attack the Muslims. The Holy Prophet met them at Hunain, 18 miles from Mecca. He was accompanied by 12,000 men, among whom were 2,000 new converts mentioned above, who had joined the army at Mecca. Contrary to the practice of the Holy Prophet, these men hastened to attack the enemy, 20,000 strong, but were quickly repulsed and fled from the battle-field in great confusion, throwing into disorder the advancing Muslim force which was passing through a narrow gorge and which was consequently forced to fly. In the stampede that followed the Holy Prophet, who stuck to his place like a rock, was left on the battle-field with only 100 men around him. Arrows from the archers of the enemy fell thick and fast all around him. It was a moment of extreme danger but the Prophet, urging his mule towards the enemy, advanced undaunted, shouting at the top of his voice: ُعَلِىَّ أَنَا أَبْنُ عُبَيد اللَّهِ, i.e. "I am indeed the Prophet of God. There is no untruth about it. I am a son of Abdul-Muttalib". 'Abbās, an uncle of the Prophet, who possessed a stentorian voice, called out to the fleeing Muslims to stop and return to their Master who wanted them. This clarion call roused the Muslims as the trumpet call of the Day of Judgement will rouse the dead from their graves and, rallying with a giant effort they rushed back to their beloved Master and attacked the enemy with such vehemence as put terror in his heart and made him flee in utter confusion. Thus the scales were turned and the day ended in a signal victory for the Muslims, and no less than 6,000 disbelievers were taken prisoner (Tabari & Hishām).

¹¹⁸⁷. Commentary:

It was only to the Holy Prophet and true believers that God vouchsafed peace and tranquillity. Thus those weak in faith became distinct from true believers; and God soon sent down His special aid and the disbelievers were routed and suitably punished.
27. Then will Allah, after that, turn with compassion to whomsoever He pleases; and Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.

28. O ye who believe! surely, the idolaters are unclean. So they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year of theirs. And if you fear poverty, Allah will enrich you out of His bounty, if He pleases. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

1188. Important Words:

جيسم (unclean) is derived from جسم which means, it was or became unclean, filthy or impure. جسم therefore, means, unclean, filthy or impure; it also signifies, a man having an incurable disease (Lane). نظافة (uncleanness) is of two kinds: one kind of نظافة is perceived by the physical senses and the other is perceived by the mind. In the present verse, it is the latter kind of uncleanness that is meant (Mufradat).

سوى (will) is a particle denoting amplification because it changes the aorist from the strait time which is the present to the ample time which is the future and is used with respect to that which has not yet happened; it is a word used to denote promising or threatening. According to some it is synonymous with سو but according to others it has a larger meaning than that letter and is distinct from it by its sometimes having ل prefixed to it. You say سوى أحل meaning, I will do such a thing (Lane).

Commentary:

The word جسم (unclean), as shown under Important Words, either means "one who is spiritually unclean" or "one having an incurable disease". Idolaters are thus here described as (1) being spiritually unclean or (2) having become so inured to idolatry that it is almost impossible for them to rid themselves of it. But since Mecca was the birthplace of Islam and a monument of Abraham's great faith in the One God, it was necessary that the place should be kept spiritually pure. Hence the prohibition to idolaters to approach the Sacred Mosque.

The coming of pilgrims to Mecca was a source of great income for Meccans and the prohibition might have given rise to fear in the hearts of some Muslims that their income would thereby be considerably lessened. They are, therefore, told here not to fear poverty, for God would make abundant provision for them out of His bounty.
29. "Fight those from among the People of the Book, who believe not in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor hold as unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have declared to be unlawful, nor follow the true religion, until they pay the tax with their own hand and acknowledge their subjection."

1189. Important Words:

- **الإمعان** (tax) is derived from **isz** meaning, he or it paid or gave satisfaction. They say **ايمان فليا حقة**, i.e. I paid such a one his right or due. **إمعان** means, he repaid, requited, or recompensed him for such a thing. **إمعان** means, the tax that is taken from the free non-Muslim subjects of a Muslim State in lieu of the protection it ensures them (Lane & Aqrab).

- **اليد** (hand) also means favour. See 5:65.

- **الماغرون** (acknowledge their subjection) is the plural of **غرر** which is derived from **غرر** meaning, he was or became small or little in body or in years or in estimation or in rank or dignity (Lane). **ماغرون** which is the active participle from **غرر** signifies, one who agrees and is satisfied, to occupy or remain in a subordinate position (Mufradât).

Commentary:

War with idolaters having been dealt with in previous verses, fighting with the People of the Book is introduced with this verse. The verse refers to those People of the Book who lived in Arabia. Like the idolaters of that country, they too had been actively hostile to Islam and had tried to exterminate it. Muslims were, therefore, ordered to fight them unless they agreed to live as their loyal and peaceful subjects. The **إمعان**, referred to in the verse, was the tax which such non-Muslims had to pay as free subjects of the Muslim State in return for the protection they enjoyed under it. Islam has ordained that in Arabia, the birthplace of Islam and its headquarters, only the People of the Book, and not idolaters, could live as subjects by paying the **إمعان**, while outside Arabia all non-Muslims could live under a Muslim Government on payment of this tax. Arabia, being the cradle and centre of Islam and, as it were, the citadel thereof, was to be kept free from idolaters. It should also be noted that as against **إمعان** which was imposed on non-Muslims, the tax imposed on Muslims is called **زكاة** which is a heavier tax than **إمعان**, and Muslims, in addition to this tax, had to perform military service which was very hard in those days and from which non-Muslims were exempt. Thus the latter in a way fared better, for they had to pay a lighter tax and were also free from military service.

The expression **اليد** (with their own hand) is used here in a figurative sense, signifying (1) that **إمعان** should not be forcibly taken from the People of the Book but that they should pay it with their own hand i.e. they should agree to pay it willingly and should acknowledge the superior power of the Muslims; or (2) that they should pay it out of hand i.e. in ready money and not in the form of deferred payment; or (3) that they should pay it considering it as a favour from Muslims, the word, **اليد** (hand) also meaning a favour.
50. And the Jews say, Ezra is the son of Allah, and the Christians say, the Messiah is the son of Allah; that is what they say with their mouths. They imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before them. Allah's curse be on them! How are they turned away! 

The word مَطْرُونَ (acknowledge their subjection) is used here to express the subordinate political status of non-Muslims, i.e. they were to occupy the position of subjects in relation to Muslims. As regards the social relations of Muslims with the dhimmis, as non-Muslim subjects of the Muslim State were called, these may be judged from the fact that the Holy Prophet himself used to stand up in reverence when the bier of a non-Muslim happened to pass by him (Dāwūd, ch. on Ḥanāfīz), and 'Ali, the Fourth Caliph, bore on his own shoulders the bier of a Christian who happened to die in the time of his Caliphate.

1190. Important Words:

عزر (Uzair or Ezra) may be taken to have been derived in Arabic from عزر. They say عزر i.e. he prevented him or forbade him; he taught him the obligatory statutes or ordinances of God; he aided or assisted him; he strengthened him; he treated him with reverence or honour (Lane). Ezra (a Hebrew name), perhaps abbreviated from Azariah meaning “Yahwe (God) helps,” was a descendant of Seraiah, the high priest, and, being himself a member of the priestly order, was known also as Ezra the Priest. He was one of the most important personages of his day and had far-reaching influence on the development of Judaism. He was especially honoured among the Prophets of Israel. In fact, he marks the spring time in the national history of Judaism and is regarded and quoted as the type of person most competent and learned in the Law. The Rabbis associate his name with several important institutions. Renan has remarked in the Preface to his History of the People of Israel that the definite constitution of Judaism may be dated only from the time of Ezra. In Rabbinical literature Ezra was considered worthy of being the vehicle of the Law, had it not been already given through Moses. According to tradition, he died at the age of 120 in Babylonia. He worked in close collaboration with Nehemiah. Ezra lived in the 5th century B.C. (Jew. Enc. & Enc. Bib.).
31. They have taken their learned men and their monks for lords beside Allah. And so have they taken the Messiah, son of Mary. And they were not commanded but to worship the One God. There is no god but He. Too holy is He for what they associate with Him! 1191

32. They desire to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths; but Allah will permit nothing except that He will perfect His light, though the disbelievers may dislike it. 1192

which cannot result except in such a one being destroyed (Mufradāt). See also 2:62.

Commentary:

After having dealt at some length with the idolatrous beliefs and practices of the pagans of Arabia, the Quran proceeds in this verse to deal with the polytheistic beliefs and practices of Jews and Christians. Those of the Jews who lived in Medina looked upon Ezra as the son of God. Similarly, a sect of Jews living at Hadramaut in the south of Arabia believed him to be the son of God. The remnants of this sect continued to linger till the end of the fourth century A.H. (Qastalānī & Dāwūd Zāhirī). As this doctrine of the Jews, which appears to be sectional, was a later innovation and did not subsist long, present Jewish sources make no mention of it but that does not affect the real situation. Elsewhere the Quran says that the Israelites were rather free in attributing sons to God (5:19).

This verse also shows that these blasphemous doctrines were not taught to Christians and Jews by their Prophets but were later borrowed by them from pagan sources. Incidentally, this claim of the Quran constitutes a proof of its divine origin, because here it states a fact which was not known to the world even two centuries ago and has been only recently brought to light by modern research. A study of the origins of the Christian faith has now established the fact that Jews and Christians borrowed their later doctrines from Babylonian and Roman pagan sources.

The words, Allah’s curse be on them, when spoken by man signify only an imprecation but, when spoken by God, they imply a prophecy of the destruction of the person or persons about whom they are uttered.

1191. Important Words:

For ʿalāhār (learned men) and rihān (monks) see 5:45 and 5:83 respectively.

Commentary:

ʿalāhār (learned men) belonged to Jews and rihān (monks) to Christians. Both these people virtually looked upon their religious leaders as so many gods besides the true God.

1192. Commentary:

The words, They desire to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, signify that they seek to injure the cause of Islam by making false propaganda against it and by inciting others to harm it. As borne out by history, the
33. He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it prevail over every other religion, even though the idolaters may dislike it. 1193

Christians of Arabia incited their powerful co-religionists in Syria and, by their help, sought to extinguish the light of Islam that God had kindled in Arabia. They are told in this verse that their plots and machinations would in no way succeed in injuring the cause of Islam. The Jews also had made a similar attempt by inciting the Persians against the Holy Prophet. See under 2:103.

1193. Commentary:

The previous verse ends with the word كفرون (disbelievers), while the present verse ends with the word مشركون (idolaters). Christians are كفر because they disbelieve in the Holy Prophet of Islam and they are مشرك because they associate co-partners with God. The difference is significant in another way also. The word كفر (used in the preceding verse) is derived from كفر which literally means “to cover.” The Quran has used this word to explain the fact that the “light” of God cannot be extinguished by those who try to cover it. In the present verse the word مشرك (idolaters) has been used to point to the fact that whereas in the case of God Christians do not refrain from associating co-partners with Him (thereby implying that His attributes can be shared by others), in their own case they cannot bear to see the favour of prophethood which they enjoy, shared by others. They cannot reconcile themselves to the idea that Prophets may be raised among any other people, as they have been raised among them. The verse thus tells them that God has caused others to share the gift of prophethood with them, whether they like it or not.

The promise that God would make Islam prevail over every other religion stands for all time. The promise was fulfilled when in its early history Islam triumphed over all peoples, including Christians; and the fulfilment of this promise is going to be repeated in the present age, when God has raised the Promised Messiah, Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, to serve and help the cause of Islam. This triumph is going to be complete and permanent. In fact, most Commentators (e.g., Bayan) agree that the final and perfect fulfilment of this promise, as made in the present verse, is to take place at the time of the second advent of Jesus.
34. O ye who believe! surely many of the priests and monks devour the wealth of men by false means and turn men away from the way of Allah. And those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah—give to them the tithings of a painful punishment.\footnote{1194}

35. On the day when it shall be made hot in the fire of Hell, and their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded therewith and it shall be said to them: 'This is what you treasured up for yourselves; so now taste what you used to treasure up.'\footnote{1195}

**1194. Commentary:**

This verse sheds some light on the moral degradation of the Jewish and Christian religious leaders who were opposed to the Holy Prophet. Their moral depravity and spiritual degeneration was itself evidence of the truth of Islam, because when the leaders of a religion themselves become corrupt and depraved, reformation can come only through a heavenly Messenger. Jewish and Christian leaders opposed the Holy Prophet, but their own depravity testified to the fact that he had appeared at a time when his advent was urgently needed.

The words, those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah—give to them the tithings of a painful punishment, give a graphic picture of Jews and Christians. They hoard wealth and do not spend it in the cause of God, i.e., in propagating truth and helping the poor and needy. They are threatened with a painful punishment.

**1195. Important Words:**

- **branded** (branded) is formed from كَرَم. They say كَرَم، i.e., he cauterized him or it; he burned his or its skin with a piece of iron or the like (Lane).
- كَرَمُ اللَّهِ والَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ الدِّينَ وَالْفَظَّةُ (branded) means, I cauterized or branded the beast with a piece of hot iron (Mufradát).
- كَرَمَ الْقَرْبَةُ فَلَا كَرَمَ الْأَكْرَمَ (branded) means, the scorpion stung such a one. كَرَمَ الْأَكْرَمَ which is the noun-infinitive from كَرَم، means, the act of cauterizing or branding with a piece of hot iron (whether for the purpose of putting a mark or for curing a disease). The Arabs say كَرَمَ الْأَكْرَمَ، i.e., the last remedy (in certain diseases) is cauterizing (Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

The reward and punishment of the life to come will not be of a physical nature, but will be the spiritual representation of the actions of man in the present life. This is clear from the verse under comment, which states that only three parts of the body—the forehead, the side and the back—will be branded.
36. The reckoning of months with Allah has been twelve months by Allah’s ordinance since the day when He created the heavens and the earth. Of these four are sacred. That is the right creed. So wrong not yourselves therein. And fight the idolaters all together as they fight you all together; and know that Allah is with the righteous. 1196

The expression is clearly figurative. When a rich man, out of miserliness or pride, refuses to help a beggar, the first sign that appears on his person is that his forehead contracts into a frown. Then he turns on his side and finally he disdainfully shows his back to the man seeking his help. Fittingly, therefore, the forehead, the side and the back have been spoken of here as being branded i.e. in the after-life these parts will appear to be branded with a hot iron, as if bearing testimony against themselves.

The verse also signifies that even in the present life the hoarded treasures of Jews and Christians will become a source of grievous punishment for them. In this case, the threatened punishment might be taken to refer to devastating wars such as the present one, in which hot metal in various forms is destroying the western peoples. They receive it on their foreheads, sides and backs i.e. whether facing the enemy or making a flank movement or turning their backs; and, curiously enough, Jews are as much hit by these wars as are Christians.

1196. Important Words:

كتاب (ordinance) is derived from كتب i.e. (1) he wrote; (2) he prescribed or ordained. كتب means, a book or a writing; divine prescript or ordinance or decree (Lane). See also 2: 54 & 2: 130.

Commentary:

The words في كتاب الله (by Allah’s ordinance) mean that God so ordained on the day when He created the heavens and the earth that the number of months should be twelve i.e. the law of nature determines that number, which holds true both in the solar and the lunar system.

The four sacred months are ذي al-Qa’dah, ذي al-Hijja, محرم and رجب. These months have been held sacred by the Arabs, who are mostly descended from Abraham, from time immemorial and Islam confirmed their sacredness. It is considered unlawful to wage war or, for that matter, to continue a state of war in these four months unless, as the Quran points out, the enemy is the first to violate their sanctity. See also note on 2: 218.
37. Surely, the postponement of a Sacred Month is an addition to disbelief. Those who disbelieve are led astray thereby. They allow it one year and forbid it another year, that they may agree in the number of the months which Allah has made sacred, and thus may make lawful what Allah has forbidden. "The evil of their deeds is made to seem fair to them. And Allah guides not the disbelieving people." 1197

1197. Important Words:

التأخير (the postponement) is the noun-substantive from َتأخَرِ meaning, he postponed or delayed a thing. They say "أنَّا أَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَٰهَكَ" i.e. God postponed the end of his life, viz. He prolonged his life. An Arab would say "يَأْتِي بِدِينَ" i.e. he sold it on credit i.e. the payment was to be made at a future period. نَـِئَـِـ ذِ~ therefore means, postponement; or the postponement of a month i.e. the transfer of the sanctity of one month to a later month, a custom of the Arabs in the Days of Ignorance; the month which the Arabs so postponed; the postponement of the time of Pilgrimage, another custom of the Arabs; a postponement of the time of payment of a debt or of the price of a thing sold (Lane & Aqrab).

لِوَاطَأَوا (that they may agree in) is derived from َوَاطِأَتِ which is again derived from َوَطَأَ meaning, he trod upon it; he trampled upon it. They say "وَأَطَأَتِ على الْأَمَرْ" i.e. he agreed with him respecting the matter. وَأَطَأَتِ على الْأَمَرْ means, the people agreed with each other respecting the affair (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The reference in this verse, as shown under Important Words, is to a long-standing Arab custom. The three successive sacred months of َذُحَّلْ قَابِّداً, َذُحَّلْ هَيْجَةَ and َمُهَارَّمَ sometimes seemed to them too long a time to refrain from their predatory expeditions. In order, therefore, to free themselves from the restrictions of the Sacred Months, they sometimes treated a sacred month as an ordinary month and an ordinary month as sacred. This practice is denounced here because it involved fraud and interfered with the security of life guaranteed in these months. The procedure adopted for postponing the observance of a sacred month was generally something like this. When in the month of َذُحَّلْ هَيْجَةَ the pilgrims returned from َمَينَ, after having performed the ceremonies of هَيْجَةَ, an influential man would arise from among the assembly and, according to Arab custom, would say, "I am he whose decree is not to be rejected." Thereupon, the assembly would request him to transfer the sanctity of the next month of َمُهَارَّمَ to the following month (شَافِرَ). Thus the sanctity of a month which God had made inviolable was violated with impunity. This artifice, however, was not resorted to every year, but only when it suited their interests or convenience. The Quran has condemned it as an impious innovation, and as evidence of the untrustworthiness of the pagan Arabs, implying that as they could not keep the ordinances of God, they could not be expected to remain true to their engagements with Muslims.
38. O ye who believe! what is the matter with you that, when it is said to you, go forth in the way of Allah, you sink heavily towards the earth? a Would you be contented with the present life in preference to the Hereafter? b But the enjoyment of the present life is but little, as compared with the Hereafter.\textsuperscript{1198}

39. If you do not go forth to fight, He will punish you with a painful punishment, and will choose in your stead a people other than you, and you shall do Him no harm at all. And Allah has full power over all things.

\textsuperscript{a}13:27. \textsuperscript{b}See 3:15.

1198. Commentary:

Just as true Muslims should always be prepared to desist from war, whenever they are required to do so (see preceding verse), they should also be ever ready to march forth in the cause of Allah whenever called upon. It is to this great truth that the present verse draws our attention. Indeed, with this verse the Quran begins to throw light on such residents of Medina as were weak in faith, including the hypocrites, and exposes the attitude they adopted to evade the obligations that devolved on them as members of the Muslim community. The hypocrites are particularly addressed, the reference being to the expedition to Tabuk, a town situated about half-way between Medina and Damascus. News was brought to the Holy Prophet that the Greeks of the Eastern Roman Empire were assembling their forces on the Syrian frontier. As the Greeks, popularly known as Romans, possessed a regular and well-disciplined army, the Holy Prophet thought it necessary to make thorough preparations to meet them. Contrary to his usual practice, he even announced his objective, making no secret of his destination, so that those who took part in it should do so in full consciousness of the length and hardships of the journey. It was a time of great trial. The long and arduous journey through the desert was undertaken in the midst of the hot weather. The season promised drought and scarcity for those who took part in the expedition and the ripeness of the harvest for those who stayed behind. Pious Muslims, however, in their devotion to the cause of Islam, promptly responded to the Prophet's call. Of those who stayed behind without permission only three were true believers, the rest being all hypocrites. Thus at the head of an army about 30,000 strong the Holy Prophet left Medina in the 9th year of Hijra. On account of the great hardships the Muslim army had to suffer in the long journey, it came to be called \textit{i.e.} the distressed army.
40. If you help him not, then know that Allah helped him even when the disbelievers drove him forth while he was one of the two when they were both in the cave, when he said to his companion, 'Grieve not, for Allah is with us.' Then Allah sent down His peace on him, and strengthened him with hosts which you did not see, and humbled the word of those who disbelieved, and it is the word of Allah alone which is supreme. And Allah is Mighty, Wise.\(^{1199}\)

1199. Important Words:


Commentary:

The reference in this verse is to the flight of the Holy Prophet from Mecca to Medina when, accompanied by Abū Bakr, he took shelter in a cave called Thaur. See note on 8: 31. The Arabic words rendered as "one of the two" literally mean "the second of the two" and refer to the Holy Prophet and Abū Bakr. The Holy Prophet has been referred to as "the second" because in the Quranic idiom the more important member of the group is referred to as being the last part i.e. the final figure. For instance see 5: 74 where God is referred to as being "the third of the trinity" according to the Christian doctrine.

The verse sheds important light on the high spiritual status of Abū Bakr, who accompanied the Holy Prophet in his flight from Mecca and was thus one of "the two" referred to in the verse. It is worthy of note that when at a time of danger, the Israelites anxiously addressed Moses, saying, We are surely overtaken, he replied, nay, speak not thus, for my Lord is with me. He will direct me aright (26: 62, 63). In a similar situation, however, the Holy Prophet, when Abū Bakr expressed anxiety, calmly said: Grieve not, for Allah is with us. This speaks volumes for Abū Bakr's spiritual greatness, for the pronoun "us" signifies that God was not only with the Holy Prophet but with Abū Bakr as well. Again, it is on record that, while in the cave, Abū Bakr began to weep, and when asked by the Holy Prophet why he was weeping he replied, "I do not weep for my life, because if I die, it is only the question of a single life. But if you die, O Prophet of God, it will be the death of Islam and of the entire Muslim community" (Zurqānī).

The pronoun in the clause, Allah sent down His peace on him, stands for Abū Bakr and not the Holy Prophet, for the Holy Prophet had all along enjoyed peace. The succeeding pronoun in the clause, strengthened him with hosts, refers to the Holy Prophet. This divergence in the use of similar pronouns is permissible in Arabic, being known as إكثار ضار (see 2: 75; 48: 10).

The words, and (God) humbled the word of those who disbelieved, mean that God frustrated the designs of the disbelievers and they failed to accomplish what they desired. See also 8: 31.
41. Go forth, light and heavy, and strive with your property and your persons in the cause of Allah. That is better for you, if only you knew.\footnote{1200}

42. If it had been an immediate gain and a short journey, they would certainly have followed thee, but the hard journey seemed too long to them. Yet they will swear by Allah, saying, 'If we had been able, we would surely have gone forth with you.' They ruin their souls; and Allah knows that they are liars.\footnote{1201}

The verse also hints that even if none else had accompanied the Holy Prophet in the hazardous expedition to Tabuk, Abū Bakr would certainly have done so just as he did on the occasion of his flight from Mecca. The verse thus provides a great testimonial to the strength and sincerity of Abū Bakr's faith.

\footnote{1200. Commentary: Muslims are here commanded to march forth in the way of God, allowing no worldly consideration or impediment to prevent them from doing so. The words "light and heavy" have several meanings i.e. whether you are young or old; alone or in parties; on foot or on horseback; with sufficient arms and provisions or with insufficient equipment and scanty provisions, etc.}

\footnote{1201. Important Words: \textit{عَرَض}} (gain) is derived from the verb \textit{عرض} for which see 7: 170. \textit{عَرَض} means, anything that happens to a man; an accident of any kind; a thing that is not permanent; frail goods of the world; worldly goods of whatever kind; property or wealth whether little or much; booty or spoil; an object of desire; a gain; a gift (Lane & Aqrab). \textit{قَصَد}} (short) is the active participle from \textit{قَصَد}}. They say \textit{قَصَد}} i.e. he went to him or directed himself to him; or he made him or it his object; he sought or pursued him or it. \textit{مَرْق}} means, the way was direct or right. They say \textit{مَرْق}} i.e. he pursued the right or direct course in the affair and did not exceed the due bounds therein; or he acted in a moderate manner. \textit{قَصَد}} which is the noun-infinitive from \textit{قَصَد}} \textit{مَرْق}} means, the aim or course of a person; an object of desire; one's intention or meaning; a right way or course; a right thing. \textit{قَصَد}} means, near. \textit{مَرْق}} means, a direct or right way or an even road. \textit{مَرْق}} means, an easy and short journey; a moderately easy and short journey (Lane & Aqrab).

\textit{شَقَّة}} (hard journey) is derived from \textit{شَقَّ}}. They say \textit{شَقَّ}} i.e. he cut or rent or split or broke it. \textit{شَقَّ}} means, it (an affair) affected him severely; it was hard and distressing to him. \textit{شَقَّ}} means, a piece of a garment; a far or long journey; a difficult road; a region or quarter in the reaching of which one is taken by difficulty and distress; distance (Lane).
43. Allah remove thy cares. Why didst thou permit them to stay behind until those who spoke the truth had become known to thee and until thou hadst known the liars? 1202

44. Those who believe in Allah and the Last Day will not ask leave of thee to be exempted from striving with their property and their persons. And Allah well knows the righteous.

45. Only those will ask leave of thee to be exempted who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, and whose hearts are full of doubt and in their doubt they waver.

46. And if they had intended to go forth, they would certainly have made some preparation for it; but Allah was averse to their marching forth. So He kept them back, and it was said: 'Sit ye at home with those who sit.' 1203

1202. Important Words:

"عَفَّا اللَّهُ عَلَكَ لَمْ أَذِنْ لَهُمُ الخَطْأُ لَنْ يُثْبَتَ الْكُذَّابُينَ (Allah remove thy cares). "عَفَّا" means, he or it effaced, erased or obliterated a trace, etc. They say also "عَفَّا الله عَلَكَ i.e. may God efface from him his sin, fault, offence, etc. Sometimes the expression "عَفَّا الله عَلَكَ is used where no sin or fault has preceded and is not even conceivable. For instance, an Arab would say to one whom he holds in high esteem "عَفَّا الله عَلَكَ meaning, may God set thy affairs aright and bring honour and glory to thee (Aqrab). See also 2:110; 2:188 & 2:220.

Commentary:

As shown under Important Words, the word "عَفَّا" does not necessarily imply the committing of a sin on the part of a person about whom it is used, for it is also used for a person who has committed no sin and even for him who is incapable of committing a sin. In fact, the expression "عَفَّا الله عَلَكَ is sometimes used to express love or respect; and here it implies a desire that the Prophet may be relieved of his cares and difficulties.

The expression, Why didst thou permit them to stay behind, is intended to hint that the refusal on the part of the Holy Prophet to give them leave would have served the useful purpose of unmasking the hypocrisy of the hypocrites. Of those who remained behind, only about half came to the Holy Prophet to ask his leave, while the majority stayed behind without asking his permission and without explaining their inability to accompany him.

1203. Important Words:

"بَطْ لَهُمْ (He kept them back) is derived from بَطِلَ (thabila) i.e. he was or became stupid or weak in
47. If they had gone forth with you, they would have added to you nothing but trouble, and would have hurried to and fro in your midst, seeking to create discord among you. And there are among you those who would listen to them. And Allah well knows the wrongdoers.¹²⁰⁴

 Commentary:

 The verse exposes the hollowness of the excuses offered by the hypocrites. It purports to say that if the hypocrites had been really anxious to march out but had only been prevented from doing so by unforeseen obstacles over which they had no control and which had cropped up at the last moment, they should have made preparations for the expedition long before by providing themselves with arms and provision. But they did nothing of the sort. Thus the fact that they made no preparation and came with their excuses at the eleventh hour shows that from the very beginning they had no intention or desire to go and that the excuses they brought forward were only so many covers to veil their hypocrisy.

¹²⁰⁴. Important Words:

شَيْبَةٌ (trouble) is the noun-infinitive from شَيْبَةٌ (khabila) i.e. he was or became corrupt, unsound or disordered in his reason or intellect or absolutely. خَبَلَ (khabal-hū) of which the infinitive is خَبَلَ (khablūn) means, it rendered him insane or it corrupted or disordered his reason or intellect. خَالٍ means, corruptness or unsoundness; or a disordered state in an absolute sense, or in reason or intellect; an affection in the heart resembling insanity or egregious stupidity; loss or a state of diminution; a state of perdition or destruction; distress, embarrassment, trouble or difficulty (Lane). See also 3: 119.

 Commentaries:

The verse declares that the defection of the hypocrites did no harm to the Muslims. On the contrary, it proved a blessing in disguise. For, if the hypocrites had gone forth with the Muslim army, they would only have caused trouble and mischief and tried to create discord and dissension.

The latter portion of the verse shows that some hypocrites or those weak of faith had actually gone forth with the Muslim army. These were ever ready to lend ear to the leaders among the hypocrites who generally remained behind.
48. They sought to create disorder even before this, and they devised plots against thee till the truth came and the purpose of Allah prevailed, though they did not like it.  

49. And among them is he who says, 'Permit me to stay behind and put me not to trial.' Surely, they have already fallen into trial. And surely Hell shall encompass the disbelievers.

50. If good befall thee, it grieves them, but if a misfortune befall thee, they say, 'We had indeed taken our precaution beforehand.' And they turn away rejoicing.

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So if the latter too had accompanied the army, both would have joined hands to injure the cause of Islam.

1205. Important Words:

- تَأَبَّأَتْ (qallabā) is the intensified form of قَالَبْتُ (qalabta). They say قَالَبْتُ i.e. he turned it over or upside-down; he altered or changed its or his mode or manner of being. قَالَبْتُ بَيْدٍ (qallabtu-hū) means, I turned it over and over with my hand.

- قَالَبَ الْفَكْرُ (qalab al-fakhr) means, he turned over and over or revolved repeatedly in his mind thoughts or considerations with a view to the attainment of some object in relation to an affair.

- قَالَبَ الْأُمْرُ (qalab al-amr) means, he investigated, scrutinized or examined affairs and turned them over and over in his mind, meditating what he should do. So قَالَبَ الْأُمْرُ (qalab al-amr) means, they turned over and over in their minds affairs, meditating what they should do to thee; or they meditated or devised in relation to thee wiles, artifices, plots or stratagem; or they revolved ideas or opinions respecting the frustrating of thy affair (Lane).

Commentary:

This verse further explains what has been said in the previous verse, viz., that the hypocrites would have plotted to injure the cause of Islam in the very midst of battle, if they had marched forth with the Muslims because they were always on the look-out to create mischief and had already been plotting to bring the Holy Prophet to grief.

1206. Commentary:

Some of the hypocrites sought to be excused on the plea that the Syrian women were exceptionally beautiful, and that if they went to that country they were likely so fall into temptation, meaning thereby that they wanted to stay behind only in order to save their morals and their faith. But faith, the verse tersely points out, they had already lost; for it was for God's sake that they had to undertake the journey, and since they declined to respond to the call of God, they could not be said to possess any faith. They destroyed the root to save the branch, if indeed they meant to save it.

1206a. Important Words:

- مَلَأَ (our precaution). The word مَلَأ gives a number of meanings e.g. command or decree;
51. Say, 'Nothing shall befall us save that which Allah has ordained for us. He is our Protector. And in Allah then should the believers put their trust.'

52. Say, 'You do not await for us anything except one of the two good things; while as regards you, we await that Allah will afflict you with a punishment either from Himself or at our hands. Wait then; we also are waiting with you.'

53. Say, 'Spend willingly or unwillingly, it shall not be accepted from you. You are indeed a disobedient people.'

thing, affair or matter; condition, case or state, etc. (Lane). Here it signifies precaution (Kashshaf).

1207. Commentary:
The expression, save that which Allah has ordained for us, means that victory as ordained by God will always be attained, however great the intervening difficulties. The words that follow, viz. He is our Protector, support this interpretation and also 58:22 which says, Allah has decreed: Of a certainty I will prevail, and My Messengers.

1208. Commentary:
The "two good things" referred to in this verse are martyrdom and victory. Only one of these two things can fall to the lot of believers in a war. Either they win and triumph or they die on the battle-field and become martyrs. Hence the evil desires which the disbelievers and hypocrites entertained concerning the Muslims could never be fulfilled. The verse thus purports to say that true believers can never suffer a defeat; they either die fighting and thus win martyrdom or they return victorious from the field of battle.

1209. Commentary:
The expression, it shall not be accepted from you, means that if the hypocrites offered to pay the Zakāt or any other subscription, it should not be accepted from them in expiation of their non-participation in the expedition. The nature of the punishment meted out to the hypocrites is worthy of special notice. No fine was levied on them, nor were they imprisoned nor subjected to a punishment generally inflicted for offences of this nature. They were simply told that as, by disobeying the command of God and refusing to serve Islam at a time of great danger, they were doomed, Zakāt, which was a means of purification and therefore of winning salvation, would not be accepted from them. This shows that the dealings of the Holy Prophet with the hypocrites were not dictated by any monetary or mundane considerations.
54. And nothing has deprived them of the acceptance of their contributions save that they disbelieve in Allah and His Messenger. And they come not to Prayer except lazily and they make no contribution save reluctantly. 1210

55. So let not their wealth nor their children excite thy wonder. Allah only intends to punish them therewith in the present life and that their souls may depart while they are disbelievers. 1211

56. And they swear by Allah that they are indeed of you, while they are not of you, but they are a people who are timorous. 1212

1210. Commentary:
Good works are of two kinds: (1) those done for the purification of one's own soul, of which Prayer is the most important, and (2) those done for the uplift of one's community, of which Zakat or other similar subscriptions form an important part. Hypocrites, the verse points out, are lazy and reluctant in both these fields.

1211. Commentary:
The verse warns the hypocrites that their possessions and their children, for whose sake they refrained from going to battle, would become a source of torture for them. Their children would embrace the faith they hate and would become its devoted followers and thus their wealth would also be used in furthering and strengthening the very cause which they abhorred. Think of the shock which 'Abdulllah bin Ubayy, leader of the hypocrites at Medina, must have felt on learning that his own son had asked the Holy Prophet to allow him to kill his father when the latter, on one occasion, used highly insulting and threatening language regarding the Holy Prophet and tried to create discord among the Faithful.

1212. Important Words:
(are timorous) is derived from which means, he feared or was afraid or he became frightened. They say i.e. I feared thee or I was in fear of thee. means, he feared for him. also means, he entered into a wave and dived therein (Lane).

Commentary:
As the Muslims predominated at Medina, the hypocrites who lacked moral courage had to conceal their infidelity and even outwardly became Muslims to secure worldly advantages. They had no faith in their hearts, but they did not possess the courage to give vent openly to their real feelings.
57. If they could find a place of refuge, or caves, or even a hole to enter, they would surely turn thereto, rushing uncontrollably.\footnote{1213}

58. And among them are those who find fault with thee in the matter of alms. If they are given thereof, they are content; but if they are not given thereof, behold! they are discontented.\footnote{1214}

1213. \textbf{Important Words:}

\textit{يَجَّحَونَ} (rushing uncontrollably) is derived from \textit{يَجِحُ} i.e. the horse broke loose or ran way and went at random so as not to be turned by anything; or it ran so as to have the mastery over its rider. \textit{يَجِحُ} means, the man went at random without consideration or aim and not obeying a guide to the right course. \textit{يَجَّادَ} means, the object of his desire baffled his efforts to attain it. The words \textit{يَجَّحَونَ} mean, they hasten or go quickly so that nothing turns them back, like horses that become ungovernable by their riders (Lane & Aqrab).

\textbf{Commentary:}

The preceding verse speaks of the extreme fear of the hypocrites. As one who is in a state of fear generally takes to one of the three possible places of rescue, the present verse refers to all those three places, whether real or supposed. These are (1) \textit{مَلِیاً}, i.e. place of refuge; (2) \textit{مَهْرَات} i.e. caves; and (3) \textit{مَدخَلَة} i.e. a hole or a burrow. The first idea of a man in fright is to go to his friends and seek refuge with them. This is referred to in the word \textit{مَلِیاً} (place of refuge). If, however, one has no friends to go to, one seeks the shelter of nature in a cave, etc. This is spoken of in the word \textit{مَهْرَات} (caves). But there may be occasions when even a cave is not available for shelter. In such a case, a frightened man tries to hide his head in any hole or burrow that may happen to be near, just as an animal in fright does. This is referred to in the word \textit{مَدخَلَة} (hole). Thus the verse refers to the extreme fear of the hypocrites which they feel when confronted with an opportunity to fight in the way of God.

1214. \textbf{Important Words:}

\textit{يَلَّمِرْكُ} (find fault with thee) is derived from \textit{لَمِرْكُ} i.e. he made a sign to him with the eye or the head, etc.; he blamed or found fault with him; he spoke evil of him. It also means, he pushed or impelled or repelled him. \textit{لَمِرْكُ} occurring elsewhere in the Quran (104:2) means, one who blames or reproaches or finds fault with others much or habitually; one who speaks evil of others and defames them; a separator of companions and friends, who goes about with calumny (Lane).

\textbf{Commentary:}

As the hypocrites had joined Muslims to secure worldly advantages, therefore, if they were given something out of \textit{Zakāt} or legal alms, they were pleased; but if they failed to get anything, they grumbled and began to find fault with the Prophet. This is one of the unmistakable signs of a hypocrite.
59. And if they had been content with what Allah and His Messenger had given them and said, 'Sufficient for us is Allah: Allah will give us of His bounty, and so will His Messenger. To Allah do we turn in supplication,' it would have been better for them.

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60. The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and for those employed in connection therewith, and for those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and for the freeing of slaves, and for those in debt, and for the cause of Allah, and for the wayfarer—an ordinance from Allah. And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.¹²¹⁵

¹²¹⁵ Important Words:

الصدقات (alms) is the plural of صدقة and here signifies Zakāt. See also 4: 5.

الفقراء (the poor) is the plural of فقر which is derived from فقر (faqara) which means, he dug the ground or he dug a well to draw forth water; or he bored or perforated beads, etc. فقر (faqara) means, he made an incision in the nose of the camel to render it tractable. فقر (faqara) also means, he broke the قار (faqara) or قار (faqara) or قار means, he was or became poor or needy. فار (faqrun) means, poverty, want or need; the state of a man when he has only what suffices for his household. فار means, poor or needy; one having only what suffices for his household; one who has only a bare sufficiency of food; one who is crippled by disease; one who has no trade or has only a mean trade. The word فار (one who possesses only what is barely sufficient) differs from سکین (for which see below) which means, one who possesses nothing, altogether destitute. Some authorities however differ from this view (Lane). See also 2: 269.

الفقراء (the poor) is the plural of سکین which is derived from سکن which means, he or it was or became still, motionless or stationary or quiet or calm. سکین means, lowly, humble or submissive; low, abject or in a state of humiliation; weak, subdued or suppressed; poor; destitute i.e. possessing nothing; or possessing somewhat; rendered by poverty to have little power of motion. Authorities differ as to who is in a worse condition—سکین or فقر (Lane).

Commentary:

In the previous verse reference was made to the displeasure of the hypocrites, if they were not given a share in the Zakāt. The present verse defines the objects for which Zakāt is to be spent and these, as the verse explains, are eight in number.

The first-mentioned class i.e. الفقراء (the poor) signifies those broken or perforated with poverty or disease, whereas the second-mentioned class i.e. سکین (the needy) signifies those rendered motionless through want of means e.g. the unemployed, or those possessing the ability to work but lacking the means thereof.

The words, those employed in connection therewith, signify those who are employed in collecting Zakāt, or in keeping an account thereof or in the performance of any other duty connected therewith.
61. And among them are those who annoy the Prophet and say, 'He gives ear to all.' Say, 'His giving ear to all is good for you: he believes in Allah and believes the Faithful, and is a mercy for those of you who believe.' And those who annoy the Messenger of Allah shall have a grievous punishment.\(^{1216}\)

62. They swear by Allah to you to please you; but Allah and His Messenger are more worthy that they should please him and God, if they are believers.\(^{1217}\)

\(^{1216}\) The words, whose hearts are to be reconciled, mean those whose hearts are sincerely inclined towards Islam but who, owing to their having become disconnected with their former society, stand in need of monetary help. The term extends to new converts also.

\(^{1217}\) The hypocrites, by using the words, slaves, signifies, besides actual slaves, captives and such persons as are called upon to pay blood-money to secure their freedom.

The expression, for those in debt, means those who are unable to pay their debts or those who have suffered an extraordinary loss in trade, etc.

The words, for the cause of Allah, imply every good or pious work commanded by God.

The term (the wayfarer) includes those stranded on a journey for lack of money; or those who travel in search of knowledge or for promoting social relations. See also 2 : 178.

1216. Commentary:

The hypocrisy used to try to please influential Muslims by making pious professions of good faith. The verse exposes their real motives by saying that if they were really sincere in their professions, they ought to have first
63. Have they not known that “whoso opposes Allah and His Messenger,” for him is the fire of Hell, wherein he shall abide? That is the great humiliation.

64. The hypocrites fear lest a Sūra should be revealed against them, informing them of what is in their hearts. Say, ‘Mock ye! surely, Allah will bring to light what you fear.’

65. And if thou question them, they will most surely say, ‘We were only talking idly and jesting.’ Say, ‘Was it Allah and His Signs and His Messenger that you mocked at?’

Commentary:

The verse lifts the veil from the jokes the hypocrites used to indulge in at the cost of the Holy Prophet and the Muslims. When they sat together in private, they used to say jokingly to one another that they feared lest God should send down a Sūra to the Prophet informing him of what lay concealed in their minds. They did not actually believe that the Holy Prophet might indeed receive revelation about their secret thoughts from God, because they did not believe him to be the recipient of divine revelation. They only said this by way of ridicule, as the words that follow, i.e., Mock ye, indicate.

The words, Allah will bring to light what you fear mean that whereas the hypocrites joked about the Holy Prophet in their secret meetings and afraid to be afraid that he might be informed of those jokes by God, while in reality they entertained no such fears, the All-Knowing God would actually divulge their secrets to His Messenger and then the hypocrites would have real cause to experience their pretended apprehensions.
66. "Offer no excuse. You have certainly disbelieved after your believing. If We forgive a party from among you, a party shall We punish, for they have been guilty".1220

9 67. The hypocrites, men and women, are all connected one with another. They enjoin evil and forbid good, and keep their hands closed. They neglected Allah, so He has neglected them. Surely, it is the hypocrites who are the disobedient.1221

1220. Commentary:

The words, You have certainly disbelieved after your believing, mean, "you expressed belief in God and His Messenger but practically you remained disbelievers"; or "you possessed some light of faith in you in the beginning but you allowed that light to become gradually extinguished."

The verse also hints that the hypocrites may yet repent and their repentance would be accepted; and history tells us that some of the hypocrites did actually repent and became sincere Muslims.

1221. Important Words:

الخافون (the hypocrites) is derived from سُبْحَانَ اللهُ which is derived from سُبْحَانَ which means, the rat known as ya'bud betook itself to its hole. إِخْرَافًا means, a hole in the earth having two open ends which the rat enters concealing one end and leaving the other exposed, so that in time of danger it may avail itself of the concealed end and escape through it المَغْدَر means, a hole or passage through earth leading up to some place through an opening at the other end. المِمّاَت means, entering faith through one door and leaving it through another; acting hypocritically. المِمّاَت means, one who conceals disbelief in his heart and expresses belief with his tongue: an hypocrite (Aqrah, Taj & Mufradat). Though hypocrites have been mentioned in the Quran as early as in 2:9 the word المِمّاَت (hypocrite) has been first used in 4:62.

نَسْبِهِم (He has neglected them). نَسْبِهِم generally meaning "forgetfulness", does not always signify the act of forgetting. Truly speaking, نَسْبِهِم means, one's ceasing to think of a person or a thing either owing to loss of memory or owing to negligence or deliberately. The Quran says اِلَّا تَنْسَوا لَهُمْ i.e. do not cease (lit. do not forget) to do good to one another. In fact, when the word نَسْبِهِم is used about God, it never means "forgetting" but simply cutting off connection by way of punishment or ceasing
68. Allah promises the hypocrites, men and women, and the disbelievers the fire of Hell, wherein they shall abide. It will suffice them. And Allah has cursed them. And they shall have a lasting punishment. 1222

69. Allah promises these hypocrites and disbelievers the fire of Hell even as He promised those before you. They were mightier than you in power and richer in possessions and children. They enjoyed their lot for a short time, so have you enjoyed your lot as those before you enjoyed their lot. And you indulged in idle talk as they indulged in idle talk. It is they whose works shall be of no avail in this world and the Hereafter. And it is they who are the losers. 1223

1222. Commentary:
This verse mentions some of the signs by which hypocrites can be distinguished from true believers. These signs are: (1) that the hypocrites form a sort of inner society among themselves, shunning true believers and being inter-connected with one another; (2) that they enjoin evil; (3) that they forbid good; (4) that they do not spend in the cause of God, keeping their hands closed; (5) that they neglect Allah and His commandments; (6) that, as a consequence, God too neglects them and they do not enjoy divine help in their works; and (7) that they are disobedient to God, always seeking to evade His behests.

1223. Important Words:
The word كاذب الالذي خاضوا (as they indulged in idle talk) has been variously explained. Either (1) it is in the sense of من or ل being used as a plural and giving the sense of pronoun with them; or (2) it has the word خاضر الالذي خاضوا understood before it, the full clause being كاذب الالذي خاضوا i.e. like the idle talk in which they indulged; or (3) it has the word خاضر or some similar word understood before it, the full clause in this case being كاذب الالذي خاضوا i.e. like the party which indulged in idle talk, etc. (Kashshaf & Shaukat).
70. aHas not the story reached them of those before them—the people of Noah, and 'Ad, and Thamúd, and the people of Abraham, and the dwellers of Midian, and the cities which were overthrown? Their Messengers came to them with clear Signs. So Allah would not wrong them, but they wronged themselves.1224

71. And the believers, men and women, are friends one of another. aThey enjoin good and forbid evil and dobserve Prayer and epay the Zakát and bobey Allah and His Messenger. It is these on whom Allah will have mercy. Surely, Allah i~ Mighty and Wise.1225

Commentary:

The reference in the pronoun "you" in the words, before you, may be either to the hypocrites in general or to 'Abdullah bin Ubayy (the leader of the hypocrites) and his close associates in particular. The words, those before you, are explained in the following verse.

1224. Important Words:

المؤثّكات (cities which were overthrown) is derived from انك. They say انك i.e. he changed his or its manner of being or state; he turned him or it away or back. They say انك i.e. the land or town was or became overturned or subverted with its inhabitants. Therefore means, towns or cities overthrown or subverted. It also means, the winds that turn over the surface of the earth, or the winds that blow from different quarters, now from this and now from that (Lane).

Commentary:

This verse explains the words, those before you, occurring in the preceding verse. The reference in words, cities which were overthrown, is to the towns to which Prophet Lot was sent and which were turned upside down on account of their transgression and depravity. The catastrophe was caused by a violent earthquake. The overthrown habitations were, according to the Bible, the two towns of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19: 24 & 25). The site is believed to be that of the Dead Sea (Jew. Enc. under Sodom). The Quran speaks of the place as being situated on or near a "permanent way" (15: 75-77).

1225. Commentary:

Compare this verse and the next with 9: 67, 68 above. The present verse enumerates some of the signs of true believers. These signs are:

(1) that they are friends to one another; (2) that
72. aAllah has promised to believers, men and women, Gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide, and delightful dwelling-places in Gardens of eternity. And bthe pleasure of Allah is the greatest of all. That is the supreme triumph.  

73. cO Prophet, strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites. And be severe to them. Their abode is Hell, and a vile destination it is.  

they enjoin good; (3) that they forbid evil; (4) that they are steadfast in the performance of Prayers; (5) that they give the prescribed Zakât; (6) that they obey God and His Messenger; and (7) that they are recipients of God’s mercy.

1226. Important Words:

(1) عَدَنَ (Gardens of eternity). عَدَنُ is derived from عَدَنَ i.e. he remained, stayed, dwelt or abode in the land. عَدَنَ اللهُ بالاَرض i.e. the camels kept to such a place, not quitting it. عَدَنَهُ would, therefore, mean Gardens of perpetual abode (Lane). See also 5:66.

Commentary:

The expression, Gardens of eternity, hints that the permanent home of man is the Hereafter, the life of this world being only transient. Incidentally, it also implies that the blessings of Heaven are everlasting. See also 5: 66.

1227. Commentary:

The words, disbelievers and hypocrites, do not here refer to two different classes of men, but only to hypocrites who are also disbelievers. As a matter of fact, the word “hypocrites” as used here explains the meaning of the word “disbelievers” which precedes it, hinting that the hypocrites referred to here are disbelievers at heart, though outwardly they profess to be believers. See also the succeeding verse.

The words, be severe to them, may mean “be strict in your dealings with the hypocrites,” i.e. you should no longer be lenient to them or condone their offences, as you did formerly, but you should now call them to account for their misdeeds. The words do not signify cruel treatment or even harshness of language or demeanor but simply strictness of attitude and treatment.
74. They swear by Allah that they said nothing, but they did certainly use blasphemous language, and disbelieved after they had embraced Islam. And they meditated that which they could not attain. And they cherished hatred only because Allah and His Messenger had enriched them out of His bounty. So if they repent, it will be better for them; but if they turn away, Allah will punish them with a grievous punishment in this world and the Hereafter, and they shall have neither friend nor helper in the earth.1228

75. And among them there are those who made a covenant with Allah, saying, ‘If He give us of His bounty, we would most surely give alms and be of the virtuous.'1229

76. But when He gave them of His bounty, they became niggardly of it, and they turned away in aversion.

1228. Commentary:
The words, They swear by Allah that they said nothing, also show that the preceding verse refers not to disbelievers and hypocrites jointly but to hypocrites only. As the verse points out, some of the men who later turned hypocrites were not insincere in the beginning; but as time went on and Islam made progress, they gradually drifted into disbelief and hypocrisy. For instance, 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, who afterwards became leader of the hypocrites, was at first a believer. But when he found that by giving his allegiance to the Holy Prophet his own prestige and importance had declined, he turned hostile and began to plot against Islam.

The expression, because Allah and His Messenger had enriched them out of His bounty, means that with the advent of the Holy Prophet to Medina, the prosperity of the town very much increased, its trade thrived and its inhabitants grew rich.

1229. Commentary:
The verse refers to the time when some of the men who later turned hypocrites retained some sincerity of faith. See the following verse.
77. So He requited them with hypocrisy which shall last in their hearts until the day when they shall meet Him, because they broke their promise to Allah, and because they lied.  

78. Know they not that Allah knows their secrets as well as their private counsels and that Allah is the Best Knower of all unseen things?

79. Those who find fault with such of the believers as give alms of their own free will and with such as find nothing to give save the earnings of their toil. They thus deride them. Allah shall requite them for their derision, and for them is a grievous punishment.

1230. **Commentary:**

The verse points to the great truth that sometimes one sin follows another as a natural consequence thereof. Hypocrisy took the place of faith in the hearts of those who did not keep the promise they had made with God. See also the preceding two verses.

1231. **Commentary:**

The verse purports to say that the hypocrites sought excuses to find fault with all classes of believers—both those who spent freely and those who could not do so. Particular reference is to the expedition to Tabûk. Before he started for Tabûk, the Holy Prophet invited the believers to make voluntary contributions to meet the expenses of this great expedition. Úthmān gave 300 camels and 10,000 dinārs; Abī Bakr parted with all that he possessed; while ʿUmar gave as much as half of his entire property. The hypocrites attributed these and other similar liberal donations to a desire for show and display on the part of the donors. On the other hand, poor believers, who could make only small contributions, were also not spared. For instance, a poor Muslim, Abī ʿAqīl who gave only a small quantity of dates, his whole day’s earnings, as his contribution, was scoffed at by the hypocrites for his scanty offering. It is to the taunting and scoffing of the hypocrites on this occasion that this verse particularly refers.
80. *Ask thou forgiveness for them, or ask thou not forgiveness for them; even if thou ask forgiveness for them seventy times, Allah will never forgive them. That is because they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger. And Allah guides not the perfidious people.*

81. 

**Those who were left behind rejoiced in their sitting at home behind the back of the Messenger of Allah, and were averse to striving with their property and their persons in the cause of Allah. And they said, 'Go not forth in the heat.'** Say, 'The fire of Hell is more intense in heat.' If only they could understand.

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1232. **Commentary:**

The verse refers to the offering of prayer for the hypocrites while they lived. It does not, however, refer to all hypocrites as a matter of principle but only to such as were doomed to perish and about whom God had revealed to His Prophet that they would die disbelievers (see 9:77 above). To pray for such hypocrites or disbelievers would virtually be contradicting the purpose of God. As for the injunction about funeral Prayer, it is contained in 9:84 below. It so happened that before the latter verse was revealed, 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites, died; and the Holy Prophet, considering that he was outwardly a Muslim and that his son was a particularly devoted believer, prepared to offer funeral Prayer for him. Thereupon, 'Umar drew his attention to the verse under comment upon which the Holy Prophet said that the verse left it to him whether or not to say the funeral Prayer for a hypocrite and that he would ask forgiveness of God for 'Abdullah more than "seventy times".

It should be noted that the words, "seventy times," are not here meant literally but are simply intended to intensify the point that such hypocrites as are doomed to perish will never be forgiven; but so great was the mercy of the Holy Prophet for those who professed faith in him that, taking advantage of the fact that God had not so far expressly commanded him to abstain from praying for the hypocrites at all, he interpreted the word "seventy" literally and offered to say funeral Prayer for 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, whose son was a very devoted Muslim.

1233. **Commentary:**

This and the following several verses speak of those who did not accompany the Holy Prophet on the expedition to Tabuk. The passive form in the word (those left behind) has been used in allusion to the words, *Allah was averse to their marching forth, so He kept them back, and it was said, 'Sit ye at home with those who sit'*, occurring in 9:46 above.

These people not only stayed behind themselves but, as is usual with mischievous persons, also tried to dissuade others from joining the expedition.
82. They must laugh little and weep much as a reward for that which they used to earn.\textsuperscript{1234}

83. And if Allah return thee to a party of them, and they ask of thee leave to go forth to fight, say then, 'You shall never go forth with me, and shall never fight an enemy with me. You chose to sit at home the first time, so sit now with those who remain behind.'\textsuperscript{1235}

84. And never pray thou for any of them that dies, nor stand by his grave; for they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger and died while they were disobedient.\textsuperscript{1236}

\textsuperscript{1234} Commentary:
The verse obviously does not contain a commandment. It only embodies a prophecy that the time was soon coming when the hypocrites would laugh little and weep much. This was meant as retribution for their evil deeds.

\textsuperscript{1235} Commentary:
The verse was probably revealed when the Holy Prophet was away from Medina during his expedition to Tabuk. But if, as some Commentators think, it was revealed after his return to Medina, it would be taken to allude to what the hypocrites previously used to say regarding the said expedition. They thought that he would never return from the expedition alive. So the Quran, in this verse reminds them of what they used to say about the Holy Prophet, and of his safe return, contrary to their expectation.

The particle ان (if), it should be noted, does not always express doubt but is often used as simply a conditional particle. Moreover, it is sometimes used not from the point of view of the speaker, but from that of the person addressed. The word is here used by God and it is obvious that God had no doubt as to the safe return of the Prophet. So it must be taken to express the state of mind of the hypocrites.

\textsuperscript{1236} Commentary:
This verse prohibits Muslims from saying funeral Prayer for hypocrites who are disbelievers at heart. When 9:80 was revealed, the Holy Prophet thought that it was still open to him to perform the funeral service of a hypocrite if he should so choose; and when therefore ‘Abdullah bin Ubayy died, he performed the service for him. By the present verse, however, God definitely forbade the performance of funeral service for disbelieving hypocrites. As a matter of principle, he who dies in a state of disbelief (whether he be an open disbeliever or a proved hypocrite) forfeits all claims on the prayers of the Faithful. His case is in the hands of God. He may punish or forgive him, as He may think fit. See also 9:80 above.
85. "And their possessions and their children should not excite thy wonder; Allah only intends to punish them therewith in this world and that their souls may depart while they are disbelievers."\(^{1237}\)

86. And when a Sûra is revealed, enjoining, 'Believe in Allah and strive in the cause of Allah in company with His Messenger,' those of them who possess affluence ask leave of thee and say, 'Leave us that we be with those who sit at home.'\(^{1238}\)

87. "They are content to be with the womenfolk, and their hearts are sealed so that they understand not."\(^{1239}\)

88. "But the Messenger and those who believe with him strive in the cause of Allah with their property and their persons, and it is they who shall have good things, and it is they who shall prosper."

\(^{a}9:55. \quad b9:81,93. \quad c6:26;63:4. \quad d8:75;9:41,111;61:12.\)

1237. **Commentary:**
See note on 9:55 above.

1238. **Commentary:**
The words, *Leave us that we be with those who sit at home*, need not be taken to have been actually uttered by the hypocrites. They simply express a state of affairs implying that the hypocrites came to the Holy Prophet with various excuses, asking his leave to stay behind.

1239. **Important Words:**
خَوَافَمُ (womenfolk) is the plural of both خَلف which are active participles from the verb خَلف which means, he remained or came after. خُلف means, one who remains behind or after others, particularly in case of a war, the word خُلف being its feminine gender. So خَوَافَمُ means, those who remain behind during war; or the women (or children) remaining behind in houses or tents. The word also signifies, bad or corrupt persons (Lane). See also 7:70 & 170.

**Commentary:**
For the meaning of the words, *their hearts are sealed*, see 2:8 & 4:156.
89.  "Allah has prepared for them Gardens underneath which flow rivers; therein they shall abide. That is the supreme triumph."

R. 12 90. And those who make excuses from among the desert Arabs came that exemption might be granted them. And those who were false to Allah and His Messenger stayed at home. A grievous punishment shall befall those of them who disbelieve.1240

91.  "No blame lies on the weak, nor on the sick, nor on those who find naught to spend, if they are sincere to Allah and His Messenger. There is no cause of reproach against those who do good deeds; and Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.1241"

1240. **Important Words:**

- المذرون (those who make excuses) is the plural of منذر which is the active participle from منذر (‘adhdhara) which again is derived from منذر (‘udhara). They say i.e. he excused him or he cleared him from blame, or he accepted his excuse. منذر (‘adhdhara) means, he was without excuse; or he affected to excuse himself but had no excuse; or he excused himself but did not adduce a valid excuse for doing so; he was remiss or wanting or deficient in an affair, setting up an excuse for being so; he did not act vigorously in the affair, causing it to be imagined that he had an excuse when really he had none. Thus منذر is one who falls short of his duty and then excuses himself without having any real excuse; whereas منذر is one who excuses himself whether he has a real excuse or not (Lane).

1241. **Important Words:**

- نصحوا (are sincere) is derived from نصح which is the active participle from نصح i.e. he advised him or counselled him sincerely or faithfully; or he acted sincerely or honestly to him; or he deserved what was good for him, نصح النصي means, the thing became pure or unadulterated (Lane).

**Commentary:**

The verse speaks of the hypocrites as well as of those weak in faith who did not join the expedition to Tabuk. Some of them were disbelievers at heart, while others were only weak in Faith.

This and the succeeding verse speak of those who cannot join an expedition owing to some real inability. No blame lies on them. The verse also shows that those who have really nothing
92. Nor against those to whom, when they came to thee that thou shouldst mount them, thou didst say, 'I cannot find whereon I can mount you;' they turned back, their eyes overflowing with tears, out of grief that they could not find what they might spend.\textsuperscript{1242}

93. The cause of reproach is only against those who ask leave of thee, while they are rich. They are content to be with the womenfolk. And Allah has set a seal upon their hearts so that they know not.\textsuperscript{1243}

\textsuperscript{1242} Commentary:
The verse is general in its application but the persons particularly referred to were seven poor Muslims who were extremely desirous of going to Jihād but did not possess the means and the wherewithal to fulfill the wish of their hearts. These men came to the Holy Prophet, begging him to provide them with conveyance so that they might go forth with him. On being told by the Prophet that he was unable to grant their request, they were sorely grieved and went away with their eyes full of tears. It is said that after they had gone, the Holy Prophet was offered three camels by 'Uthmān and four by other Muslims and these he gave to the seven men. The Quran mentions this incident in order to contrast the faith and sincerity of these poor Muslims with the insincerity of those who proffered lame and false excuses and asked to be allowed to stay behind, although they possessed all the means to go. It also appears from this verse that all those who remained behind at Medina were not hypocrites but that among them there were also true and sincere Muslims who could not go because they did not possess the means to do so.

\textsuperscript{1243} Commentary:
For an explanation of the words, Set a seal upon their hearts, see 2:8 & 4:156.