

## The Mustering'

The surah derives its name from the prominence within it of the word *al-hāshr*, meaning 'The mustering'. Like the other Madinan surahs, it contains matters related to the Islamic order, as well as matters of faith. As the previous surah, 'al-Mujādilah', concluded on the topic of the two parties of the Compassionate and of the Devil, this surah opens on the theme of the faction of the Compassionate being victorious over the faction of the Devil.

*By the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**In the name of Allah...** We begin the surah in the name of the Allah, that it be as an emblem signifying the faith, and that the Muslims learn the necessity of beginning their actions in His name, glory be to Him.

... **the Compassionate, the Merciful.** He created, firstly with the act of creation, and secondly with grace, cultivation and favour.

**All that is in the skies and all that is in the earth glorify to Allah; and He is the Mighty, the Wise. (1)**

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١﴾

**All that is in the skies and all that is in the earth glorify to Allah;** ... 'Glorify' is given for *sabbah* – its meaning is to declare His absolute absence of any fault or deficiency. The meaning of 'all that is in the skies and that in the earth' includes the skies or skies and the earth themselves. They glorify Him by their existence, in that all things indicate the existence of the God and His qualities, as effects signifying their cause. Or it means that they have tongues by which they glorify Him, while we do not understand. The poet has said:

*All of existence perceives, but  
man is barred from perceiving their perceiving.*

... **and He is the Mighty, the Wise.** He is the Mighty in His dominion and authority over all things; He is the Wise as all He does accords to wisdom and goodness.

**(It is) He who removed those who disbelieved of the Book-folk from their habitations for the first mustering; ye did not suppose that they would leave, and they supposed that their strongholds would defend them against Allah – so Allah came to them from whence they had not reckoned, and He cast terror into their hearts; they ruined their houses with their own hands and the hands of the believers; so take admonishment, O ye owners of vision. (2)**

هُوَ الَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ لِأَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ مَا ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مَانِعَتُهُمْ حُصُونُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَأَتَتْهُمْ اللَّهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوا وَقَذَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ يُخْرِبُونَ بُيُوتَهُمْ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَيْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ

﴿٢﴾

**(It is) He who removed those who disbelieved of the book-folk...** All the Book-folk are disbelievers, but some of them believed in the Messenger and so departed from disbelief. Others did not believe in him, and they are said to have disbelieved on account of their continuance in disbelief, as we say 'Guide us' when we mean 'Continue to guide us', [as in surah al-Hāmd, ayah 6].

Or it is on account of their being believers prior to the raising of the Messenger, as their duty was to follow their religion; then, when the Messenger came, their duty was to follow him, and those who did not became disbelievers. Those meant here are Jews of the tribe of the Bani Nadīr.

... **from their habitations** ... Allah helped the believers and gave them authority over the Bani Nadīr, so that they were able to drive them out.

... **for the first mustering;** ... 'Mustering' is given for *hāshr*; it means to gather and drive from one place to another. Perhaps the first time was when the Jews were exiled from Madinah collectively, after which they were driven from other places until none of them remained within the entire Arabian peninsula. For they are a people of schemes and intrigue, and so the Messenger wanted the land to be free of them and of their scheming, so that they would not hatch plots against the new religion.

... **ye did not suppose that they would leave,** ... The Muslims never supposed that the Jews would depart with such speed, for what they knew of their violence and prowess.

... **and they supposed that their strongholds would defend them against Allah...** The Jews themselves thought that their citadels would protect them against the divine will.

... **so Allah came to them...** It means that they were faced by His command that their strongholds be ruined, and that they should be gripped by panic.

... **from whence they had not reckoned...** They had not supposed that they could be taken in the manner of fear entering their hearts and their strength being made lax and infirm, and the breaking of their determination and their valour.

... **and He cast terror into their hearts;** ... It means that Allah, glory be to Him, cast terror into their hearts. It happened when they saw the extent of the Muslims' forces – their own strength and determination collapsed.

... **they ruin their houses with their own hands...** They destroyed their homes to prevent the Muslims from benefiting from them.

... **and the hands of the believers;** ... The believers destroyed some of their homes in order to reach them and attack them.

... **so take admonishment, O ye owners of vision.** 'Owners of vision' is given for *ulil-absḥæ*, literally 'possessors of visions', that is, the plural of sight. It means those having sense, or reason. They were to perceive how Allah, glory be to Him, destroys and prevails over a group who combat Him, to such an extent that they themselves destroyed that which was most valuable to them: their homes. The meaning of seeing such things is that a person sees in them their consequences.

Commentators state that these *ayaṭ* were sent down concerning the Bani Nadīr. Briefly, the story is that one of the Messenger's companions killed two men who were subject to the Islamic jurisdiction. He did so by mistake. In order to pay the compensation or 'blood-wit' (*diyāh*), the Messenger sought to raise a loan from the Bani Nadīr, a group of Jews numbering about a thousand, who lived on the outskirts of Madinah. They appeared to agree to make the loan, and invited the Messenger within their fort. The Messenger declined and instead rested against a wall of the citadel. Thereupon archangel Gabriel (*Jabraʾīl*) descended and informed the Messenger of Allah that they were resolved upon treachery. It was also apparent to him from their activities, for they had plotted that one of them mount the wall above where the Messenger Allah was sitting, so as to drop a rock upon his blessed head, in the hope of killing him.

The Messenger returned to Madinah without waiting for the loan. From there he sent a message to the Bani Nadīr giving them ten days to depart from his land, on the grounds of their breaching their covenant and treachery towards him. When that time was over they had no option but to leave. However, some hypocrites urged them not to leave and promised them that they would come to their aid. So some stayed and informed the Messenger that do what he may, they would not depart. And so the Messenger went against them with a group of his companions, his banner in the hand of Imam Ali, *peace be upon him*. They surrounded the stronghold and fought to occupy their houses. The Jews withdrew from house to house, and as they withdrew the buildings they were occupying were ruined. And so, in order to cut off all their hopes, the Messenger ordered that some of their trees be cut down.

The Jews soon despaired of victory, and they sent an envoy to the Messenger of Allah seeking that he grant them permission to leave. The Messenger agreed on condition that they not take with them more of their wealth than could be carried by camel. This they refused and they continued their resistance. Then, as the siege wore them down they accepted the Messenger's condition, but as a repayment of their obstinacy the Messenger of Allah withdrew his permission for them to take with them any of their wealth. They accepted and so they left with nothing. Thus their wealth returned to Islam. With the dispersal of the Bani Nadīr the Muslims were relieved of a bitter enemy who had been plotting to eradicate Islam from the root.

**And were it not that Allah wrote dispersal for them, He would have chastised them in the world; and theirs in the hereafter is the chastisement of the fire. (3)**

وَلَوْلَا أَنْ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجَلَاءَ لَعَذَّبْتَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ

عَذَابِ النَّارِ ﴿٣﴾

**And were it not that Allah wrote dispersal for them...** It means that He ruled that they should be exiled from their place to another.

**He would have chastised them in the world;** ... By commanding His Messenger to kill and destroy them, as He, glory be to Him, did with the Bani-Quraydhah.

... **and theirs in the hereafter is the chastisement of the fire.** on account of their continuance in disbelief and disobedience.

**That is because they opposed Allah and His Messenger; and whosoever opposes Allah, indeed Allah is severe in retribution. (4)**

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۗ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِ اللَّهَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ

الْعِقَابِ ﴿٤﴾

**That ...** It means their being driven from their homes, and the fire being prepared for them in the hereafter.

**... is because they opposed Allah and His Messenger; ...** That is, they contend against Allah and wage war against His Messenger.

**... and whosoever opposes Allah, indeed Allah is severe in retribution.** It means that He, glory be to Him, is ready to severely punish, for, as it is said, 'He is the Most compassionate of all compassionate ones at the station of compassion and mercy, and the Severest of punishers at the station of punishment and requital.'

**And whatever palms ye cut down or ye leave standing upon their roots – it is with the permission of Allah; and that He may humiliate the perverse. (5)**

مَا قَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ لَيْتَةٍ أَوْ تَرَكْتُمُوهَا قَائِمَةً عَلَىٰ أُصُولِهَا فَبِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

وَلِيُخْزِيَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٥﴾

**And whatever palms ye cut down or ye leave standing upon their roots – it is with the permission of Allah . . .** 'Palms' is given for *liṭāh*, a type of date-palm that gives a high-quality fruit, and whose leaves are useful in building. In attacking the Bani Nadīr the Muslims cut down some of their trees, and left others untouched. This troubled the Muslims, for they thought that if the cutting of trees was necessary, then allowing some to remain was not lawful, whereas if it was necessary for them to remain, then cutting some down was not lawful. Thus this ayah came down to exonerate them and settle their hearts, and to explain that as far as warfare and exemplary punishment requires trees to be cut they are to be cut, while where it is not necessary for them to be cut down they are to remain.

**... and that He may humiliate the perverse.** Part of the purpose for cutting those trees was that Allah wished to humiliate the 'perverse' (*al-fāsiqīn*), meaning the Jews of Bani Nadīr. They felt regret at the Muslims cutting down the trees they had planted and tended, and they also felt regret at those that were left, for thereafter the Muslims were to benefit from them.

The theme now turns to explain the ruling of the spoils taken in exiling the Bani Nadīr, in that they were the special property of the Messenger, and of his kin. This was because the Muslims had not strived to earn them – in contrast to the spoils for which the Muslims had strived, four parts of which belonged to the Muslims, one fifth belonging to the Messenger and his kin. This is because the Messenger and his kin are forbidden to receive *zakaʿ* and other charities, and so their needs were met from spoils and *khums* [a fifth of unspent earnings]. Certainly the Messenger of Allah required an extra share in order to carry out the management of the Muslims affairs, especially those related to government. In this way he was just like governmental ministers today, who have private budgets in order for them to carry out their duties:

**And whatever Allah returns to His Messenger from them – for that ye spurred neither horse nor camel; rather Allah gives dominion to His Messengers over whom He wills, and Allah over all things is in power. (6)**

وَمَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ مِنْهُمْ فَمَا أَوْجَفْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ خَيْلٍ وَلَا رِكَابٍ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَلِّطُ رُسُلَهُ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

قَدِيرٌ ﴿٦﴾

**And whatever Allah returns to His Messenger from them ...** the verb 'return' is given for *afaʿ*, meaning the 'spoils of strife', but which originally meant 'return'. This indicates that the spoils were usurped and wrongfully in the hands of the disbelievers, and that as spoils they return to their real owners, the believers, for whom Allah created all things.

**... for that ye spurred neither horse nor camel; ...** The Muslims did not acquire those spoils through any victory with horse or camel, such that they would have a right to them.

**... rather Allah gives dominion to His Messengers over whom He wills, ...** He, glory be to Him, creates terror and despair in the hearts of the disbelievers so that the Messenger of Allah is victorious and captures their towns without warfare and without effort.

**... and Allah over all things is in power.'** He is able to establish the Messengers over the disbelievers, without battle.

Now that this introduction has been laid down, that the Muslims did not strive for those spoils, the theme turns to explain the ruling itself, that the spoils were not for them, but for the Messenger and his kin:

**Whatever Allah returns to His Messenger from the folk of the townships, it is for Allah and the Messenger and the kin, the orphans, the destitute, the wayfarer; that it may not circulate amongst the rich of ye. And what the Messenger grants ye, so take it; and what he forbids ye, refrain from it; and be guardful of Allah; indeed Allah is severe in retribution. (7)**

مَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَى فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَى  
وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ  
مِنْكُمْ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا  
اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٧﴾

**Whatever Allah returns to His Messenger from the folk of the townships ...** It means the returns taken from the disbelievers without warfare.

**... it is for Allah...** those returns belong to Allah; this is a mark of honour for the Messenger, for everything belongs to Allah.

**... and the Messenger...** Given to him by Allah, glory be to Him.

**... and the kin, ...** That is, the Messenger's family and household, his near kin. It means the purified Imams *peace be upon them* [as referred to in 33: 33].

**... the orphans, the destitute, the wayfarer, ...** Such returns are for the fatherless child, the pauper whose poverty renders him inactive, and he who is stranded away from home among people who know nothing of him or of his background. It is established that these are categories of the descendants of the Messenger *may Allah bless him and his family*.

*The wisdom behind this allocation is then explained:*

**... that it may not circulate ...** 'circulate' is given for *dawlatan*, meaning that which circulates among a particular group, firstly belonging to this one of them and then to that one.

**... amongst the rich of ye ...** It had been the practice during the Ignorance era that when a battle took place the spoils would be taken by the leaders; and it is clear that the rich circulate property among themselves, through their banquets to which only the rich are invited, through the sons of some marrying the daughters of others, and through their presenting their guests with gifts, and so on, so that property always moves from one leader to another, while the poor remain deprived. The phrase 'that it may not' completes the reasoning, in that such 'spoils' can only be divided in one of three ways: they could be divided among the chiefs as during the Ignorance era; or they could be divided among the Muslims, like the spoils that they are entitled for when they partake in battle, called *ghanimah* or spoils; or they could be allocated to the Messenger of Allah. The first is ruled out as it leads to the stockpiling of wealth among the rich; and the second is ruled out as the Muslims did not engage in a battle and did not deserve it. Therefore, only the third course remains open.

*As this ruling was difficult for them, His word came down:*

**... And what the Messenger grants ye, so take it; and what he forbids ye, refrain from it; ...** It means that the Muslims were to act according to the laws and rulings as he explained them to them.

**... and be guardful of Allah, ...** It means be wary of His punishment, and do not oppose Him.

**... indeed Allah is severe in retribution.** His retribution is severe for those who ignore His commands and prohibitions, and oppose Him. It is recorded in *Majma' al-Bayan* that some Muslim chiefs suggested to the Messenger to act as they had done during the Ignorance era by taking what you choose and leave the rest for us. Then the ayah was sent down and the companions submitted to the command of Allah and His Messenger.

*He, glory be to Him, then explains the characteristics of the four groups of the Messenger's kin who are entitled to the spoils that have not been fought for. However, the characteristics that follow are no more than a rationale for the legislation at the time of the revelation. They are not permanent conditional requirements.*

**For the poor migrants, those driven from their homes and from their wealth seeking profusion from Allah, and His contentment, while succouring Allah and His Messenger. Those, they are the truthful. (8)**

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ  
فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنْصُرُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ  
الصَّادِقُونَ ﴿٨﴾

**For the poor...** expanding on who of 'the kin ...', or 'the orphans ...' and this is more fitting as it has been already established that it is not a condition that the leader who takes the spoils should be poor; this merely describes conditions at the time of the revelation.

... **migrants** ... It describes their having migrated from Makkah to Madinah.

... **those driven from their homes** ... The disbelievers forced them out in oppression and enmity.

... **and their wealth** ... having left their wealth behind them.

... **seeking profusion from Allah**, ... They sought that Allah would bestow bounty upon them in place of the homes and wealth they had left behind them.

... **and His contentment**, ... They sought for Him to be content with them.

... **while succouring Allah and His Messenger** ... It means that they fought for Allah's religion and in front of His Messenger, in order to exalt the word of Islam.

... **Those, they are the truthful**. Such people are truthful in their faith, doing all that faith requires.

*Having lauded the Muhajerin (emigrants), the theme now turns to laud the Ansḥar (supporters), the natives of Madinah who accepted Islam, in His word:*

*And those who made their dwelling in The Abode and in the belief before them – they love whosoever migrates to them, and they find no need within their breasts for what they were given, and they prefer them above themselves, even though they are in desperation. And whoever is protected from the avarice of his soul – those, they are the thrivers. (9)*

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيْمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْتُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شَحْمَةَ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٩﴾

*And those who made their dwelling in the abode...* 'The Abode' of the Hijrah (migration) meaning the holy city of Madinah.

... **and in the belief** ... Faith is like a dwelling or home, in that it is adopted by a person to relax within it and constantly return to it, so that whatever affair engages a person he turns to the belief for inspiration as to how to deal with it. Or it may be that the word 'adopt' is latent, so that the reading would be 'and adopt the faith'.

... **before them** ... It means before the migration of the Migrants (the Muhajerin) to Madinah, for it was before the migration that the people of Madinah believed (in the Message of the Prophet).

... **they love whosoever migrates to them**, ... That is, from Makkah and the other towns and cities of disbelievers. The sense is that just as the migrants are laudable for the reasons previously given, so too the Ansḥar are to be lauded for loving the migrants.

... **and they find no need within their breasts for what they were given**, ... It means that the Ansḥar were not envious of the migrants' being given the spoils of Bani Nadjr by the Messenger of Allah.

... **and they prefer them above themselves**, ... That is, the Ansḥar prefer to house and do good to the migrants, and they think of them before they think of themselves.

... **even though they are in desperation** ... The Ansḥar preferred the Migrants' needs over their own, and such persons are greater in reward than those who dispense in charity from a position of wealth.

... **And whoever is protected from the avarice of his soul** ... It means those who are able, with the grace of Allah, glory be to Him, to guard against the miserliness and selfishness of his soul.

... **those, they are the thrivers**. They are at the lofty levels of success.

*Having lauded the Migrants and the Ansḥar, their followers in goodness until the end of time are lauded, in His word:*

*And those who came after them, saying, 'O Our Lord! Forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in belief, and put not rancour in our hearts for those who believe. Our Lord, indeed Thou are Kind, Merciful.' (10)*

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيْمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

*And those who came after them*, ... It means those who accept Islam after the Migrants and Ansḥar; whose words, which show their strong and deep rooted belief, are:

... **saying 'O Our Lord! Forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in belief, ...** They ask forgiveness for their sins and for their brothers of the Migrants, the Anṣar and others who preceded them in belief.

...**and put not rancour in our hearts for those who believe ...** 'Rancour' is given for *ghall*, meaning hatred, bitterness, spite. 'Those who believe' means the believers of the past and present. The term 'and put not' (*la> taj'al*) shows that grace is from Him, glory be to Him, and when His grace is not forthcoming for a person that person becomes prone to enmity and bitterness. Thus, they are saying, 'Do not leave us to ourselves, for then the devil and our souls will overcome us, and then our souls will become subject to rancour.'

...**Our Lord, indeed Thou are kind, merciful.**' He is kind and merciful to the servants. This prayer teaches the believers the correct attitude towards those who preceded them in faith, and towards their contemporaries.

With this lauding of the believers and the explanation of their position, the theme now turns to clarify something of the position of the hypocrites in His word:

**Have thou not looked to those who engage in hypocrisy? They say to their brothers, those of the Book-folk who disbelieve, 'If they send ye forth, we will definitely go forth with ye, and we will never obey anyone concerning ye, and if ye are fought, we will definitely succour ye.'** And Allah testifies that they are liars. (11)

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا يَقُولُونَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَئِنْ أُخْرِجْتُمْ لَنَخْرُجَنَّ مَعَكُمْ وَلَا نُطِيعُ فِيكُمْ أَحَدًا أَبَدًا وَإِنْ قُوتِلْتُمْ لَنَنْصُرَنَّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١١﴾

**Have thou not looked to those who engage in hypocrisy? ...** The address, in the singular, is to the Messenger, or to the listener. The question form is to convey outrage. 'Engage in hypocrisy' is given for *nafaqu*, meaning to do hypocrisy; that is, manifesting belief while holding disbelief within.

... **They say to their brothers, those of the Book-folk who disbelieve, ...** That is, to their brothers in disbelief, the Jews who disbelieved in the Messenger of Islam. It means the Jews of Bani Nadjr.

... **If they send ye forth, we will definitely go forth with ye, ...** They (the hypocrites) promised that if the Messenger deported them (i.e. the Jews), they would leave their homes with them.

... **and we will never obey anyone concerning ye, ...** By 'anyone' they meant the Messenger of Allah. They meant that if they were ordered to fight them they would disobey, and would not fight them.

... **and if ye are fought, we will definitely succour ye ...** They promised that if the Messenger and the Muslims were to wage war against them, they would definitely come to their assistance and fight with them against the Messenger and the Muslims.

... **And Allah testifies that they are liars.** It means that Allah testifies that the hypocrites were lying to them and that their promises were false; they would not go forth with Bani Nadjr and they would not fight with them. It is said that Abdullah ibn Ubayy was urging the Jews towards resistance and war against the Messenger, and so made these false promises to them. And it turned out just as Allah had said, for when the time came for action it became clear that he had been lying.

**If they are driven out, they will definitely not go forth with them, and if they are fought, they will definitely not succour them, and even if they succoured them, they would definitely turn their backs; and then they would not be succoured. (12)**

لَئِنْ أُخْرِجُوا لَا يَخْرُجُونَ مَعَهُمْ وَلَئِنْ قُوتِلُوا لَا يَنْصُرُوهُمْ وَلَئِنْ نَصَرُوهُمْ لَيُولِيْنَ الْأَدْبَانَ ثُمَّ لَا يَنْصُرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

**If they are driven out, ...** That is, if the Messenger of Allah were to drive out the Bani Nadjr.

... **they will definitely not go forth with them, ...** It means that the hypocrites would not share their exile with them.

... **and if they are fought, they will definitely not succour them, ...** That is, if the Muslims were to fight the Bani Nadjr, the hypocrites would not come to their aid.

... **and even if they succoured them ...** Supposing the impossible ...

... **they would definitely turn their backs..** They would not fight with them against the Messenger and the Muslims but would hand them over on a plate to be vanquished.

... **and then they would not be succoured.** It means that even supposing that the hypocrites remained with them and did not turn their backs, still the Jews would not be rescued, for the hypocrites were too few and too weak to resist the Messenger and the Muslim forces.

The theme then explains that the hypocrites had the greatest fear for the Muslims; how then would they support the Jews against them?

**Ye arouse greater dread in their breasts than Allah; that is because they are a people not understanding. (13)**

لَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ رَهَبَةً فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ بِأَنْهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا

يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

**Ye arouse greater dread in their breasts...** The Muslims were greatly feared by the hypocrites and by the Jews. They feared them 'in their breasts' as the breast is the housing of the heart, and it is the heart that is the home of the soul, which is what feels fear and security.

... **than Allah;** ... They feared the Muslims more than they feared Allah, glory be to Him, for they saw the Muslims while they didn't see Allah. For faith has not been firmly established in their hearts so that they would fear Him.

... **that is because they are a people not understanding.** They feared the Muslims more than they feared Allah because they failed to think, to reflect and so failed to realise His magnificence, glory be to Him.

He then explains, glory be to Him, that the Jews' fighting the Muslims is unlike any other war, for in the severity of their fear of the Muslims and their lack of unity the Jews would not dare to fight them out in the open. Thus the Muslims were given courage for the fight:

**They will not fight ye together save in fortified towns, or from behind walls. Their fighting among themselves is severe; thou would think them together but their hearts are diverse. That is because they are a people not reasoning. (14)**

لَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ جَمِيعًا إِلَّا فِي قُرَى مُحَصَّنَةٍ أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ جُدُرٍ بَأْسُهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ شَدِيدٌ تَحْسَبُهُمْ جَمِيعًا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ شَتَّىٰ ذَلِكَ بِأَنْهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا

يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

**They will not fight ye together...** Those Jews would not unite to fight the Muslims. This is to reflect their essential weakness, in that even all of them together would not fight against the Muslims save in the manner that follows. Or 'they' means the Jews and the hypocrites, and 'together' is for emphasis.

... **save in fortified towns, or from behind walls.** They would not fight against the Muslims save from fortified, secure positions, or from behind walls so that they could pelt the Muslims with missiles and rocks and suchlike.

... **Their fighting among themselves is severe;** ... They bear enmity between themselves, the one for the other. They are disunited and cannot cooperate. Therefore their hearts are divided and they have not the courage to fight against the Muslims.

... **thou would think them** ... O Messenger, or O reader.

... **together** ... Anyone might imagine them united.

... **but their hearts are diverse** ... They are not at all united.

... **That is because they are a people not reasoning.** They do not think about what is good for them and what is harmful. All that is said is true of whoever fails to reflect, but it is true of the Jews in particular for two reasons. First, that they reckon themselves to be Allah's chosen people. Second, their lust for material things. Unity and the other virtues are born of humility and the exercise of spirituality in all affairs, but when someone believes himself to be chosen he puts himself above others, and this breeds disunity, and when a person dedicates himself to the material things, he fails to purify his soul, so that it cannot become the source of goodness and virtue. In the course of history we see that the Jews are either aggressors or persecuted. When they are able they transgress until comes along who would hunt them and so on.

**Like those closely before them: they tasted the mischief of their affair, and theirs is a painful chastisement. (15)**

كَمَثَلِ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَرِيبًا ذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَهُمْ عَدَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

﴿١٥﴾

**Like those closely before them** ... Bani Nadjr were like those closely before them, the Bani-Qaynaqa<sup>٥</sup>. They too had breached their pact with the Messenger so he ordered them to depart.

... **they tasted the mischief of their affair,** ... They tasted the evil consequences of their actions.

... **and theirs is a painful chastisement.** In the hereafter. <sup>٥</sup>Abdullah ibn Ubayy the hypocrite had promised to fight with them, but did not do so – just as he deceived the Bani Nadjr and deserted them when it was their turn to face the Muslim forces.

**Like the devil when he says to the human, 'Disbelieve!' Then when he disbelieves, he says, 'Indeed I renounce thee; for I fear Allah, Lord of the worlds!' (16)**

كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ اكْفُرْ فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ قَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ  
مِّنكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

**Like the devil ...** The example of ibn Ubayy is like the devil in his deceiving man and then forsaking him and leaving him to the chastisement of Allah.

**... when he says to the human, "Disbelieve!" ...** The devil says this by suggestion (*waswas*) and by making disbelief seem beautiful to man, so that man obeys the devil and disbelieves.

**Then when he disbelieves, ...** When man disbelieves and opposes Him, glory be to Him, in such wise that he deserves His chastisement,

**... he says, "Indeed I renounce thee; ...** The devil tells the disbeliever that he will not help him nor will he rescue him from the chastisement of Allah.

**... for I fear Allah, Lord of the worlds!** Can one who is terrified come to the aid of another? Thus did Ibn Ubayy deceive Bani Nadjr and Bani Qaynaqa<sup>s</sup> into opposing the Messenger, for he did not support them but deserted them.

**And the destiny of them both is that they are in the fire, eternal in it – that is the recompense of the wrongful. (17)**

فَكَانَ عَنَقِبَتِهِمَا أَنَّهُمَا فِي النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۖ وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

**And the afterlife of them both ...** That is, the devil and the human he has deceived into disbelief.

**... is that they are in the fire, eternal in it ...** They both deserve the fire, and shall meet the chastisement, the one for his deception, the other for his disbelief.

**... that is the recompense of the wrongful.'** Such an afterlife is the reward of those who are wrongful to themselves with disbelief due to the deception of the devil.

**O ye who believe! Be guardful of Allah, and a soul should look at what it has sent on for tomorrow. And be guardful of Allah; indeed Allah is knowing of what ye do. (18)**

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

**O ye who believe, be guardful of Allah ...** That is, fear His punishments; do not neglect His commands. The address is made particularly to the believers, as it is they who will benefit from such an address; otherwise, to be guardful and virtuous in this way is necessary for everyone.

**... and a soul should look at ...** It means that everyone should regard and think about:

**... what it has sent on for tomorrow ...** That is, for the day of resurrection: has it prepared virtue or corruption? reward or punishment? The meaning is that it is necessary to send ahead the beautiful things, for whatever deeds a person performs will be seen by him on the day of resurrection.

**... And be guardful of Allah, ...** do not disobey His commands and prohibitions.

**... indeed Allah is knowing of what ye do.** He is informed of our actions and on the morrow will requite us for them.

**And be not like those who forget Allah, so He makes them forget themselves; those, they are the perverse. (19)**

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنسَاهُمْ أَنفُسَهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ  
الْفٰسِقُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

**And be not like those who forget Allah, ...** The address is to the believers, meaning that they should not, like the Book-folk, who believed (in Allah) and then forgot Him by disobeying Him. The meaning is not actual forgetfulness, but rather abandoning His commands, for he who is aware (of his duties and responsibilities) but abandons them is like he who forgets, in that both fail to implement the commands.

**... so He makes them forget themselves; ...** It means that Allah makes those who forget Him such that they do not act for their salvations, like the person who forgets himself and so pays no attention to his condition.

**... those, they are the perverse.** They are perverse for they are outside the realm of obedience to Allah, the Most High.

Are those who enter the fire due to their disbelief and disobedience equal to those who enter the garden in reward for their faith and acting virtuously? Never!

**Not equal are the companions of the fire and the companions of the garden; for indeed the companions of the garden are the thrivers. (20)**

لَا يَسْتَوِي أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ وَأَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ ۗ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ  
الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

Those who are forever in the fire are not equal to those who remain eternally in the garden; these latter accomplish the achievement of being rewarded and saved.

How is it that the disbelievers have no fear about the Qur'an, and do not believe in He who sent it, whereas had the Qur'an been sent down to a mountain it would have feared? So where a solid mountain fears, the harsh heart fears not: 'They are like stones, or worse in harshness':

**Had We sent this Qur'an down upon a mountain, thou would have seen it humbled, split asunder from fear of Allah. And such metaphors We strike for humankind that they might deliberate. (21)**

لَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَىٰ جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ  
خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَلُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

**Had We sent this Qur'an down upon a mountain, ...** If the Qur'an had been addressed to a mountain with the expectation that it would put it into action,

**... thou would have seen it humbled, ...** Thou, O Messenger of Allah, or the reader would have seen the mountain to be frightened and submissive.

**... split asunder from fear of Allah.** This means either in reality, considering that the mountains (earth, etc.) perceive although we do not know how they do so, as He says, 'O mountains, sing praises with him' [34:10] and '... (Heavens and Earth) said we come in willing obedience' [41:11] and 'There is not a thing but it glorifies His praise.' [17:44] and '... and they (Heavens and Earth) were afraid of it...' [33:72]. Or it is a figurative usage to denote the power of penetration and influence within the Qur'an, such that it would make mountains fear and would shatter them, thus implying the question of why the human being does not fear?

**...And such metaphors ...** This particular similitude, and other metaphors (*amthab*), bring closer to the mind's eye the sacred Qur'an's magnificence and importance.

**...We strike for humankind that they might deliberate.** It means for them to reflect about that which the metaphors represent.

The theme now turns to clarify a number of Allah's attributes, glory be to Him, so as to explain that all humility is to be for Him, glory be to Him, just as the mountain is humbled by His word:

**He is Allah who – there is no god but Him, Knower of the unseen and the witnessed; He is the Compassionate, the Merciful. (22)**

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ ۗ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ  
الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٢﴾

**He is Allah who – there is no god but Him, ...** It means that in the whole of existence none have a say but Him, and none is rightfully worshipped but Him, alone, without partner.

**... Knower of the unseen and the witnessed; ...** He knows all things, whether they are hidden from the senses like the angels and the jinn and suchlike, or whether the senses perceive them, like the sensory things. It is narrated from Imam al-Baqir, *peace be upon him*, that: 'The unseen is that which has not yet come to pass, while the witnessed is that which has already come to pass.'

**... He is the Compassionate, ...** His mercy embraces the entire creation.

**... the Merciful.** He graces the believers. Thus His knowledge is the knowledge of one who is compassionate and merciful, not of one who is cold, harsh and severe.

**He is Allah – there is no god but Him, the King, the Holy, the Safety, the Secure, the Authority, the Mighty, the Compeller, the Sublime; glorified be Allah of that which they partner. (23)**

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ ۗ الْمُؤْمِنُ  
الْمُهَيْمِنُ ۗ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ ۗ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا  
يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

**He is Allah – there is no god but Him, ...** The repetition serves the purpose of driving the point home in opposition to the worshippers of idols, naturalists and suchlike.

... **the King**, ... It is given for *al-malik*, meaning the absolute sovereign lord over all existence.

... **the Holy**, ... He is pure of all forms of shortcoming, impurity, fault and ugliness.

... **the Safety**, ... It is given for *al-salam*, meaning that existence is safe from Him, glory be to Him, in that He is not like those rulers who harm their subjects and their lands. Also it means that He is safe from all faults, such that He is safety itself.

... **the Secure**, ... It is given for *al-mu'min*, meaning that His creation is safe and tranquil, as He does it not the slightest harm. Also it means that He bestows faith. Or it means that He has a bond to creation just as the Faithful has a bond to the Creator, for faith is fundamentally the bond to something.

... **the Authority**, ... It is given for *al-muhyamin*, meaning that He has authority over the creation.

... **the Mighty**, ... It is given for *al-ʿaziz*, meaning that He is absolute in His sovereignty, or rare in His being while His benefits to others are many. Of this Allah is the clearest embodiment, for He is one, alone, while the whole of existence is in need of Him, glory be to Him.

... **the Compeller**, ... It means that He overcomes resistance; or that He compels other than Him, as all of existence is compelled by Him, glory be to Him.

... **the Sublime**; ... He elevates and grandifies Himself above all that would lead to a shortcoming or fault.

... **glorified be Allah of that which they partner.** It means that He is pure and holy of all that the idolaters and polytheists say of Him having partners and suchlike.

**He is Allah, the Creator, the Originator, the Fashioner – His are the beautiful names. Whatever is in the heavens and earth glorify to Him; and He is the Mighty, the Wise. (24)**

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَلِيقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢٤﴾

**He is Allah ...** To Him all the beautiful names and attributes of perfection apply, for 'Allah' is the proper name of that being to which they all apply.

... **the Creator**, ... It is given for *al-khaliq*, meaning that He determined the existence of every thing.

... **the Originator**, ... It is given for *al-baʿi*, meaning that He executes the determining of all things by causation.

... **the Fashioner**; ... It is given for *al-muṣawwir*, meaning that He fashions everything that exists into a particular form. A thing needs to be decided upon, and designed, before being created, then it needs to be taken from the stage of potentiality to that of existence, and then that thing needs to be given a particular shape, or form.

... **His are the beautiful names ...** He is the Knowing rather than the ignorant, the Powerful rather than the incapable, the Generous rather than the miserly, and so on. His are all the beautiful names.

... **Whatever is in the heavens and on earth glorify to Him; ...** They declare His purity of all faults, shortcomings and ugliness. They do this by their existence, or in accordance with their perceptions.

... **and He is the Mighty**, ... He is the Mighty (*al-ʿaziz*) in His sovereignty.

... **the Wise**. He does nothing in vain, but according to wisdom and the best interests.