

Surah 33. Al-Ahzab

Asad: They think that the Confederates have not [really] withdrawn;²² and should the Confederates return, these [hypocrites] would prefer to be in the desert, among the bedouin, asking for news about you, [O believers, from far away;] and even were they to find themselves in your midsts, they would but make a pretence at fighting [by your side].²³

Malik: They thought that the confederates would never withdraw. Indeed, if the confederates should come again, they would wish to be among the beduins and seek news about you from a safe distance; and if they happened to be with you, they would take but a little part in the fighting.

Pickthall: They hold that the clans have not retired (for good); and if the Clans should advance (again), they would fain be in the desert with the wandering Arabs, asking for the news of you and if they were among you, they would not give battle, save a little.

Yusuf Ali: They think that the Confederates have not withdrawn; and if the Confederates should come (again) they would wish they were in the deserts (wandering) among the Bedouins and seeking news about you (from a safe distance); and if they were in your midst they would fight but little.³⁶⁹³

Transliteration: Yaḥsaboona alahzaba lam yathhaboo wain yati alahzabu yawaddoo law annahum badoona fee alaAAarabi yasaloona AAan anbaikum walaw kanoo feekum ma qataloo illa qaleelan
Khattab:

They ?still? think that the enemy alliance has not ?yet? withdrawn. And if the allies were to come ?again?, the hypocrites would wish to be away in the desert among nomadic Arabs, ?only? asking for news about you ?believers?. And if the hypocrites were in your midst, they would hardly take part in the fight.

Author Comments

22 - Sc., "but would come back in force and resume the siege".

23 - Lit., "they would not fight except a little".

3693 - This completes the picture of the psychology of the Hypocrites, begun at verse 12. Let us analyse it. (1) When they first saw the enemy they were already in a defeatist mood, and thought all was over (verse 12). (2) Not content with disloyalty themselves, they tried to infect others, who made paltry excuses to withdraw from the fight (verse 13). (3) They were ready to betray the City to the enemy if once the enemy had gained entrance (verse 14). (4) They forgot all the promises of fidelity which they had previously sworn (verse 15). (5) In their paltry calculations they forgot that cowardice in war does not pay

(verses 16-17). (6) Without taking much part in the actual defence, they were ready to talk glibly and claim a lion's share in the fruits of the victory (verses 18-19). (7) Even when the enemy had withdrawn, their cowardly minds were still afraid that the enemy would return, and were already meditating what they would do in that case: perhaps they would dwell in the deserts and spy on Madinah from a safe distance; and if caught in Madinah they would fight little and intrigue much. It was a miracle that with such men in their midst, the holy Prophet and his band won through.

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Source : *Alim.org-Compare Translation-Surah 33-Ayah 20*