

# Tafseer Surah al-Kafirun (الكافرون)

Notes on Nouman Ali Khan's Concise Commentary of the Quran

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## Introduction

- A distinction is being made in the surah that the Muslims are not worshipping the same God that the idol worshippers are worshipping
- The Prophet (pbuh) is being told to be aggressive towards the idol worshippers in Mecca. The way he is being told to speak to them is not usually common among the prophets, therefore, it is very distinct
  - This means that the hatred towards the Prophet (pbuh) and Islam had gone to such a point in Mecca that he is being asked to use very direct language with them. He is basically being told to tell them that he is parting ways with them and is no longer concerned with them
- Why this surah was revealed
  - After numerous harsh attempts to try and have Muhammad (pbuh) drop his call failed, the Quraysh tried a more softer approach. They tried to negotiate some sort of deal with him where they could switch deities to worship from time to time. They were also willing to make him one of their leaders. This surah was revealed as a response to their request for negotiations on worship
    - After this surah's revelation, they started torturing the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions because they saw it as a loss cause to try and change his mind
    - The Quraysh feared that his call would have an impact on their wealth because they were selling *shirk* to the people for profit. They tried to first buy him out and then later negotiate
- It is said that there is repetition in this surah because Allah is angry with the disbelievers in Mecca, thus, He is letting them know that there is no room for compromise
- Even though the Quraysh believed in Allah, they were not willing to worship and believe in Him the way He commanded them to. This was a major part of their *kufr* (disbelief)
  - Their disbelief also included rejecting the prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh) and the Quran and alleging that both were false

## Tafseer of the Verses

### 1. Say, O disbelievers

- a. A very condescending and harsh tone is being used here to address them
- b. Allah is telling those specific group of disbelievers that came to negotiate with him that none of them will be converting to Islam ever and they will all die as disbelievers

- i. Only Allah knows whether someone will ever convert or not because He knows the future and what is in the people's hearts
- ii. When someone makes up their mind not to believe even after it has been made clear to them, then Allah can also seal up their hearts so that they never come to the truth
- c. The Arabic word *kafara* means to bury, deny, and be ungrateful
- d. The word *qul* (say) in Arabic in the beginning of the surah is to tell the disbelievers that the response is not coming from the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) but a higher authority (Allah)

## **2. I do not worship what you worship**

- a. This includes idols, money, power, desires, etc.
- b. Worship also includes obedience and love
  - i. So the Prophet (pbuh) is being told to say that he obeys and loves Allah over all else
- c. Acts of worship require our intentions to be solely for Allah
- d. Negation is stronger with the verb and that is why it is used here
  - i. It means that "I will never worship what you worship"

## **3. Nor are you worshippers of what I worship**

- a. It is negated with the noun so negation is a little weak
  - i. It means that sometimes they may worship Allah
    - 1. Ex: when they fell into prostration once after being overcome by the power of the Quran

## **4. Nor will I be a worshipper of what you worship**

- a. Here noun is being used to negate it
  - i. So the Prophet (pbuh) is being told to deny from both angles: negating with noun and verb
    - 1. It means there will never be a time when he will worship their false gods

## **5. Nor will you be worshippers of what I worship**

- a. Same idea of them never believing being emphasized with repetition

## **6. For you is your religion, and for me is my religion**

- a. This is further proof that a specific group of people are being addressed here because they will never convert and continue to hold onto their false religion
- b. The Arabic word *deen* (religion) used in this verse can also mean judgement
  - i. It is to imply that both will have their own judgements before Allah on the Day of Judgement
- c. There is a sense of heightened emotion in the use of the language in this verse
- d. This surah also shows that compromise on religious principles can also constitute *kufr* (disbelief)
  - i. We must submit to Islam completely
    - 1. There is no such thing as partial Islam
  - ii. Some Muslims mix elements of other religions or cultures which contradict our faith into Islam and this is wrong. We must never compromise on our faith

1. People tend to do this sometimes because they find certain aspects of Islam inconvenient. We do not mold Islam to our liking, rather, we mold ourselves according to it