

Tafseer Surah Al-Munafiqun

Introduction

- I. This *surah* puts the subject of hypocrites in a very concise way, it is a continuation of the subject from *Surah al-Jumu'ah*
- II. The hypocrites in Media had very similar characteristics and qualities to the Children of Israel
 - A. They both said things that they did not actually do
- III. The objectives of this *surah*:
 - A. Expose the hypocrites, their characteristics, and clarify their position in Islam as a warning against them and against imitating them [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer*]
 - B. Revealing the disgraceful actions of the hypocrites, by mentioning their immoral characteristics, their schemes, and their conspiracy against the Prophet ﷺ and his companions, and exposing the ugliness of their hidden intentions, as well as mentioning some of their heinous statements regarding the Prophet ﷺ [*al-Tafseer al-Muyassar*]
 - C. Warning the believers against getting busy with the adornments and distractions of this world, neglecting the obedience and worship of Allah, and urging them to spend in the way of Allah seeking His pleasure before it's too late [*al-Tafseer al-Muyassar*]

Tafseer of the Verses

1. **When the hypocrites come to you 'O Prophet', they say, "We bear witness that you are certainly the Messenger of Allah"—and surely Allah knows that you are His Messenger—but Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are truly liars.**
 - a. When the Prophet ﷺ arrived in Medina and the Muslims increased in the city, and Islam became dignified in it, there were people among its inhabitants from the Aws and Khazraj tribes who publicly showed faith but concealed disbelief in their hearts, in order to maintain their status, protect their blood, and keep their wealth safe [Sa'di]
 - b. Allah begins with '*when the hypocrites come to you*' because it is inevitable. It's not a matter of *if* they would come to the Prophet ﷺ, it was going to happen sooner or later
 - c. The hypocrites only came to the Prophet ﷺ to tell him that he was the Messenger of Allah out of sarcasm and to just get on his good side, they did not really believe in him. This is why right after it Allah declares them to be liars because they were only testifying with their mouths not with their hearts
 - d. The main lesson from this verse is that hypocrites go out of their way to profess their faith even though they have none of it in their hearts, their actions usually speak louder than their words. They say they are believers but they do not act like it
 - e. We can also learn from this that when we have true faith and actions to go along with it, then we do not need to go around boasting to others about it. If we are true in our faith, then Allah knows it and that is sufficient
2. **They have made their 'false' oaths as a shield, hindering 'others' from the Way of Allah. Evil indeed is what they do!**

- a. The hypocrites were making false oaths in their belief of the Prophet ﷺ in order to protect themselves from being scrutinized and punished by the believers. In order to succeed in their mission of disrupting the message of Islam, they needed a cover to be accepted by the Muslim community because they had the upper hand politically in Medina
 - i. They used to spread rumors and doubts in order to drive people away from the faith [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer*]
 - b. Some of the qualities of hypocrites: lying, breaking promises, betraying others' trusts, being unable to take criticism, being lazy about prayer, being reluctant to spend on charity, etc.
 - i. We can all suffer from a degree of all these qualities or some of these qualities. If we find them in ourselves, we should work to get rid of them
 - 1. We must remember that our actions have an impact on our hearts. If we do not check ourselves and change our ways, we could completely corrupt our hearts to the point of no return
 - 2. We should not look at others who may suffer from such qualities and determine them to be hypocrites, rather, we should use these as a measurement to evaluate the state of our own hearts. Only Allah knows the state of other people's hearts, we do not have access to that knowledge
 - c. Hypocrisy can be divided into two types:
 - i. Conscious
 - 1. This is when the person knows he/she is a hypocrite, such as, a non-Muslim pretending to be a Muslim in order to spy on Muslims
 - ii. Subconscious
 - 1. This is when the person has characteristics of a hypocrite but does not know that he/she is suffering from a degree of hypocrisy
 - d. Some of the scholars said that nobody feels safe from hypocrisy except a hypocrite. This means if we still fear falling into hypocrisy, then we still have faith in our hearts, a true believer is always fearful of falling into it and is constantly checking himself/herself
- 3. This is because they believed and then abandoned faith. Therefore, their hearts have been sealed, so they do not comprehend.**
- a. Their hypocrisy was because they only believed outwardly but disbelieved inwardly so Allah sealed their hearts because of their disbelief, therefore, they do not understand what is beneficial for them, the reality of faith, and the sweetness of its effect on the heart [*al-Tafseer al-Muyassar* and Sabuni]
 - i. They used to proclaim words of faith in front of the believers but those of disbelief when alone in front of the heads of the hypocrites [Sabuni]
 - b. Once the heart closes to guidance, the intellect will not understand it either. So the verse is saying that their spiritual problem led to an intellectual problem as well
- 4. When you see them, their appearance impresses you. And when they speak, you listen to their 'impressive' speech. But they are 'just' like 'worthless' planks of wood leaned**

‘against a wall’. They think every cry is against them. They are the enemy, so beware of them. May Allah condemn them! How can they be deluded ‘from the truth’?

- a. The outward appearance of the hypocrites was impressive due to the luxuries they possessed and their tongues were eloquent in speech, however, their hearts were empty of faith and their minds lacked understanding and beneficial knowledge. This is why they are compared to pieces of wood, which have no life in them [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer and al-Tafseer al-Muyassar*]
- b. They thought that every loud voice is directed towards them and harmful to them, because they knew the reality of their situation and because of their extreme cowardice and the fear of being discovered [*al-Tafseer al-Muyassar and Sa’di*]
 - i. This fear of theirs was so excessive that any loud call would make them panic and imagine as if they were about to be punished by the believers. We are given the impression here that their fear was so intense that it is as if they were even afraid of their own shadows. Whenever a caller would proclaim a command from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, they would think that it is they who are intended by it [Sabuni]
- c. Allah then says that these hypocrites are the true enemy with emphasis because the visible and prominent enemy is easier to deal with than the enemy who is not felt, who is deceitful and cunning, claims to be a friend but is the clear enemy [Sa’di]
 - i. Allah also tells the Prophet ﷺ to beware of them because they cannot be trusted with anything especially sensitive information which needs to be kept hidden from the Muslims’ enemies [Sabuni]
- d. Allah then ends the verse with the rhetorical question, how do these hypocrites turn away from the Islamic religion after its evidence has become clear and its principles have been established, towards disbelief that only brings them loss and misery?! [Sa’di]

5. When it is said to them, “Come! The Messenger of Allah will pray for you to be forgiven,” they turn their heads ‘in disgust’, and you see them ‘O Prophet’ turn away in arrogance.

- a. Meaning when these hypocrites are told: Come to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and apologize for what you’ve done, he will seek from Allah forgiveness for your sins, they turn their heads in mockery and jest, and you see them turning away from what they are instructed to do, because they are too proud to accept the truth and submit to it [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer*]
 - i. This actually took place when some of the believers went to some of the hypocrites including Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites, to admit their mistakes and apologize for the dirty remarks they made, for which Allah sent down certain verses criticizing them, but they all refused out of arrogance [Sabuni]
- b. The noun form of the word ‘arrogance’ is used in Arabic to indicate that these hypocrites will never change and remain arrogant, hence, the verse which follows is the suitable punishment for them

6. It is the same whether you pray for their forgiveness or not, Allah will not forgive them.

Surely Allah does not guide the rebellious people.

- a. Meaning Allah will not forgive these hypocrites regardless of whether the Prophet ﷺ sought forgiveness for them from Allah or not because they are disobedient to Allah and have chosen disbelief over belief, this is why the Prophet's ﷺ prayer for their forgiveness, even if he were to do so, would have no benefit for them [Sa'di]
- b. Allah does not guide those who go against His obedience and who persist in disobeying Him [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]
- c. In the next few two verses, Allah discloses some examples of their crimes and wickedness [Sabuni]

7. They are the ones who say 'to one another', "Do not spend 'anything' on those 'emigrants' with the Messenger of Allah so that they will break away 'from him'." But to Allah 'alone' belong the treasuries of the heavens and the earth, yet the hypocrites do not comprehend.

- a. The emigrants from Mecca, when they first migrated, were in need of lots of assistance because they left their homes and properties in Mecca in order to escape persecution from the Quraysh. The new believers in Medina financially supported them a lot, so the hypocrites encouraged each other to stop spending money on them for assistance so that they would abandon the Prophet ﷺ out of financial distress
- b. Then Allah states that everything that these hypocrites have been given also belongs to Him because He is the creator of everything and He is the one who gave it to them
 - i. Allah gives provision to whom He wills, and restricts it from whom He wills, and He makes easy for whom He wills the means [of livelihood], and makes it difficult for whom He wills [Sa'di]
 1. We can also take away from this that Allah can enrich the emigrants and provide for them even if the hypocrites decide not to give them anything, because they are not an essential equation in the distribution of Allah's provisions. Allah can provide them from other means as well [My comment]
- c. In the end, Allah tells us that these hypocrites say such things because they are ignorant of the fact that Allah has ultimate control over all aspects of life, including the distribution of wealth and provision

8. They say, "If we return to Medina, the honorable will definitely expel the inferior." But all honor and power belongs to Allah, His Messenger, and the believers, yet the hypocrites do not know.

- a. The leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah ibn Ubayy, said to a selected group while returning from a military expedition with the Muslims, "If we return to Madina, the honorable [by which he meant him and his people] will drive out the weak [by which he meant Muhammad ﷺ and his emigrant companions]." One of the companions overheard him and reported it to the Prophet ﷺ and when Abdullah ibn Ubayy was asked about it, he denied saying it. It is then that these verses were revealed [Sabuni]
- b. The opposite of what this hypocrite claimed is actually the truth and this is why Allah said that He, His Messenger, and the believers are truly the honorable ones while these

hypocrites are the inferior ones but they fail to realize it due to their delusion [Sa'di]

9. O believers! Do not let your wealth or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. For whoever does so, it is they who are the 'true' losers.

- a. After Allah showed the keenness of the hypocrites on holding back from spending in order to prevent others from Allah's path, He warns the believers against doing the same [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]
- b. This is an internal battle for all of us, we should make efforts to assure that worldly things do not distract us from remembering Allah
 - i. The love of money and children is what most people's souls are bound to, causing them to give those things priority over the love of Allah [Sa'di]
 - ii. Remembering Allah in this verse is in reference to obeying and worshiping Him through prayer, charity, fasting, Hajj, jihad, and all other acts of obedience that bring us closer to Allah [Sabuni]
- c. This verse should not be misused, as is done by some manipulators, to derive that we can just abandon our families and go out serving Islam in some way. Serving our families and taking care of them is part of our faith as well. This verse is about those who abandon religious obligations because they are too distracted by their worldly lives. We need to have a balance between serving Allah's religion and engaging in permissible worldly activities
- d. Those whose wealth and children distract them from the prayer and the other obligations that Allah has imposed on them, they are the true losers who will lose themselves and their families on the day of judgment [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer*]
 - i. They were deceived by their share of Allah's generosity and mercy over them [*al-Tafseer al-Muyassar*]

10. And spend from what We have provided for you before death comes to one of you, and you cry, "My Lord! If only You delayed me for a short while, I would give in charity and be one of the righteous."

- a. Meaning spend, O believers, in the way of Allah and His Messenger some of what We have given you in the paths of goodness, being proactive in doing so before death comes to one of you, and he sees its signs and indications, and says remorsefully: "O Lord, if only You had delayed me for a short time, so that I could give charity from my wealth, and be among the righteous and pious" [*al-Tafseer al-Muyassar*]
- b. The 'spending' here includes obligatory expenditures such as *zakkah*, expiation for certain sins, expenditures on wives, and other such things, as well as recommended expenditures such as spending money on all forms of benefits. And the phrase '*what We have provided for you*' is an indication that Allah did not burden His servants with spending that would cause them hardship or difficulty. Instead, He commanded them to give a portion of what He has provided them, which He made easy for them and facilitated the means for them [Sa'di]
 - i. So in the context of Medina at that time, the believers who were helping their emigrant brothers are being told to let them be grateful to the One who gave them and comfort their needy [emigrant] brethren, and let them hasten to do so.

For when death comes, the servant cannot add even a particle of goodness to his/her deeds [Sa'di]

c. The 'righteous' are those who fulfill Allah's commands and avoid His prohibitions [Sa'di]

11. But Allah never delays a soul when its appointed time comes. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.

a. Meaning get your act together now before it is too late because there are no second chances once the angel of death arrives at your door

b. Allah will not delay anyone's time, whether the person is righteous or evil, believer or disbeliever when their term comes to an end. We also learn from this that every neglectful person in this life is regretful at the time of death and asks for more time to make up for what he/she missed but it is of no use! [Sabuni]

c. Allah ends the verse by stating that He is knowledgeable about what we do of good and evil, and He will compensate us accordingly [*al-Tafseer al-Muyassar*]