



Al-Munafiqoon

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the sentence *Idha jaa kal-munafiqoona* of verse 1. This is the name of the Surah as well as the title of its subject matter, for in it a review has been made of the conduct and attitude of the hypocrites themselves.

Period of Revelation

As we shall explain below this Surah was revealed either during the Prophet's (peace be upon him) return journey from his campaign against Bani al-Mustaliq, or immediately after his arrival back at Al-Madinah, and we have established by argument and research in the Introduction to Surah An-Noor that the campaign against Bani al-Mustaliq had taken place in Shaban A.H. 6. Thus, the date of the revelation of this Surah is determined precisely.

Historical Background

Before we mention the particular incident about which this Surah was revealed, it is necessary to have a look at the history of the hypocrites of Al-Madinah, for the incident

that occurred on this occasion had a whole series of events behind it, which ultimately led up to it.

Before the Prophet's (peace be upon him) emigration to Al-Madinah the tribes of the Aus and the Khazraj, fed up with their mutual rivalries and civil wars, had almost agreed on the leadership of one man and were making preparations to crown him their king. This was Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul, the chief of the Khazraj. Muhammad bin Ishaq has stated that among the people of Khazraj his authority was never contested and never had the Aus and the Khazraj rallied to one man before this. (Ibn Hisham, vol. II, p. 234)

Such were the conditions when the voice of Islam reached Al-Madinah and the influential people of both the tribes started becoming Muslims. When before the emigration, invitation was being extended to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to come to Al-Madinah, Abbas bin Ubadah bin Nadlah Ansari wanted to defer this invitation for the reason that Abdullah bin Ubayy also might join in the declaration of allegiance and invitation to the Prophet (peace be upon him), so that Al-Madinah might become the center of Islam by common consent. But the delegation that arrived in Makkah to declare their allegiance did not give any importance to the proposal of Abbas bin Ubadah, and all its members, who included 75 men from both the tribes, became ready to invite the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the face of every danger (Ibn Hisham, vol. II, P. 89). We have given the details of this event in the Introduction to Surah Al-Anfaal.

Then, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) arrived in Al-

Madinah, Islam had so deeply penetrated every house of the Ansar that Abdullah bin Ubayy became helpless and did not see any other way to save his leadership than to become a Muslim himself. So, he entered Islam along with many of his followers from among the chiefs and leaders of both the tribes although their hearts were burning with rage from within. Ibn Ubayy in particular was filled with grief, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) had deprived him of his kingship. For several years his hypocritical faith and grief of being deprived of his kingdom manifested itself in different ways. On the one hand, when on Fridays the Prophet (peace be upon him) took his seat to deliver the sermon, Abdullah bin Ubayy would stand up and say: O people, the Messenger of Allah is present among you, by whom Allah has honored you; therefore, you should support him and listen to what he says and obey him. (Ibn Hisham, vol. III, p. 111). On the other, his hypocrisy was being exposed day by day and the true Muslims were realizing that he and his followers bore great malice against Islam, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Muslims.

Once when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was passing on the way Abdullah bin Ubayy spoke to him in harsh words. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) complained of it to Hadrat Saad bin Ubadah; he said: O Messenger of Allah, don't be hard on him, for when Allah sent you to us we were making a diadem to crown him, and, by God, he thinks that you have robbed him of his kingdom. (Ibn Hisham vol: II, pp. 237-238).

After the Battle of Badr when the Prophet (peace be upon him) invaded the Jewish tribe of Bani Qainuqa on their breaking the agreement and un-provoked revolt, this man stood up in support of them, and holding the Prophet (peace be upon him) by his armor, said: These 700 fighters have been helping and protecting me against every enemy; would you cut them down in one morning? By God, I will not leave you until you pardon my clients. (Ibn Hisham, vol. III, pp. 51- 52).

On the occasion of the Battle of Uhud this man committed open treachery and withdrew from the battlefield with 300 of his companions. One should note that at this critical moment when he so acted, the Quraish had marched upon Al-Madinah with 3,000 troops and the Prophet (peace be upon him) had marched out with only 1,000 men to resist them. Of these 1,000 this hypocrite broke away with 300 men and the Prophet (peace be upon him) was left with only 700 men to meet 3,000 troops of the enemy in the field. After this incident the common Muslims of Al-Madinah came to realize fully that he was certainly a hypocrite and his companions were also his associates in hypocrisy. That is why when on the very first Friday, after the Battle of Uhud, this man stood up as usual to make a speech before the Prophet's (peace be upon him) sermon, the people pulled at his garment, saying: Sit down you are not worthy to say such things. That was the first occasion in Al-Madinah when this man was publicly disgraced. Thereupon he was so filled with rage that he left the mosque jumping over the heads of the people. At the door

of the Mosque some of the Ansar said to him: What are you doing? Go back and ask the Prophet (peace be upon him) to pray for your forgiveness. He retorted: I do not, want him to pray for my forgiveness." (Ibn Hisham, vol. III, p. 111).

Then in A. H. 4 the Battle of Bani an-Nadir took place. On this occasion he and his companions supported the enemies of Islam even more openly. On the one side, the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his devoted companions were preparing for war against their enemy, the Jews, and on the other, these hypocrites were secretly sending messages to the Jews to the effect: Stand firm we are with you: if you are attacked, we will help you, and if you are driven out, we too will go out with you. The secret of this intrigue was exposed by Allah Himself, as has been explained in Surah Al-Hashr, Ayats 11-17.

But in spite of being so exposed the reason why the Prophet (peace be upon him) was still treating him kindly was that he had a large band of the hypocrites behind him. Many of the chiefs of both the Aus and the Khazraj were his supporters. At least a third of the population of Al-Madinah consisted of his companions, as became manifest on the occasion of the Battle of Uhud. Under such conditions it was not prudent to wage a war with these internal enemies combined with the external enemies. On this very account, in spite of being fully aware of their hypocrisy the Prophet (peace be upon him) continued to deal with them according to their apparent profession of faith for a long time. On the other hand, these people too

neither possessed the power nor the courage to fight the believers openly as disbelievers, or to join hands with an invader and face them in the battlefield. Apparently they were a strong hand but inwardly they had the weakness which Allah has vividly portrayed in Surah Al-Hashr, Ayats 12-14. Therefore, they thought their well being lay only in posing as Muslims. They came to the mosque, offered the prayers, gave away the zakat, and would make tall oral claims to the faith, which the true Muslims never felt the need to do. They would offer a thousand justifications for each of their hypocritical acts by which they would try to deceive their compatriots, the Ansar, into believing that they were with them. By these designs they were not only saving themselves from the disadvantages which could naturally accrue if they separated themselves from the Ansar brotherhood, but also taking advantage of the opportunities to make mischief which were available to them as members of the Muslim brotherhood.

These were the causes which enabled Abdullah bin Ubayy and like minded hypocrites to get an opportunity to accompany the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his campaign against the Bani al-Mustaliq, and they simultaneously engineered two great acts of mischief which could shatter the Muslim unity to pieces. However, by virtue of the wonderful training in discipline that the Muslim had received through the pure teaching of the Quran and the companionship of the Prophet (peace be upon him) both acts of mischief were stopped in time, and the hypocrites themselves were disgraced instead. One of

these was the mischief that has been mentioned in Surah An-Noor, and the other which has been mentioned in this Surah.

This incident has been related by Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, Nasai, Tirmidhi, Baihaqi, Tabari, Ibn Marduyah, Abdur Razzaq, Ibn Jarir Tabari, Ibn Saad and Muhammad bin Ishaq through many reliable channels. In some traditions the expedition in which it took place has not been named, and in others it has been connected with the Battle of Tabuk. But the authorities on the battles fought by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and history agree that this incident took place on the occasion of the campaign against the Bani al-Mustaliq. The following seems to be the real story when all the traditions are read together.

When after crushing down the power of Bani al-Mustaliq the Islamic army had made a halt in the settlement at the well of al-Muraisi. Suddenly a dispute arose between two men on taking water from the well. One of them was Jehjah bin Masud Ghifari, a servant of Umar appointed to lead his horse. The other was Sinan bin Wabar al-Juhani, whose tribe was an ally of a clan of the Khazraj. Harsh words between them led to fighting and Jehjah kicked Sinan, which the Ansar, on account of their ancient Yamanite tradition, took as a great insult and disgrace. At this Sinan called out the men of Ansar and Jehjah the emigrants for help. Hearing about the quarrel Ibn Ubayy started inciting and calling the men of the Aus and the Khazraj to come out and help their ally. From the other side some emigrants

also came out. The dispute might have led to a fight between the Ansar and the Muhajirin themselves at the very place where they had just fought an enemy tribe jointly and crushing it had halted in its own territory. But hearing the noise the Prophet (peace be upon him) emerged and said: What is this call of paganism. What have you to do with such a call, leave it, it is a dirty thing. Thereupon the leading men of the two sides met and settled the dispute. Sinan pardoned Jehjah and peace was restored.

After this every person whose heart was disaffected came to Abdullah bin Ubayy and they all said to him: Until now we had our hopes attached to you and you were protecting us, but now it seems you have become a helper of these paupers against us. Ibn Ubayy was already enraged. These words made him burst out, thus: This is what you have done to yourselves. You have given these people shelter in your country, and have divided your property among them. So much so that they have now become our rivals. Nothing so fits us and the paupers of Quraish (or the companions of Muhammad, peace be upon him) as the ancient saying: Feed your dog to fatten it and it will devour you. If you hold back your property from them, they would go elsewhere. By God, when we return to Al-Madinah, the honorable ones will drive out from it the mean ones.

Zaid bin Arqam, a young boy, also happened to be present in the assembly at that time. He heard this and mentioned it before his uncle, and his uncle who was one of the Ansar chiefs went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and told him the whole story. The Prophet (peace be upon him)

called Zaid and asked him what had happened and he repeated every word of what he had heard. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Zaid, you are perhaps displeased with Ibn Ubayy; you might have been mistaken in hearing; you might have imagined Ibn Ubayy said this. But Zaid was sure and firm. He said: No, I swear by God I have heard him say this and that. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) called Ibn Ubayy, and he came and swore that he had not said any such thing. The people of the Ansar also said: a boy says this: he might have been mistaken in what he heard. Ibn Ubayy is a venerable old man and our chief. Do not believe what a boy says against him. The elderly people of the tribe reproved Zaid also, who became depressed and held his peace. But the Prophet (peace be upon him) knew Zaid as well as Abdullah bin Ubayy. Therefore, he fully understood what had actually happened.

When Umar came to know of this, he came to the Prophet and said: Please allow me to put this hypocrite to the sword. Or, if you do not think it is fit to give me the permission you may tell Muadh bin Jabal, or Abbad bin Bishr, or Sad bin Muadh, or Muhammad bin Maslamah from among the Ansar to go and kill him. But the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: No, the people will say Muhammad (peace be upon him) kills his own companions. After this he ordered the people to set off immediately, although it was at a time when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was not accustomed to travel. The forced march continued for 30 hours at a stretch so that the people

became exhausted. Then he halted, and as soon as they touched the ground they fell asleep. This he did to distract their minds from what had happened at the well of al-Muraisi. On the way Usaid bin Hudair, an Ansar chief, met the Prophet (peace be upon him), and said: O Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, today you ordered the people to set off at a time which was disagreeable for traveling; a thing you have never done before. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Have you not heard of what your friend said. When he asked who he meant, the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Abdullah bin Ubayy. He asked what he had said. The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered: He has asserted that when he returns to Al-Madinah, the honorable ones will drive out from it the mean ones. He answered: By God, O Messenger of Allah, you are the honorable one and he is the mean one; you will drive him out whenever you want to.

By and by the news spread among the Ansar soldiers and it enraged them against Ibn Ubayy. The people advised him to go to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and request for his forgiveness, but he retorted: You asked me to believe in him, and I believed in him; you asked me to pay the zakat on my property, and I paid the zakat too; now the only thing left is that I should bow down to Muhammad (peace be upon him). This further enraged the believing Ansar and everyone started reproaching and cursing him. When the caravan was about to enter Al-Madinah, Abdullah, the son of Abdullah bin Ubayy, stood before his father with a drawn out sword, and said: You had said that when you

reached Al-Madinah, the honorable ones would drive out the mean ones. Now, you will know who is honorable you or Allah and His Messenger. By God, you cannot enter Al-Madinah until the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) permits you to enter. At this Ibn Ubayy cried out: O people of Khazraj, look, my own son is preventing me from entering Al-Madinah. The people conveyed this news to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and he said: Tell Abdullah to let his father come home. Abdullah said: If this is the Prophet's (peace be upon him) order, then you may enter. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Umar: Now what do you think, Umar. Had you killed him on the day when you asked my permission to kill him, many people would have trembled with rage. Today if I order them to kill him, they will kill him immediately. Umar replied: By God, I realize there was greater wisdom behind what the Apostle of Allah said than what I said. These were the circumstances under which this Surah was revealed, most probably after the Prophet's (peace be upon him) return to Al-Madinah.

1. (O Muhammad), when the hypocrites come to you, they say: "We bear witness that you are indeed Allah's Messenger." And Allah knows that you are indeed His Messenger. And Allah bears witness that surely the Hypocrites are liars.*1

إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ قَالُوا
نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ
إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُهُ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّ
الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١﴾

*1 That is, Although the thing they are uttering with the tongue is true by itself, it does not reflect their belief. Therefore they lie when they say that they bear witness that you are a Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah. Here, one should clearly understand that an evidence or witness is composed of two things: first, the actual thing to which one bears the witness; second, the concerned person's own belief about the thing to which he bears the witness, Now, if the thing by itself is true and the belief of the bearer of witness also corresponds to what he says, he will be truthful in every respect. And if the thing in itself is false; but the bearer of the witness believes it to be right and true, he will be regarded as truthful in one way, for he is truthful in expressing his belief, and liar in another way, for the thing he is bearing witness to is by itself false. Contrary to this, if the thing by itself is true but the belief of the bearer of the witness is opposed to it, he will be regarded as truthful because he is testifying to the right thing, and a liar because his own belief is contrary to what he is saying with the tongue. For instance, if a believer states that Islam is a true religion, he is truthful in every respect, but if a Jew, while he is steadfast in his Judaism, states the same thing, he would be stating the right thing but his evidence would be regarded as false, for he is testifying against his faith and belief. And if he calls it a false religion, he would be uttering a false thing but he would be bearing a true witness according to his belief.

2. They have taken their oaths as a shield*² so they

أَتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَن

can hinder (others) from the way of Allah.*³ Indeed it is evil that which they do.

سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

*2 That is, they use the oaths that they swear to convince others of their Islam and faith as a shield to save themselves from the wrath of the Muslims so that they do not treat them as they treat their open enemies.

These oaths may imply the oaths which they usually swear to convince others of their faith as well as those which they swore when they were caught committing some hypocritical act, and also those oaths which Abdullah bin Ubayy had sworn to contradict the report given by Zaid bin Arqam. Besides these, there is another probability that Allah might have regarded this statement of theirs as an oath: We bear witness that you are Allah's Messenger. This last probability has given rise to a dispute among the jurists, namely: If a person states something with the words: I bear witness, will it be regarded as an oath or not? Imam Abu Hanifah and his companions (except Imam Zufar), Imam Sufyan Thauri and Imam Auzai regard it as an oath (Yamin in the Shariah terminology). Imam Zufar says that it is not an oath. Two sayings from Imam Malik have been reported in this connection: First, that it is an oath absolutely, and second, that if while saying: I bear witness, his intention was to say: My God, I bear witness, or I bear witness before God, it would be a statement on oath, otherwise not. Imam Shafei says: Even if the person says the words: I bear witness before God. it would not be a

statement made on oath, unless he uttered these words with the intention of swearing an oath, (Al-Jassas, Ahkam al-Quran; Ibn alArabi, Ahkam al-Quran).

*3 The verb *sadd* in Arabic is transitive as well as intransitive. Therefore, *saddu-un sabil-Allah* means; They turn away from the way of Allah, as well as: they turn others away from the way of Allah. According to the first meaning the verse would mean: By means of these oaths, they first plant themselves firmly among the Muslims and then invent ways to escape fulfilling demands of the faith and to avoid obedience to Allah and His Messenger. According to the second meaning it would mean: They use their false oaths as a cover for committing evil deeds. Posing as Muslims they weaken the Muslim community from within: find out the secrets of the Muslims and convey these to their enemies: create doubts about Islam among the non-Muslims and use such devices for inspiring the simple Muslims with evil suggestions which only a hypocrite in the guise of a Muslim could do, for an open enemy of Islam cannot use them.

3. That is because they believed, then they disbelieved, so a seal has been put on their hearts, so they do not understand.*4

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا
فَطُبِعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا
يَفْقَهُونَ

*4 In this verse believing means professing the faith in order to be counted among Muslims, and disbelieving means not to believe sincerely and to persist in disbelief as

usual. The verse means to say that when they, after due thought, decided to adopt this hypocritical attitude instead of adopting either belief or disbelief plainly, Allah caused a seal to be set on their hearts and deprived them of the grace to adopt the attitude and conduct of a true, sincere and noble person. Now, their power of understanding has been lost, their moral sense has become dead, and while following this way they never even feel that their habit of always telling lies, their deceitful behavior and the ever present contradictions between their word and deed is a wretched state in which they have involved themselves.

This is one of those verses in which the meaning of “causing a seal to be set on the heart of somebody by Allah” has been made clear. These people did not become hypocrites because Allah had set a seal on their hearts; so faith did not enter them, and they became hypocrites under compulsion. But, in fact, Allah set a seal on their hearts only when they decided to persist in disbelief in spite of professing the faith outwardly. Then, they were deprived of the capacity to believe sincerely and of the grace of the moral attitude resulting from it, and were helped to persist in the hypocrisy and hypocritical morals, which they had chosen to adopt for themselves.

4. And when you see them, their figures would marvel you. And if they speak, you listen to their speech.^{*5} They are like blocks of timber propped up.^{*6} They deem

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ
وَإِنْ يَقُولُوا تَسْمَعُ لِقَوْلِهِمْ كَأَنَّكُمْ
خُشْبٌ مُّسْنَدَةٌ تَحْسَبُونَ كُلَّ

every shout to be (directed) against them.*⁷ They are the enemies,*⁸ so beware of them.*⁹ May Allah destroy them.*¹⁰ How are they being perverted.*¹¹

صِيْحَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ هُمْ اَلْعَدُوُّ
فَاَحْذَرْهُمْ قَتَلَهُمُ اللهُ اَنِي
يُؤْفَكُونَ

*5 Abdullah bin Abbas has stated that Abdullah bin Ubayy was a strongly built, healthy, handsome and smooth-tongued person, and the same was the case with most of his companions. They were all the nobles of Al-Madinah. When they came to sit in the Prophet's (peace be upon him) assembly, they would sit reclining on cushions against the walls and would talk agreeably and convincingly. From their outward appearance and manner of speech no one could imagine that those honorable people of the city would be so wretched and degraded in their character.

*6 That is, those who sit reclining on cushions against the walls, are not but but pieces of timber. Comparing them to timber is meant to imply that they are devoid of the moral sense which is the essence of humanity. Then by comparing them to blocks of timber propped up against the wall, it has also been pointed out that they are absolutely worthless, for the timber would be useful only when it has been utilized in making of a ceiling, or a door frame, or a piece of furniture. A block of timber that has just been placed against a wall serves no useful purpose at all.

*7 This brief sentence portrays the state of their guilty conscience. Since they fully knew what game of hypocrisy they were playing under the screen of their superficial

faith, they always remained in a state of alarm, thinking as to when the secret of their treason might be exposed, or the believers might feel disgusted with their evil deeds and machinations and take them to task for them. If ever a cry was raised anywhere in the city, or a noise was heard; they immediately grew alarmed and thought it was directed against themselves.

*8 In other words, these hidden enemies are more dangerous than the open enemies.

*9 That is, do not be deceived by their outward appearances. Beware of them, for they can deceive you at any moment.

*10 This is not a curse but a declaration of the verdict about them by Allah that they have become worthy of His punishment and He will certainly inflict His punishment on them. It is also possible that Allah may not have used these words in their literal sense but in the meaning of a curse and condemnation according to Arabic idiom.

*11 It has not been pointed out as to who perverts them from belief to hypocrisy. This by itself makes it clear that there is not one but many factors responsible for their perversion. There is Satan, there are their evil friends, and there are their own selfish motives. Someone's wife or children become his motive, and someone is driven to perversion by the evil ones in his society, or by jealousy, spite and pride.

5. And when it is said to them: "Come, the Messenger of Allah will ask

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا يَسْتَغْفِرْ

forgiveness for you.” They turn their heads aside, and you see them evading and they are arrogant.*12

لَكُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ لَوَّأَ رُءُوسَهُمْ
وَرَأَيْتَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ وَهُمْ
مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ

*12 That is, they not only refuse to come to the Messenger to seek forgiveness, but also on hearing the invitation they shake their heads with arrogance and pride, and remain adamant, thinking that it would be disgraceful for them to approach the Messenger (peace be upon him) to seek forgiveness. This is a clear sign that they are not believers.

6. It is the same for them, whether you ask forgiveness for them, or do not ask forgiveness for them. Allah shall never forgive them.*13 Surely, Allah does not guide the people who are disobedient.*14

سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَسْتَغْفَرْتَ لَهُمْ أَمْ
لَمْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ لَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الْفَاسِقِينَ

*13 This thing was reiterated in Surah At-Taubah, which was revealed three years after Surah Al-Munafiqoon, even in stronger words. In that Surah, Allah, while addressing the Prophet (peace be upon him) said this about the hypocrites: O Prophet (it will be all the same) whether you beg forgiveness for them or not, for Allah will not forgive them even if you beg forgiveness for them seventy times. This is because they have disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger, and Allah does not show guidance to the

wrongdoers. (Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 80). A little further on in that Surah it was again said: And never perform the funeral prayer for anyone of them who dies nor stand at his grave, for they have denied Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and died while they were transgressors. (Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 84).

*14 Two things have been stated in this verse. First, that the prayer of forgiveness can be beneficial only for those who are guided aright. Let alone a common man, even if Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) himself prays for the forgiveness of the person, who has turned away from guidance and adopted the way of sin and transgression instead of obedience, he cannot be forgiven. Second, that it is not Allah's way to bless with guidance those who do not seek His guidance. If a person himself turns away from Allah's guidance, rather shakes his head with arrogance and rejects the invitation when he is called towards guidance, Allah has no need that He should go after him with His guidance and implore him to come to the right path.

7. They are those who say: "Do not spend on those who are with Allah's Messenger, until they disperse." And for Allah are the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not understand.

هُمُ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ لَا تُنْفِقُوا عَلَيَّ
 مَن عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ حَتَّىٰ
 يَنْفَضُوا^ق وَلِلَّهِ خَزَائِنُ السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا
 يَفْقَهُونَ



8. They say: “If we return to AlMadinah, the more honorable will surely expel from it the meaner.”*¹⁵ And to Allah belongs honor, and to His Messenger, and to the believers,*¹⁶ but the hypocrites do not know.

يَقُولُونَ لَئِن رَّجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ
لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنَهَا الْأَذَلَّ
وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ
وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَلَكِنَّ
الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

*¹⁵ Zaid bin Arqam says: When I reported these words of Abdullah bin Ubayy to the Prophet (peace be upon him), and Abdullah bin Ubayy came and disowned them on oath, the elderly people of the Ansar, and even my own uncle, reproved me for this; so much so that I felt that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had also mistaken me for a liar and Abdullah bin Ubayy for a truthful person. This caused me great anguish and grief. Then, when these verses were revealed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) called me, and taking hold of my ear, said: The boy’s ear was truthful Allah has himself testified to what it had heard. (Ibn Jarir. In Tirmidhi also there is a tradition on the same subject).

*¹⁶ That is, all honor belongs to Allah in virtue of His essence, to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in virtue of his prophethood, and to the believers in virtue of their faith. As for the disbelievers, the wicked people and the hypocrites, they have no share whatsoever in the real true honor.

9. O you*¹⁷ who believe, let not your possessions nor

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ

your children distract you from the remembrance of Allah.*¹⁸ And whoever does that, then those are the losers.

أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادِكُمْ عَنْ
ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ
فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

*17 Now a word of admonition is being addressed to all those people who have entered Islam, whether they are true and sincere believers, or those who profess the faith merely verbally. As we have explained at several places above. the words *alla-dhina amanu* in the Quran are sometimes used to address the true believers and sometimes to address the hypocrites, for they profess the faith only with the tongue, and sometimes to address the Muslims of all kinds in general. The context itself shows which group is the audience at a particular place.

*18 The mention of the possessions and the children, in particular, has been made for man mostly turns away from the demands of the faith for the sake of their well being and interests and becomes involved in hypocrisy, weakness of faith, or wickedness and disobedience; otherwise it implies everything of the world that allures and absorbs man so completely that he becomes heedless of the remembrance of God. This heedlessness in respect of the remembrance of God is indeed the root cause of all evil. If man only remembers that he is not free but the servant of One God, and that God is fully aware of all his actions and deeds, and he will be held accountable one day before Him for all his actions and deeds, he would never be involved in any

deviation and wickedness, and if ever he commits an error due to a human weakness, he will immediately rectify it as soon as he comes to realize his wrongdoing and repent.

10. And spend from that which We have provided you before death should come to any of you, then he should say: “My Lord, why did You not relieve me for a little while so that I should have given in charity and become among the righteous.”

وَأَنْفِقُوا مِنْ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ
أَنْ يَأْتِيَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ
فَيَقُولَ رَبِّ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنِي إِلَى
أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ فَأَصَّدَّقَ وَأَكُنْ مِنَ
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. And never will Allah delay a soul when its term has come. And Allah is Informed of what you do.

وَلَنْ يُؤَخِّرَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِذَا جَاءَ
أَجَلُهَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
﴿١١﴾

