

### INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Al-Munāfiqūn*, 63.

This is the seventh of the ten short Madinah Sūras dealing with a special feature in the social life of the Brotherhood.

The special feature here dealt with is the wiles and mischief of the Hypocrite element in any community, and the need of guarding against it and against the temptation it throws in the way of the Believers.

The battle of Uḥud (Shawwāl A.H. 3) unmasked the Hypocrites in Madinah: see iii. 167, and n. 476. This Sūra may be referred to some time after that event, say about 4 A.H. or possibly 5 A.H. if the words reported in verse 8 were uttered in the expedition against the Banūl' Muṣṭaliq, A.H. 5. (See n. 5475 below).

*Summary.*—False are the oaths of the Hypocrites: they only seek selfish ends: Believers should beware of their wiles and strive devotedly always for the Cause (Ixi. 1-11).

*Al-Munāfiqūn, or the Hypocrites*

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,  
Most Merciful.*

1. When the Hypocrites<sup>5466</sup>  
Come to thee, they say,  
"We bear witness that thou  
Art indeed the Messenger  
Of Allah." Yea, Allah  
Knoweth that thou art  
Indeed His Messenger.  
And Allah beareth witness  
That the Hypocrites are  
Indeed liars.
2. They have made their oaths<sup>5467</sup>  
A screen (for their misdeeds):  
Thus they obstruct (men)  
From the Path of Allah:  
Truly evil are their deeds.
3. That is because they believed,  
Then they rejected Faith:  
So a seal was set<sup>5468</sup>  
On their hearts: therefore  
They understand not.

## سُورَةُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

اتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ  
إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢﴾

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا فَطُبِعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ  
فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٣﴾

5466. The hypocrite element, if one exists in any society, is a source of weakness and a danger to its health and its very existence. When the holy Prophet came to Madinah in *Hijrat*, his arrival was welcome to all the patriotic citizens: it not only united them in common life and healed their old differences, but it brought honour and light to them in the person of the greatest living Prophet. But there were some baser elements filled with envy. Such hopes as they had entertained of attaining power and leadership by playing on the animosities of the factions were now dashed to the ground. They now began to work underground. For fear of the majority they dared not oppose the new growing Brotherhood of Righteousness. They tried to undermine it by intriguing secretly with its enemies and swearing openly its loyalty to the holy Prophet. They were thoroughly unmasked and discredited at the battle of Uhud. See iii. 167, and n. 476.

5467. Cf. lviii. 16 and n. 5358. When they say that Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah, it is Allah's own truth: but what is in their hearts? Nothing but falsehood.

5468. Cf. ii. 7. Their double-dealing has fogged their understanding. In Arabic the heart is taken to be the seat of understanding as well as of affection.

4. When thou lookest  
At them, their bodies<sup>5469</sup>  
Please thee; and when  
They speak, thou listenest  
To their words. They are  
As (worthless as hollow)  
Pieces of timber propped up,<sup>5470</sup>  
(Unable to stand on their own).  
They think that every  
Cry is against them.<sup>5471</sup>  
They are the enemies;  
So beware of them.  
The curse of Allah be  
On them! How are they  
Deluded (away from the Truth)!

5. And when it is said  
To them, "Come, the Messenger  
Of Allah will pray for your"<sup>5472</sup>  
Forgiveness", They turn aside  
Their heads, and thou wouldst  
See them turning away  
Their faces in arrogance.

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ وَإِنْ يَقُولُوا  
تَسْمَعُ لِقَوْلِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ خُشُبٌ مُّسْنَدَةٌ يَّحْسِبُونَ كُلَّ  
صَيْحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ هُمُ الْعَدُوّ فَاحْذَرْهُمْ فَنُلْهِمُ اللَّهَ  
أَنِّي يُؤَفِّكُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا يَسْتَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ لَوَّوْا  
رُءُوسَهُمْ وَرَأَيْتَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ وَهُمْ مُّسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

5469. The Hypocrites at all times are plausible people, and so were the Hypocrites of Madinah. They present a fine exterior; they dress well; they can usually afford fine equipages; they try to win the confidence of every one, as they have no scruples in telling lies, and apparently expressing agreement with every one. Their words are fair-spoken, and as truth does not check their tongues, their flattery and deception know no bounds. But all this is on the outside. As they have no sincerity, nothing that they say or do is worth anything.

5470. Good timber is strong in itself and can support roofs and buildings. Hollow timber is useless, and has to be propped up against other things. The Hypocrites are like rotten timber. They have no firm character themselves, and for others they are unsafe props to rely upon.

5471. Their conscience always troubles them. If any cry is raised, they immediately get alarmed, and think it is against themselves. Such men are worse than open enemies.

5472. Even hypocrisy like other sins can be forgiven by repentance and amendment, provided there is a will and earnest desire to turn from evil and seek the Grace of Allah. In this case there was none.

## 6. It is equal to them

Whether thou pray for  
Their forgiveness or not.<sup>5473</sup>  
Allah will not forgive them.  
Truly Allah guides not  
Rebellious transgressors.

سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَسْتَغْفَرْتَ لَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ  
لَهُمْ لَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ  
الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٦﴾

## 7. They are the ones who say,

"Spend nothing on those  
Who are with Allah's Messenger,<sup>5474</sup>  
Till they disperse  
(And quit Madinah)."  
But to Allah belong  
The treasures of the heavens  
And the earth; but  
The Hypocrites understand not.

هُمْ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ لَا تُنْفِقُوا عَلَيَّ مَنْ عِنْدَ  
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ حَتَّىٰ يَنْفَضُوا وَلِلَّهِ خَزَائِنُ السَّمَوَاتِ  
وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٧﴾

8. They say, "If we<sup>5475</sup>

Return to Madinah, surely  
The more honourable (element)  
Will expel therefrom the meaner".  
But honour belongs to Allah

يَقُولُونَ لَئِنْ رَجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ  
الْأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْأَذَلَّ وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ  
وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ

5473. The stiff-necked rejecters of Allah's Truth have made a wide gulf between themselves and Allah's Grace. No prayer for them will help them. In the attitude of rebellion and transgression they cannot obtain Allah's forgiveness.

5474. The *Muhājirūn*, who had come to be with the holy Prophet in Madinah in exile, were received, helped, entertained by the *Anṣār* (Helpers). The Hypocrites in Madinah did not like this, and tried in underhand ways to dissuade the good folk of Madinah from doing all they could for the exiles. But their tricks did not succeed. The small Muslim community grew from strength to strength until they were able to stand on their own resources and greatly to augment the resources of their hosts as well. It is goodness that produces strength and prosperity, and Allah holds the keys of the treasures of man's well-being. It is not for Allah's enemies to dole out or withhold the unbounded treasures of Allah.

5475. Words of this import were spoken by 'Abdullāh ibn Ubai, the leader of the Madinah Hypocrites, to or about the Exiles, in the course of the expedition against the Banū'l Mustaliq in the fourth or fifth year of the Hijra. He had hopes of leadership which were disappointed by the coming to Madinah of a man far greater than he. So he arrogated to himself and his clique the title of "the more honourable (element)" and slightly spoke of the Emigrants as the "meaner" element that had intruded from outside.

And His Messenger, and  
To the Believers; but  
The Hypocrites know not.

لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨﴾

## SECTION 2.

9. O ye who believe!  
Let not your riches  
Or your children divert you  
From the remembrance of Allah.  
If any act thus,  
Surely they are the losers.<sup>5476</sup>
10. And spend something (in charity)  
Out of the substance<sup>5477</sup>  
Which We have bestowed  
On you, before Death  
Should come to any of you  
And he should say,  
"O my Lord! Why didst  
Thou not give me  
Respite for a little while?  
I should then have given  
(Largely) in charity, and I  
Should have been one  
Of the doers of good".

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ  
وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ  
ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

وَأَنْفِقُوا مِنْ مَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْفِكَ أَحَدُكُمْ  
الْمَوْتَ فَيَقُولَ رَبِّ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنِي إِلَى أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ  
فَأَصَّدَقَ وَأَكُنْ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

5476. Riches and human resources of all kinds are but fleeting sources of enjoyment. They should not turn away the good man from his devotion to Allah. "Remembrance of Allah" includes every act of service and goodness, every kind thought and kind deed, for this is the service and sacrifice which Allah requires of us. If we fail in this, the loss is our own, not any one else's: for it stunts our own spiritual growth.

5477. "Substance" or "Sustenance". Whatever good we enjoy comes from Allah, and it is our duty to use some of it in the service of others, for that is Charity and the service of Allah. Every unselfish act is Charity. And we must not postpone our good resolutions to the future. Death may come suddenly on us, and we cannot *then* be allowed to plead for more time. Every present moment calls urgently for its good deed.

11. But to no soul  
 Will Allah grant respite<sup>5478</sup>  
 When the time appointed  
 (For it) has come; and Allah  
 Is well acquainted  
 With (all) that ye do.

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

5478. When our limited period of probation is over, we cannot justly ask for more time, nor will more time be given to us then. Procrastination is itself a fault, and Allah knows every hidden thought and motive in our minds.