

victorious, and those people in Madinah who had not become Muslim were humiliated. For that reason, some of them pretended to become Muslim, out of fear and by way of deceit, in order to protect themselves and their wealth. So they lived among the Muslims, pretending to be of their number, when in reality they were not Muslims.

By His kindness towards the believers, Allah described the characteristics (of the hypocrites) by which they might be recognised, so that the believers would not be deceived by them and so that (the hypocrites themselves) might be discouraged from committing many of their evil actions. Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿The hypocrites are afraid lest a soorah be sent down concerning them...﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 64)

(In this passage), Allah described them in terms of the essence of hypocrisy:

﴿Among people there are some who say: We believe in Allah and the Last Day – but in fact they are not believers﴾. They paid lip service to that which was not in their hearts, so Allah showed them to be liars by saying ﴿but in fact they are not believers﴾, because true faith is that which is confirmed in the heart and on the lips. Theirs was an attempt to deceive Allah and His believing slaves.

Deceit means pretending one thing whilst concealing something else so that the deceiver may get what he wants from the one whom he is deceiving. These hypocrites were behaving in this manner with Allah and His slaves, but their deceit backfired on them. This is a kind of miracle or wonder, because the deceiver usually either gets what he wants or he remains safe without gaining or losing anything. But in this case, the deceit of the hypocrites backfired on them. It was as if they did what they did of plotting and scheming in order to harm and doom themselves, because Allah (ﷻ) is not harmed by their deceit at all, and neither are His believing slaves. The believers are not harmed if the hypocrites pretend to believe in order to protect their wealth and lives, because their plotting will eventually backfire on them, which