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Research Article

## **Historical Synopsis of Nifāq (Hypocrisy) and Prophetic Response in Madinah**

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**Abstract:** This historical study investigates the emergence and dynamics of hypocrisy (nifāq) in the early Islamic community of Madinah and explores the strategic responses of Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) in mitigating internal threats posed by the Munāfiqūn (hypocrites). Using a historical-analytical method, the research draws upon primary sources such as the Qur'an, ḥadīth, classical sīrah, and early Islamic historiography, while contextualizing the findings with modern scholarly insights. The study identifies a series of conspiratorial acts orchestrated by 'Abdullāh b. Ubayy and his followers—ranging from military desertion, rumor-spreading, alliance with enemies, to attempts at division through rival institutions. The analysis demonstrates that the Prophet's (SAW) leadership was historically grounded in restraint, long-term vision, and political maturity, prioritizing social cohesion over immediate retribution. By interpreting these responses as part of a conscious historical strategy, the research highlights the relevance of the Prophetic model in contemporary Muslim leadership, especially in managing intra-community tensions and ideological fragmentation. This paper contributes to Islamic historical scholarship by revisiting early Madinan society through the lens of conflict and governance and proposes further interdisciplinary research that bridges prophetic leadership with historical and political thought in Islamic civilization.

**Keywords:** Islamic History; Munāfiqūn; Prophet Muḥammad (SAW); Conflict Management; Historical Leadership

**Abstrak:** Studi sejarah ini menyelidiki kemunculan dan dinamika kemunafikan (*nifāq*) dalam komunitas Islam awal Madinah dan mengeksplorasi tanggapan strategis Nabi Muhammad (SAW) dalam mengurangi ancaman internal yang ditimbulkan oleh *Munāfiqūn* (munafik). menggunakan metode historis-analitis, penelitian ini mengacu pada sumber-sumber primer seperti *Al-Qur'an*, *ḥadīth*, *sīrah* klasik, dan historiografi Islam awal, sambil mengkontekstualisasikan temuan dengan wawasan ilmiah modern. Studi ini mengidentifikasi serangkaian tindakan konspirasi yang diatur oleh 'Abdullāh b. Ubayy dan para pengikutnya—mulai dari desersi militer, penyebaran rumor, aliansi dengan musuh, hingga upaya perpecahan melalui lembaga saingan. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan Nabi (SAW) secara historis didasarkan pada pengekangan, visi jangka panjang, dan kematangan politik, memprioritaskan kohesi sosial daripada pembalasan segera. Dengan menafsirkan tanggapan ini sebagai bagian dari strategi sejarah yang sadar, penelitian ini menyoroti relevansi model Profetik dalam kepemimpinan Muslim kontemporer, terutama dalam mengelola ketegangan intra-komunitas dan fragmentasi ideologis. Makalah ini berkontribusi pada keilmuan sejarah Islam dengan meninjau kembali masyarakat Madinan awal melalui lensa konflik dan pemerintahan, dan mengusulkan penelitian interdisipliner lebih lanjut yang menjembatani kepemimpinan profetik dengan pemikiran sejarah dan politik dalam peradaban Islam.

**Kata kunci:** Sejarah Islam; *Munāfiqūn*; Nabi Muhammad (SAW); Manajemen Konflik; Kepemimpinan Sejarah

## INTRODUCTION

After migrating to Medina, the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) established the foundation of the first Islamic state with a multicultural society consisting of the Muhājirūn, Anṣār, the Jewish community, and the local Arab tribes.<sup>1</sup> In this diverse socio-political atmosphere, he faced challenges from groups with different responses to Islamic da'wah. The first group consists of true companions who are loyal and committed to Islamic values, while the second group includes external opponents such as the Quraysh as well as internal enemies, the al-Munāfiqūn (hypocrites), who present the most complex and dangerous face in the internal conflict dynamics of the Medina society.<sup>2</sup> Al-Munāfiqūn took advantage of the post-Badr War atmosphere to infiltrate the social structure of Muslims by showing Islam outwardly, but secretly opposing the mission of the Prophet PBUH, forging alliances with enemies, spreading slander, and trying to destroy the unity of the ummah from within.<sup>3</sup>

The phenomenon of *nifāq* was not known in the Makkah phase, where the opposition to Islam was overt.<sup>4</sup> However, after Islam gained political power in Medina, there was a need for some local elites, such as 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy ibn Salūl, to pretend to accept Islam in

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<sup>1</sup> Siti Masykuroh, Uswatun Hasanah, and Agus Mahfudin Setiawan, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam: Pra Islam Hingga Tiga Kerajaan Besar Islam (Abad Ke 7-19)* (Lampung: RIL PRESS, 2024); Ira M Lapidus and Ghufuron A Masadi, "Sejarah Sosial Ummat Islam: Bagian Kesatu Dan Dua/Ira. M. Lapidus," 2000; Philip K. Hitti, *History of The Arabs, Cet. I, Terj. Cecep Lukman Dan Dedi Slamet Riyadi* (Jakarta: Penerbit Serambi, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Saifur Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri, "Ar-Raḥeeq Al-Makhtum (The Sealed Nectar)," (*Maktaba Dar-Us-Salam Publishers*, 1995). 186–200

<sup>3</sup> Rafi Uddin Shah, "The Revival of Seerah: A Case Study about Seerat Research Center and the Encyclopedia of Muhammad ﷺ Project," *Al-Aijaz Research Journal of Islamic Studies & Humanities* 6, no. 3 (2022): 1–11; A. Salahi, *Muhammad (SAW): Man and Messenger* (Markfield Conference Centre, United Kingdom, Islamic Foundation, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> S.S Hosain, *The Early History of Islam* (New Delhi, India.: Adams Publishers and Distributors, 1993).

order to maintain their social influence.<sup>5</sup> Ibn Ubayy, who had been almost crowned king of Medina before the arrival of the Prophet, felt his power shifted and began the form of covert resistance that was the root of the development of nifāq.<sup>6</sup> Since then, al-Munāfiqūn has become an internal threat that cannot be addressed with conventional military strategies without the risk of triggering wider social fragmentation. The Qur'an mentions their behavior in many verses, including Surah al-Baqarah (2:8–9, 2:14–15) and Surah al-Munāfiqūn as a whole, signifying the urgency and complexity of this issue.

Although classical Islamic literature such as the works of Ibn Hishām and al-Ṭabarī has noted al-Munāfiqūn's role in the political history of Medina, many contemporary studies still place more emphasis on the theological or moral aspects of nifāq, rather than examining the Prophet's political strategy in dealing with this internal threat contextually.<sup>7</sup> Farman and Yücel (2023) highlight the Prophet's political prudence in the Ḥudaybiyyah Agreement as a form of peaceful and strategic handling of internal slander, which is relevant for assessing the Prophet's decisions in dealing with the munāfiqūn diplomatically.<sup>8</sup> Sancholi (2025) examines the psychological dimension of the arrogance of the munāfiqūn who feel superior to other Muslims, thus creating internal conflicts that threaten social stability.<sup>9</sup> Nahar (2020) emphasized that Islamic education can play an important role in preventing the emergence of munāfiq from an early age through fostering sincerity and moral integrity.<sup>10</sup> Hussain (2024) offers a political philosophy approach with the concept of "Islamic overlapping consensus," which emphasizes the importance of rejecting nifāq as an effort to build the unity of the ummah within the framework of diversity.<sup>11</sup> Noor (2015) formulated a prophetic leadership model based on altruistic service that makes gentleness, patience, and moral justice as the main strategies in dealing with internal betrayal.<sup>12</sup> Overall, these studies provide a theoretical and contextual framework that strengthens the study's position in explaining the munāfiqūn character and strategy of the Prophet (PBUH), while filling in the gaps in the literature with an integrated approach based on historical data and contemporary relevance. Therefore, there is still a gap in understanding the Prophet's response to hypocrisy as a crisis management strategy and long-term leadership rooted in a prophetic vision and social stability.<sup>13</sup> Some recent research is beginning to highlight that the Prophet's approach is not

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<sup>5</sup> Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Saviors of Islamic Spirit*, Vol. 1 ((Lucknow: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, 1972).45-47

<sup>6</sup> Akbar Shah Najeebabadi, *History of Islam (Vol 1)* (Darussalam, 2001). 287

<sup>7</sup> Muhammad Hamidullah, *The First Written Constitution in the World* (Kazi Publications Chicago, IL, 1986).

<sup>8</sup> Mursal Farman and Salih Yucel, "Rereading the Hudaybiyya Treaty: With Special Reference to Ibn 'Umar's Role in Fitan," *Religions* 14, no. 5 (2023): 666.

<sup>9</sup> Doostali Sancholi, "The Hypocrites' Sense of Self-Superiority During the Time of the Prophet of Islam (Peace Be Upon Him): Its Effects and Consequences According to the Noble Quran," *The Islamic University College Journal No. 82 : Part 3* 82, no. 3 (2025): 74–88.

<sup>10</sup> Syamsu Nahar, "Prevention of Hypocritical Behavior and Its Perspective in Islamic Education.," *Dinamika Ilmu* 20, no. 1 (2020): 1–12.

<sup>11</sup> Gozde Hussain, "Islamic Overlapping Consensus," in *Islamic Doctrines and Political Liberalism: Muslim's Sincere Support* (Springer, 2024), 199–241.

<sup>12</sup> Ismail Noor, *Altruistic Service Leadership: Prophet Muhammad's Model* (Partridge Publishing Singapore, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> Mustafa Osman Ismail Elamin, "Faith-Based Leadership in Conflict Resolution: The Practices of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)," *International Journal of Religion*, 2024, 535–46.

solely based on revelation, but also reflects social intelligence and strategic leadership that is relevant to the context of modern leadership.<sup>14</sup>

This study offers an original contribution by examining nifāq as a political phenomenon in early Medina society, and reviewing how the Prophet Muhammad used a non-confrontational approach in dealing with hypocrites to maintain the unity of the ummah. This study differs from previous research in that it explicitly places prophetic actions within the framework of conflict leadership and internal crisis resolution. In the midst of the increasing challenges of unity in contemporary Muslim society, this prophetic model is becoming increasingly relevant to be emulated and recontextualized.

Theoretically, this research relies on an integrative approach between Islamic leadership theory and conflict management frameworks. Within the framework of Islam, leadership is not only administrative, but also moral and spiritual, as described by al-Ghazālī and Ibn Khaldūn.<sup>15</sup> This approach combines conflict resolution principles such as avoidance, accommodation, and collaborative resolution, as described in the theory of social conflict by Burton and Fisher.<sup>16</sup> By combining these two approaches, the framework of this study analysis seeks to understand the actions of the Prophet PBUH as a combination of prophetic inspiration and socio-political strategies based on maslahat.<sup>17</sup>

This research aims to: (1) contextualize the emergence and evolution of nifāq in Medina; (2) analyzing the tactics and strategies of the hypocrites in disturbing the stability of the ummah; and (3) evaluate the prophetic approach to managing these internal threats through wise, patient, and non-destructive actions. This study also aims to identify the relevance of the Prophet's approach in the context of current Muslim leadership, especially in the face of internal social and political fragmentation.

This research uses a historical method with a literature approach. The primary sources used include the Qur'an, the hadiths of ṣaḥīḥ, as well as early Islamic historical works such as *Sīrah Ibn Hishām*, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, and *Zād al-Ma'ād* by Ibn al-Qayyim. Secondary sources include modern works in the fields of Islamic history, prophetic leadership, and conflict studies. The data was analyzed through a thematic approach that identified the pattern of actions of the Prophet PBUH in the face of hypocrisy, and then compared it with Islamic leadership theory and modern conflict management. This study considers the validity of historical narratives and contextual hermeneutic approaches to understand the intent and meaning of the actions of the Prophet PBUH in complex socio-political situations.

By raising nifāq as the main theme in the socio-political dynamics of Medina, this study shows that the approach of the Prophet PBUH is based on the principles of benefit, patience, and protection of the unity of the ummah. His strategy characterized by delaying action, restraint of retaliation, and secret personal advice demonstrates mature and

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<sup>14</sup> Abdul Mannan Iftikhar, Khalid Mahmood Arif, and Muhammad Imran, "Model of Conflict Management: An Analytical Review of Conflict Resolution Strategies of Prophet (ﷺ)," *PAKISTAN ISLAMICUS (An International Journal of Islamic & Social Sciences)* 4, no. 03 (2024): 250–56.

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Khaldun, "The Muqaddimah, Trans. Franz Rosenthal," *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, 1958.

<sup>16</sup> John Wear Burton, "Conflict: Resolution and Prevention," (*No Title*), 1990.

<sup>17</sup> Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, "Islam and Secularism" (Kuala Lumpur: Art. Printing Warks Sdn. Bld, 1993): II, 1993).

preventive leadership. This model can provide strategic inspiration for contemporary Muslim leaders facing similar internal challenges, as well as offer a leadership paradigm based on ethics and sustainability.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Character and Conspiratorial Strategy of the Munāfiqūn in Medina

In the context of the formation of Islamic society in Medina, the Munāfiqūn appeared as the most complex internal threat.<sup>18</sup> In contrast to the polytheists who openly show their rejection, Munāfiqūn disguises themselves in the guise of faith while devising various subversive strategies against the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) and the Muslim community. Their basic character is marked by pretense, double loyalty, and insincerity of faith, as vividly portrayed in the Qur'an and the history of sīrah. The large number of events in the Medina period indicate that their actions were not incidental, but rather part of a systematic pattern of undermining the structure and solidarity of Islamic communities from within.

One of the most conspicuous forms of the betrayal of the Munāfiqūn was the military desertion in the Battle of Uhud. When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) decided to follow the voice of the majority of Muslims to leave the city and face the enemy outside, 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy felt eliminated and withdrew his 300 troops home before the battle began.<sup>19</sup> This action was not only a sign of disloyalty, but also a strategic attempt to weaken Muslim power from within and undermine the morale of the army. In the same incident, a hypocrite named Ḥārith ibn Suwayd defected and killed two Muslims, an act that was later retaliated with the execution of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (RA).<sup>20</sup> The Qur'anic verse in Surah al-Nisā' (4:88) responds to the polemic among the companions about how to deal with hypocrites, and asserts that they have been misled by their own deeds and are not worthy of guidance. The Qur'an mentioned this incident when it says:

“Then what is [the matter] with you [that you are] two groups concerning the hypocrites, while Allah has made them fall back [into error and disbelief] for what they earned? Do you wish to guide those whom Allah has sent astray? And he whom Allah sends astray never will you find for him a way.” (Qur'an 4:88).

After the Battle of Uhud, the hypocrites launched a campaign of ridicule and verbal harassment against the Prophet PBUH.<sup>21</sup> They used the defeat as a justification that Muhammad was not a messenger of Allah, because a true prophet should not lose.<sup>22</sup> Even in the Tabuk expedition, they insinuated the Prophet for losing his camel which was later

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<sup>18</sup> Agus Mahfudin Seiawan and Ahmad Sodikin, “Misi Dakwah Islam Masa Bani Umayyah 661-750 M,” *JUSAN: Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam Indonesia* 1, no. 1 (2023).

<sup>19</sup> Najeebabadi, *History of Islam (Vol 1)*. 312

<sup>20</sup> Al-Mubarakpuri, “Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum (The Sealed Nectar).” 255

<sup>21</sup> Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, Ed. 'Umar 'Abd Al-Salām Tadmūrī (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1995).

<sup>22</sup> Muhammad Al-Ghazālī, *Fiqh Al-Sīrah* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1998).

rediscovered through revelation, humiliating them.<sup>23</sup> Analysis of these actions shows a pattern of prophetic delegitimization through popular rhetoric and ridicule of prophetic symbols.

A more extreme conspiracy arose in the form of an assassination attempt on the Prophet PBUH when he returned from Tabuk<sup>24</sup>. A total of twelve people covering his face tried to knock him down from the narrow street at night. This incident failed thanks to the intervention of Allah and the vigilance of the Prophet PBUH and Hudhayfah al-Yamānī who knew the identity of the perpetrators.<sup>25</sup> This action reflects that nifāq has evolved from verbal abuse to a direct physical threat to the Prophet's life, signaling an escalation in the intensity and courage of the hypocrites. In this regard, the Qur'an says:

“They swear by Allah that they did not say [anything against the Prophet] while they had said the word of disbelief and disbelieved after their [pretense of] Islam and planned that which they were not able to carry out. And they were not resentful except [for the fact] that Allah and His Messenger had enriched them of His bounty. So if they repent, it is better for them; but if they turn away, Allah will punish them with a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter. And there will not be for them on earth any protector or helper.” (Qur'an 9:74)

Furthermore, the event known as the Ifk of adultery against 'Ā'ishah RA is one of the most emotionally draining episodes in prophetic history. Led by Ibn Ubayy, this event aimed to tarnish the image of the Prophet's family and shake the people's trust in the Prophet as a person and leader.<sup>6</sup> Allah revealed verses in Surah al-Nūr (24:11–20) that explicitly defended and sanctified 'Ā'ishah, and called the act of spreading slander a grave sin deserving of severe punishment. This strategy of slander against the family of leaders is a classic tactic in the war of opinions, which remains relevant even in the modern political world.

In an effort to build the infrastructure of the conspiracy, the Munāfiqūn built the al-Ḍirār Mosque, which looked like a place of worship but was actually used to divide the people and devise a secret agenda against the Prophet PBUH. The Prophet PBUH did not respond immediately, but after the revelation from Allah in Surah at-Tawbah (9:107–108), he ordered its demolition. This action provides an important lesson that religious institutions can be used as tools of manipulation, and it is important for Muslims to see the substance of the intention behind the outward structure. In this regard, the Qur'an says:

"And [there are] those [hypocrites] who took for themselves a mosque for causing harm and disbelief and division among the believers and as a station for whoever had warred against Allah and His Messenger before. And they will surely swear, 'We intended only the best.' And Allah testifies that indeed they are liars. Do not stand [for prayer] within it—ever. A mosque founded on

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<sup>23</sup> Hishām, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, Ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī.

<sup>24</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Aẓīm*, Vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2003).

<sup>25</sup> Kathīr.

righteousness from the first day is more worthy for you to stand in. Within it are men who love to purify themselves; and Allah loves those who purify themselves. (Qur'an 9:107–108)

Ibn Ubayy also tried to provoke intra-community conflicts when there was a minor dispute between a Muhājir and an Anṣār. He stated that the "honorable" would expel the "weak" from Medina, referring to himself and the Prophet PBUH implicitly.<sup>8</sup> Ironically, it was his own son, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abdullāh, who refused to let his father enter Medina without the Prophet's permission. This shows how blunt the influence of hypocrites is among generations of friends who have a high commitment to the authority of revelation. The Qur'an testified this incident when it says:

"And when it is said to them, 'Come, the Messenger of Allah will ask forgiveness for you,' they turn their heads aside and you see them evading while they are arrogant. It is all the same for them whether you ask forgiveness for them or do not ask forgiveness for them, Allah will never forgive them. Indeed, Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people. They are the ones who say, 'Do not spend on those who are with the Messenger of Allah until they disband.' And to Allah belong the treasuries of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not understand. They say, 'If we return to al-Madinah, the more honored [for power] will surely expel therefrom the more humble.' But honor belongs to Allah and His Messenger, and to the believers, but the hypocrites do not know". (Qur'an 63:5–8)

No less serious, the hypocrites also repeatedly avoid the order of jihad under the pretext of being contrived. One of them was al-Jadd ibn Qays, who used the excuse of fear of slander not to go to Tabuk.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, in the Battle of al-Aḥzāb, they pretended to be worried for the safety of their homes, when this was not the case. An analysis of these verses shows that nifāq always has rationalist justifications, but his mind is full of lies. The Qur'an disclosed such incidences when it is stated that:

"And among them is he who says, 'Permit me [to remain at home] and do not put me to trial.' Unquestionably, into trial they have fallen. And indeed, Hell will encompass the disbelievers." (Qur'an 9:49)

And also:

"There the believers were tested and shaken with a severe shaking. And [remember] when the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is disease said, 'Allah and His Messenger did not promise us anything but delusion. And when a group among them said, 'O people of Yathrib! There is no place for you" (Qur'an 33:11–13)

In addition to physical and verbal actions, the hypocrites also launched psychological attacks by weakening the morale of the Muslim troops ahead of the expedition. They said, "Do not go because of the heat," when Allah replied that the fire of Hell is hotter (Qur'an

9:81). This shows how narrative control is used as a strategy to form negative opinions and degrade the fighting spirit of Muslims.

They also spread accusations against the Prophet, such as his marriage to Zaynab bint Jaḥsh and the unfair distribution of zakat. They called the Prophet and his companions greedy and cowardly. These accusations are answered by Allah in Surah at-Tawbah verses 58, 65, and 79.<sup>10</sup> This shows that hypocrites use moral rhetoric to attack the legitimacy of the Prophet, something very common in modern opposition politics: attacking the reputation of the leader to undermine the trust of the masses.

Furthermore, the hypocrites forge secret alliances with external enemies, such as the Quraysh and the Scribes. Qur'an 59:11–12 emphatically refers to them as liars who will not be loyal to anyone.<sup>11</sup> This action makes them a double agent who endangers the survival of the fledgling Islamic state.

Their tactics include spying, the spread of false information, and even the use of witchcraft, as done by Labīd ibn al-A'ṣam who caused the Prophet PBUH to be sick until he was healed through revelation (al-Bukhārī).<sup>26</sup> They also deliberately violated the orders of the Prophet PBUH, such as using the spring water before he arrived at al-Mushāqqaq on the way from Tabuk.<sup>27</sup> Even when the Prophet was on an expedition, they spread the issue against 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib RA, accusing him of not being trustworthy of being trusted to guard Medina.<sup>28</sup>

Based on all these data, it can be concluded that the main character of the Munāfiqūn is characterized by structural and strategic betrayal, not simply individual insincerity. They operate in a systematic scheme with political, psychological, theological, and social tactics. Their strategy reflects three key elements: the delegitimization of leadership, the formation of negative opinions, and hidden coalitions with external forces. The Prophet PBUH responded to them not only with patience, but also with meticulousness of strategy and the support of revelation that maintains the stability of the community.

### **Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) Strategic Response to Internal Threats**

The Prophet Muḥammad's response to the hypocrisy (nifāq) in Medina reflects prophetic leadership that prioritizes social stability, a long-term political vision, and spiritual wisdom. His strategy is not repressive, but rather shaped through a gradual and thoughtful approach rooted in Divine revelation. When faced with open betrayal such as the defection of 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy at the Battle of Uḥud, the Prophet PBUH refused to carry out executions or open actions that could trigger divisions in the still fragile Muslim society. As stated by Ibn Kathīr, the Prophet realized that the execution of Ibn Ubayy could be considered a form of political revenge and injuring the prophetic moral integrity upheld by the people of Medina.<sup>29</sup> This action showed not only the greatness of the soul, but also the

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<sup>26</sup> Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, Hadith No. 3268., n.d.

<sup>27</sup> Salahi, *Muhammad (SAW): Man and Messenger*; Al-Ghazālī, *Fiqh Al-Sīrah*.289

<sup>28</sup> Al-Mubarakpuri, "Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum (The Sealed Nectar)."

<sup>29</sup> Ismā'īl ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah Wa Al-Nihāyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 2000). Vol 4



political calculation that avoided the collapse of credibility and the birth of a crisis of trust between the Anṣār and the Muhājirīn.

The Prophet PBUH consistently placed the unity of the ummah (taḥābbu wa taʿāwun) above personal punishment. One of the most important examples is the delay in action against the construction of the Masjid al-Ḍirār, which was built by the munāfiqīn to spread slander. The Prophet PBUH waited until a revelation came down that expressly forbade the erection of mosques on evil grounds (Qur'an 9:107–108), and then ordered its demolition. This strategy suggests that the Prophet preferred the legitimacy of revelation to impulsive action, an approach that Farman and Yücel refer to as “prophetic leadership rooted in spiritual intelligence.”<sup>30</sup> Within this framework, the Prophet's integrity was built not only on firmness, but also on his ability to distinguish momentum between human action and revelational decisions.

In the face of stressful situations such as the incident of ifk (slander against ʿĀ'ishah RA), the Prophet PBUH showed extraordinary example through strategic silence and spiritual patience. He was not in a hurry to defend his family's honor verbally, but rather waited for confirmation from revelation (Qur'an 24:11–20). This approach, as described by Hussain in his study of Islamic political consensus, is a form of crisis management that puts morality above emotional sentiment.<sup>31</sup> In this context, the Prophet was not only a spiritual leader, but also an internal conflict manager who exemplified the principle of prudence in crisis communication.

Prophetic strategies also include a rehabilitative approach and taʿdīb bi al-luṭf—that is, subtle and personal warnings. The Prophet PBUH generally chose to advise the munāfiqīn secretly and only made public exposure when the situation had endangered the stability of the ummah. This makes room for repentance, and is a model of compassion-based social intervention. As mentioned in the hadiths of al-Bukhārī, the Prophet's actions in rebuking the perpetrators of hypocrisy reflected an effort to repair morality rather than “public shaming.”<sup>32</sup> In the context of contemporary Islamic character education, this approach is still relevant. Nahar in his journal emphasized that the value of al-amr bi al-maʿrūf practiced by the Prophet could be the foundation for the prevention of nifāq in modern Islamic education.<sup>33</sup>

In terms of strategic defense, the Prophet also refused military assistance from non-Muslims in important situations, such as after the betrayal of Ibn Ubayy. This reflects the principle of spiritual independence and full trust in the loyal ranks of believers. As affirmed in QS. 3:160, the Prophet instilled the concept that true help comes from God and not from worldly allies. This reinforces the value of tawakkul as the foundation of prophetic leadership, a value that today is often overlooked in contemporary Muslim geopolitics. This analysis is also emphasized by D. Sancholi in his research that the separation of loyalty

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<sup>30</sup> Farman and Yücel, “Rereading the Hudaibiyya Treaty: With Special Reference to Ibn ʿUmar’s Role in Fitan.”

<sup>31</sup> Hussain, “Islamic Overlapping Consensus.”

<sup>32</sup> Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (Cairo: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2002).

<sup>33</sup> Nahar, “Prevention of Hypocritical Behavior and Its Perspective in Islamic Education.”

between faith communities and opportunistic groups is crucial in maintaining prophetic authority.<sup>34</sup>

The Prophet's ability to manage the psychology of the ummah is also seen in the use of tactical diversion, such as extending the journey during the Tabūk expedition so that the statement of the munāfiqīn does not trigger an uproar among the troops. This strategy shows the Prophet's expertise in reading the emotional conditions of the community, as well as being a model of prophetic tactfulness. According to Noor's research, the Prophet's approach focuses heavily on strengthening internal motivation and maintaining collective morale, not with intimidation or harsh rhetoric<sup>35</sup>. In the context of modern conflict management, this can be seen as a solution-focused approach.

On the other hand, the Prophet's act of rejecting institutions based on total hypocrisy, such as the al-Dirār Mosque, teaches that not all compromises can be tolerated. Firmness in maintaining the sanctity of places of worship from evil intentions shows that the Prophet PBUH has strict limits in principled matters. As stated by Qur'an 9:108, the Prophet was forbidden to stand in the mosque because it was not built on the basis of piety. This is an important lesson that in managing the ummah, spirituality should not be compromised for the sake of pseudo-stability. In this framework, the Prophet's strategy shows the integration between wisdom (wisdom) and 'azm (firmness).

Finally, this whole approach is framed in absolute trust in Allah (tawakkul mutlaq), as manifested in every military expedition based on the belief in Divine help and not the number of personnel or material power. This perspective, as explained in G. Hussain's (2024) research, is the main differentiator between Islamic leadership strategies and secular political models. The Prophet PBUH made monotheism not just a metaphysical belief, but a managerial and political strategy.<sup>36</sup> Thus, the Prophet's strategic response not only solved the internal problems of the people of the time, but established moral and institutional foundations that are relevant throughout the ages.

### **Relevance for Contemporary Muslim Leadership**

The findings of this study reveal that the response of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to the internal threat posed by the Munāfiqūn in Medina was not only reactive or contextual, but reflected a prophetic leadership model that has universal principles that are relevant to this day. Prophetic strategies such as restraint against coercive forces, prioritizing social stability, patience in the face of slander, and consultative and spiritual approaches in decision-making, show that leadership in Islam is not purely administrative, but moral and visionary.

Theoretically, this model broadens the horizons in the study of Islamic leadership that generally focuses on aspects of fiqh and history. This research emphasizes that prophetic leadership is not only normative, but also operational, through conflict resolution practices that avoid escalation. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) refused to execute 'Abdullāh b.

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<sup>34</sup> Sancholi, "The Hypocrites' Sense of Self-Superiority During the Time of the Prophet of Islam (Peace Be Upon Him): Its Effects and Consequences According to the Noble Quran."

<sup>35</sup> Noor, *Altruistic Service Leadership: Prophet Muhammad's Model*.

<sup>36</sup> Hussain, "Islamic Overlapping Consensus."

Ubayy despite the evidence of his involvement in treason considering the wider socio-political impacts. This step forms one of the basic principles of strategic leadership in Islam: avoiding slander is more important than punishing the perpetrator at the risk of breaking the unity (Ibn Kathīr, 2000).<sup>37</sup> This shows the theoretical contribution that public policy in Islam should be weighed against the principles of maṣlaḥah (the common good) and ta'ammul (deep consideration).

This finding is in line with a contemporary study by Yacine that raises the concept of "ethical foresight" as part of modern management practices based on Islamic values. In his book, he emphasizes that the leadership strategy of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, such as consistency towards honesty and patience in the face of internal provocations, is a concrete example of the integration of spiritual values and emotional intelligence in the management of current organizational conflicts. He concluded that the Prophet PBUH adopted a deliberative and non-confrontational approach in dealing with internal differences, which is particularly relevant in the context of modern community management which is full of diversity of values and interests.<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, Suljić in his article highlights how the prophetic leadership paradigm serves as a model for global conflict resolution that avoids the duality between power and morality. He emphasized that the Prophet PBUH never used force only as a tool of domination, but as a means of collective protection. The Prophet's attitude in dealing with the disobedience of the munāfiqūn through moral formation and spiritual strengthening affirms that conflict resolution in Islam is not domination, but the transformation of values.<sup>39</sup>

The relevance of this prophetic model to contemporary Muslim leadership is crucial, especially in the context of the emergence of various forms of internal division, both at the community, organizational, and state levels. In a modern Muslim society that is often faced with identity conflicts, sectarianism, and political polarization, the Prophet Muhammad's approach shows that the unification of the vision of the ummah must be done through dialogue, example, and principle, not through verbal violence or coercive actions. As Ahmad and Akhtar suggest, an understanding of the Prophet's sīrah is not only important as a historical value, but must be revived as a strategic cornerstone in Muslim leadership education today. They propose that sīrah needs to be an instrument for fostering a cadre of ummah leaders who are able to balance moral idealism and social pragmatism.<sup>40</sup>

The prophetic model is also relevant to contemporary challenges such as the era of digital disinformation, the crisis of public integrity, and the weak social resilience of Muslims. One of the most important strategies of the Prophet PBUH is not to be reactive to

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<sup>37</sup> Kathīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm*, Vol. 4.

<sup>38</sup> Mohamed Yacine, "Leadership in Action: Exploring the Principles of Prophet Muhammad in Contemporary Management Practices," in *Emotionally Intelligent Methods for Meaningful Leadership* (IGI Global Scientific Publishing, 2025), 1–30.

<sup>39</sup> Vahid Suljić, "The Islamic Paradigm as a Timeless Model for Global Peacebuilding," *Religions*, no. 19 (2024): 126–60.

<sup>40</sup> Ira Lapidus, "Islamic Revival and Modernity: The Contemporary Movements and the Historical Paradigms," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40, no. 4 (1997): 444–60; Kalsoom Akhtar and Matloob Ahmad, "سیرت اور اس کی ضرورت و اہمیت عصر حاضر کے تناظر میں: The Importance and Need of The Seerah in Current Period," *Scholar Insight Journal* 3, no. 1 (2025): 92–110.

the spread of slander, as in the case of ifk that befell 'Ā'ishah (RA). He chose to remain silent until revelation came, reflecting the leadership's steadfastness in refraining from an instant response to public pressure. This teaches a lesson for today's Muslim leaders to rely more on data-driven clarification and legal clarity before making decisions amid pressure from public opinion.

Thus, theoretically, this study makes an important contribution to the development of a relevant prophetic values-based Islamic leadership framework for contemporary Muslim leaders to adopt. Its relevance is not only in the political or organizational aspects, but also in the development of a collective culture that values unity, justice, and social responsibility. This study encourages the renewal of Islamic leadership theory so that it is not trapped in historical literalism, but transforms into a model of applied ethics in responding to the current and future social dynamics of Muslims.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the phenomenon of nifāq (hypocrisy) in Medina during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was not just a form of individual moral deviation, but a structured political threat that had the aim of weakening the unity of the ummah and subverting prophetic authority from within. The Munāfiqūn, led by 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy, carried out various strategic conspiracies such as military desertions, the establishment of rival institutions (such as the al-Dirār Mosque), slander against the Prophet's family, and forging secret alliances with the enemies of Islam. Their character is shaped by insincerity, political interests, and a desire to shake social stability without direct confrontation.

In the face of this threat, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) showed an extraordinary leadership model, based on patience, political intelligence, and the guidance of revelation. He is not in a hurry to crack down on the hypocrites openly, but opts for a gradual approach that prioritizes the benefit of the people and prevents the escalation of internal conflicts. Strategies such as postponement of sanctions, private correction, and spiritual coaching have not only succeeded in maintaining the stability of Medina, but have also provided an example of ethical leadership that remains relevant today. This approach emphasizes that the management of internal conflicts within the Muslim community requires moral foresight, political considerations, and contextual knowledge of the potential slander that can be caused.

This study also found that prophetic values such as tawakkul, ṣabr, ḥikmah, and commitment to the unity of the ummah are the main foundations in dealing with the dynamics of hypocrisy. The prophetic model in responding to nifāq does not use a militaristic or repressive approach, but is based on the cultivation of values, self-control, and social sensitivity. The strategy combined tactical precision with the legitimacy of revelation, making the Prophet PBUH not only a religious leader but also a visionary statesman and conflict manager.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that contemporary Muslim leaders, whether in the political, educational, and socio-religious spheres, adopt prophetic values in dealing with internal conflicts, especially those originating from opportunist actors disguised as Islamic identities. The study also suggests that further studies expand the analysis of the

prophetic response to nifāq with a cross-disciplinary approach, such as political psychology, the sociology of conflict, and the philosophy of Islamic ethics. With such an approach, the study of hypocrisy will not only be a historical material, but also a source of transformative leadership strategies for Muslims today and in the future.

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