

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HYPOCRITES

*By Abdul Ghany Jahangeer Khan*

*Central French Desk*

The Holy Qur'an is a complete book, one of magnificence and wonder, which gives a detailed description of all the main characteristics of the believers, disbelievers and hypocrites. By measuring themselves against this description, anyone can easily determine which of the three groups they belong to.

It is known that from the dawn of time, Prophets, Messengers and their Caliphs have faced opposition. Sometimes the hostility was shown by external adversaries, those who preferred disbelief to belief. At times, the antagonism came from enemies within the community of believers; in other words, hypocrites. The latter are more vicious than common disbelievers, for they conceal their attacks on Prophets, Messengers and Caliphs within the veils of deceit and trickery. Obedience is a thing they simply cannot abide. They believe, in their pride and arrogance, that they are superior to Prophets, Messengers and their Caliphs. This transpires from the following verse:

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

[2:35] And *remember the time* when We said to the angels: 'Submit to Adam,' and they *all* submitted. But Iblis *did not*. He refused and was too proud; and he was of the disbelievers.

Thus it appears that Iblis represents any individual who refuses to bear the yoke of obedience and not only announces his rebellion but preaches it to his comrades as well. The deluded wretch believes he is greater than the Prophets, Messengers and Caliphs; and proclaiming his superiority, he tells his companions: "We are better than they." We read in the next verse:

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ إِلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ

[7:13] *God* said, 'What prevented thee from submitting when I commanded thee?' He said, 'I am better than he. Thou hast created me of fire while him hast Thou created of clay.'

It is in their nature to incline towards anarchy. However, they carry out their attacks on figures of religious authority on the pretext of reform, according to the Qur'an:

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ  
أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِنْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ

[2:12-13] And when it is said to them: 'Create not disorder on the earth,' they say: 'We are only promoters of peace.' Beware! It is surely they who create disorder, but they do not perceive it.

Another trait which characterises them is that they refuse to believe like ordinary people do. They consider believers to be imbeciles. We read:

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا كَمَا آمَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا آمَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ  
أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَكِنْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

[2:14] And when it is said to them, 'Believe as *other* people have believed,' they say: 'Shall we believe as the foolish have believed?' Beware! It is surely they that are foolish, but they do not know.

Deception and mockery are the hallmarks of the hypocrites. Allah declares:

وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ شَيَاطِينِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِئُونَ

[2:15] And when they meet those who believe, they say: 'We believe;' but when they are alone with their ringleaders, they say: 'We are certainly with you; we are only mocking.'

Furthermore, we are informed that the reason for their mockery is that they are proud of their knowledge:

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

[40:84] And when their Messengers came to them with manifest Signs, they exulted in the knowledge which they possessed. And that at which they mocked encompassed them.

They labour under the delusion that their knowledge is the basis of their success in worldly affairs, according to the verse that follows:

إِذَا حَوَّلْنَا نِعْمَةً مِنَّا قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيْتُهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ بَلْ هِيَ فِتْنَةٌ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

[39:50] And when trouble touches man, he cries unto Us. But when We bestow on him a favour from Us, he says, 'This has been given to me on account of *my own* knowledge.' Nay, it is only a trial; but most of them know not.

Thus, God's favours become trials for the arrogant and self-righteous.

One of the objections raised by hypocrites against Prophets, Messengers or Caliphs is their ordinariness: they don't see anything special in them. This is apparent from the kind of questions they ask, such as: "Why don't angels continuously descend upon them with revelation?" or "Why don't they wield any political might?" By publicly raising these issues, they hope to lead many astray. This is what we read in the following Qur'anic verses:

وَقَالُوا مَا لِيَ هَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ لَوْلَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ فَيَكُونُ مَعَهُ نَذِيرًا أَوْ يُلْقَىٰ إِلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ أَوْ تَكُونُ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا وَقَالَ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا

انظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا

[25:8-10] And they say, 'What is the matter with this Messenger that he eats food, and walks in the streets? Why has not an angel been sent down to him that he might be a warner with him? Or a treasure should have been thrown down to him, or he should have had a garden to eat therefrom.' And the wrongdoers say, 'You follow none but a man bewitched.' See how they coin similitudes for thee! Thus they have gone astray and cannot find a way.

Another conviction hypocrites hold on to is that they are able to reach God without pledging obedience to anyone, and that they need no Ameer between them and God. They do not ascertain things according to the Word of God or the dictates of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Instead, they seek guidance from Satan, and follow their own base desires. God rebukes them, saying:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ  
وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ  
آمَنُوا بِمَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَحَاكَمُوا إِلَى الطَّاغُوتِ وَقَدْ أُمِرُوا أَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِهِ  
وَيُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُمْ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ رَأَيْتَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنْكَ صُدُودًا

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ جَاءُوكَ يَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا إِحْسَانًا وَتَوْفِيقًا

[4:60-63] O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey *His* Messenger and those who are in authority among you. And if you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and *His* Messenger if you are believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is best and most commendable in the end. Dost thou not know of those who pretend that they believe in what has been revealed to thee and what has been revealed before thee? They desire to seek judgment from the rebellious, although they were commanded not to obey them. And Satan desires to lead them far astray. And when it is said to them, 'Come ye to what Allah has sent down and to *His* Messenger,' thou seest the hypocrites turn away from thee with aversion. Then how is it that when an affliction befalls them because of what their hands have sent on before them, they come to thee swearing by Allah, *saying*, 'We meant nothing but the doing of good and reconciliation?'

Hypocrites are wont to hatch clever schemes for misleading the masses. This aspect of their psyche is presented in the following verses:

قَالَ فِيمَا أُغْوِيْتَنِي لَأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ثُمَّ لَآتِيَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ  
أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا بَجْدَ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ

[7:17-18] He said: 'Now, since Thou hast adjudged me as lost, I will assuredly lie in wait for them on Thy straight path. Then will I surely come upon them from before them and from behind them and from their right and from their left, and Thou wilt not find most of them to be grateful.'

It shall often be noticed that the very first to fall in their trap are their own close relatives who display far more loyalty to the leaders of the hypocrites than to God, and their friends who love worldly benefits more than their religion. Such people prefer the homes of disbelievers to those of believers. Allah reveals these unfortunate characteristics of theirs in these verses:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا آبَاءَكُمْ وَإِخْوَانَكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنِ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْكُفْرَ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ  
 مِنْكُمْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ قُلْ إِن كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ  
 اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِينُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ  
 فَتَرْتَضُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

[9:23-24] O ye who believe! Take not your fathers and your brothers for friends, if they prefer disbelief to faith. And whoso befriends them from among you, it is they that are wrongdoers. Say, if your fathers, and your sons, and your brethren, and your wives, and your kinsfolk, and the wealth you have acquired, and the trade whose dullness you fear, and the dwellings which you love are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah comes with His judgment; and Allah guides not the disobedient people.

They forget the following warning issued by the Holy Prophet (pbuh):

“Whoever obeys me, obeys Allah, and whoever disobeys me, disobeys Allah. Whoever obeys my Ameer, obeys me, and whoever disobeys my Ameer, disobeys me.”

The hypocrites believe that they are leaders in their own right, free to disregard whatever displeases them. God counters their belief, saying:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ  
 وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُبِينًا

[33:37] And it behoves not a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that there should be a choice for them in the matter concerning them. And whoso disobeys Allah and His Messenger, surely strays away in manifest error.

Some of the hypocrites hail from the elders and most respected figures of the community of Muslims; despite their standing, they fall into apostasy. There is the well-known case of ‘Abdullah ibn Abi Sarh, a scribe entrusted with committing the Qur’anic revelation to writing. It is reported in the Hadith, that despite enjoying a position of nearness to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), Satan beguiled him, and he apostatised and went to join the enemies of Islam.

Similar was the case of Maulvi Muhammad 'Ali, a companion of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him). Having had the honour of serving him and composing many articles on religious topics, amongst other things, he left the circle of obedience and separated himself from the Jama'at during the time of the Second Caliph (may Allah be pleased with him).

The story was repeated during the fourth Caliphate when a secretary employed by the Central Arabic Desk became an apostate, and left to join forces with enemies of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at.

Such incidents are therefore not a matter of surprise. This is God's tradition, and there is no change in His practice. He declares:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ أَكْبَرًا مُجْرِمِيهَا لِيَمْكُرُوا فِيهَا وَمَا يَمْكُرُونَ إِلَّا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ

[6:124] And thus have We made in every town the great ones from among its sinners *such as are in utter darkness* with the result that they plot therein; and they plot not except against their own souls; but they perceive not.

God is Self-Sufficient; He needs no one. He grants dominion to whomsoever He pleases and snatches it back from whomsoever He pleases. It would therefore be extremely ill-advised for anyone to make a famous individual become the foundation of their faith and religion; for should such an individual ever happen to stumble, their faith would risk being severely affected. That would indeed be a devastating transaction. To those who mislead and those misled, Allah declares:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْعَالِيُونَ

[5:55-57] O ye who believe! Whoso among you turns back from his religion, then *let it be known that in his stead* Allah will soon bring a people whom He will love and who will love Him, *and who will be kind and humble towards believers, hard and firm against disbelievers.* They will strive in the cause of Allah and will not fear the reproach of a faultfinder. That is Allah's grace; He bestows it upon whomsoever He pleases; and Allah

is Bountiful, All-Knowing. Your friend is only Allah and His Messenger and the believers who observe Prayer and pay the Zakat and worship God alone. And those who take Allah and His Messenger and the believers for friends *should rest assured* that it is the party of Allah that must triumph.

وَمَكَرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ

[3:55] And they planned, and Allah *also* planned; and Allah is the Best of planners.

Our final proclamation is that all praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.