**The Hypocrites**

"The signs of the hypocrite are three: when he speaks he lies, when he promises he breaks his promise and when he is entrusted he betrays the trust." (1)

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ وَإِن يَقُولُواْ تَسْمَعْ لِقَوْلِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ خُشُبٌ مُّسَنَّدَةٌ يَحْسَبُونَ كُلَّ صَيْحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ هُمُ ٱلْعَدُوُّ فَٱحْذَرْهُمْ قَاتَلَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

63.4. When you see them, their outward form pleases you, and (their posture and speech are attractive and effective, so that) you give ear to their words when they speak. (In reality) they are like blocks of wood propped up and (draped over) in striped cloaks. They think (being themselves treacherous) every shout (they hear) to be against them. They are the enemies themselves, so beware of them. May God destroy them (they are liable to destruction by God)! How they are turned away from the truth (and pursue evil purposes)! (2)

This verse mentions some of the characteristics of hypocrites, describing them with both their physical and character traits as follows:

1. The hypocrites are physically noticeable, well-dressed, and impressive in appearance. They maintain this impressive outward appearance, posture, and image only for effect.

2. They are articulate and fluent in expressing themselves; they almost charm people around them with their eloquent speech and writings. When they speak, they can draw the attention of people.

1. Despite these qualities, hypocrites are like wood blocks propped up and draped over in attractive cloaks. Outwardly they look impressive, but their hearts are very hardened. For as stated in the preceding verse, “a seal has been set on their hearts” (Al-Munafiqun 63:3).(117) Therefore, they do not understand the truth; more precisely, they cannot penetrate into the essence of matters to grasp the truth.
2. Moreover, they assume that every shout is against them. They live in continuous zigzags; they are sometimes here and sometimes there. Outwardly they pose as believers, but their hearts are closed to the truth. They waste their life in duality. They are, indeed, so indifferent to the religious matters that they are deader than a corpse in the face of the matters to which believers pay great attention. Nonetheless, they seem on the side of the believers at the mosque, battlefield, and out in the street. Due to their hypocrisy, they are weak-hearted. They are constantly in worry that their real identities will be displayed at any moment. Thus, they think every shout or noise they hear is against them.
3. Hypocrites are hard-hearted enemies of the believers. Instead of operating openly, they disguise their ill-intentions; you never know what they are going to do. They are like scorpions or snakes in the grass; it is difficult to know where and how they will appear to bite.
4. Therefore, believers must beware of them because these poisonous characters can bite them anytime, at every opportunity. Furthermore, they do that in disguise of doing favor to the society.

God Almighty ends the verse as follows: “May God destroy them (they are liable to destruction by God)! How they are turned away from the truth (and pursue evil purposes)!”

The leading representatives of hypocrisy in the Age of Happiness were people such as ‘Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul, Mughith ibn Qays, and Jad ibn Qays. Like these people, hypocrites look impressive and are well-dressed, and as an attitude well-suited to their hypocritical nature, they have such a weakness for visible ornaments and beautifications that they look far from being natural. Almost all hypocrites have been like them in every age. They are generally addicted to fantasizing and speaking pretentious and inflated words; they are lovers of themselves and of their thoughts, actions, and intelligence. They are “holed” with so many weak spots that they may be seen as narcissists. Even if what they speak is generally nonsense, they speak as if talking about profound matters and try to cover their nonsense with ambiguities and mystifications. But for God’s guidance and warnings, they are almost able to draw the attention of the most insightful people including the scholars who are the successors to the Prophets in their messages. While they themselves are listening to others, they give the impression that they are listening attentively. As a matter of fact, all their manners and acts are but show and ostentation. Their actions and words are all lies and deception. They are so cunning and so expert in deceiving that without God’s special grace, it is not easy to detect them.

As hypocrites are themselves liars, dishonest, and two-faced and are busy deceiving others, they suspect even the most innocent behavior and consider all the words, actions, and movements which stem from the most sincere, innocent, and decent feelings and thoughts as hostile towards them. Since they look at others through the mirror of their scorpion-like poisonous character, they think the most innocent people are deceitful like themselves. In line with the adage that says, “A betrayer is fearful,” the hearts of hypocrites beat with the thought of betrayal while their pulses beat with fear. They are the most dangerous enemies of the believers.

Exposing their inner and outer traits, God Almighty warns the believers to be cautious against the hypocrites while they continue their own righteous manners and behavior in an honest and upright way.

*Hypocrites are liable to destruction by God! How they are turned away from the truth and pursue evil purposes! May God preserve us from their evils, tricks, and ploys! Amen, O the All-Aiding! (3)*

**(1)Bukhari and Muslim**

**(2) 63:4.The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(3) M. Fethullah Gulen**