



How to cite this article:

Bagheri Sadr, M., Tabatabaei, S. M. K., & Moradi, M. (2025). The Role of Tribal Ethos as the Focal Point of the Qur'anic Critique of the Followers of Hypocrites during the Prophetic Era in Yathrib. *Journal of Historical Research, Law and Policy*, 3(2), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.61838/jhrp.434>



Article history:
Original Research

Dates:

Submission Date: 20 February 2025
Revision Date: 07 May 2025
Acceptance Date: 14 May 2025
Publication Date: 30 May 2025

The Role of Tribal Ethos as the Focal Point of the Qur'anic Critique of the Followers of Hypocrites during the Prophetic Era in Yathrib

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ABSTRACT

Numerous verses in the Holy Qur'an critique hypocrites, with some specifically addressing the worldview and conduct of the hypocrites during the era of Revelation. A meticulous examination of the occasions of revelation (asbāb al-nuzūl) of these verses reveals that tribalism was one of the most fundamental factors contributing to the emergence and expansion of negative traits and behaviors among the followers of the hypocrites in Yathrib during the Prophetic era. Substantiating this premise is the primary objective of the present research, which is conducted using a descriptive-analytical method. The findings demonstrate that the tribal culture of the inhabitants of Yathrib partially restricted individual freedoms, compelling people to follow their tribal chiefs or elders. The Holy Qur'an, while critiquing the tribal leaders who embraced hypocrisy, simultaneously censures the ordinary people who blindly followed them. In the Qur'anic discourse, this dynamic constitutes the central axis of the critique directed at the followers of hypocrites.

Keywords: *Hypocrisy in the Qur'an; Ethnic bigotry; Tribal culture; Worldview and conduct of hypocrites; Traditions of Asbāb al-Nuzūl (Occasions of Revelation).*

Introduction

Understanding and analyzing the worldview, actions, and conduct of influential individuals and groups within any geographical and temporal context requires the researcher to mentally project themselves into that environment, grasping the cultural dynamics of tribalism as well as the fundamental ideologies of those actors. The present research is no exception to this overarching principle. To accurately comprehend historical events, one must first construct a precise and concise picture of the cultural landscape and tribal system of that specific geographical area during the early years of the Hijrah (migration). Furthermore, it is essential to identify the central ethos driving the hypocrites and their followers during the Prophetic era, which precipitated such specific behaviors.



A holistic, network-based examination of human virtues and vices reveals that certain traits play a pivotal role in generating other positive or negative characteristics and behaviors. Naturally, an individual striving for moral development and the eradication of vices can achieve personal and societal reform more expediently if they identify the root causes of a specific trait. The Holy Qur'an alludes to this phenomenon in passing. Furthermore, hypocrites, as a primary opposition group to the Prophet, have been extensively discussed by Qur'anic exegetes and scholars. However, most existing research has predominantly focused on the attributes, actions, and specific examples of hypocrites during the era of Revelation; tribalism, as the central mechanism for reproducing negative traits and behaviors among their followers, has received insufficient scholarly attention. This study aims to explore this issue through the lens of *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation) traditions and historical reports concerning the hypocrites of the early Islamic period.

Moreover, it can be argued that without investigating this dimension, achieving a precise understanding of the approximately three hundred Qur'anic verses related to hypocrisy remains unattainable. Although the vast majority of these critiques are directed at the hypocrites who acted as tribal chiefs or elders, a small fraction specifically targets their followers. Without the allegiance and support of the latter, the tribal leaders could not have operationalized their agendas.

Similarly, neglecting this theme in the Qur'an precludes a comprehensive understanding of the Qur'anic methodology of adversary analysis (identifying enemies). The hypocrites, alongside polytheists and Jews, were actively involved in numerous events during the revelation period, particularly post-migration to Medina. However, following the Prophet's demise, they suddenly vanish from historical discourse. This abrupt disappearance suggests that post-Prophet, the hypocrites largely assimilated into the ruling apparatus, seemingly achieving their ultimate objectives—unlike the polytheists and Jews, who maintained a marginal yet continuous political and social presence. Furthermore, this research moves beyond a mere quantitative acceptance of historical reports. By employing a qualitative analytical approach to the traditions of *asbāb al-nuzūl*, it seeks to differentiate genuine tribal motivations from post-hoc political fabrications. This methodological rigor ensures a deep hermeneutic engagement with classical texts, allowing us to accurately isolate the spirit of tribalism from mere socio-economic calculations of that era.

Literature Review

The exact historical inception of this specific line of inquiry is difficult to pinpoint; however, its research background traces back to the second century of the Hijri calendar. It should be noted that while the primary focus of these early texts does not perfectly align with the subject of this article, marginal connections do exist. For instance, works detailing the traits of hypocrites occasionally make passing references to the tribalism, bigotry, and pre-Islamic zealotry (*ḥamiyyah*) exhibited by the hypocrites or their followers. An early example is *Ismā'īl ibn Mihrān Abī Naṣr al-Sakūnī* in his (now lost) book *ʿIlm al-Akhlāq* (The Science of Ethics). Based on secondary reports, this work contained brief descriptions of the hypocrites alongside its primary focus on believers and wrongdoers.

Subsequently, *Ja'far ibn Muḥammad al-Firyābī* (d. 913 CE) detailed these characteristics in *Ṣifat al-Nifāq wa Dhamm al-Munāfiqīn* (1). Other contributors in this domain include *Abū Nu'aym Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdullāh al-Iṣfahānī* in *Ṣifat al-Nifāq wa Na't al-Munāfiqīn min al-Sunan al-Ma'thūrah ʿan Rasūlillāh* (2) and *Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr*, famously known as *Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah*, in *Ṣifāt al-Munāfiqīn* (3). Nevertheless, none of these classical authors directly addressed the tribalism of the hypocrites and their followers.

Among contemporary scholars, Dāwūd Maḥdāvīzādagān in the article "Nifāq: Iṣṭilāḥ Siyāsī-yi Qur'ān-i Karīm" (Hypocrisy: A Political Term in the Holy Qur'an) (4), and Qāsim Bustānī and Naṣrah Bājī in "'Ilal-i Shakl-gīrī-yi Nifāq dar Jāmi'ah-yi Dīnī wa Payāmad-hā-yi ān dar Bayān-i Ḥaḍrat-i Zahrā" (Causes of the Formation of Hypocrisy in a Religious Society and Its Consequences in the Words of Hazrat Zahra) (5) briefly touch upon the role of tribalism in fostering the negative attitudes of hypocrites. However, none of these works critically examine the trait of tribalism as the focal point of the Qur'an's critique directed at the hypocrites' followers. This precise gap underscores the innovative aspect of the present study and distinguishes it from existing literature.

Conceptual Framework

Hypocrisy (Nifāq)

Literal Meaning of Nifāq

Linguistically, nifāq is a rare verbal noun (maṣḍar) of the Form III verb (mufa'alah), on the morphological pattern of fi'āl, derived from the Arabic root n-f-q. The primary meaning of this root is "to run out," "to perish," or "to be depleted," a core concept evident in all its derivatives, such as nafaqah (expense) and infāq (spending). This implies that in any expenditure, a portion of one's wealth is depleted or lost. Furthermore, the verb nafaqa is sometimes used regarding the marketability of goods, meaning a commodity becomes scarce or sells out quickly, thereby driving its price up (6). The term al-nafaq refers to moving secretly through an underground tunnel (7), which inherently involves a mechanism of escape or liberation (8, 9).

It is noteworthy that the jerboa (yarbū'), a desert rodent with short forelimbs and long hind legs, constructs a subterranean burrow with two entrances. The main, visible entrance is called al-qāṣi'ā', while the concealed exit, covered with a thin layer of soft soil, is known as al-nāfiqā'. When a predator enters the burrow, the jerboa strikes the soft soil of the hidden exit with its head and escapes the peril. Some lexicographers argue that the term nifāq—meaning to act hypocritically—is derived from this behavior, as it perfectly aligns with the conceptual framework of the word. A hypocrite essentially creates a secret escape route to evade danger and save himself, concealing this route in his heart and even denying its existence (10).

Technical Meaning of Nifāq

Technically, nifāq refers to an inner psychological state in which an individual outwardly professes Islam while inwardly harboring disbelief (11). This condition fundamentally differs from taqiyyah (dissimulation), wherein a believer conceals their true faith and feigns otherwise for safety (12). In Islamic terminology, nifāq has also been characterized as entering Islam through one door and exiting it through another (10). Consequently, an individual possessing this inner state of hypocrisy is termed a munāfiq (hypocrite), which is the active participle (ism fā'il) derived from this root.

Yathrib

Yathrib consisted of several contiguous villages, featuring a collection of agricultural dwellings and fortresses (āṭām) interspersed with farmlands, predominantly palm groves (13). This region, surrounded by volcanic lava plains (ḥarrah), was geographically divided into two main sectors: the Upper ('Āliyah) and the Lower (Sāfilah). The 'Āliyah, characterized by a cooler climate and more fertile soil, was occupied by the Jewish tribes of Banū Qurayzah and

Banū al-Naḍīr, alongside most clans of the Aws tribe. Following the advent of Islam in Yathrib, the Qubā' Mosque was built in this area. Conversely, the Sāfilah was the residential hub for most of the Khazraj clans, as well as the Jewish Banū Qaynuqā'. Historical reports indicate that the soil fertility and climate of the Sāfilah were inferior to those of the 'Āliyah. The Prophet of Islam selected this lower region for his residence and the establishment of Al-Masjid al-Nabawī (14, 15).

These two sectors of Yathrib differed culturally and religiously, a distinction that persisted even after the Prophet's migration. Islam was adopted gradually in Yathrib. The inhabitants of the Sāfilah, primarily the Khazrajites, were the first to embrace the faith, whereas the residents of the 'Āliyah converted over a more extended period. Researchers attribute this phased conversion to two main factors. First, the Khazrajites had been defeated in the Battle of Bu'āth—the final conflict between the Aws and Khazraj prior to the Prophet's arrival—which rendered them more humble and receptive to his authority. Initially, during the Pledge of 'Aqabah, they seemingly viewed the Prophet as an authoritative mediator capable of quashing tribal tensions in Yathrib (16). Second, the demographic presence of the Banū Qaynuqā' Jews in the Sāfilah was relatively small, resulting in a significantly weaker cultural influence on the local Arabs compared to the profound impact of Banū al-Naḍīr and Banū Qurayzah in the 'Āliyah. It is also worth noting that upon migrating to Yathrib, many Muslims—either immediately or shortly thereafter—settled in the 'Āliyah and interacted heavily with its residents. This was largely to escape the disease-prone environment of the Sāfilah, which was plagued by numerous marshes and insects. However, even this influx of Muslims did not precipitate an immediate conversion of the 'Āliyah populace (15, 17).

The people of Yathrib primarily traced their lineage to Yemeni tribes that had migrated to the Hijaz. Consequently, they possessed a more advanced culture than the inhabitants of Mecca, who were generally descended from Hijazi nomads, specifically the Kinānah branch. The Yathribite economy was structured around agriculture and, in later stages, organized animal husbandry. In contrast, the Meccans—despite controlling major contemporary trade routes and maintaining an economy based on commerce, mercantile services, and herding, which typically accelerates cultural evolution—exhibited a more primitive and incompatible culture compared to the Yathribites (18, 19).

Furthermore, the majority of the Yathribites—comprising all clans of the major Aws and Khazraj tribes, as well as the Khuzā'ah tribe—were further removed from polytheism than the Meccans. Prior to accepting Islam, they were idolaters; however, unlike many human civilizations, they did not worship a pantheon of deities. They exclusively venerated the idol Manāt, seeking rain, favorable decrees, good fortune, and blessings from it. This relative monolatry facilitated their smoother transition to Islam (19-21).

Finally, a highly relevant point that enhances the accurate interpretation of Qur'anic verses concerning hypocrisy pertains to the geographical terminology. While a historical review reveals a distinction between the specific bounds of Yathrib and Medina, the Qur'an uses the term al-Madīnah to refer to the entirety of Yathrib in the four verses that discuss the hypocrites (Al-Munāfiqūn: 8; Al-Aḥzāb: 60; Al-Tawbah: 120 and 101).

To elaborate, the word al-Madīnah appears fourteen times in the Qur'an, four of which refer to the geographical settlement of the Prophet and its environs. The term Yathrib is used only once (Al-Aḥzāb: 13), pointing to the exact same geographical area. These verses all address events involving the hypocrites, were revealed from the fifth year of the Hijrah onwards, and denote the broader settlements of the Yathrib region rather than the restricted area of Madīnat al-Nabī. Therefore, one should not assume that the Qur'an, akin to some historians, restricts the term

al-Madīnah to a specific neighborhood; rather, in the Qur'anic context, al-Madīnah is synonymous with the greater Yathrib (15, 22).

The Tribal Ethos as the Focal Point of the Qur'anic Critique Directed at the Followers of the Hypocrites

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah Almighty presents numerous critiques of the hypocrites; a careful examination reveals that the majority of these criticisms are directed at the leaders of the hypocrites, while a smaller portion addresses their followers. From a macro perspective, the Qur'anic critiques concerning the followers of the hypocrites can be categorized into three main areas:

- a. The Qur'anic critique of the hypocrites' followers due to their complicity with tribal leaders in propagating despair regarding Allah.
- b. The Qur'anic critique of the hypocrites' followers due to their complicity with tribal leaders in exhibiting arrogance toward Allah.
- c. The Qur'anic critique of the hypocrites' followers due to their complicity with tribal leaders in sowing discord among Muslims.

Each of these three categories of Qur'anic critique is substantiated by evidence from the Holy Qur'an, though, for the sake of brevity, only the most salient verses for each point are referenced. However, before delving into this discussion, it must be noted that individuals during the Prophet's era, having been raised in the civilization of the Hijaz, lacked the freedom to make major independent decisions due to the pervasive culture of tribalism. Instead, they were compelled to conform to the established system of tribal activism. Otherwise, they faced ostracization from their tribe, leaving them severely vulnerable in terms of livelihood, security, and survival. Thus, if a hypocrite held the position of a tribal chief, a clan leader, or enjoyed a specific social status among his people, he would naturally draw a faction of his tribe along with him, owing to the binding nature of his commands. Such allegiances sometimes remained confined to the realm of ideology, while at other times, they materialized into concrete actions.

Given this context, it can be argued that in the forthcoming instances of Qur'anic critiques targeting a group of hypocrites, the true addressees of these censures are twofold: the prominent individual who played the leading role in guiding his followers, and the followers themselves. That is, those who generally belonged to the same tribe or clan as the hypocritical leader and were subjected to severe Qur'anic criticism due to their tribalistic ethos and blind obedience to their tribal chief or influential figure.

Historians maintain that the notion that pre-Islamic Yathrib was inhabited exclusively by the two polytheistic tribes of Aws and Khazraj, alongside the three Jewish tribes of Banū Qurayzah, Banū Qaynuqā', and Banū al-Naḍīr, is inaccurate. The Khazrajites and Awsites in pre-Islamic Yathrib had grown so populous that they had subdivided into numerous distinct clans. These clans operated independently regarding their political, security, defensive, and even religious activities. It was as if each clan had evolved into a separate, highly structured pseudo-tribe. This dynamic was particularly evident in the process of various Yathribite clans accepting Islam, as well as in their military support—or lack thereof—for the Prophet and the Muslims. For instance, certain Awsite clans, such as Aws Manāt, continued to worship idols until the fifth year of the Hijrah and maintained defense and security pacts with Banū Qurayzah and Banū al-Naḍīr. Following the exile of Banū al-Naḍīr, the Battle of the Trench (Al-Aḥzāb), and the severe measures taken against Banū Qurayzah, this group was compelled to convert to Islam outwardly, yet they did not harbor true faith in their hearts (23, 24). This faction, which repeatedly engaged in practical opposition against the Prophet and the Muslims, was subsequently designated as hypocrites (25, 26).

The Qur'anic Critique Directed at the Followers of the Hypocrites during the Prophetic Era in Yathrib

The Qur'anic Critique of the Followers of Hypocrites for Complicity with Tribal Leaders in Propagating Despair Regarding Allah

In verse 6 of Surah Al-Fath, Allah Almighty states: "That He may punish the hypocrites, men and women, and the polytheists, men and women, who entertain a bad opinion of Allah. For them shall be an adverse turn of fortune: Allah is wrathful with them and He has cursed them, and prepared hell for them and it is an evil destination" (Al-Fath: 6). This verse, which follows the opening verses of Surah Al-Fath, pertains to the events of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah. Historical reports and exegetical traditions recount that when the Prophet and the Muslims intended to travel for the Hajj pilgrimage, they asked the nomadic tribes surrounding Yathrib to accompany them. These tribes included Juhaynah, Ashja', Ghifār, Aslam, and Muzaynah. However, their leaders offered excuses, and their followers—in blind obedience to their tribal chiefs—refused to join the Prophet and the Muslims. They even discouraged some Muslims from accompanying Muhammad, arguing that the God of Muhammad would do nothing for them (27-29).

In his account of the Pledge of Riḍwān (Bay'at al-Riḍwān) and the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah, Al-Ṭabarī highlights a significant detail: the Prophet's companions pledged that if the Quraysh attacked the Messenger of Allah, they would not flee and would not leave him alone. Amidst them, only one person refused to pledge allegiance: Jadd ibn Qays, from the Banū Salimah clan of the Khazraj tribe, who were inhabitants of the Sāfilah (Lower Sector) (29).

The Qur'anic Critique of the Followers of Hypocrites for Complicity with Tribal Leaders in Exhibiting Arrogance Toward Allah

Following the conclusion of the Battle of Al-Muraysī' in favor of the Muslims—a conflict that had been imposed on them but resulted in minimal bloodshed due to the Prophet's implementation of various non-military strategies (30)—an altercation broke out over drawing water from a well between an Emigrant (Muhājir) named Jahjāh ibn Sa'īd al-Ghifārī, who was the freedman of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, and a Helper (Anṣārī) named Sinān ibn Wabar al-Juhanī. As the dispute escalated, it reached the Prophet. He admonished them, saying: "What is this? Are you acting like the people of the pre-Islamic era of ignorance (Jāhiliyyah)? This is beneath your dignity." He further instructed the Muslims: "Leave it, for it is repulsive and discordant."

However, 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy fanned the flames of pre-existing grudges, setting the stage for an internal sedition. Turning to the Anṣār, he said: "You brought this upon yourselves. You Anṣār have elevated the Emigrants over yourselves, and now you can stop no one but yourselves. Your situation with them is like the saying: 'Fatten your dog, and it will eat you.' When you shared your homes, farms, food, and clothes with them, this day could have been predicted" (31).

He then went among his own people—the Khazrajites of the Sāfilah—and declared: "By Allah, I have never seen the humiliation I witnessed today in my entire life. By Allah, from the very beginning, I did not agree to accept the Muslims into Medina; but my people liked it and accepted it. When we return to Medina, the mighty will surely expel the weak from it"—implying that he would expel Muhammad ibn 'Abdullāh from Medina. Zayd ibn Arqam, a young adolescent sitting in the crowd, heard Ibn Ubayy's words and shouted: "By Allah, the mighty one you spoke of is the Messenger of Allah, and the weak one is you. You are the one who has not the slightest helper even among his own people and tribe; but Muhammad is cherished by all Muslims." 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy snapped at him: "Silence, you who are the most childish of all children" (32, 33).

Zayd ibn Arqam rose, went to the Prophet, and reported what he had heard. Desiring to prevent the fire of sedition from reigniting, the Prophet questioned Zayd three times: "Perhaps you are mistaken? Perhaps youthful pride has overcome you? Perhaps you heard something similar and are now in error?" Zayd firmly insisted on the accuracy of what he had heard and relayed. At that moment, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb requested permission to deal with Ibn Ubayy, or to order 'Abbād ibn Bishr to kill him. The Prophet refused, stating: "I do not want it said that Muhammad kills his companions; especially after a victory" (34).

Realizing that Zayd had reported him, 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy approached the Prophet and denied Zayd's claims. The Prophet told him to seek forgiveness if he had said such things. Ibn Ubayy denied it again, this time swearing an oath that Zayd was lying. Some Muslims began to reprimand Zayd, accepting 'Abdullāh's words. They even questioned the Prophet: "Is it right to favor the words of a child over the statements and oaths of our chief and tribal elder?" (27).

To extinguish the sedition, the Prophet ordered an immediate march toward Medina, allowing stops only for obligatory prayers during a journey that lasted over a full day and night. At the onset of the march, Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr approached the Prophet and remarked on the unusual and ill-timed departure. The Prophet replied: "Have you not heard what your companion said: 'When we return to Medina, the mighty will surely expel the weak from it'?" This indicated that the Prophet accepted Zayd ibn Arqam's report. Usayd responded: "You are the mighty, and he is the weak. You entered Medina when he was about to be crowned; hence, he is bitter" (35, 36).

The grueling march continued relentlessly until noon the following day. When the Prophet finally permitted a halt, everyone immediately fell asleep from extreme exhaustion. This strategic move made the people forget Ibn Ubayy's affair, thereby quelling the sedition (26).

Following this, and prior to reaching Medina, Zayd faced immense pressure and slander from the Anṣār. However, toward the journey's end, Surah Al-Munāfiqūn was revealed, confirming Zayd's account. Verse 8 states: "They say, 'When we return to the city, the mighty will surely expel the weak from it.' Yet all might belongs to Allah and His Apostle and the faithful, but the hypocrites do not know" (Al-Munāfiqūn: 8). With this revelation, the Muslims turned away from Ibn Ubayy; in Medina, no one would even return his greetings. Moments before he could enter the city, his own son blocked his path, declaring: "Today I will prove to you that you are the weak one and the Prophet is the mighty one." Upon hearing this, the Messenger of Allah forbade the son from doing so, instructing him to respect his father and permitting Ibn Ubayy to enter Medina (37).

Later, some individuals approached 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy, urging him to go to the Prophet to seek forgiveness for the severe verses revealed against him, so he might restore his standing. Ibn Ubayy turned away in anger and protested: "You told me to believe in Muhammad, and I did. You told me to pay Zakat, and I did. Now you have left nothing for me to do but to prostrate to him." He then turned and walked away. At that moment, verse 5 was revealed: "When they are told, 'Come, that Allah's Apostle may plead for forgiveness for you,' they twist their heads, and you see them turn away disdainfully" (Al-Munāfiqūn: 5) (28, 38).

The Qur'anic Critique of the Followers of Hypocrites for Complicity with Tribal Leaders in Sowing Discord Among Muslims

Allah Almighty addresses the critical events of the Battle of the Trench (Al-Aḥzāb) in the opening verses of Surah Al-Aḥzāb. In verse 19, He states: "...So, when there is panic, you see them looking at you, with their eyes rolling like someone fainting at death. Then, when the panic is over, they scald you with [their] sharp tongues in their greed

for the spoils. They never have had faith. So, Allah has made their works fail, and that is easy for Allah" (Al-Aḥzāb: 19).

Historical accounts of the Battle of the Trench indicate that as long as the Quraysh forces remained to the north of Yathrib behind the trench, and the Muslims on the inner side, the situation was not critical. However, when Banū Qurayẓah rushed from the south of Yathrib to aid the Qurayshi polytheists, flanking the Muslims of Medina from behind, intense fear gripped many Muslims and all the hypocrites within the Islamic army. Some individuals, such as Muʿattib ibn Qushayr al-Awsī—who belonged to the ʿAmr ibn ʿAwf clan and resided in the ʿĀliyah—protested vehemently in severe distress, sowing discord among the Muslims (34).

He shouted: "How can the Prophet promise us victory over the kings of Persia and Rome, when we do not even dare to step out to relieve ourselves?" He rallied a group around himself, and together they voiced their protests during those highly critical moments (39).

A faction of these malcontents sought to flee the battle under the pretext of defending their homes and families. This group belonged to the Banū Ḥārithah clan of the Aws Allāh (Al-Nabīṭ) tribe (29). The leader of this faction was Aws ibn Qayẓī, who requested the Prophet's permission to abandon the battlefield on the excuse of protecting his house (29).

As observed, the hypocrites mentioned in this verse were predominantly Awsites (40) and belonged to the Banū Ḥārithah clan from the Sāfilah of Yathrib; however, Muʿattib ibn Qushayr was from the ʿĀliyah of Yathrib (19, 41). This demonstrates that in this instance, the trajectory of hypocrisy manifested collectively as a group. It must be noted that analyzing hypocrisy as a movement or current has unique characteristics in every specific context. For example, during military conflicts, the presence or absence of individuals, declarations of war and peace, advancing, halting, or retreating can generally be explained through the lens of tribal functions. Other socio-political affairs, however, can also be examined on an individual basis. This is because in the Hijazi tribal system of that era, decisions regarding military affairs were generally made collectively by the tribe, specifically dictated by the tribal chief, whereas other decisions—such as non-military matters—were made independently by individuals.

Another verse addressing the cowardice of certain hypocrites of that era is verse 57 of Surah Al-Tawbah, which refers to the incident involving Jadd ibn Qays, the leader of the Khazrajite Banū Salimah clan. He abstained from the expedition to Tabūk and actively dissuaded others from participating (15, 42). Regarding him and his followers, Allah stated: "If they could find a refuge, or a hideout, or a hole [to creep into], they would turn to it in frantic haste" (Al-Tawbah: 57).

In his *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*, Al-Wāḥidī attributes the revelation of this verse to ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubayy and his tribe. He writes that when the Prophet dispatched the Muslims toward Tabūk, he ordered them to halt at a location in Medina called Thaniyyat al-Wadāʿ to allow the rest of the Muslims to join them. ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubayy, commanding his own tribe, deployed his forces further back from Thaniyyat al-Wadāʿ. When the Holy Prophet ordered the Muslims to march, Ibn Ubayy reneged on his promise, ordered his tribe to return to their homes, and failed to attend Tabūk (28).

Conclusion

Yathrib comprised a cluster of contiguous villages dominated by a distinct tribal culture. In many respects, this cultural framework restricted the individual liberties of the tribesmen, compelling them to submit to the edicts of the tribal chief, a clan leader, or a prominent tribal figure. This deprivation of individual autonomy forced the members

of the tribe into an obligatory allegiance with that central figure. Consequently, if this pivotal figure positioned himself in opposition to Islam or the Prophet, a faction of his followers would, willingly or unwillingly, align with him.

The Qur'an's critiques of the hypocrites are largely twofold. On one hand, they target the key figures who actively opposed the Prophet of Islam; on the other, they censure the ordinary tribesmen who surrendered their agency and management of their affairs to others due to blind tribalism. It must be acknowledged that the culpability of this second group (the ordinary followers) is no less significant than that of the first group (the tribal chiefs and elders who embraced hypocrisy). In any political structure, leaders cannot exert positive or negative influence without the backing of a following, no matter how small. This dynamic is exponentially magnified within the deeply tribalistic system of the Hijazi civilization. Ultimately, by shifting the analytical focus from the leaders of hypocrisy to the sociological dynamics of their followers, this research unveils a critical dimension of the Qur'anic methodology in adversary analysis. It demonstrates that dismantling hypocritical movements necessitates addressing the underlying cultural schemas—such as blind tribal loyalty—that sustain them. This Qur'anic perspective offers a timeless framework for evaluating institutional leadership criteria and guiding societal reform, emphasizing that the collective accountability of followers is just as crucial as the integrity of the leaders.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to all those who helped us carrying out this study.

Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

All ethical principles were adhered in conducting and writing this article.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

Funding

This research was carried out independently with personal funding and without the financial support of any governmental or private institution or organization.

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