

## سُورَةُ الْحُجُرَاتِ

### Sūrah al Hujurāt

#### (THE APARTMENTS)

Revealed at Madinah, it has two Sections and eighteen Āyāt.

#### Section 1

In the Name of Allah

The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful.

1. O you who believe! Do not be forward in the presence of Allah and His Messenger, and fear Allah. Verily Allah is Hearing, Knowing.
2. O you who believe! Do not raise your voice above the voice of the Prophet, nor shout loud to him in discourse, as you do to one another, lest your works may be rendered fruitless, while you perceive not.
3. Verily those who lower their voices in the presence of the Messenger of Allah! Those are they whose hearts Allah has disposed towards piety; theirs will be forgiveness and splendid wage.
4. Verily these who call aloud to you from outside the inner apartments, most of them are foolish.
5. And had they waited till you come out unto them, it had surely been

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْدِمُوا فِي اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَأَنْقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَنْ تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَغْضُّونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلنَّفْيِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُنَادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ

better for them, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

6 O you who believe! If a mischief-maker came to you with a report, then make a strict inquiry, lest you may hurt a people unwittingly and thereafter repent of what you have done.

7 And know that verily among you there is the Messenger of Allah. If he were to obey you, you would surely be in trouble, but Allah has endeared faith to you and has bedecked it in your hearts and has made infidelity and wickedness and disobedience abhorrent to you. These! They are the men of rectitude.

8 Through grace from Allah and His favour. And Allah is Knowing, Wise.

9 And if two parties of the faithful fall to mutual fighting, then affect reconciliation between them. But if one of them rebels against the other, then fight the party which rebels till it reverts to the Commandment of Allah. Then if it reverts, affect reconciliation between them justly and be equitable, Allah loves the equitable.

10 The faithful are but brethren, so affect reconciliation between your brethren and fear Allah that mercy may be shown to you.

وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكَ مَسْأَلٌ مِنْهُمَا فَمَنْ لِيَأْتِيَهُمَا  
أَنْ تَضْمِنَهُمَا فَمَا تَجْعَلُ خَيْرًا لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ﴿١١﴾

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ  
مِنَ الْأُمُورِ لَكُنْتُمْ فِي آيَاتٍ مِنْهُ وَمَا يَكُونُ لَكُمْ  
أَنْ يَطِيعَكَمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٢﴾

فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٣﴾

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتِلُوا فَاصْلِحُوا  
بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ بَغَّتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَاقْتُلُوا  
الَّتِي بَغَتْ حَتَّى تَأْتِيَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ  
فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ  
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

## Secrets of Revelation

Before undertaking reformation of the world, the very goal of Jihād, there is a need for self-reformation first. This is based on respect for the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup>. Any slackness in his obedience is simply unacceptable. The confines of his respect are that the believers must never, under any circumstances, precede him in any matter whatsoever. This amounts to preceding Allah, because the dictates of the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> are in fact Allah's Commandments. The believers must fear Allah as He is all-Knowing.

### Holy Prophet's<sup>SAW</sup> Respect is the Basis of Self-Reformation

The believers must not raise their voices in his audience and must never speak in a tone louder than his. Nor must they talk casually with him as they do among themselves, lest it invalidates all their deeds without their knowing it. Some scholars assert that if a person unintentionally raises his voice, without even realising it, it may vitiate his good deeds. As the Prophetic Barakah - the light of the Qalb and the spiritual feelings - are transmitted through the righteous scholars and the accomplished saints, they are to be similarly respected. And as for the invalidation of good deeds, Ahl-e-Sunnah agree that it is the outcome of infidelity, very much a voluntary action. Unless and until one does it on purpose, he will not become an infidel. Similarly faith is also voluntary and unless one wilfully embraces Islam he cannot be a Muslim.

Maulana Ashraf 'Ali Thānvi<sup>RAJ</sup> explains: Taking a lead over the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> or indulging in reckless conversation are acts of impudence and discourtesy towards his status, and can cause his annoyance. Even if it is unintentional, the possibility of annoyance and disregard cannot be ruled out. Impudence or discourtesy are offences that divest the capacity to act righteously paving the way to sin and eventually leads to infidelity. Mufti Muhammad Shafi<sup>RAJ</sup>, in his Mu'arif ul Qurān, asserts with reference to some scholars that an act of impudence or disregard towards a spiritual mentor will bear similar results, that is, shall impede acting righteously, ultimately vitiating the faith.

Those who lower their voices in the presence of the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> are the believers whose Qulub Allah has approved for Taqwa and as such nothing in its violation crosses their minds. Such are the fortunate souls who qualify for His Forgiveness as well as a mighty reward.

## Same Etiquettes Mandatory at the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> Tomb

According to the righteous scholars the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> commands the same respect as he did in his temporal life. So it is against the etiquettes to raise one's voice while paying traditional homage at his tomb. Also when Aḥādīth are read out, it is forbidden to make noise, being rude and against the etiquettes. Similarly the audiences of great religious scholars must also be attended with due deference. And those who call out to the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> from outside his private chambers are mostly unwise. This refers to some pagans of Banu Tamīm, who in a hurry to get back to their possessions and livestock, had called out aloud for the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> from outside his private chambers.

## The Sacred Chambers

The chambers of the noble wives of the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> had ceilings improvised from date palm branches, and the doors were draped with heavy woollen curtains. The Holy Prophet's<sup>SAW</sup> tomb was the erstwhile chamber of Ḥadhrat 'Ayesah Ṣiddīqah<sup>RAU</sup> while others were adjoined in the direction of the niche of the mosque. Ḥadhrat Daūd bin Qais<sup>RAU</sup> reports that he had seen these apartments. The distance between the outer door and the living room was 6 to 7 arm-lengths (9 – 10 feet), its length was about 10 arm-lengths (15 feet) while the ceiling was 7 to 8 arm-lengths (10 – 12 feet) high. These sacred chambers were included in the Holy Prophet's<sup>SAW</sup> Mosque on the orders of Walced bin Abdul Mālik.

Had the villagers calling out to the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> been patient until he had himself come out for an hearing, it would have been better for them. The wording of the Qurān "till you come out unto them" means that the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> had himself noticed them. And if he had come out for any other purpose, it would not have been proper to call out to draw his attention. They were sincere believers seeking religious knowledge, but because of the rural background they were unaware of the etiquettes. They were, therefore, pardoned, as evident from "Allah is Forgiving, Merciful". Nevertheless, their simplicity or naivety became a blessing for mankind as it led to the revelation of etiquettes to be observed while in the Holy Prophet's<sup>SAW</sup> audience.

The believers must never trust the information received through any mischief monger. Any complaints of disobedience to the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> or impudence towards him must be investigated before initiating action against the alleged offenders, lest the believers harm anyone wrongly and regret later. The background leading to this revelation was that the chieftain of Bani Mustāliq, Harith bin Abi Dharrar, (whose daughter Ḥadhrat Jawairia<sup>RAU</sup> was married to the

Holy Prophet <sup>SAW</sup>) had visited him and embraced Islam. He sought the Holy Prophet's <sup>SAW</sup> permission to convert his tribe to Islam and to convey them the injunction of Zakāt, and also requested for a courier to his tribe to collect it. The Companion deputed for the purpose happened to be a former rival of Bani Mustaliq. As he arrived, the entire tribe turned out to greet him. Assuming it to be an assault he fled and complained to the Holy Prophet <sup>SAW</sup>, who ordered an expedition against them under the command of Hadhrat Khalid bin Waleed <sup>RAI</sup>. They met Bani Mustaliq already on their way to Madinah to clarify the situation. Together they returned and explained to the Holy Prophet <sup>SAW</sup> and the misunderstanding was removed.

### The Testimony of a Wicked Person

The scholars conclude that it is forbidden to act upon information provided by a wicked person unless confirmed by other sources. In Islamic jurisprudence, it is acceptable only in petty temporal affairs but not in important issues like war.

### The Contemporary Vote

The present day vote is also a testimony whereby Governments are formed to decide the fates of nations. If only this rule was applied to vote in our country, which in any case is a necessity according to Shari'ah!

### Impartiality of the Companions <sup>RAI</sup>

The information in the above incident was provided by a Companion <sup>RAI</sup> void of any chance of wickedness. Ahl-e-Sunnah believe that all Companions <sup>RAI</sup> were just and impartial, though not innocent. And anyone who committed a sin was duly punished in accordance with Shari'ah and purified. And in the light of Qurān and the Sunnah none remained without purification through penitence. The very few who erred indeed repented in an exemplary manner. Besides, the Divine declaration *Radhī Allāh 'Anhum wa Radhu 'Anhu* (Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him) is an irrefutable evidence to their truthfulness, as Divine Pleasure can only be attained through remission of sins and dying as a believer. Moreover, the honour of Companionship is enjoyed by all whether they availed the company of the Holy Prophet <sup>SAW</sup>, for a long time or for a moment.

All of them are being reminded of the singular honour of enjoying the presence of Allah's Messenger amidst them. This great favour can be rightfully acknowledged only by total adherence to him and not by imposing their opinion on him. A compliance with his directions is indeed a source of mercy for them, so personal opinions must be surrendered in right earnest.

## The Status of Companions<sup>RAU</sup>

It was due to the honour of his company that Allah blessed the noble Companions with devotion by embedding faith deep into their hearts. They are certainly the perfect examples of love and devotion. And He instilled in them an abhorrence for infidelity, sin and disobedience. As a result they always sought the pleasure of the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup>. They are the exemplary people who, by His Munificence, treaded the straight path, indeed a reward and a great Divine favour. Even today the Shari'ah of the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup>, his sayings and his directions are preserved in pristine form and the same level of obedience is expected from the Ummah, a level expounded by Allah, the Omniscient and the Wise as a living testimony to their greatness.

The believers are commanded to work for reconciliation between two warring groups of believers. And if despite these efforts one of them continues to oppress the other, the believers must fight until it reverts to Allah's obedience and agrees to a truce. The cause of conflict must be removed with equity and justice in accordance with Shari'ah, to ensure that no conflicts take place in future, for Allah approves the equitable. He has enjoined equity and truce because all Muslims belong to the same fraternity. This bond is stronger than the biological bond; it is only friendliness that befits brothers. Therefore, it is best to live peacefully and be conscious of Allah in all matters of war and peace to invoke His Mercy and to give believers the capacity to take the right decisions.

## Mutual Conflicts of the Companions<sup>RAU</sup>

According to the righteous scholars, this Āyah take care of all mutual conflicts of the believers especially the disputes amongst the Companions<sup>RAU</sup>. Whenever they had to cross swords, they had sincerely deliberated through Ijتهād. All aimed at the attainment of Allah's Pleasure, so no one has the right to criticise. They should rather be spoken of highly and respectfully. Their righteousness is supported by many a Ahādīth and the Commentators have dwelt on this topic at length.

### Section 2

11. O you who believe! Let not one group scoff at another group, perchance they may be better than they are, nor let some women scoff at other women, perchance the latter may be better than they

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُوا مِن قَوْمٍ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ  
أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءً مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ  
أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَرُوا

are. And do not traduce one another, nor revile one another by odious appellations; ill is the name of sin after belief. And whosoever will not repent, then those are the wicked.

12. O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion; indeed some suspicion is a sin. And spy not, nor backbite one another. Would any of you relish to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You detest that. And fear Allah; verily Allah is Relenting, Merciful.

13. Mankind! Verily We! We have created you of a male and a female, and We have made you nations and tribes that you might know one another. Verily the noblest of you with Allah is the most pious of you. Verily Allah is Knowing, Wise.

14. The desert Arabs say: We have believed. Say you: You have not believed, rather say: We have submitted to Islam; while faith has not yet entered into your hearts. And if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He shall not diminish of your works; verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

15. The faithful are only those who have faith in Allah and His Messenger, and have not doubted thereafter, and have striven hard with their riches and their lives in

بِالْأَلْسِنِ بِئْسَ الْإِيمَانُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ  
وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

بِتَأْيِهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ  
الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا  
أَيُّبٌ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا  
فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

بِتَأْيِهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ  
شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ  
أَتْقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ ءَامَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ  
قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ  
وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِكُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ  
شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ  
ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ  
فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

the Cause of Allah. Those! They are the truthful.

16. Say you: What! Will you instruct Allah about your religion? Whereas Allah knows whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, and Allah is Aware of everything.

17. They regard it as a favour to you that they have embraced Islam. Say you: Deem not your surrender a favour to me; nay! Allah has conferred a favour upon you as He has guided you to the faith, if you are sincere.

18. Allah knows the hidden in the heavens and the earth, and Allah is the Beholder of what you do.

قُلْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ  
يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ  
وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾

يَمُنُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَا تَعْتُوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُمْ  
بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَيْتُكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ  
صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ  
بَصِيرٌ يَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

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## Secrets of Revelation

O' believers! Guard against situations that may lead to conflicts. For instance, no group of believers may ridicule another, for who knows the ridiculed may be higher in status with Allah than the mocker. Similarly the believing women must be very careful in what they say and should never speak disdainfully about other women. The latter may be dearer to Allah than the former. Do not find faults in one another, for it promotes hatred and estrangement. No one should call another names. These are important issues that Qurān has enjoined upon the believing men and women independently, but are grossly ignored today resulting in mutual hatred. It is indeed repugnant to speak ill of one other and give the infidels a chance to raise fingers on Muslims. It does not befit a believer to call someone with insulting names. Still if a believer continues to act depravedly and does not stop, he is guilty of wickedness and will be dealt with accordingly.

Similarly, scepticism is an evil trait, that does not befit a believer. Because suspicion is one of the grave sins, it is forbidden to be sceptical of any believer



without solid evidence. There is no need to be inquisitive or suspicious in order to find out the weaknesses of others. One is responsible to act in accordance with the apparent situation without wasting time in finding faults in others. And a believer must never engage in backbiting, which is like tearing the flesh from his brother's corpse to devour, a loathsome idea indeed. A corpse feels no pain when its flesh is torn, though it does expose its bones. Yet the guilty would be indulging in an extremely disgusting activity. Similarly the person who is absent is unaware of what is being talked about him while the backbiter tears his cloak apart, exposing his secrets. So O' believers! You must repent and renounce backbiting and be mindful of Allah, the Most Merciful.

### Rules on Backbiting

To speak ill of anyone in his absence is termed as backbiting. If what is being said is not true, it falls under slander. If the victim is not so far aware of what has been said in his absence, the backbiter must confess his guilt before him. And if the victim comes to know of it then the backbiter must beg his pardon as well.

Similarly it is forbidden to backbite against children, the tax-paying infidels under protection and an insane person, whether by word of mouth or by gestures. The only exception is where evil is likely to spread if a wicked person is not exposed with a view to protecting the masses. It is also permissible to inform a person or an agency that can pre-empt the evil and take remedial measures. In any case the aim must purely be the reformation and not humiliation.

O' People! Allah has procreated all of you from a single male and a female and has divided you into different tribes and clans merely for identification. And as for the honour and precedence, the most honourable amongst you in Allah's view is the one who is most righteous. Righteousness is indeed an inner state known only to Allah and people have no means to measure it. So give due regard to all according to their ranks, as Allah is All Knowing. With the emergence of an Islamic State in Madinah, some people identified their mundane interests with it and a lot from the rural areas outwardly embraced Islam without inner endorsement. They would observe the worships only for expected petty gains. One of them mentioned their conversion to Islam before the Holy Prophet <sup>SAW</sup> as if they had done a great favour to Islam. The Holy Prophet <sup>SAW</sup> was commanded to tell them that they had not become believers and had at the most submitted to Islam. The faith as such had not penetrated their hearts. And if they were to accept it whole heartedly, in submission to Allah and His Messenger <sup>SAW</sup>, He will not nullify even their superficial deeds, being the Forgiving, Clement.

## Are Islam and Faith Two Different Concepts?

In terms of Shari'ah, Islam and Īmān (faith) are the same. The former means submission followed by an endorsement by the heart. It is conformity in deeds ending up in confirmation by the Qalb. On the other hand, Īmān refers to an endorsement by the Qalb first, followed by conformity in deeds. Both are one and the same, though having different meanings in the literal sense. For instance, the hypocrites outwardly displayed obedience while their hearts were void of faith. They were taken as Muslims but in Allah's Knowledge they were not believers. And who indeed are the believers? Those who once having believed in Allah and His Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> never faltered in their faith throughout life. They never considered their lives or wealth to be their own, rather fought in Allah's Cause with both and proved their metal as true believers. And those who profess obedience only for vested interests, and never willingly donate even a penny in Allah's Cause nor participate in Jihād, are not true to their claim. They are in effect trying to devise a new religion, in order to bluff Allah by professing piety. Do they know better than what is revealed by Allah as Dīn? They ought to refrain from yet another act of impudence by way of fabrications, for Allah is well Aware of all affairs of the heavens and the earth.

These foolish people expect the Holy Prophet<sup>SAW</sup> to be indebted to them for having converted to Islam. They must be told not to consider it as a favour to him, rather it is for their own good. Had they not converted, they would have been destroyed. And if they are true in their claim of having accepted the faith wholeheartedly, it is indeed a great Divine favour that He facilitated them with the capacity to believe. Beware that Allah knows all the hidden secrets in your bosoms, and is also watching over your deeds.