



CHAPTER 49

Al-Ḥujurāt: The Apartments

(REVEALED AT MADĪNAH: 2 sections; 18 verses)

The chapter takes its title from v. 4, which enjoins the Muslims not to call out to the Prophet from behind the private *apartments*. It was revealed to teach good manners as well as good morals when large masses began to enter Islām and deputation after deputation came to Madinah. The Holy Prophet was not only the spiritual head of a people; he was also a Prophet who had to direct his people in their religious and temporal affairs. He had to decide their cases and to make laws for them; to lead them to prayer, to bow before God and into the field to fight against a powerful enemy; and, therefore, it was necessary that the new converts to Islām should appreciate the value of his time. It, however, teaches respect not only for the Prophet's privacy but also for each other's privacy.

The chapter was revealed at Madinah in the year 9 A.H. The opening verses are unanimously taken to refer to the time of the visit of the deputation of the Banī Tamīm. As the previous chapter speaks of victories for the Muslims, and as victory brings ease, this chapter denounces the vices of a civilized society living in ease and comfort. Opening with an injunction as to the manners to be observed towards the Holy Prophet, the section is concluded with a direction requiring the Muslims to make peace between Muslims. The second section teaches the Muslims some of the social virtues, and enjoins them to avoid certain vices which are the bane of society, showing that brotherhood in Islām is not based on the distinctions of tribes and families, but on piety and righteousness.

SECTION 1: Respect for the Prophet

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 O you who believe, be not forward in the presence of Allāh and His Messenger, and keep your duty to Allāh. Surely Allāh is Hearing, Knowing.^a

2 O you who believe, raise not your voices above the Prophet's voice, nor speak loudly to him as you speak loudly one to another, lest your deeds become null, while you perceive not.^a

3 Surely those who lower their voices before Allāh's Messenger are they whose hearts Allāh has proved for dutifulness. For them is forgiveness and a great reward.

4 Those who call out to thee from behind the private apartments, most of them have no sense.^a

5 And if they had patience till thou come out to them, it would be better for them. And Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.

6 O you who believe, if an unrighteous man brings you news, look carefully into it, lest you harm a

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقَدَّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ①

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ②

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَعْضُونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوَى لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ③

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يِنَادُونَكَ مِنْ وَّرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ④
وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ⑤

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا

1a. The presence of Allāh means the presence of His commandments. The words imply the utmost obedience.

2a. The Qur'ān not only inculcates high morals but also regulates social conduct, because its teachings are intended for all grades of men. When large numbers of men began to enter Islām such directions became necessary, and they will always be needed by the masses in any society. A loud voice is expressive of arrogance or resentment.

4a. As already pointed out, when the masses began to enter Islām many of them were ignorant even of the ordinary social rules, and they called out to the Prophet with loud voices while he was within his house. The practice is deprecated because it meant disrespect to the Holy Prophet.

people in ignorance, then be sorry for what you did.^a

7 And know that among you is Allāh's Messenger. Were he to obey you in many a matter, you would surely fall into distress; but Allāh has endeared the faith to you and has made it seemly in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you disbelief and transgression and disobedience. Such are those who are rightly guided —

8 A grace from Allāh and a favour. And Allāh is Knowing, Wise.

9 And if two parties of the believers quarrel, make peace between them. Then if one of them does wrong to the other, fight that which does wrong, till it return to Allāh's command. Then, if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably. Surely Allāh loves the equitable.^a

10 The believers are brethren so make peace between your brethren, and keep your duty to Allāh that mercy may be had on you.

SECTION 2: Respect for Muslim Brotherhood

11 O you who believe, let not people laugh at people, perchance they may be better than they; nor let women

قَوْمًا يَجْهَلُونَ فَتَضْحَكُوا عَلَيْهِ مَا
فَعَلْتُمْ نُدَمِينَ ⑥

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ
يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ
وَزَيَّنَّهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ
الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الرُّشِدُونَ ⑦

فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِعَاةٌ طَوَّالَةٌ
عَلَيْكُمْ حَكِيمَةٌ ⑧

وَإِن طَآئِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ائْتَتَا
فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِن بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا
عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَتَآتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى
تَفِيءَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِن فَاءَتْ
فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ⑨

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ
أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَأَقْبُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ⑩

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرَكُمُ
مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا
مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءً مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ

6a. Such a direction was expedient when a condition of war necessitated prompt action to be taken against the enemy. But even the exigencies of war were to be carried out with the utmost carefulness, so that friendly people should not suffer loss.

9a. It is related that the occasion of the revelation of this verse was a quarrel between the Aus and the *Khazraj*, the two chief tribes of Madinah; but this does not mean that the verse is applicable only to that case. The verse, in fact, requires the Muslims not to be indifferent when one party of them quarrels with another. In such cases they must bring every kind of pressure within their reach to bear upon the party in error. It is the duty of every Muslim to maintain the unity of Islām. An attitude of indifference towards *fatwās* of *kufir*, directed against their own brethren by ignorant Mullās, has dealt a fatal blow to

(laugh) at women, perchance they may be better than they. Neither find fault with your own people, nor call one another by nick-names. Evil is a bad name after faith; and whoso turns not, these it is that are the iniquitous.^a

12 O you who believe, avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is sin; and spy not nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You abhor it! And keep your duty to Allāh, surely Allāh is Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful.

13 O mankind, surely We have created you from a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other. Surely the noblest of you with Allāh is the most dutiful of you. Surely Allāh is Knowing, Aware.^a

14 The dwellers of the desert say: We believe. Say: You believe not, but say, We submit; and faith has not yet entered into your hearts. And if you obey Allāh and His Messenger, He will not diminish aught of your deeds. Surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.^a

أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا
أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَرُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ
يُبْسُ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ
وَمَنْ لَمْ يَنْتَبْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا
مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا
تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا
أَيُّجِبُ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ
مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ
وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ
لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

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

the union of Muslim brotherhood, and, if the Muslims do not raise their voice against these *fatwās*, they must never hope to make any progress towards real union.

11a. This verse and those that follow deal with some of the evils which are most rampant in civilized society, and which corrupt a society to its core. These evils mostly arise with wealth; for, living in ease, people are most concerned with seeking each other's faults, and thus mutual hatred takes the place of brotherly love and friendly concord.

13a. The principle of the brotherhood of man laid down here is on the broadest basis. The address here is not to believers, as in the two previous verses, but to men in general, who are told that they are all, as it were, members of one family, and their divisions into nations, tribes and families should not lead to estrangement from, but to a better knowledge of, each other. Superiority of one over another in this vast brotherhood does not depend on nationality, wealth, or rank, but on the careful observance of duty, or moral greatness.

14a. Here the Muslims are enjoined to deal kindly and leniently, even with those who, being novices, were not yet really grounded in the faith, though they were members of the

15 The believers are those only who believe in Allāh and His Messenger, then they doubt not, and struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allāh. Such are the truthful ones.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ
وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا
بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ ﴿٥﴾

16 Say: Would you apprise Allāh of your religion? and Allāh knows what is in the heavens and what is in the earth. And Allāh is Knower of all things.

قُلْ أَعْلَمُونَ اللَّهُ يَدِينُكُمْ وَاللَّهُ
يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٦﴾

17 They presume to lay thee under an obligation by becoming Muslims. Say: Lay me not under an obligation by your Islām; rather Allāh lays you under an obligation by guiding you to the faith, if you are truthful.

يَمُنُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَا
تَمُنُوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُ
عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٧﴾

18 Surely Allāh knows the unseen of the heavens and the earth. And Allāh is Seer of what you do.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَ
الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾

Muslim brotherhood. Faith had not yet entered into their hearts, but they were to be regarded as Muslims. The solidarity of Islām is being shattered today by narrow-minded Mullās who, on one pretext or another, issue *fatwās* of *kufir* against this or that party of Muslims.