

**MAJOR THEMES IN *SŪRAT AL-HUJURĀT*
(CHAPTER 49 OF THE *QUR'ĀN*)**

by

Rahim Ebrahim

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Supervisor: Professor Abul Fadl Mohsin Ebrahim

Joint Supervisor: Professor Syed Salman Nadvi

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DECLARATION

The Registrar (Academic)
UNIVERSITY OF DURBAN-WESTVILLE

Dear Sir

I, Rahim Ebrahim

(Full Name of Student)

REG. NO.: 8524208

hereby declare that the dissertation/thesis entitled

Major Themes in
Sūrat Al-Hujurāt
(Chapter 49 of the Qur'ān)

is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any other University.

Rahim Ebrahim

(Signature)

18 Dec. 1996

Date

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Dedicated

to

Hadrat Mawlānā Abdul Kadir حفظه أ لله تعالى

in recognition of his continued service to Islam
in
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Sūra XLIX.

Hujurāt, or The Inner Apartments.

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.*



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. ﴿١﴾ ye who believe!
Put not yourselves forward
Before Allah and His Apostle;
But fear Allah: for Allah
Is He Who hears
And knows all things.
2. ﴿٢﴾ ye who believe!
Raise not your voice
Above the voice of the Prophet,
Nor speak aloud to him
In talk, as ye may
Speak aloud to one another,
Lest your deeds become
Vain and ye perceive not.
3. Those that lower their voice
In the presence of
Allah's Apostle,—their hearts
Has Allah tested for piety:
For them is Forgiveness
And a great Reward.
4. ﴿٤﴾ Those who shout out
To thee from without

The Inner Apartments—
Most of them lack understanding.
5. If only they had patience
Until thou couldst
Come out to them,
It would be best
For them: but Allah is
 Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
6. ﴿٦﴾ ye who believe!
If a wicked person comes
To you with any news,
Ascertain the truth, lest
Ye harm people unwittingly,
And afterwards become
Full of repentance for
What ye have done.

١- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْدُمُوا
بَيْنَ يَدَيْ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ○

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

٣- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَغْضُّونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ
قُلُوبَهُمْ لِتَتَّقُوا لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ○

٤- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ينادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ
الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ○

٥- وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ
لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ
وَ اللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ○

٦- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ
فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ
فَتُصِيبُوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ ○

7. And know that among you
Is Allah's Apostle: were he,
In many matters, to follow
Your (wishes), ye would
Certainly fall into misfortune:
But Allah has endeared
The Faith to you, and
Has made it beautiful
In your hearts, and He
Has made hateful to you
Unbelief, wickedness, and
Rebellion: such indeed are
Those who walk in
righteousness;—
- ٤- وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ
وَزَيَّنَّهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ
وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ
أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّشِدُونَ ۝
8. A grace and favour
From Allah: and Allah
Is full of Knowledge
And Wisdom.
- ٨- فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝
9. If two parties among
The Believers fall into
A quarrel, make ye peace
Between them: but if
One of them transgresses
Beyond bounds against the other
Then fight ye (all) against
The one that transgresses
Until it complies with
The command of Allah;
But if it complies, then
Make peace between them
With justice, and be fair:
For Allah loves those
Who are fair (and just).
- ٩- وَإِن طَافْتُم مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ آقْتَنُوا
فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا
فَإِن بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى
فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي
حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ
فَإِن فَاءَتْ
فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ۝
10. The Believers are but
A single Brotherhood:
So make peace and
Reconciliation between your
Two (contending) brothers;
And fear Allah, that ye
May receive Mercy.
- ١٠- إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ
فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ۝
11. O ye who believe!
Let not some men
Among you laugh at others:
It may be that
The (latter) are better
Than the (former):
Nor let some women
Laugh at others:
- ١١- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ
عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ
وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَاءٍ

It may be that
The (latter) are better
Than the (former) :
Nor defame nor be
Sarcastic to each other,
Nor call each other
By (offensive) nicknames:
Ill-seeming is a name
Connoting wickedness,
(To be used of one)
After he has believed :
And those who
Do not desist are
(Indeed) doing wrong.

عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونَ خَيْرًا مِنْهُنَّ ۗ
وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ
وَلَا تَنَابَرُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ
بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ
بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ ۗ
وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُبْ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ۝

12. ﴿١٢﴾ ye who believe !
Avoid suspicion as much
(As possible) : for suspicion
In some cases is a sin :
And spy not on each other,
Nor speak ill of each other
Behind their backs. Would any
Of you like to eat
The flesh of his dead
Brother? Nay, ye would
Abhor it . . . But fear Allah :
For Allah is Oft-Returning,
Most Merciful.

١٢- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ
إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا
وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعضُكُمْ بَعضًا
أُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا
فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ۝

13. ﴿١٣﴾ mankind ! We created
You from a single (pair)
Of a male and a female,
And made you into
Nations and tribes, that
Ye may know each other
(Not that ye may despise
Each other). Verily
The most honoured of you
In the sight of Allah
Is (he who is) the most
Righteous of you :
And Allah has full knowledge
And is well acquainted
(With all things).

١٣- يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ
مِّن ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ
وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا
وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا
إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ۝

14. The desert Arabs say,
"We believe." Say, "Ye
Have no faith ; but ye
(Only) say, 'We have
submitted
Our wills to Allah.'
For not yet has Faith
Entered your hearts.
But if ye obey Allah
And His Apostle, He
Will not belittle aught
Of your deeds : for Allah
Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

١٤- قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا
قُلْ لَمْ نُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا
وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ
وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِّنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ۝

15. Only those are Believers
Who have believed in Allah
And His Apostle, and have
Never since doubted, but
Have striven with their
Belongings and their persons
In the Cause of Allah :
Such are the sincere ones.

١٥- إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ ○

16. Say : "What ! will ye
Instruct Allah about your
Religion?" But Allah knows
All that is in the heavens
And on earth : He has
Full knowledge of all things.

١٦- قُلْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ اللَّهُ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ○

17. They impress on thee
As a favour that they
Have embraced Islām.
Say, "Count not your Islām
As a favour upon me :
Nay, Allah has conferred
A favour upon you
That He has guided you
To the Faith, if ye
Be true and sincere.

١٧- يَسْتُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَا تَتَّبِعُوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ○

18. "Verily Allah knows
The secrets of the heavens
And the earth : and Allah
Sees well all
That ye do."

١٨- إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ○



INTRODUCTION

THE NAME: *AL-HUJURĀT*

In order to place the name of Chapter 49 of the *Qur'ān*, namely *al-Hujurāt*, in perspective, it is essential to explain the term *al-Hujurāt*. The word *hujrah* (plural-*hujurāt*) literally means "room, compartment, chamber."¹ *Al-Hujurāt* appears only once in the *Qur'ān* in verse 4 of Chapter 49 and it particularly refers to the one-room apartments of the Prophet's (*sallā Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* - peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) wives (*riḍḍwān Allāhi 'alayhinna* - may Allāh be pleased with them). Hence, due to the specific usage of this word, this Chapter of the *Qur'ān* was thus named.²

When one scans through this Chapter of the *Qur'ān*, one notes that it is through the instruction of Allāh (*Subhāna Hu wa Ta'ālā* - Glory be to Him the Most High) that the apartments of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) are to be accorded due reverence. The Divine Injunction in this regard points out to the fact that it is Allāh, the Omnipresent, Who supports and provides sanctuary to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Hence, the apartments of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) symbolize abodes of absolute peace and tranquility which can be described as *sanctum sanctorum*³. From this one gathers that the apartments of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) are characterized by an aura of reverence and are as such not viewed as ordinary apartments.

1. Cowan, J. Milton ed. Wehr Hans. *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*. Wiesbaden. Otto Harrassowitz. 1961, p. 157.

2. Al-Ṣābūnī, Muḥammad 'Alī. *Ṣafwat al-Tafāsīr*. Beirut. Dār al-Qur'ān al-Karīm. 1981. Vol. 3, p. 231.

3. A Latin phrase meaning "sacred and sanctified".

Therefore, even today when Muslims who go to pay homage to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) must adhere to the Divine Code of conduct in this regard i.e while entering *al-Masjid al-Nabawi* (The Prophet's Mosque) in the city of Madīnah, Saudi Arabia, and while they stand in front of his grave.

STRUCTURE OF *SŪRAT AL-HUJURĀT*

Words	Verses	<i>Rukū'</i>
335	18	02

SIGNIFICANCE OF *SŪRAT AL-HUJURĀT*

The *Qur'ānic* Chapter entitled *Al-Hujurāt* is one of those Chapters which deals with a number of issues and directives which affect the day-to-day life of a Muslim and also the Islamic community and the State as a whole. Although it contains only eighteen verses (*'āyāt*), it is a significant Chapter for it embodies guidance in ethical conduct. It spells out the manner in which Muslims ought to approach *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.s.), what they ought to do when they receive nefarious news, how they should treat their fellow brothers-in-Faith, and touches upon the essence of *īmān* (Faith) and virtuous deeds.¹ This chapter was revealed in 09 A.H./631 C.E.² and by that time the whole of the

1. Majāzī, Muḥammad Mahmūd. *Al-Tafsīr al-Wāḍiḥ*. Cairo. Maṭba'ah al-Istiqlāl al-Kubrā. 1975. 5th Edition. 1975. Vol. 3. Parts 26 and 27, p. 53.

2. *Dars-e-Qur'ān - Chatti Manzil*. Lahore. Dars-e-Qur'ān Board. Idārah Islāh wa Tablīgh, n.d., p. 350.

Arabian Peninsula had submitted to Islam and the first Islamic State with al-Madīnah as its capital had come into being and Divine Laws were being revealed and promulgated. Thus, the contents of this Chapter lay down the moral and social norms that are to be upheld in any given Islamic society. The objectives for the study of this particular *Qur'ānic* Chapter are:

- a) To identify major themes in the *sūrah*.
- b) To discuss each theme separately, and
- c) To explain the moral, social and legal implications of each theme.

Chapter One

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

History bears testimony to the fact that the conquest of Makkah 8/630 was another turning point in the mission of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). He was well aware of the knowledge of the Divine Pattern (*al-Sunnah al-'Ilāhiyyah*) as well as sound administration in temporal affairs and this made it possible for him to succeed in eradicating all forms of warfare which the Quraysh were engaged in. Hence, the terms of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah that he entered into with the Quraysh clearly demonstrate that he applied the criteria of peaceful negotiations for the restoration of law and social order in the whole of the Arabian Peninsula. Concluding such a treaty paved the way for Islam to be accepted by the whole of Arabia as the religion of God. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) sent deputations to various geographical regions in order to invite the people to Islam and as a result of this, tribesmen from distant lands began to come to Madīnah in batches.¹ These deputations came to render allegiance to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and to accept Islam on behalf of their tribes. In view of this historical event, scholars and historians describe the ninth year as '*Ām al-Wuḥūd* i.e. "The Year of Deputations."²

1.1 A MADINITE REVELATION

There are differences of opinion pertaining to the exact time and era of the revelation of

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1. Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadwi. *Muhammad Rasulallah - The Apostle of Mercy*. Lucknow. Lucknow Publishing House. 1982. 2nd Edition, p. 331.
 2. *Dars-e-Qur'ān - Chatti Manzil*, p. cit. p. 350.

Sūrat al-Hujurāt. Some scholars are of the view that this entire Chapter (49) was revealed in Madīnah in 9 A.H., while others base their view on a report of *Hadrat* ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās (*Raḍiya Allāh ‘anhu* - may Allāh be pleased with him). He reports that 17 verses were revealed in Madīnah and only one verse, that is, verse 13, was revealed in Makkah.¹ However, majority of scholars suggest that the entire Chapter was revealed in Madīnah in 9 A.H.² The following facts lend support to this view:

a) Verse 4 was revealed at a time when a deputation of the *Banū Tamīm* tribe came to converse with the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Upon their arrival they did not find the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in the *masjid* (mosque). At that particular time he (s.a.w.s.) was in his apartment. Impatience led this tribe to loudly call out for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). They addressed him (s.a.w.s.) as follows: "Oh Muḥammad, Oh Muḥammad, come out of your apartment."³ As a result of their uncouth behaviour, verse 4 was revealed to establish the correct moral code that ought to be observed in the presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). It is mentioned in the *Sīrah* literature (Biography of the Prophet Muḥammad - s.a.w.s.) that it was during the year 9 A.H./631 C.E. that the *Banū Tamīm* tribe led a deputation to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and this clearly indicates the year in which it was revealed.⁴

b) The incident referred to in verse 6 can be traced back to the conversion of Walīd bin

1. Karam Shāh, Pīr Muḥammad. *Ḍiyā’ al-Qur’ān*. Lahore. Ḍiyā’ al-Qur’ān Publishers, n.d. Vol. 4, p. 575.

2. *Al-Tafsīr al-Wāḍiḥ*, op. cit. Vol. 4. Parts 26 and 27, p. 53.

3. *Dars-e-Qur’ān -Chatti Manzil*, op. cit., p. 350.

4. Siddiqi, Abdul Hameed. *The Life of Muhammad*. Lahore. Kazi Publications. 2nd. Edition. 1975, p. 282.

'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'ayṭ (r.a.) who accepted Islam after the conquest of Makkah which took place in 8 A.H.¹

1.2 SABAB AL-NUZŪL (CAUSE OF ITS REVELATION)

In addition to the moral and spiritual significance of this Chapter, there is distinctive evidence of its reference to a particular incident. This is very well demonstrated in the following *Qur'ānic* verse:

*"They impress on thee as a favour that they have embraced Islam. Say, count not your Islam as a favour upon me: Nay, Allāh has conferred a favour upon you that He has guided you to the faith, if you be true and sincere."*²

The above verse bears particular reference to members of the delegation of the *Banū 'Asa'd* tribe who were reproached for their audacious misconception in relation to their acceptance of Islam. It is reported that this tribe alluded to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) that their accepting Islam had been a great favour to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) on the basis of the following reasons:

Firstly, they did not retaliate by fighting the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and his followers as other tribes had done during the advent of Islam. Secondly, they had accepted Islam which was

1. *Ḍiyā' al-Qur'ān*, op. cit. Vol. 3, p. 575.

2. *Qur'ān*, 49:17.

being propagated by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) himself.¹ Thirdly, some scholars are of the view that the *Banū 'Asa'd* tribe's motive in accepting Islam during a period of famine was to receive charity from the Muslims.²

1.3 SOCIAL CHARACTERISTIC OF THE ARAB SOCIETY

A study of the history of the Arabs gives us an insight into the social characteristic of the Arab society. Tribal affiliation and solidarity was the predominant factor in Arab society. Great significance was attached to the institution of tribal chiefs. Tribal chiefs were held in high esteem and enjoyed paramount recognition in society. As a result, the victorious Conquest of Makkah in 8/631, 9/632 heralded a new order in the Islamic world. Since deputation after deputation came to swear allegiance to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), the Arab chiefs had no choice but to accept Islam. They were under the impression that their acceptance of Islam meant a great deal to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Hence, they had the notion that they would still be holding prominent positions in the community, as was the case prior to the advent of Islam. As a result of this false notion, they displayed an indifferent attitude to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), crude mannerism of speech in his presence, and an abrupt mode of questioning him.

Another factor which contributes to the historical background of this Chapter (49), particular verse 17, is a report in which mention is made of the coming of the delegations

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1. Philips, Abu Ameenah Bilal. *Tafseer Soorah Al-Hujuraat - A Commentary on the 49th Chapter of the Quraan*. Riyadh. Tawheed Publications. 1990, p. 203.
 2. Ali, Abdullah Yusuf. *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*. Lahore. Sh. Muhammad Ashraf. 1968. Vol. 2, p. 1407.

of 'Abd al- Qays and Banū Hanīfah, among whom was Musaylimah, the imposter. Musaylimah embraced Islam on the assumption of succeeding the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and taking control of all affairs after his demise.¹ The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) referred to Musaylimah as *al-kadhdhāb* (meaning a liar), and mentioned that Musaylimah would cause oppression. Thus, verse 17 refutes Musaylimah for his motives in accepting Islam.

Islamic History reveals that by 9th year *Hijrī* the supremacy of Islam had been fully established. Although by 10th *Hijrī* the majority of the pagan Arabs had embraced Islam, there were still those who remained as Christians and Jews. Those who did not accept Islam were nevertheless still under the protection of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and they were to abide by the social and political aspects of Islamic legislation. The overwhelming majority of Muslims who lived far from Madīnah needed to be taught the Divine Revealed Faith. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) appointed teachers in order to instruct the new converts in matters of the *dīn* (religion). For example, Mu'ādh ibn Jabal (r.a.) was one of such teachers.

The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) taught his envoys that in Islam there existed no distinction between religious and secular affairs and thus the social, political, moral and spiritual code of life had to be regulated according to the teachings of Islam.²

1. Al-'Umarī, Akram Diyā'. *Madīnan Society at the Time of the Prophet. The Jihād against the Mushrikūn*. Trans. by Hudā Khattāb. Washington. The International Institute of Islamic Thought. 1991, vol. 2, p. 222.

2. Siddiqui, Abul Hameed. *The Life of Muhammad*, op. cit., pp. 282-283.

1.4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN *SŪRAT AL-FATH* AND *SŪRAT AL-HUJURĀT*

Mawlānā Amīn Aḥsan Iṣḥāḥī adds another dimension to *Sūrat al-Hujurāt*. He maintains that there exists a historical relationship between *Sūrat al-Fath* (48), and *Sūrat al-Hujurāt* (49). He states that the entire contents of *Sūrat al-Hujurāt* is the explanation of the last verses of *Sūrat al-Fath*.¹ In the last verses of *Sūrat al-Fath*, the attributes of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and his *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) (r.a.) are spelt out:

*"Muḥammad is the messenger of Allāh and those who are with him, are very strong against the disbelievers, and they are polite to one another."*²

The revelation of the last verses of *Sūrat al-Fath* ascertain the fact that the newcomers to Islam were unaware of the real status of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and of their responsibilities within the Islamic society. It is through the revelation that *Allāh* (SWT) provides general guidance to the people, including that which concerns respect that ought to be accorded to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

All instructions given by *Allāh* (SWT) are directed to the believers for their moral and spiritual upliftment. The revelation of *Sūrat al-Naṣr* verifies the events that were to follow after the victorious conquest of Makkah:

1. Iṣḥāḥī, Amīn Aḥsan. *Taddabur-e-Qur'ān*. Lahore. Farān Foundations. 1991. Vol. 7, p. 479.

2. *Qur'ān*, 48:29.

"When Allāh's succour and triumph come and you see mankind entering the religion of Allāh in troops."¹

It is through this revelation that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is informed in advance about the Year of Deputations when tribe after tribe would come to accept Islam at his hands. *Sūrat al-Fath* speaks of the victory of the Muslims and as victory brings about ease, *Sūrat al-Hujurāt* denounces the vices of such a society which is engrossed in comfort and ease.

1.5 THE SOCIO-ETHICAL NORMS

Sūrat al-Hujurāt lays down seven socio-ethical norms, relevant to maintain unity within the infant Islamic State.² These norms, however, are not bound by time and space.

The first norm is enunciated in its first verse which teaches believers what code of conduct must be observed towards *Allāh* (SWT) and His Messenger (s.a.w.s.). Verses 2-5 lay down the injunction that *Allāh's* Messenger (s.a.w.s.) must be respected. This means that Muslims should lower their tone in his presence. Then the passage goes on to lay down the positive aspect of the injunction. It refers to the people who speak softly and gently as those who are God-conscious. The passage then reverts to reminding people that those who call out to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) from outside the private chambers do not understand the evil consequences of such behaviour.³

1. *Qur'ān*, 110:2.

2. *Taddabur-e-Qur'ān*, op. cit. Vol.7, p. 479.

3. *ibid*, Vol. 7, p. 487.

Verses 6-8 lay down the third ethical norm which deals with matters pertaining to the investigation of reports. The historical background of verse 6 can be traced back to the incident when the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) ordered Walīd bin ‘Uqbah bin Abī Mu‘ayt (r.a.) to collect *zakāt* from *Banū Mustaliq*. Because of strained relationships that existed with this tribe during the pre-Islamic era, Walīd (r.a.) was reluctant to undertake the task at first. However, since it was the Prophet’s (s.a.w.s.) instruction, he had no other option. As he came near to where the tribe was residing, an overwhelming majority of people from that tribe advanced towards him. He was under the impression that they had come out to kill him, while they had in effect come to accord him a rousing welcome. Thus, he returned to Madīnah without collecting the *zakāt* from them. He informed the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) that *Banū Mustaliq* were against Islam. Thereafter, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) sent Khālīd bin Walīd (r.a.) to investigate the incident, and Khalid (r.a.) came back with good news.¹

The fourth norm is contained in verses 9-10 and relates to the establishment of peace between two parties who fight each other. This injunction is also based on respect for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Since all believers are spiritually his followers, making peace among them is indicative of respect for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) who laid down the foundation for Muslim brotherhood.² Hence, the crux of verses 9-10 is the establishment of peace between members of the Muslim community on the basis of Islamic ideology of *‘Ukhuwwah* (brotherhood).

The fifth social norm is contained in verse 11. It lays down the rule for showing respect

1. Qutb, Sayyid. *Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān*. Beirut. Maṭba‘at al-Shurūq. 1974. Vol. 6, p. 3341.
2. Siddiqui, Abudul Hameed. *The Life of Muhammad*, op. cit., pp. 282.

to members of the Muslim community, and warns against indulging in unseemly acts.

The sixth norm is found in verse 12. It forbids Muslims from engaging in any activity or action which could lead to enmity, hatred, etc.

The seventh socio-ethical norm pertains to *taqwā* (God-consciousness). It is categorically pointed out that one's status and honour in the sight of *Allāh* (SWT) depend upon one's *taqwā* and certainly not upon any kind of prejudice or bias.

The Year of Deputations marked the end of the era of ignorance, and ushered in the era of knowledge, human kindness and mutual social relationship. Deputations from every Arabian tribe streamed into Madīnah in order to pay homage to Islam and to the last Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

Prior to the arrival of these deputations, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) had sent letters to the rulers within the country and to kings and emperors of neighbouring lands, inviting them to accept Islam. Muḥammad Tāhir Patnī, the noted Indian scholar of Traditions, writes in his celebrated *Majma' Bahr al-Anwar*:

This was the Year of Deputations and since the Quraysh were the religious leaders and guardians of the House of God, the Arabian tribes had adopted a policy to watch and wait in regard to Islam. When the Quraysh bowed their heads to Islam, Makkah was captured and the *Thaqīf* tribe also accepted Islam. They too came to realize that it was not possible for them to resist the power of Islam. Then deputations started arriving in Madīnah from

all over Arabia and the people entered the Faith of God collectively.¹

Although many of the tribes had accepted Islam before coming to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), they were nevertheless still weak in their *imān* (faith) and thus came to learn more about Islam. During that period, a number of orators and poets challenged the Muslims to a contest in oratory and poetry. The contest ended in establishing the supremacy of Islam.²

At this juncture, it must be noted that Arab tribesmen lacked diplomacy and refined mannerism when they conversed with the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Apart from the absence of any proper etiquette in addressing the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) we may note in the following dialogue, however, their openness in questioning the truth that was being imparted to them. The context of the following dialogue is related to the time when the delegation of the *Banū ‘Āmir* tribe visited the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and their leader addressed the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) thus:

Ḍammām bin Tha‘labah: Oh Muḥammad! Your emissary came to us saying that you have been sent by *Allāh* as a Messenger.

The Prophet (s.a.w.s.): He has spoken the truth.

Ḍammām bin Tha‘labah: Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and who entrenched these mountains amongst other things?

The Prophet (s.a.w.s.): *Allāh* (SWT).

Ḍammām bin Tha‘labah: By *Allāh*, Creator of the heavens, earth, and the mountains, tell me in truth, did *Allāh* really send you as His Messenger?

1. *Muhammad Rasulallah - The Apostle of Mercy*, op. cit, pp. 365-366.

2. *ibid*, p. 366.

- The Prophet (s.a.w.s.): Yes, that is the truth.
- Ḍammām bin Tha‘labah: Your emissary told us that the five daily prayers are compulsory.
- The Prophet (s.a.w.s.): He spoke the truth.
- Ḍammām bin Tha‘labah: Then your emissary told us about fasting for one month in a year.
- The Prophet (s.a.w.s.): Yes, he stated the truth.
- Ḍammām bin Tha‘labah: By *Allāh* Who sent you as a Messenger, did He command you to tell us to fast?
- The Prophet (s.a.w.s.): Yes.
- Ḍammām bin Tha‘labah: Your emissary told us that it is compulsory on one to perform the *ḥajj* should one have the means to undertake the journey to Makkah?
- The Prophet (s.a.w.s.): Yes, he stated the truth.

Mawlānā Muḥammad Badr-i-‘Ālam states that after Ḍammām bin Tha‘labah (r.a.) questioned the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) he proclaimed, "By *Allāh*, the Creator Who sent you as the true Messenger, I will neither add to nor subtract anything from your teachings."¹

Muḥammad Badr-i-‘Ālam also points out that in the compilations of *Imāms* Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, al-Bukhārī, Muslim and Abū Dā‘ūd, it is mentioned that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.)

1. Badr-i-‘Ālam, Muḥammad. *Tarjumān al-Sunnah*. Delhi. Nadwat al-Muṣannifīn. 1948, vol. 1, pp. 545-546.
 2. *ibid*, op. cit., p. 546.

said: "*If that person has spoken the truth, then he will certainly enter paradise.*"¹

Analysing the above conversation between the leader of the delegation of *Banū 'Āmir* and the Prophet (s.a.w..s.), it appears that the conversation was a highly structured activity in which the interlocutors tacitly seemed to be operating with a set of basic conventions. Four basic conventions are being applied in this conversation.

The leader of the delegation and the Prophet (s.a.w..s.) have undoubtedly adopted a co-operative attitude when communicating. This is why the conversation went on smoothly and was successful. The four conventions gleaned from this conversation are as follows:

i) The interlocutors' contributions to the conversation were true. They believed in what they conversed about. However, the leader of the delegation lacked adequate evidence. Therefore, he was overwhelming in his interrogation which sounded rude. As a result there is an indirect hint that a person speaking to the Prophet (s.a.w.s) needs to be polite.

ii) The next convention which the interlocutors used was to be as informative as required for the purposes of the conversation. Neither of the interlocutors said too little nor too much. From this point of view as well, the conversation was successful. However, the style of speech of the leader of the delegation was not very elegant. Hence, the emphasis in verse 2 of *Sūrat al-Hujurāt* provides a clear directive that one should be polite while conversing with the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

iii) Another of convention used in the conversation is to be relevant i.e. clearly relating

1. Badr-i-'Ālam, op. cit., p. 546.

to the purpose of the exchange. Here too the conversation proceeded successfully, but the language of the leader of the delegation of the tribe sounded impolite and abrupt.

iv) The final convention used is that the interlocutors were orderly and concise, and avoided obscurity and ambiguity. Nevertheless, the mannerism of the leader of the delegation seems insolent, impertinent and somewhat offensive. As a result this *Sūrah* lays down that while conversing with the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) one must display respect while addressing the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), both in behaviour and language.¹

Ethnomethodology² of the Arab society shows that there was a dire need to educate these tribes about exemplary manners and sound morals. *Sūrat al-Hujurāt* provides discourse in this respect, not only for the sake of the privacy of Prophet (s.a.w.s.), but also for the privacy to be observed among Muslims. Hence, two major themes covered in this particular chapter are:

- i) respect for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) which involves *imān* (faith);
- ii) mutual respect among Muslims, which involves social interactions, such as brotherhood, etc.

It is to be noted that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is not only regarded as the spiritual head of the Muslim community, but being the last Messenger of *Allāh*, he was also entrusted with the

1. Insight into the conversation was made possible with the interview conducted with Dr. A.K. Aziz, Senior Lecturer, Department of Arabic, Urdu and Persian, University of Durban-Westville.

2. This is a term used in Sociology which denotes "an examination into human behaviour.

task of guiding his *ummah* (community) both in their religious as well as temporal affairs" Besides this, he (s.a.w.s.) made it his duty to teach the new adherents to the fold of Islam the ethical norms. *Sūrat al-Hujurāt* is an important Chapter, for in it are to be found lessons in Islamic ethics and morality which were not only applicable during the time of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), but are equally applicable in every day and age.

Chapter Two

MAJOR THEMES AND ISSUES

The major themes echoed in *Sūrat al-Hujurāt* are of indispensable value since they provide mankind with the necessary guidance which pertain to the ethical and moral code, relevant to any time and place in history. A thorough scrutiny of its verses reveal at least eight major themes. These major themes are listed in the table below:

No.	Themes and Issues	Verse No.
1	Obedience to <i>Allāh</i> (SWT) and His Messenger (s.a.w.s.)	1
2	Respect for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.)	2 - 5
3	Verification of Reports	6
4	Maintenance of Peace and Brotherhood of Muslims	9 - 10
5	Condemnation of Reviling People, Defaming them and being Sarcastic to them	11
6	Gravity of Suspicion, Spying and Backbiting	12
7	Equality of Mankind	13
8	Sincerity of <i>Īmān</i> (Faith) and its Impact on Action	14 - 15

Each theme as arranged in the above table will be examined separately in the light of the views of various scholars, both classical and contemporary. In addition, various other *Qur'ānic* injunctions as well as teachings from the *Hadīth* which are relevant to each theme will be cited so as to shed more light upon each theme.

2.1 OBEDIENCE TO ALLĀH (SWT) AND HIS MESSENGER (s.a.w.s.)

*"O ye who believe! Put not yourselves forward before Allāh and His Apostle, but fear Allāh: For Allāh is He who hears and knows all things."*¹

Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, in his celebrated *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, mentions the *asbāb al-nuzūl* (causes of revelation) of this verse. It may suffice here to mention three of them:²

1. This verse was revealed because on the day of 'Īd al-Adḥā (The Festival of Sacrifice) during the lifetime of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) some Muslims had sacrificed their animals before the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) had done so, and before he had lead them in the 'Īd ṣalāh (prayer). The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) instructed them to re-offer their sacrifice.

2. According to ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah (r.a.) this revelation came down in order to caution the people not to keep fast on the day of doubt but rather to begin keeping their fast upon the instruction of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

3. Some people were talking and saying that it would be good if a revelation could come addressing such and such an issue. This displeased Allāh (SWT), for it was not for them to anticipate a revelation on a particular issue.

1. *Qur'ān*, 49:1

2. Al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr. *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*. Beirut. Dār al-Ma'rifah, n.d. Vol. 11, pp. 76-77.

Thus, *Allāh* (SWT) revealed verse 1 to instruct the believers to observe patience while following in the footsteps of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and not to engage in any religious matter prior to having received a clear directive from the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

Various *mufasssirūn* (scholars of the exegesis of the *Qur'ān*) have made attempts to delve into the meanings of the revealed verses and their commentaries give us an insight into their significance. For example, *Mawlānā* Abū al-Ā'īlā Mawdūdī analyses verse 1 thus:

"Do not go ahead of *Allāh* and His Messenger (s.a.w.s.) but follow behind: Do not precede them, but be subordinate to them. Do not decide your matters yourself by your own, but look for guidance in *Allāh's* Book and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (s.a.w.s.) concerning those matters".¹

Like Mawdūdī, a similar interpretation is given by al-Ṭabarī wherein he states that one should not hasten in implementing religious and worldly matters before receiving the decision of *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). In order to lend support to this view, he cites the interpretation of Ibn 'Abbās (r.a.) that one should not say anything against the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*.² Al-Ṭabarī also quotes a statement made by Mujāhid which cautions one not to give any *fatwā* (religious decree) until one has fully understood the Will of *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).³

1. Mawdūdī, S. Abul Ā'īlā. *Text, Translation and Brief Notes of the Holy Qur'ān*. Trans. by Murad Puri, M.A. Text. Lahore. Islamic Publications Ltd. 1982. Vol. 2. 1st Edition, p. 296.

2. *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, op. cit. Vol. 11, p. 74.

3. *ibid*, p. 74.

Here it may appropriate to state that this opening verse is addressed to the believers which pronounces the supremacy of *Allāh*'s injunction and it is obvious that since the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is the medium through which the Will of *Allāh* (SWT) has been made known, he must be obeyed. Since *Allāh* (SWT) is Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent, it is imperative that all believers must abide by *Allāh*'s (SWT) injunctions. Hence, one's submission to *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) must be with complete willingness. This means that a true believer must accept the authority of *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) without hesitation, demand or question. Once Divine Authority has been accepted, then believers must act upon Divine Orders without raising any doubts. Therefore, believers are commanded not to make hasty decisions and snap judgements regarding religious or secular affairs, but should derive guidance from the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* as is evident in the following verse of the *Qur'ān*:

*"If ye differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allāh and His Apostle."*¹

Abū Amīnah Bilāl Philips adds another dimension to the meaning of the opening verses and suggests that figuratively one is in *Allāh*'s (SWT) presence when one recites the *Qur'ān*. Such is the case also when one studies the *Aḥādīth* which explain the Prophet's (s.a.w.s.) *Sunnah*. Hence, the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* can be described in contemporary times as being in the presence of *Allāh* (SWT) and His Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Forwardness and haste in *Allāh* (SWT) and His Prophet's (s.a.w.s.) presence could imply making instantaneous judgements based on superficial recitation and by misinterpretations of the *Qur'ān* and

1. *Qur'ān*, 4:59.

Sunnah. Another aspect of such forwardness could allude to giving one's own personal opinions or allowing cultural behaviour to take precedence over the injunctions of the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*. Great precautions must, therefore, be taken when explaining or discussing the original sources of Islam. No statements must be made which contradict the categorical Divine Injunctions and that of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).¹ Otherwise this practice may have a detrimental effect on one's moral and spiritual evolution. It may even result in leading people astray and out of the fold of Islam. In this regard, the *Qur'ān* explicitly declares:

*"It is not fitting for a Believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allāh and His Apostle, to have any option about their decision: If anyone disobeys Allāh and His Apostle, he is indeed on a clearly wrong path."*²

It is also of utmost importance that one should revere the *Qur'ān* and be attentive to its message when it is being recited. Mere listening to the recitation would not be of much value, but it is only by reciting it or listening to it with comprehension and understanding would one then be in a position to enrich one's knowledge pertaining to the Divine Commandments. Hence *Allāh* (SWT) declares:

*"When the Qur'ān is read, listen to it with attention."*³

1. *Tafseer Al-Hujuraat - A Commentary on the 49th Chapter of the Quraan*, op. cit., pp. 44-45.

2. *Qur'ān*, 33:36.

3. *Qur'ān*, 7:204.

Similarly, one is also required to listen obediently to the pronouncements of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Although the authority of the *Qur'ān* is binding on all Muslims, it must be borne in mind that the *Sunnah* is also an indispensable source of guidance for mankind in every era and generation. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.), in his *Khutbat al-Wadā'ah* (Farewell Sermon), states that Muslims should seek guidance from both the *Qur'ān* and his *Sunnah*.¹

Hence, the question of indispensability of the *Ḥadīth* depends on the position of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). The mission of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) has been clearly laid down in *Sūrat al-Jumu'ah*:

"It is He Who has sent amongst the unlettered an Apostle from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom" ²

The above summarizes the mission of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in that he was entrusted to recite the Revealed Verses, teach the Book and Wisdom, and to cleanse and purify the people. If mankind can emulate the examples and the precedence laid down by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) then society can be assured that justice will always be coupled with mercy.

Real obedience to and reverence for *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) can be achieved only if there is absolute fear of *Allāh* (SWT) in the inner self of a human-being.

1. Haykal, Muḥammad Ḥusayn. *The Life of Muḥammad*. Trans. by Isma'īl Rāgī al-Fārūqī. USA. North American Trust Publications. 1976, p. 487.

2. *Qur'ān*, 62:2.

Allāh (SWT) concludes verse 1 with a directive to fear Him at all times and in all spheres of life. Any form of deception or superficial devotion to spiritual matters for the attainment of one's personal desires or ulterior motives cannot surpass the knowledge of *Allāh* (SWT), since the knowledge of *Allāh* (SWT) is not confined to time and space. Therefore, *Allāh* (SWT) declares His two *ṣifāt* (Attributes), i.e. the all-Knowing and the All-Hearing in the closure of verse 1. This verifies that the inner intentions behind man's deeds are known to *Allāh* (SWT), and the verbal pronouncements of man are heard by *Allāh* (SWT) at all times.

In view of the real obedience to *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), 'Allamah Shabbir Aḥmad Uthmānī reinforces the idea of fear of *Allāh* (SWT) by stating: "It should be remembered that God hears that which is pronounced by the tongue and knows that which is in the heart. Then how will this device or deception do before God? So a man should engage in his work fearing Him."¹

Philips adds to this view by stating that verse 1 is sealed with two of *Allāh*'s (SWT) qualities, both of which produce a real state of God-consciousness in all who comprehend their implications. It is real fear of *Allāh* (SWT) that brings to the understanding of the believer the question of accountability to *Allāh*, for he realizes that any form of disrespect to *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* are known to *Allāh* (SWT).²

1. Usmani, Allamah Shabbir Ahmed. *The Noble Quraan - Tafseer-e-Usmani*. Trans. by Maulana Mohammed Ashfaq Ahmed. Lahore. Aalameen Publications, n.d., Vol. III, p. 111.

2. *Tafseer Al-Hujuraat*, op. cit., p. 45.

The only path to sincere and absolute obedience to *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is by strict adherence to the concepts of *iṭā'ah* (obedience) and *ittibā'* (adherence) which appear in the following *Qur'ānic* injunction: "Say if you do love *Allāh*, follow me, then *Allāh* will love you."¹ Both the terms, *iṭā'ah* and *ittibā'* are very closely inter-related. The former is classified into two categories. Firstly, a believer must mentally be ready to accept the authority of *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). The second step is to obey the authority of *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in totality and unconditionally. If one does not totally submit to the authority of *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.); then it means that one is arrogant and possesses pride, and such actions can be compared to the actions of *Iblīs* (Satan) who refused to obey the orders of *Allāh* (SWT), eg. the *Qur'ān* states:

*"And behold, We said to Angels: "Bow down to Ādam:" and they bowed down: Not so Iblīs: he refused and was haughty he was of those who reject Faith."*²

Ittibā' literally means to place one's footsteps on the footstep of someone else; and hence *ittibā'* of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) means to follow his instructions and to emulate him. Hence it means that acceptance of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) as one's role model is the first step towards submission to *Allāh* (SWT). From this it is evident that obedience to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is in fact obedience to *Allāh* (SWT). Here a question may be posed: is it binding upon Muslims to follow the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) at all times? In order to clarify this point, it is imperative that the different categories of *Sunnah* be discussed here

1. *Qur'ān*, 3:31.

2. *Qur'ān*, 2:34.

so as to shed light upon that which is obligatory and that which is optional. Basically there are three types of *Sunnah*:¹

a) A *taqrīr sunnah* is that which was established by the instruction and implementation of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and was upheld by the *ṣahābah*. An example of *taqrīr Sunnah* is the method of performing the *ṣalāt*.

b) The actions of the *ṣahābah* which the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) observed and either stopped them or did not. For example the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) stopped them from wearing gold rings.

c) The actions of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) which he did not impose upon his *ṣahābah* (r.a.) to implement, eg. his personal habits, mode of dressing, his manner of eating, his likes and dislikes.

Out of the abovementioned *Sunnah*, only the first two categories are binding on the Muslim *Ummah* (community). The last category constitutes the personal privilege of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). This means that if any Muslim emulates this *Sunnah* with the *niyyah* (intention) of attaining *thawāb* (reward), then he would be rewarded for that. However, if he omits any *Sunnah* of this category, then he will not be accountable. At the same time it must be also borne in mind that although the personal *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is not binding, a believer does not have the right to condemn any person who upholds such a *sunnah* nor should he/she ask such a person to refrain from it.

1. Al-Sibā'ī, Muṣṭafā. *Al-Sunnah fī al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī*. Damascus. Al-Maktab al-Islāmī. 1978. 2nd. Edition, pp. 48-49.

Having discussed the concept of obedience to *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), and its relevance for mankind, it is now appropriate to develop the corollary which is respect for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). This respect must be adhered to, for it is the path to spiritual growth and self-realization.

Respect in general refers to the treating of someone with reverence. According to Divine Law, respect for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) differs from that of other human beings which is defined by verse 2 of this *Sūrah*. Hence respect for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) would mean to treat the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) with great reverence, veneration and honour. Respect for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is the reverence which a follower shows to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and his teachings, thereby displaying an integrated spiritual awareness that the Divine Message requires both commitment and humility which are significant ideals in a noble mind. Hence, respect for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) must be sustained and perpetuated so that future generations would adopt his teachings and thus make his followers conscious of his everlasting message.

2.2 RESPECT FOR THE PROPHET (s.a.w.s.)

"O ye who believe! Raise not your voice above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak aloud to him in talk, as ye may speak aloud to one another, lest your deeds become vain and ye perceive not. Those that lower their voice in the presence of Allāh's Apostle - their hearts Has Allāh tested for piety: For them is Forgiveness and a great reward. Those who shout out to thee from without the Inner Apartments - Most of them lack understanding. If only they had patience, until thou couldst come out to

them it would be best for them: but Allāh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."¹

One of the causes of the revelation of the above was the crude mannerism which the deputation of *Banū Tamīm* tribe, out of ignorance of the elevated status of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), displayed when they addressed him. They posed abrupt questions and they were also disrespectful to him. Furthermore, they exercised impatience by not waiting for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) to come out of his apartment and to receive them for the purpose of discourse and decision-making. It is through the revelation of verse 2 that the believers are taught the manner in which they ought to approach the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).²

Apart from the above-mentioned reason, another factor is related to the incident when *ḥadhrat* Abū Bakr (r.a.) and *ḥadhrat* ‘Umar (r.a.) had voiced their opinions to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) on the issue of choosing a leader for the *Banū Tamīm* tribe. *Ḥadhrat* Abū Bakr (r.a.) proposed the name of Alqa‘qā‘ bin Ma‘bad (r.a.), while *ḥadhrat* ‘Umar (r.a.) proposed Al-Aqra‘ bin Ḥābis (r.a.). Thus, while voicing their opinions, a dispute ensued between them and they raised their voices to such a level that the voice of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) was suppressed.³

By revealing the above verses, *Allāh* (SWT) instructs the believers how to behave whilst in the presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Thus, social conduct is guided by Divine Reve-

1. *Qur‘ān*, 49:2-5.

2. Khān, Ā‘lā Hazrat Aḥmad Razā. *Kanz al-Īmān*. Lahore. Diyā‘ al-Qur‘ān Publications, n.d., p. 928.

3. *Fī zilāl al-Qur‘ān*, op. cit. Vol. 6, p. 3339.

lation. It is now imperative to crystalise the essence of the revelation not only in its original context, but also to discuss its relevance to present times.

Just as verse 1 is introduced by an address to believers, with a negative assertion, there is a similar technique applied in verse 2. Firstly, believers are commanded not to raise their voices in the presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) which means that they should not shout out the name of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in the vicinity of his apartments, nor should they address him as they would address each other, nor should they converse loudly with him as they would with each other. Such actions depict vanity and arrogance on the part of a believer. *Allāh* (SWT) warns believers that transgression of such a nature would result in serious consequences, i.e. that a believer would be deprived of all blessings and salvation in this world, as well as in the Hereafter. This means that the believer would not be eligible for any reward which is being anticipated to be attained on the Day of Judgement. Therefore, *Allāh* (SWT) declares to the believers who are guilty of such transgression, that all their accumulated good deeds on earth would not be given due recognition and would definitely be annulled. Hence, only a total condemnation of the misconduct of the Arab tribes of those times helped to create an impact which was essential to bring about a transformation from the immoral to the moral. Therefore, believers should refrain from vociferously expressing their views to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), for such mannerism depicts arrogance against the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and his authority. It is quite clear that by the revelation of verse 2, any form of superiority shown to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is actually taken to be a mark of disrespect, and as such *Allāh* (SWT) imposes a grievous penalty for such violation.

When verse 2 was revealed, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) recited it to his *ṣahābah* (r.a.) who had gathered around him. Upon its recitation, a certain *ṣahābī* by the name of Thābit ibn Qays (r.a.) began to cry for he was under the impression that the revelation was directed at, and applicable to him since he was accustomed to speaking very loudly in view of the fact that he was hard of hearing. This misunderstanding resulted in his avoiding the *masjid* so as not to be in the presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Furthermore, he commanded his wife, Jamīlah bin ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Ubayy ibn Salūl to place him under lock and key. He vowed to remain in solitary confinement in his own dwelling until he sought the forgiveness of *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). His absence was a cause for concern and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) delegated ‘Aṣim bin ‘Addī (r.a.) to bring Thābit bin Qays (r.a.) to him. When he was brought before the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), he was questioned about the reason for his estrangement. He replied that he felt that the revelation of verse 2 was applicable to him for he was accustomed to speaking loudly in the presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Hence, he feared that all his good deeds would be declared null and void. Thereafter, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) reassured him that he was not an inmate of hell, but an inmate of heaven, and therefore he should live happily on earth. The glad tidings given by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) allayed his fears. During the Battle of Yamāmah, he was martyred, as predicted by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).¹

Another significant point which needs to be highlighted is that the revelation of verse 2 had a tremendous impact on the life of *ḥadrat* Abū Bakr (r.a.) and *ḥadrat* ‘Umar (r.a.). It resulted in effecting an immediate transformation of their behavioural pattern in the

1. *Tafseer Al-Hujuraat*, op. cit., p. 48.

presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). It is reported that they resolved never to raise their voices in his (s.a.w.s.) presence again.¹ *Ḥadīrat* Abū Bakr (r.a.) said, "By *Allāh* Who sent you as a Messenger, I will not talk loudly to you again till my death. As for *ḥadīrat* 'Umar (r.a.), he would not speak until the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) granted him permission to speak. When he used to speak, he was so inaudible that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) had to ask him what he had said.²

The reaction of Thābit bin Qays (r.a.) and the changes brought about in the mode of articulation of *ḥadīrat* 'Abu Bakr (r.a.) and that of *ḥadīrat* 'Umar (r.a.) bear testimony to the fact that their intense fear for *Allāh* (SWT) inculcated in them the highest degree of respect for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) which was not an imposition by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) but, rather a strict command from *Allāh* (SWT) Himself. From this, we gather that the *ṣahābah* (r.a.) applied the verses of the *Qur'ān* to themselves, not only theoretically but practically too.

The meaning of the *Qur'ānic* injunctions had a positive impact on their hearts which strengthened their belief in *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). The mere mention of *Allāh*'s name caused them to tremble with fear, and as such they acted upon the directives of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) without expressing a shadow of doubt. The following *Qur'ānic* verse describes their exclusive qualities pertaining to their belief and their total submission to the Will of *Allāh* (SWT) and the authority of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.):

1. *Ḍiyā' al-Qur'ān*, op. cit. Vol. 3, p. 575.

2. Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, Abū Bakr Aḥmad bin 'Alī al-Rāzī. *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*. Beirut. Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabī, n.d. Vol. 6, p. 1702.

*"For , Believers are those who, when the name of Allāh is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts, and when they hear His Signs rehearsed, find their faith strengthened, and put (all) their trust in the Lord."*¹

The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) constantly exposed his companions (r.a.) to the revelation of *Allāh* (SWT), by means of recitation and interpretation. Thus, to them the *Qur'ānic* injunctions were Divine Directives that ought to be implemented.

Commenting on the impact that the *Qur'ānic* verses had on the lives of the *ṣahābah* (r.a.), Philips states, "the reading or recitation of the *Qur'ān* would cause tears of ecstasy or deep reflection. It was not the sound of the *Qur'ān* which changed their lives but the Divine Message contained in its passages."²

During the lifetime of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and after his demise, the *ṣahābah* were the torch-bearers of the message of Islam. Their intense love and reverence for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) never allowed them to deviate from the path of righteousness. Hence, their personal sacrifices, for the sake of *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) are regarded as a Divine Blessing, which contributed to the successful propagation of Islam to all parts of the world. Their strict adherence to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) has left an indelible mark in the minds of their contemporaries, and the generations to follow. Therefore, in every era and generation, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is to be regarded as the pillar of spiritual strength for all believers. If believers desire to be the recipients of *Allāh's*

1. *Qur'ān*, 8:2.

2. *Tafseer Al-Hujuraat*, op. cit., p. 50.

(SWT) mercy in this world and as well as in the Hereafter, then respect and reverence for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), including his discourses and authority are of vital importance. Therefore, the believers in every era and eon should accept the fact that the *ṣahābah* (r.a.) are role models who exemplified reverence for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), and by virtue of their humbleness and humility, were always ready to serve the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). The way of life practised and taught by the *ṣahābah* (r.a.) should become a way of life for all believers. Al-Sā'ib ibn Yazīd (r.a.) reports that *ḥadīrat* 'Umar (r.a.) once heard two men raising their voices in the *Masjid* of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). He questioned them whether they realized where they were. Before they could provide an answer, *ḥadīrat* 'Umar (r.a.) posed another question, enquiring from them where they had come from. Since they replied that they were from Ṭā'if, *ḥadīrat* 'Umar (r.a.) spared them. Had they been from Madīnah, they would have received a severe lashing from him for raising their voices in the Prophet's (s.a.w.s.) *Masjid*.¹

Analysing verse 2, 'Allāmah Shabbir Aḥmad 'Uthmānī elaborates upon the code of conduct to be adhered to when in the *majlis* (gathering) of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) as follows:²

a) The rank of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is far higher than that of men; therefore, if one were to speak to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), one ought to speak with a soft voice and in a reverential style with politeness and courtesy.

1. Al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad bin Ismā'īl. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Cairo. Dār wa Maṭābi' al-Sha'b, n.d. Kitāb al-Ṣalāh. Vol 1. Part 1, p. 127.

2. *The Noble Quraan - Tafseer-e-Usmāni*, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 2224.

b) The persons present should not make noise or speak loudly, bitterly, sharply or acrimoniously among themselves.

Raising of one's voice means speaking without reservation and can be detrimental to the feelings of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Therefore, *Allāh* (SWT) places a grievous penalty for improper behavioural pattern in the presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). In this regard, the following *Hadīth* may be cited wherein the following is stated:

*"A man may inadvertently speak a word pleasing to Allāh because of which Paradise is destined for him, and another may recklessly speak a word displeasing to Allāh because of which he will be cast in hellfire further than the distance between heaven and earth."*¹

In reference to the prohibition of raising of voices above that of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), al-Ṭabarī states that one should not regard the call of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) as that of another ordinary being. He elaborates further by stating that *Allāh* (SWT) strongly condemns the followers of Islam from addressing the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in the manner in which they would address one another. By this is meant that *Allāh* (SWT) commands that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) must be accorded respect and reverence of the highest degree, above that of all other creations of *Allāh* (SWT). Therefore, it is of utmost importance to address the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) by the appropriate titles as designated by *Allāh* (SWT).² Al-Ṭabarī cites the following *Qur'ānic* injunction to further substantiate his view:

1. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, op. cit. Kitāb al-Da'wāt. Vol. 3. Part 8, p. 135.

2. *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, op. cit. Vol. 11, p. 74.

*"Deem not the summons of the Apostle among yourselves like the summons of one of you to another: Allāh does know those of you who slip away under the shelter of some excuse: then let those beware who withstand the Apostle's order, lest some trial befalls them, or a grievous penalty be inflicted on them."*¹

Throughout the *Qur'ān*, Allāh (SWT) distinctly commands mankind to fear Him and to hold the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in high esteem. Besides commanding mankind to adhere to the code of respect and reverence for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), Allāh (SWT) provides a practical demonstration as to how the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is to be approached and addressed. Scanning through the text, one can easily note that whenever Allāh (SWT) addresses the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) directly, He never addresses him by name, but in the most honorific terms eg.: "O Apostle/O Prophet"²; "O Messenger"³; "O thou folded in garments"⁴; "O thou wrapped up in a mantle"⁵.

The above is indicative of the fact that it is obligatory for a believer not to address the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) by his name, but by the most honorific terms as stipulated by the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*. This means that when a believer utters the name of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in his daily speech or engages in discussions related to the life of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), or when imparting knowledge where mention is made of the name of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) then a believer must add (Peace and Blessings of Allāh be upon him). The response of the

1. *Qur'ān*, 14:63.

2. *Qur'ān*, 8:64; 8:70; 33:1; 33:28.

3. *Qur'ān*, 5:44.

4. *Qur'ān*, 73:1.

5. *Qur'ān*, 74:1.

hearer of the sacred name of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) should also be the same. It is this mark of humility which enables a believer to perceive the high status that ought to be accorded to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

In yet another citation, *Allāh* (SWT) prohibits mankind to address or describe the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) by using words which are derogatory or ambiguous which may result in degradation of his unique status:

*"O ye of Faith! Say not (to the Apostle) words of ambiguous import, but words of respect; and harken (to him). To those without Faith is a grievous punishment."*¹

In reference to the above verse, some scholars hold that even the slightest disrespect shown when addressing the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) will be detrimental to one's *īmān* (faith) and *ā'māl* (deeds). The reason for its revelation is that whenever the Jews came to see the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), they would pretend to show respect to him, but they would use ambiguous words or twist the words in order to insult him (s.a.w.s.). For example, when they wanted to draw his attention, they would use the expression *rā'inā*, which means "Pay attention to us." But this expression has other meanings also. In Hebrew, there is a word which has a similar sound and it means, "Listen, may you become deaf." In colloquial Arabic it meant "If you listen to us, then we will listen to you." Then with a little twist of the tongue it could be turned into *rā'īyanā*, which means "our shepherd." Thus, *Allāh* commands the believers not to use that word when desiring the attention of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). They should

1. *Qur'ān*, 2:104.

rather use another term i.e. *unzur nā* (look at us).¹

In every era and generation, scholars and learned men will always engage in discourses on the life of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), either in the form of speeches or in written works. They should thus heed the fact that they ought to accord due reverence and respect to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). They should carefully consider the choice of words and phrases when describing the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). In other words, they ought to refrain from using such a word in describing the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) that may be honorific in meaning in one language and yet derogatory in another. Likewise they should not use such words that are ambiguous. Moreover, if a word implies respect and reverence, but varies slightly in its pronunciation to imply disrespect, then such a word should not be used.

Dr. Mawlānā Faḍl al-Rahmān Ansari summarizes our duties to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) as follows:

- a) To respect him above all created-beings.
- b) To love him above all created-beings.
- c) To obey him without demur.
- d) To be absolutely loyal to him.²

From the following *Qur'ānic* citation, Muslims are made aware that a strong bond should exist between them and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.):

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1. Maududi, S. Abul A'la. *The Meaning of the Quran*. Lahore. Ripon Printing Press Limited. 3rd. Edition. 1974. Vol. 1, p. 102.
 2. Ansari, Muhammad Fazl-ur-Rahman. *The Qur'anic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society*. Karachi. Trade and Industry Publications Ltd. 1977. Vol. 2, p. 22.

*"So it is those who believe in him, honour him, help him, and follow the Light which is sent down to him, it is they who will prosper."*¹

Thus, it follows that in no way must a believer be disloyal to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) because disloyalty to him is in effect disloyalty to *Allāh* (SWT). If a believer is disloyal to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), it means that there is a defect within his/her innermost self, and as such his/her *īmān* (faith) would be in question. *Allāh* (SWT) strongly condemns any form of disloyalty by declaring:

*"O ye that believe! Betray not the trust of Allāh and the Apostle."*²

From this, one gathers that any form of deviation from the precepts laid down by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is viewed in a serious light. In addition to the consequences for superseding the authority of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) as portrayed in verse 2 of *Sūrat al-Hujurāt*, the following injunction is another example wherein *Allāh* (SWT) warns mankind of the serious consequences of showing disrespect to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.):

*"Those who annoy Allāh and His Apostle, Allāh has cursed them in this world and in the Hereafter, and has prepared for them a humiliating punishment."*³

1. *Qur'ān*, 7:157.

2. *Qur'ān*, 8:27.

3. *Qur'ān*, 33:57.

If raising of the voice above the voice of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is a sinful act which is followed by a grievous penalty, then one wonders what degree of sin and punishment would be meted out to the one who voices one's opinion against his commands, which in reality are the Commands of *Allāh* (SWT)?

Praising the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and holding him in high esteem above all the creations of *Allāh* (SWT) is classified as *al-Sunnah 'Ilāhiyah* (the Way of *Allāh*). In Chapter 94 *Allāh* (SWT) specifically states: *wa rafa'nā laka dhikrak* (i.e. and We (*Allāh*) has given you the esteem in which you are held) to demonstrate the great honour which He has conferred upon the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in this world. It also has a very deep connotation and has a world of glad tidings concealed in it. *Allāh* (SWT) assures him (s.a.w.s.) that however vehement his opponents might be in rejecting his call, and however insulting they might be in taunting him, He (SWT) has exalted his honour and has granted him (s.a.w.s.) the highest position amongst all created-beings. Therefore, the whole universe would be reverberating with the sound of his (s.a.w.s.) praise. In other words *Allāh* (SWT) guarantees that none of the opponents can inflict any harm on the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) or his mission.

It is a matter of fundamental belief that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is the only source of true guidance pertaining to success in this life and the next, believers are therefore obliged to maintain a close relationship with him (s.a.w.s.) by cultivating love for him within the innermost recesses of their hearts. Worship is exclusively for *Allāh* (SWT) alone, but worship of the Creator without showing obedience for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) will be meaningless, for no *ṣalāh* is complete without the recitation of *ṣalāt* (*al-taḥḥiyāt*).

Therefore, *Allāh* (SWT) has provided the believers with an obligatory medium of expressing their love and reverence for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) as is categorically depicted in the following verse:

*"Allāh and His angels send blessing on the Prophet: O ye who believe! send ye blessings on him, and salute him with all respect."*¹

From the above-mentioned injunction it is deduced that the *ṣalāt* and *salām* are a *sunnah* of *Allāh* (SWT) and if a believer desires to be the recipient of His mercy, then he/she should send salutations on the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) with the greatest of devotion and respect at all times. The following *Aḥadīth* clarify this injunction:

a) *Hadrat* Abū Ṭalhā (r.a.) reports that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) states:

*"Whosoever recites ṣalāt (salutations) on me once, then Allāh bestows His mercy ten times more on him."*²

c) *Hadrat* ‘Abd Allāh bin Mas‘ūd (r.a.) reports that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) states:

*"Verily Allāh (SWT) has certain angels wandering all over the earth in order to convey to me the ṣalāt of my ummah."*³

1. *Qur’ān*, 33:57.

2. Al-Nawawī, Abū Zakariyā Muḥyī al-Dīn Yaḥyā. *Nuzhat al-Muttaqīn Sharḥ Riyād al-Ṣāliḥīn*. Beirut. Mu‘assash al-Risālah. 1992. 20th Edition. Vol. 2, p. 199.

3. Khandhlawi, Muhammad Zakariyya. *Virtues of Salaat Alan Nabi*. Durban. Impress, n.d., p. 23.

It is thus evident that the love for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) must transcend the love for any other created-being, and that a close spiritual relationship should always exist between a believer and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). This point is further stressed by the following *Qur'ānic* citation:

*"The Prophet is closer to the Believers than their own selves."*¹

Closely related to the abovementioned *Qur'ānic* citation is a *Ḥadīth* which depicts the true meaning of love for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.):

*Ḥadrat Anas (r.a.) narrates that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) states: "A person cannot have perfect or complete īmān if his love for his parents, family members and other people transcends his love for me."*²

Thus far, respect, reverence and love for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) have been discussed in the light of Verse 2 of the *Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt* wherein *Allāh* (SWT) begins with a negative assertion and pronounces condemnation of all virtuous acts of a believer who displays any form of superiority over the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Reference was also made to the other *Qur'ānic* citations and relevant *Aḥadīth* in order to demonstrate how a believer should safeguard his/her virtuous deeds by the implementation of true love and respect for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). It is now essential to analyse verses 3 - 5 so as to further elaborate on other aspects pertaining to respect and reverence for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

1. *Qur'ān*, 33:6.

2. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, op. cit. Kitāb al-Īmān. Vol. 1. Part 1, p. 10.

Unlike verses 1 and 2, which begin with a negative assertion, verses 3 - 5 proceed to establish the positive aspect of the injunction, i.e. those who lower their voices in the presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and desist from such unruly conduct in the presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) are given the guarantee of benefitting from *Allāh's* (SWT) forgiveness. From this, one may safely infer that *Allāh* (SWT) will increase the piety of such an individual who dignifies the status of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and who submits to his authority.

It may be appropriate here to discuss the implication of *taqwā*. *Taqwā* may be defined as looking upon *Allāh* (SWT) with awe and reverence and consciously desiring to avoid the displeasure of *Allāh* (SWT) whom we conceive as the power of love. The root word is *waqaya* and conveys the sense of saving, guarding or preserving from something which causes injury or harm. Hence, *taqwā* means to guard oneself from sin, or what would cause harm to oneself in the world to come. The significance of this etymological analysis is that the verses in *Sūrat al-Hujurat* enjoin upon its readers to exercise *taqwā* as the first stage in man's spiritual advancement and they further lay down behavioural norms by which other stages of development which relate to moral, social and legal spheres. The locus of *taqwā* is within the heart. Therefore purification of the body is dependent on purification of the heart. The following *Hadīth* may be cited in order to emphasize the significance of *taqwā*:

"Islam is to openly declare, and īmān is from the heart." Thereafter the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) pointed to his heart three times declaring: "Taqwā lies herein."¹

1. *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, op. cit. Vol. 11, p. 89.

Philips interprets verse 3 in line with *Tafsīr* Ibn ‘Abbās (r.a.). He states that if a believer’s ideologies turn out to be contrary to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and are proven wrong by the veracity of authentic *Aḥadīth*, and such a believer lowers his voice by submitting to the truth, then he has passed the test of piety concerning his belief in the Prophethood of Muḥammad (s.a.w.s.).¹ This means that one’s *īmān* would not be complete without declaring and affirming that Muḥammad (s.a.w.s.) is the messenger of *Allāh*. Likewise, one has to uphold the teachings of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) without any reservations. Here it may be pointed out that precedence must be given to the *Sunnah* over one’s personal opinions. Submission to the *Sunnah* is a true reflection of one’s *īmān* and this fact is verified by the following *Ḥadīth* wherein the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) states: "*whosoever rejects or turns away from my Sunnah is not a true follower of mine.*"²

The essence of the test of this life, i.e. a choice between good and evil is the cardinal principle laid down in the verse that is being discussed. This could be further elaborated upon by stating that, if an intended act of disobedience is substituted by a virtuous deed, by virtue of choice, then such a person has passed the test of *taqwā* (piety) and becomes eligible for *Allāh*’s (SWT) forgiveness and rewards. To substantiate this point, the following *Ḥadīth* may be cited wherein the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) states:

*"Whosoever intends to commit a bad deed and chooses not to commit it, will have a good deed recorded for him."*³

1. *Tafseer Al-Hujuraat*, op. cit., p. 55.

2. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, op. cit. Kitāb al-Nikāh. Vol. 3. Part 7, p. 2.

3. *ibid.* Kitāb al-Da‘wāt. Vol. 3. Part 8, p. 128.

After severely reprimanding those guilty of misdemeanour in the presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), *Allah* (SWT) provides further discourses on the correct morals and ethics via the injunction of verse 5. He (SWT) places great emphasis on the inculcation of patience. The attribute of patience is a great virtue in Islam. It is one of the criteria by which mankind has to exercise in order to attain the forgiveness of *Allāh* (SWT). In almost every Chapter of the *Qur'ān*, *Allāh* (SWT) explicitly stresses this point, eg.:

*"Except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of patience and Constancy."*¹

*"O ye who believe! seek help with patient perseverance and prayer: for Allāh is with those who patiently preserve."*²

Verse 5 then concludes with two Attributes of *Allāh* (SWT), i.e. Forgiving and Merciful.

Allāh (SWT) reassures the believers that the doors of His forgiveness are always open. A believer should, therefore, not be despondent of His (SWT) Mercy, for He, in His (SWT) Infinite Mercy, is prepared to forgive those who have committed errors in the past on condition that their act of repentance be of a sincere nature.

It may be reiterated here that respect and reverence for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) should not

1. *Qur'ān*, 103:3.
2. *Qur'ān*, 2:153.

be a mere superficial expression, but an expression of conviction and readiness to follow his example as expressed in the following *Qur'ānic* citation:

*"Ye have indeed in the Apostle of God a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in God and the Final Day, and who engages much in the praise of God."*¹

Thus, true love, respect and reverence for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) will inspire the believer to follow him unconditionally. Dr. Ansari states that it is the bond of loyalty to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) which serves as the bond of integrity for the Islamic world-community.²

2.3 VERIFICATION OF REPORTS

*"O ye who believe! If a wicked comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest ye harm people unwittingly, and afterwards become full of repentance for what ye have done."*³

Verification of reports is vital in any community or State for the avoidance of conflict and the maintenance of peace and harmony. Since there are people in any given community with varying degrees of character, it is inevitable that some may contribute to the smooth running of a community, while others may create discord. Therefore, if a person's integrity is questionable, the veracity of any news or report conveyed by such a person must be put

1. *Qur'ān*, 103:3.

2. *The Quranic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society*, op. cit. Vol. 2, p. xiii.

3. *Qur'ān*, 2:153.

to the test in order to ascertain its validity and credibility.

The reason for the revelation of the abovementioned verse has already been discussed in detail in chapter 1. In addition to its historical perspective Philips states that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) despatched a group of companions (r.a.) to deal with the *Banū Mustaliq* tribe after Walīd bin ‘Uqbah (r.a.) had provided the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) with incorrect information that this particular tribe had refused to pay the *zakāt*. When the two groups met, it was confirmed that:

a) Walīd bin ‘Uqbah (r.a.) was guilty of transgression for he misconstrued the reason why the *Banū Mustaliq* tribe had sent out a delegation to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

b) This tribe was innocent, for its leaders had sent out a delegation to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) to enquire the reason for the delay in the collection of *zakāt*. They feared that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) did not contact them because *Allāh* (SWT) was displeased with them.¹

From a study of the *Sīrah* literature, it is evident that from time to time questions arose that had to be settled. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) would then exercise his own judgement as well as consult with his companions about the issue in question. If decisions arrived at were not approved, then *Allāh* (SWT) would send down a clear revelation to rectify the Prophet’s (s.a.w.s.) decision or to advise him on a particular issue. For example, this particular verse was revealed in order to confirm the sincerity of the actions of *Banū*

1. *Tafseer Al-Hujuraat*, op. cit., p. 62.

Mustaliq, and to advise the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) not to take hasty decisions, but to thoroughly scrutinize any information coming from questionable sources. It is through this injunction that believers are provided with guidelines on how to exercise judgements when any information is received from a person whose integrity is questionable. The principle laid down in this verse is the avoidance of judgements which could be detrimental to others, either intentionally or unintentionally.

This incident is a good example of the application of this verse by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Had he (s.a.w.s.) not, in compliance with the requirements of this verse, made thorough investigation of what had actually transpired, then the report presented by Walīd bin ‘Uqbah bin Abī Mu‘ayṭ (r.a.) would have resulted in warfare, disunity and disharmony. Thus, the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah that was entered into would have been violated in view of the fact that one of the terms of the treaty was that war should be suspended for ten years in order to maintain peace between Muslims and the Quraysh. The Arabian Peninsula would have been in turmoil, and as result, a distorted view of Islam would have emanated. Hence, the direction given in this verse is quite expedient, especially when a state of war is imminent. The principle of investigation enshrined in this verse is immutable and applicable at all times.

In order to secure happiness and prosperity for an individual as well as for the community, *Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt* goes on to lay down the norms by which positive results can be obtained. The next theme under review would be the maintenance of peace and the brotherhood of Muslims which are essential for the functioning of a sound society. Verses 9 and 10 elaborate on these themes.

2.4 MAINTENANCE OF PEACE AND BROTHERHOOD OF MUSLIMS

*"If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make peace you between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies, then make peace between them with justice, and be fair: For Allāh loves those who are fair (and just). The Believers are but a single Brotherhood, make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allāh, that ye may receive mercy."*¹

The revelation of the above is linked to an incident when the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) was requested by 'Abd Allāh ibn Ubayy, the hypocrite, to visit him and his people. So the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) set out on a donkey and a group of Muslims followed him on foot. When they were in close proximity of 'Abd Allāh ibn Ubayy and members of his tribe, 'Abd Allāh ibn Ubayy sarcastically remarked that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) should keep his distance from him in view of the fact that the smell that was coming from the Prophet's (s.a.w.s.) donkey was having an adverse effect on him. One of the *ṣahābah* (r.a.) from amongst the *Anṣār* reacted to that by stating that the smell issuing from the Prophet's (s.a.w.s.) donkey was far better than that of 'Abd Allāh ibn Ubayy. This infuriated the tribesmen of 'Abd Allāh ibn Ubayy and violence erupted between the two camps. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) intervened and restored peace between them.²

1. *Qur'ān*, 49:9-10.

2. Ibn Kathīr, 'Imād al-Dīn Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'īl. *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*. Beirut. Dār Ihyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī. 1967. Vol. 4, p. 211.

Thus, the preceding verse, therefore, lays down the principle of dealing with disputes in order to maintain peace and to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood amongst Muslims. these verses reference is made to two parties which could also imply disputes between two individuals or disputes between two groups of people. However, it does matter whether the dispute is between two individuals or two groups. The first step is to endeavour to bring about peace, even before giving consideration to the cause of the dispute. This means that there should be peaceful negotiations and mediations to restore relationships between the two parties. Hence, the criteria to be applied for the restoration of peace is justice based on the guidance given by the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*. Here it may be appropriate to cite the following *Qur'ānic* injunction which emphasizes the concept of justice:

*"And when ye judge between man and man, that ye judge with justice: verily how excellent is the teaching which He giveth you! For Allāh is He Who hears and sees all things."*¹

It is evident that only justice structured according to Divine Law can ensure a peaceful and harmonious co-existence. The term justice has two connotations, i.e. a) respecting the rights of every individual; and b) redressing any wrong that has been committed as a result of quarrels and disputes.

A believer should apply a strict code of justice while interacting with other members of the community. Hence, in order to secure individual and collective peace and prosperity,

1. *Qur'ān*, 4:58.

Muslims are commanded to adhere to impartial arbitration. Impartial arbitration in quarrels and disputes demonstrate the highest degree of morality and God-consciousness and are rewarded by Divine benediction. According to ‘Abd Allāh Yūsuf ‘Alī "justice is an attribute of *Allāh*, and to stand firm for justice is to be a witness to *Allāh*, even if it is detrimental to our interests (as we conceive them) or the interests of those who are near and dear to us."¹ In support of this view, the following *Qur’ānic* injunction may be cited:

*"O you who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allāh, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: For Allāh can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allāh is well-acquainted with all that you do."*²

From this one gathers that believers are exhorted not to compromise the laws of justice when attempting to settle disputes at a personal level, or among blood-relations, or among such people that belong to different social groups. This means that if an individual is found guilty of transgressing or violating the rights of others, then the arbitrator should not be partial in his decisions by favouring the aggressor because of friendship or by virtue of being a family member. The arbitrator must be just without fear, nor must he accept a favour in return for his decision. Material gain should, in other words, not influence him to rule in favour of the rich. On the other hand, if the poor is guilty of transgression, then the arbitrator must not rule in the favour of the poor based on compassionate grounds.

1. *The Holy Qur’an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, op. cit. Vol. 1, p. 223.
2. *Qur’ān*, 4:135.

Hence, it is quite clear that an arbitrator must guard against snap judgements and should foster the maintenance of peace at all levels as decreed by Divine Law. The Islamic justice system is superior to all other forms of man-created justice systems. Since the innermost motives of any individual, be it a ruler or the ruled, are known to *Allāh* (SWT), it is thus imperative that all individuals must be guided by Divine Injunctions in their application of justice for the restoration of everlasting peace and tranquility at all levels.

The following is yet another example where *Allāh* (SWT) lays down the norm by which a believer should be guided when undertaking the task of restoring peace in a situation of holocaust and turmoil:

*"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allāh as a witness to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to Piety: and fear Allāh. For Allāh is well-acquainted with all that you do."*¹

A study of the *Qur'ānic* injunctions pertaining to the maintenance of peace on the basis of justice reveal that the quality of justice is also an integral part of faith. It is indicative by the revelation of the abovementioned verse that the real test of one's *īmān* (faith) comes when one is assigned the task of doing justice involving people with whom one does not have a good relationship with, or with whom one has an aversion for. The prevalence of justice in such a case distinctly brings out the degree of piety that one possesses. An individual's fear of *Allāh* (SWT) would also prevent one from deviating from the Divine

1. *Qur'ān*, 5:9.

Law. Hence, fair dealing in the process of reconciliation is of paramount importance for the amelioration of relationships between individuals and the society as a whole.

Pertaining to the maintenance of peace on the basis of justice, in reference to verse 9 of *Sūrat al-Hujurāt*, *Mawlānā Iṣlāhī* is of the view that if after justice has prevailed and consensus has been reached on a particular dispute and the transgressor becomes aggressive and fails to admit his guilt or refuse to acknowledge the verdict of the arbitrator, then it would be appropriate to refer the transgressor to higher authorities. In other words, the case should be referred to a pious religious leader or a *qadī* (judge in an Islamic State) and his decision would be final in the sense that the transgressor would have no option but to conform to the decision in accordance to the dictates of the *Shar'iah*.¹

Philips presents another view which pertains to the steps that should be taken in order to create an atmosphere conducive to peace: a) sides should not be taken even if the wrong party is identified; b) both factions should be encouraged to cease hostilities and peace should be restored on the basis of Islam; and c) those who refuse to stop hostilities should be fought against, while those willing to make peace and submit to the Law of *Allāh* (SWT) should be supported.²

The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) strongly emphasized the importance of alleviating aggression and promoting peace in order to cultivate sound relationships amongst members of a community. In an authentic *Hadīth*, *ḥadrat* Anas (r.a.) reports that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.)

1. *Taddabur-e-Qur'ān*, op. cit. Vol. 7, p. 480.

2. *Tafseer Al-Hujuraat*, op. cit., p. 73.

states:

"Assist your brother whether he is the oppressor or the oppressed." Upon hearing this, *ḥadrat* Anas (r.a.) told the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) that assisting the oppressed was understandable, but the assisting of the oppressor was puzzling. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) then explained saying: *"Assist the oppressor by preventing him from oppressing."*¹

The concluding statement of verse 9 specifies that *Allāh* (SWT) loves those who regard the quality of justice as being among the highest virtues in Islam. Justice in all spheres of life must transcend the self and its desires. In Islam justice emanates from the strict obedience and submission to the will of *Allāh* (SWT), which in reality, is a true reflection of one's *īmān* (faith). Hence, the application of the principles of justice in the maintenance of peace is also a vital ingredient for the salvation of the soul. This fact may be verified by citing the a *Ḥadīth* reported by Ibn 'Umar (r.a.) wherein the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) states:

*"Those who are just in their judgements, just to their families and just in whatever they govern, will be in the presence of Allāh on the Day of Judgement, sitting on the rostrum of light to the right of the Throne."*²

It is now also essential to define briefly the term peace within the Islamic context, since peace forms an integral part in the enforcement of brotherhood of Muslims. The terms peace and Islam are synonymous for both these terms are derived from the same root i.e.

1. *Nuzhat al-Muttaqīn Sharḥ Riyād al-Ṣāliḥīn*, op. cit. Vol. 1, p. 206.

2. Siddiqi, Abdul Hameed. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Lahore. Sh. Muhammad Ashraf. 1976. Vol. III, p. 1016.

salima, which means peace. One of the attributes of *Allāh* (SWT) is *al-Salām* i.e. Peace. It thus follows that a Muslim ought to be a symbol of peace in belief, word, deed and thought. Complete peace can only be achieved by absolute submission to the Will of *Allāh* (SWT) in body, mind and soul. Muslims greet each other with the greeting of peace *al-salām 'alaykum* (peace be on you) and likewise they terminate their daily *ṣalāh* with the pronouncements of peace.

Heaven according to the *Qur'ān* is an abode of peace. Dr. Ishti'āq Husayn Qurayshī elucidates this point by stating that "a true Muslim's life after death, as well, shall be perfect peace; for according to Islam, salvation is nothing but the attainment of complete peace."¹

Peace is thus an integral part of Islam. If peace is established at all levels then the greatest social ideal propounded by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in regard to Muslim brotherhood can be assured. The concept of brotherhood, according to Islamic teachings may be classified into 3 categories:

- a) Ideological brotherhood on the basis of belief in *tawhīd* and *risālah* (Oneness of *Allāh* (SWT) and the institution of Prophethood including that of Muḥammad (s.a.w.s.).
- b) Biological brotherhood in reference to blood relations (offsprings of same parents).
- c) Humanitarian brotherhood i.e. on a universal level, meaning that all mankind have common parentage i.e. by virtue of being the descendants of *ḥadrat Ādam* (a.s.) and *Hawā* (Eve).

1. Qureshi, Istiaq Husain. *The Religion of Peace*. New Delhi. Kitab Bhavan. 1988, p. 135.

As for the concept of ideological brotherhood (i.e. brotherhood of Muslims) as portrayed in verse 10 of *Sūrat al-Hujurāt*, emphasis is laid on the assumption that all believers are brothers based on their total submission to *Allāh* (SWT) and adherence to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). This means that brotherhood of Muslims should not just be a theoretical aspect, but an ideology at a practical level. Therefore, a critical appraisal of verse 10, lays down a clear perception to create an Islamic society based on truth and love for *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). According to Dr M M Ahsan, this love can be exemplified in the lives of the Muslims through:¹

- a) adherence to the principles of brotherhood;
- b) equality;
- c) love and mutual co-operation;
- d) God-consciousness;
- e) the granting of human rights which Islam grants to its followers;
- f) the protection of a Muslim's honour and dignity, just as they are sacred as his blood and property.

Hence, the enforcement of Muslim Brotherhood is the greatest social ideal in Islam. History reveals the fact that during the lifetime of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), he practically demonstrated the concept of Muslim brotherhood in order to impress upon his followers the importance of inculcating the attitude of selflessness towards each other. One of his very first task upon settling in Madīnah, after the *hijrah* (Migration from Makkah to

1. Ahsan, M.M. *The Islamic Attitude to Social Relations in the Light of Sūrah al-Hujurāt*. Leicester. The Islamic Foundation. 1977, pp. 1-2.

Madīnah) was to cement the bonds of brotherhood amongst Muslims. He made the *anṣār* (Helpers i.e. a term used to denote the Muslims of Madīnah) accept the *muhājirūn* (emigrants from Makkah) as their own brothers. This new fraternity that was established amongst them was unique in the annals of history. By establishing this unique concept of brotherhood, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) set into motion an operational unity among his followers. For example, as a result of this, Sa'd bin Rabī' (r.a.), an *anṣārī* (sing. of Anṣār), offered to split his wealth equally with 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin 'Awf (r.a.), a *muhājir*.¹ Furthermore, he was even prepared to divorce one of his wives, and after the period of *'iddah* (the waiting period) she would be in a position to marry 'Abd al-Raḥman bin 'Awf. Although 'Abd al-Raḥmān expressed his gratitude to him, he told him that what he did was not an act of kindness but rather he was impelled to do that as a duty to his fellow brother.² Hence, this is indicative that the bond of brotherhood amongst Muslims is based on respect for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) as well as common ideology. Equality, unity and mutual respect are the essential norms for the successful application of this type of brotherhood.

The quintessence of brotherhood is that all believers stand equal before *Allāh* (SWT) and therefore all believers must be united by virtue of their faith in serving their Creator to the highest degree. Believers are further commissioned by the following *Qur'ānic* injunction to maintain solidarity: "*Verily, this Brotherhood of yours is a single brotherhood, and I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore serve Me (and no other).*"³

1. Haykal, M H, op. cit., p. 178.

2. Siddiqui, Abdul Hameed. *The Life of Muhammad*, op. cit., p. 139.

3. *Qur'ān*, 21:92.

Closely linked to the above is the statement of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in his Farewell Sermon:

*"Know that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim, and that all the Muslims constitute one brotherhood."*¹

In another *Hadīth*, the Prophet (s. a.w..s.) reinforces the unity of Muslim brotherhood:

*"The believers are like one structure, each part supports or strengthens the other."*²

In this regard, Allāh (SWT) explicitly declares:

*"And hold fast, all together, the Rope which Allāh (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allāh's favour on you."*³

It should be mentioned here that if a believer desires to attain the blessings and mercy of Allāh (SWT) he has to show concern for the welfare of other Muslims. The primary requisite for this is to establish a sound relationship, eg. when a Muslim meets another Muslim he should greet him/her with the salutation of peace. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) states:

"It is impermissible for a Muslim to sever relations with his Muslim brother for

1. Haykal, M. H., op. cit., p. 487.

2. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, op. cit. Kitāb al-Adab. Vol. 3. Part 8, p. 14.

3. *Qur'ān*, 3:103.

*more than three nights, and the best of them, is he who first expresses greetings of peace to the other."*¹

From the above it can be inferred that the greetings of peace should not be a mere ritual, i.e. only a verbal declaration, but rather it should emanate from the innermost recesses of the heart, or else one's *īmān* would be in question, depriving one of the benediction of *Allāh* (SWT).

Despite disputes, personal or cultural differences, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) stressed the importance of reconciliation between Muslims on the basis of faith. Muslims should strive to assist one another in all affairs as commissioned by *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). This bond of brotherhood should be vibrant, leading one to act decisively in order to perpetuate it as pointed out by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.):

*"Believers in their mutual love, kindness and affection are like one body: if one limb is injured, then the entire body is united with it in wakefulness and fever."*²

*"None of you has believed until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."*³

The following *Qur'ānic* citation may serve to expostulate the paramount importance of enforcing Muslim Brotherhood:

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1. Khān, Muḥammad Muḥsin. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī - Arabic English*. Turkey. Crescent Publishing House. 1977. 2nd. Edition. Vol. VIII, pp. 64-66.
 2. *ibid.* Vol. VIII, p. 26.
 3. *Nuzhat al-Muttaqīn Sharḥ Riyād al-Ṣāliḥīn*, op. cit. Vol. 1, p. 168.

"It is He Who has named you Muslims, both before and in this (Revelation); that the Apostle may be a witness for you, and ye be witness for mankind! So establish regular Prayer, give regular Charity, and hold fast to Allāh! He is your Protector."¹

From the above, it is imperative to note that Islam does not uphold the institution of caste nor does it tolerate distinguishing mankind on the basis of social status. Philips elucidates this by stating that the very format of *ṣalah* (Prayer) dictates brotherhood of believers. In congregational prayer, there are no reserved places, and all must stand shoulder to shoulder. Even the choice of *imām* (one who leads the prayer) is not based on his social status in society, but on his ability to memorize the *Qur'ān*. For example the Companions (r.a.) once appointed Salāmah (r.a.), who was only six or seven years old, to lead them in prayer since he had memorized more of the *Qur'ān* than any of them. Moreover, the institution of *zakāh* collected by the State or institutions are distributed to the poor Muslims and this ensures the economic survival of their fellow Muslim brothers. Furthermore, the final pillar of Islam *hajj* (Pilgrimage) emphasizes brotherhood of believers. In this international assembly, the equality of Muslims is upheld. They all dress in *iḥrām* (the male pilgrim's garb i.e. consisting of only two sheets: one worn around the waist and the other draped around the shoulders) and this is symbolic of the essential unity and equality of Muslim brotherhood.²

While communism or capitalism, democracy or dictatorship are the manifestations of man which are essentially ephemeral, the Islamic society is based on an equitable social system

1. *Qur'ān*, 22:78.

2. *Tafseer Al-Hujuraat*, op. cit., pp. 84-85.

based upon the teachings of the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*. Muslims, by virtue of their faith in *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) form part and parcel of one *Ummah*. This "ummatic" concept determines their brotherhood which transcends blood relationship. Love, peace and co-operation are the basic principles which guide the social conduct of the members of the Muslim community. Should any form of deviation resulting in distrust, hatred and feud occur, it must be remedied immediately by the entire Muslim Community.

2.5 CONDEMNATION OF REVILING PEOPLE, DEFAMING THEM AND BEING SARCASTIC WITH THEM

*"O ye who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by (offensive) nicknames: ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness, (to be used of one) after he has believed: and those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong."*¹

'*Ālā Hadrat Aḥmad Razā Khān* in his celebrated *Kanz al-Īmān* puts forth three incidents which prompted the revelation of the above and they are as follows:²

1. Thābit ibn Qays ibn Shumās (r.a.) was hard of hearing and thus whenever he attended the gathering of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), the Companions (r.a.) would make space for him so that he could sit near the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). One day it so happened that he came late

1. *Qur'ān*, 49:11.

2. *Kanz al-Īmān*, op. cit., pp. 929-930.

and could not find any place. He forced himself through asking the Companions (r.a.) to make space for him. He finally reached close to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and there was only one person between him and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). He told that person to move so that he could sit near the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). That person was not happy to do so. He told him that since he managed to find a place, he should sit where he was. Thābit (r.a.) was angry and sat behind him. Later on he asked that person who he was. That person replied that he was so and so. Thābit (r.a.) then, taking that person's mother's name, said, "You are the son of so and so." That person became embarrassed and put his head down.

2. It is reported that this verse was revealed in connection to the *Banū Tamīm* tribe. Some of its members used to look at the poverty of such poor Companions (r.a.) like 'Ammār, Bilāl, Ṣuḥayb, Salmān, Sālim and others and make a mockery of them.

3. One day *ḥadīrah* Ṣafīyah bin Ḥuyyay (r.a.), the wife of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), came to know that *ḥadīrah* Ḥafsā (r.a.), another wife of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) had called her a Jewess and this offended her and she wept. So the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in order to console her told her, "You are the descent of the Prophetic lineage and the wife of a Prophet, how can she be prouder than you?" The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) then cautioned *ḥadīrah* Ḥafsā (r.a.) saying, "Fear Allāh."

Verse 11 of *Sūrah al-Hujurāt*, therefore, outlines the negative aspects of human conduct which a believing Muslim, in particular, must refrain from in order to practically maintain unity. Restraining the tongue can assist in averting disunity and discontent among Muslims. If what one utters is not checked then it could result in the disintegration and total moral

collapse of the community. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) pointed out that "*a Muslim is one from the tongue and hands of whom other Muslims are safe.*"¹ Believing Muslims are not only prohibited from reviling or ridiculing one another, but they are also prohibited from reviling or ridiculing all other people irrespective of their religion, colour, creed or caste. Reviling or ridiculing others is a demonstration of egotism or racial pride which is in total opposition to the principles of Islam. Thus, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) warns: "*One who has left in his chest a mustard seed's worth of pride will not enter Paradise.*"²

To laugh at people in contempt or ridicule, is strongly condemned for it projects one's superiority and undermines the dignity of others. Any action which hurts the feelings of others must be avoided. Such evil practices like malicious exposure of people's faults, character assassination i.e. slandering, either verbally or in writing, sarcasm i.e. passing derogatory remarks against a person, either directly or indirectly, and looking down upon the poor, can erode the bond of brotherhood and result in destabilising peace and harmony within a community.

Mawlānā Islāhī, commenting on the above verse, states that one should abstain from meaningless conversation, futile speech, the spreading of evil traits and the inciting of turmoil in society. Hence, it is impermissible to indulge in acts of social degradation of people by making false allegations against them.³

1. *Nuzhat al-Muttaqīn Sharḥ Riyād al-Sālihīn*, op. cit. Vol. 2, p. 262.

2. *ibid.* Vol. 1, p. 445.

3. *Taddabur-e-Qur'ān*, op. cit. Vol. 7, p. 480.

Dr M M Ahsan, in his analysis of the above verse, holds that there are three evil traits mentioned which pave the way to *fitnah* (corruption) in the life of the individual and society. They are as follows:¹

a) *Sukhriyya*: which has a broad definition and which can be applied in different forms to different situations. Generally, it can be defined as laughing at others or ridiculing them. Ridiculing others may take different forms, eg., imitating someone's voice, by showing signs of aggression; laughing at someone's speech, personality or attire; attracting attention to the weakness of others by making gestures; and the expression of any form of physical or psychological persecution. *Sukhriyya* offends the one being ridiculed and makes one react in the same way, thus creating a vicious circle of attack and counter attack which ultimately leads to a number of other evils.

b) *Lamz*: which has a wide connotation, is another evil characteristic. It could be defined as blame, censure, criticize, find fault, etc. Whether the criticism is done explicitly or implicitly by certain postures of the body or verbally, it can create discontent and sedition in society. Hence, this could further lead to the degeneration of moral and spiritual values of an individual and society as a whole. In reality, the one who indulges in acts of slander is inflicting harm to oneself in two ways. Firstly, such a person reveals his own evil characteristics, i.e. the decadence of his own moral and spiritual values. Secondly, such a person will provoke the one who is being slandered to commit an act of sin, i.e. there would be retaliation in the same way or even in a greater degree which may lead to other serious crimes.

1. *The Islamic Attitude to Social Relations in the Light of Sūrah al-Hujurāt*, op. cit., p. 6.

c) *Tanābuz bi Alqāb*: are contemptuous names that are used in calling others. Such names contain some aspects of *sukhriyya* and *lamz*, which may include the following: i) to remember someone for his weakness in behaviour, by attaching an offensive nickname on such an account and ii) to talk about someone sarcastically and attaching an offensive nickname owing to such a person's deformities.

From Dr M M Ahsan's analysis, it can be deduced that the use of offensive nicknames are totally condemned by Divine Law for it leads to other forms of sin, such as character-assassination, slander, backbiting, etc., which in turn hinders moral and spiritual evolution. Attributing nicknames to people on account of their physical deformities can have an adverse psychological effect upon them. It may cause them to feel inferior to others and may even lead them to contemplate suicide. Muslims ought to refrain from addressing individuals by such nicknames like Blackie (a person of dark complexion); Kojak (a bald person); or Kaffir or Coolie (referring to an African and Indian respectively); or Mota (an individual who hails from a wealthy background); or Cock-eyed (a squint person).

However, it ought to be mentioned that in Islam, there is also room for making use of nicknames. Nicknames may be used for several reasons, some of which, are enumerated hereunder:

a) Under unavoidable circumstances, not in a derogatory sense but with respectful reference, to serve as a mark of identification in cases where more than one person has the same name eg. in the science of *Hadīth* literature it is evident that the *muḥaddithūn* (scholars of *Hadīth*) use such name like Sulaymān the blear-eyed, Wāsil the hunchbacked,

etc., with dignity and respect when discussing the biographies of transmitters of *Ḥadīth*.¹

b) the expression of love for someone whereby a nickname is use as a pet-name, eg. the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) nicknamed 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣaqr (r.a.): "Abū Hurayrah" (father of kitten) for having observed him always carrying a kitten in his arms.²

c) in cases where two people have the same name or title and thus a nickname like the blind physician may be used to differentiate between two physicians.³

d) in the cases where names of persons are not available, titles such as "the train robber," "the serial killer," etc. may be used. Such nicknames are used for the purpose of identifying the particular trait of the criminal and not for denigration.

Consequently, *Allāh* (SWT) concludes verse 11 by distinguishing between those who are repentant and those who desist repentance. Divine Law declares that those who oppress others by immorality and abuse are those who refuse to repent and may be classified as *fāsiqūn* (transgressors) and as such will be subject to a grievous penalty. Hence, it is clear that one's *īmān* (faith) cannot be fused with *fīsq* (transgression) and this is evident from the following *Qur'ānic* citation:

"As to those who reject Faith, is the same to them whether thou warn them or do not

1. *Text, Translation and Brief Notes of the Holy Qur'ān*, op. cit. Vol. 2, pp. 296-297.

2. *Tafseer Al-Hujuraat*, op. cit., p. 91.

3. *Text, Translation and Brief Notes of the Holy Qur'ān*, op. cit. Vol. 2, p. 297.

*warn them; they will not believe. Allāh hath set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing and on their eyes is a veil; great is the penalty they (incur)."*¹

However, *Allāh* (SWT) in His infinite mercy has left the doors of repentance open to those who seek genuine forgiveness:

*"He is the One who accepts repentance from His servants and forgives sins: And He knows all that ye do."*²

2.6 GRAVITY OF SUSPICION, SPYING AND BACKBITING

*"O you who believe! Avoid suspicion as much in some cases is a sin: And spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, you would abhor it. But fear Allāh; for Allāh is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful."*³

It is mentioned in *Kanz al-Īmān* that the cause for the revelation of this verse was the following incident:⁴ Whenever the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) went out for *Jihād* (armed combat in the for the defence of Islam) or for any other journey, he used to attach a poor Companion (r.a.) of his to two affluent ones. In that way the poor person would serve them and they

1. *Qur'ān*, 2:6-7.

2. *Qur'ān*, 42:25.

3. *Qur'ān*, 49:12.

4. *Kanz al-Īmān*, op. cit., p. 931.

in turn would look after his needs. *Hadrat* Salmān al-Farsī (r.a.), who was a poor man, was assigned to serve two affluent persons. One day he slept away and did not prepare their meals. So they sent him to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) to ask him for some food. *Hadrat* Usāmah (r.a.) who was in charge of cooking food for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) told him that there was no food left. So Salmān (r.a.) returned to the two affluent persons and reported to them exactly what Usāmah (r.a.) had said. Their reaction was to mention that Usāmah (r.a.) was a miser. Later on when these two affluent presented themselves to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), he told them, "I can see the colour of the flesh in your mouths." They said, "We have not eaten any flesh." The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) remarked, "You have backbited and whosoever backbites a Muslim has eaten the Muslim's flesh."

This *Qur'ānic* verse also reveals the evil characteristics which in fact impede the moral upliftment of a community. Such evil characteristics create an atmosphere conducive to perpetual hatred suspicion and sedition. Hence, *Allah* (SWT) ordains the demolition of such factors which evoke anti-brotherhood sentiments.

Zann (suspicion), according to Dr M M Ahsan, is the formation of opinions about others or the expression of conjectures. The first directive in the above injunction is the proscription of extensive conjecture. It is obvious that conjectures are merely suspicions which in turn can lead a person to engage in other such sinful acts which are in direct violation of Divine Law. If suspicions or conjectures of a blameworthy nature are prevalent, then doubt and hatred amongst individuals and the society as a whole may lead to other unjustified actions. Here, it is to be noted that having suspicions about someone without a valid reason, or interpreting an incident in insidious terms is a grave sin. An

invalid suspicion may be likened to the worst kind of falsehood and the *muhaddithūn* refer to this evil as "backbiting of the heart."¹

The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) cautions against suspicion as follows:

*"Beware of suspicion, for verily it is the most deceptive form of speech."*²

*"Allah overlooks the evil thoughts of the Muslim as long as they do not speak about it or act on it."*³

There is no doubt that when suspicions are voiced publicly they can lead to other forms of major sins, such as slander, backbiting, etc. It is precisely for this reason that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) urged Muslims to refrain from encouraging suspicion.

Thus, it is evident that whenever misleading statements about people are made, it would be better for the believers to exercise restraint. They should first look at their own faults and weaknesses, before resorting to make the persons who have been falsely accused targets of reproach and blame. Moreover, one should not over-react if suspicion is cast over one, rather one should take heed of the advice given by *ḥadrat* 'Umar (r.a.) who gave the following advice: *"If your Muslim brother makes an ambiguous statement to you, you should only think the best, and you will find a good explanation for it."*⁴ This attitude

1. *The Islamic Attitude to Social Relations in the Light of Sūrah al-Hujurāt*, op. cit., p. 8.

2. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, op. cit. Kitāb al-Adab. Vol. 3, Part 8, p. 23.

3. Al-Naysabūrī, Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Beirut. Kitāb al-Sha'b, n.d. Vol. 1, p. 332.

4. *Tafseer Al-Hujuraat*, op. cit., p. 100.

will facilitate the building of mutual trust and the eradication of evil practices which lead to suspicion. Therefore, the reporting of misunderstood statements must be avoided so as to eliminate hatred and discord amongst the Muslims.

Private conversations in the presence of others is another malpractice which tends to lead to suspicion. Concerning the condemnation of private conversations in the presence of a third person, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) states that "*two people should not converse privately in the presence of a third.*"¹ Such a practice may create suspicions in the mind of a third person for the following reasons: firstly, the third person is being ignored by being excluded from the conversation and secondly, by being excluded from the conversation, the third person is bound to feel that he is the topic of discussion. Likewise, one should also avoid conversing in a foreign language if the third person present is ignorant of such a language, for that too will not only be insulting to him/her but it will also breed suspicion and distrust.

The Divine Attribute *Al-Tawwāb* (Forgiving) mentioned in the conclusion of verse 12 signifies that *Allāh* (SWT) is ever willing to forgive transgressors who persevere with determination and sincere repentance to adhere to the right path. From a thorough analysis of verse 12, it is evident that the elimination of suspicion, spying and backbiting will have a positive impact on the moral and spiritual growth of the individual as well as the society as a whole.

1. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, op. cit. Kitāb al-Isti'dhān. Vol. 3, Part 8, p. 80.

2.7 EQUALITY OF MANKIND

*"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may depise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allāh is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allāh has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)."*¹

Diyā' al-Qur'ān makes mention of an incident which may have prompted this verse to be revealed. The Quraysh considered themselves to belong to the highest rung of the social ladder. They were a proud lot. When the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) conquered Makkah in 8/631 without spilling a drop of blood, the flag of Islam was hoisted. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) called upon *ḥadrat* Bilāl (r.a.) to climb on the roof of the *Ka'bah* to give the *adhān* (call to prayer). For the nobles of the Quraysh, it was as if the mountain of calamity was falling upon them. Their hearts were saddened. 'Attāb bin Usayd said, "Thank God, my father died before he saw this soul breaking scene." Hārith bin Hishām said, "Could Muḥammad not find another person better than this black crow?" Suhayl bin 'Amr said, "As Allāh wills." Abū Sufyān said, "I do not wish to say anything lest Allāh makes him (i.e. the Prophet -s.a.w.s.) aware of our conversation." Hence, this verse was revealed and it shattered their false pride.²

Unlike the preceding verses (10 -12) where an indepth study of the ideological concept of

1. *Qur'ān*, 49:13.

2. *Diyā' al-Qur'ān*, op. cit. Vol. 1, p. 578.

brotherhood, i.e. brother of Muslims was undertaken, the above extends to the principle of brotherhood in the broadest sense, i.e. the universal brotherhood of mankind. This is verified by the fact that the injunction does not specifically address believers, but begins by addressing mankind in general.

The expression "*We created you from a single pair*" denotes the origin of man, i.e. all mankind have a common parentage, they are the progeny of Adam and his partner Eve. The ancestral lineage of mankind is also explicitly declared in the following *Qur'ānic* citation:

*"O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, his mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women."*¹

The following *Hadīth* re-enforces the equality of mankind by virtue of their common parentage:

*"All mankind are the progeny of Ādam and Ādam was fashioned out of clay."*²

Hence, it can be deduced that all mankind stand equal before *Allāh* (SWT). Here it ought to be pointed out that the expression "and made you into tribes and nations" as mentioned in the above *Qur'ānic* citation enunciates that life is considered as an organic whole, for

1. *Qur'ān*, 4:1.

2. Da'wat-O-Irshad Wing. *Sermons of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him)*. Islamabad. Islamic Research Institute. Sha'aban 1400 A.H., p. 31.

all aspects of life are considered as components of a unified body. Affliction to a portion thereof, afflicts the whole. Although it is diversified in form, but ultimately assists each other to a common end. Mankind is divided into groups, i.e. "tribes and nations" solely for the purpose of identification and greater social-interaction. Therefore, to create a sound system in human life, there should be co-operation, harmony and mutual respect. This means that the attribute of respect and be respected must be adopted in order to create a climate conducive to peace and prosperity.

Hammudah 'Abd al-'Āfī's insight on the concept of equality of mankind is as follows:¹

- All mankind are the creation of One and the same God.
- All mankind are the descendants of Adam and Eve.
- God is not partial to any race or religion. The difference of race, colour or social status do not affect the true stature of man in the sight of God. However, it must be emphasized that all men are equal, but at the same time they may not necessarily be identical. This means that there are differences of abilities, versatilities, ambitions, wealth or materialistic possessions, etc. Yet, none of these differences can by itself establish a status of superiority of an individual or race over another. All such possessions and the degree of prestige that an individual enjoys on this worldly plane have no bearing on the character and personality of the individual in the sight of God. The only distinction which God gives recognition to is the degree of *taqwā* (piety).

It is thus evident that the superiority of a person over another is on the basis of unwavering faith in God and certainly not on the basis of social status. This brings to the

1. Abdalati, Hammudah. *Islam in Focus*. Maryland. International Graphics Printing Service. 1975, pp. 39-40.

understanding of the individual that social justice must be implemented in order to eliminate prejudice or persecution. Divine Law decrees that there should be no form of suppression or oppression by the imposition of social castes.

At this juncture, it may be appropriate to deliberate on the steps undertaken by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) to implement the concept of equality of mankind in order to serve as an example in every era and eon. The following pronouncement and practical demonstrations of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) reveal that he established equality concerning all human beings by eradicating that which are man made, i.e. racial discrimination, man's self prestige and superiority, social degradation, etc.: "*There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab.*"¹

History bears testimony to the fact that, with the advent of Islam, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) demolished the institution of ethnic groups, which the zeal of nationalism gave rise to. A study of the history of the Arabs reveals that during the pre-Islamic era, tribal affiliation and soildarity existed in the Arabian society. They used to express pride about the nobility of their lineage, eg. the Northern Quraysh had retained the privilege of position and had looked down upon the Southern Arab tribes. They displayed their social prestige and superiority by not going to 'Arafāt during the time of *hajj* (Pilgrimage).² It is the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) who demolished the concept of colour- consciousness, racial discrimination, nationalism, etc. and instilled God-consciousness into their hearts. In his Farewell Sermon, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) continuously emphasized: "O men of the Quraysh, this day does God sweep away all pride of the pagan days and all notions of superiority by birth. The whole

1. *Sermons of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him)*, op. cit., p. 30.

2. Nu'mānī, 'Allāmah Shiblī. *Sīrat al-Nabī*. Trans. by Sibtain Ahmad. Karachi. Jamiyat-ul-Falah, n.d. Vol. 2, p. 132.

race is descended from Adam and Adam was made of clay."¹ It was during that occasion that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) elucidated the concept of equality of mankind as enunciated in verse 13 of *Sūrat al-Hujūrāt*.

Thus, with the advent of Islam proclamation was made of the universal equality of mankind. From then on Arabs and non-Arabs, noble and layman, king and beggar were all regarded to be equal and could attain the highest ranks on the basis of piety or God-consciousness.

The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) addressed his enemies at the Conquest of Makkah and declared:

"I say to you what Yūsuf said to his brothers: "Have no fear this day" (Qur'ān: 12:92); "go your way for you are all free." He then instructed Ḥadrat Bilāl (r.a.), a black Abyssinian slave, to climb on the roof of the Ka'bah and to give the adhān (call for prayer).²

The honour given to ḥadrat Bilāl (r.a.) bears testimony to the fact that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) laid down the foundation for equal opportunities in all spheres of life for all beings irrespective of colour, creed, caste, or rank. Will Durant in his *The Age of Faith* acknowledges this:

1. *Sermons of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him)*, op. cit., p. 31.

2. *Muhammad Rasulullah - The Apostle of Mercy*, op. cit., p. 326.

"Mohammed's ethics transcended the limits of the tribe. Distinction of rank or race, so strong among the tribes, was diminished by similarity of belief. 'If a negro slave is appointed to rule you, hear and obey him, though his head be like a dried grape.' It was a noble concession that made one people of diverse nations scattered over the continents' Mohammed (taught) 'Let no violence in religion. If they embrace Islam they are surely directed: but if they turn their backs, verily to thee belongs preaching only.' 'Give a respite to the disbelievers. Deal thou gently with them' 'Kill not the old man who cannot fight, nor young children nor women' Fight in the way of Allāh against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Allah loveth not aggressors."¹

From the above it is evident that Islam lays down the precepts for believers to establish a sound relationship with human-beings of other faiths. This means that Muslims must display a positive attitude towards all human-beings. *Allāh* (SWT) strongly condemns all forms of insolent behaviour towards others by declaring:

*"Nor walk on the earth with insolence: for thou canst not rend the earth asunder, nor reach the mountains in height. Of all such things the evil is hateful in the sight of thy Lord."*²

The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) made it part of his duty to impress upon the people that they must maintain a positive attitude towards each other. Hence he is reported to have said:

1. *The Qur'anic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society*, op. cit. Vol. 1, p. 201.
2. *Qur'ān*, 17:37-38.

*"I have been sent to perfect good behaviour and politeness."*¹

*"God has sent me to teach good manners and good deeds."*²

*"The man with the most perfect faith is one who is the most polite."*³

The following *Qur'ānic* injunction may also be cited to provide discourse on propagation of the universal message of Islam without having to go to the extent of indulging in acts of segregation:

*"Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: For thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance."*⁴

Commenting on the above, 'Abd Allāh Yūsuf 'Alī states:

"In this wonderful passage are laid down principles of religious teaching, which are good for all times: but where are the Teachers with such qualifications? We must invite all to the Way of God, and expound His Universal Will; we must do it with wisdom and discretion, meeting people on their own ground and convincing them with illustrations from their own knowledge and experience, which may be very narrow, or very wide. Our preaching must be, not dogmatic not self-regarding, not offensive, but gentle, considerate, and as such would attract their attention. Our

1. *The Religion of Peace*, op. cit., p. 109.

2. *ibid*, p. 109.

3. *ibid*, p. 109.

4. *Qur'ān*, 16:125.

manner and our argument should not be acrimonious, but modelled on the most courteous and the most gracious example, so that the hearer may say to himself, 'This man is not dealing merely with dialectics; he is not trying to get a rise out of me; he is sincerely expounding the faith that is in him, and his motive is the love of man and the love of God.'¹

Hence, equality of mankind can be implemented by inviting fellow-beings of all faiths to the Truth and disseminating the eternal message of Islam. This is viewed as one of the noblest vocations, and in this regard the *Qur'ān* declares:

"Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to God, works righteousness, and says, 'I am of those who bow in Islam?'"²

Verse 13 concludes with the attribute of *Allāh's* (SWT) infinite knowledge of all the deeds of the created-beings as well as that which is concealed in their hearts. This is meant to bring to the realization of mankind that every individual is born equal without any possessions and that every individual is destined to return to the Creator without any possessions. Faith and good deeds will be of paramount importance and will determine one's salvation in the Life to Come. This brings us to the final major theme of *Sūrat al-Hujurāt* which pertains to sincerity of *īmān* and its translation into action.

1. *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 689.
2. *Qur'ān*, 41:33.

2.8 SINCERITY OF *ĪMĀN* AND ITS IMPACT ON ACTION

*"The desert Arabs say, we believe." Say, "Ye have no faith; but ye (only) say, 'We have submitted our wills to Allāh,' for not yet has Faith entered your hearts. But if ye obey Allāh His Apostle, He will not belittle aught of your deeds: for Allāh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." Only those are Believers Who have believed in Allāh and His Apostle, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their persons in the Cause of Allāh: such are the sincere ones."*¹

The above was directed to the *Banū Asad* tribe who had accepted Islam in order to receive charity.² Various *mufasssirūn* reveal that some of the desert Arabs were shaky in their faith and considered their submission to Islam as a favour to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). In these verses *Allāh* (SWT) instructs them about the real implication of *īmān* (faith).³ In the subsequent verses, He (SWT) informs them that He has full knowledge of their intentions and reprimands them for their arrogance in trying to impress upon the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) that they have done him a favour by accepting Islam:

*"Say: "What! Will ye instruct Allāh about your religion? But Allāh knows all that is in the heavens and on earth: He has full knowledge of all things. They impress on thee as a favour that they have embraced Islam. Say, "Count not your Islam as a favour upon you that He has guided you to the Faith, if ye be true and sincere."*⁴

1. *Qur'ān*, 49:14-15.

2. *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 1407.

3. See page 3 of this dissertation.

4. *Qur'ān*, 49:16-17.

In order to delve deeper into the concept of *īmān* (faith) and its translation into action, it is imperative to note the following:

The Bedouin Arabs claimed that their acceptance gave status to Islam. Thus, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) received the revelation and conveyed it to them in order to bring to their realization that they were fortunate to be Muslims but, in reality *īmān* had not as yet permeated their hearts. They were told that they could achieve faith only if they chose to submit totally to the authority of *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

The declaration of faith in the Oneness of *Allāh* (SWT) and the Messengership of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) qualifies one to enter the fold of Islam and to be called a Muslim. Thereafter, one has to make a conscientious effort to translate what he believes in into action and this is the real test of one's *īmān*. Any form of obstinacy which prevents one from implementing the commandments of *Allāh* (SWT) and following the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) will inevitably be detrimental to one's *īmān*. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) explains the difference between Islam and *īmān* in the following manner:

*"Islam is only acceptance and īmān is submission in totality by the implementation of actions."*²

Therefore, it is evident that *īmān* (faith) and *a'māl* (deeds) are interlinked. The three stages of *īmān* are: (i) affirmation with the heart; (ii) confirmation with the tongue and (iii) trans-

1. See page 4 of this dissertation.

2. *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, op. cit. p. 210.

lation of what is affirmed in one's heart and confirmed with one's tongue into practical application. Thus, a true believer is one who exerts one's utmost to uphold the Islamic institutions of *ṣalāh* (the 5 daily compulsory prayers), *zakāh* (the poor due), *sawm* (fasting), *hajj* (pilgrimage) and *jihād* (striving in the path of *Allāh*), and is of exemplary character, displaying fairness and equity in one's social interactions with others.

Chapter Three

MORAL, LEGAL AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In the preceding chapter, eight major themes echoed in *Sūrat al-Hujurāt* were comprehensively analysed, beginning with obedience to *Allāh* (SWT) and the Messenger (s.a.w.s.) and concluding with sincerity of *īmān* (faith) and its translation into action. In this chapter an attempt is made to expound upon the moral, legal and social implications of four broad themes as envisaged in *Sūrat al-Hujurāt* which are as follows:

- i) Sovereignty of *Allāh* (SWT)
- ii) Respect for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.)
- iii) Moral Rectitude
- iv) Equality of Mankind

3.1 SOVEREIGNTY OF *ALLĀH* (SWT)

The question of sovereignty in Islam is totally different in definition and application to that viewed by Fascism, Communism, Nationalism, Capitalism, Monarchism, Nazism, and Liberalism, etc. Sovereignty in general, is recognised by the political scientists to be the connecting force which binds the elemental forces that exist in a state. It may lie in one person or a number of persons, and may be visible or invisible, but it must exist somewhere, otherwise the state would disintegrate. It is that sovereign power which keeps

the various parts of the state together, if necessary by force.¹ Hence, according to the Western concept, sovereignty is derived from people, or a ruler abrogates it and attributes to himself, i.e. king or dictator.

The Islamic concept of Sovereignty of *Allāh* (SWT), on the other hand, implies that the only Sovereign Power that exists in the universe is the Almighty *Allāh*, Himself.² This is explicitly declared in the following *Qur'ānic* verse:

*"To Allāh belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; and Allāh has power over all things."*³

*"Your Guardian-Lord is Allāh, Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, and is firmly established on the Throne (of authority): He draws the night as a veil over the day, each seeking the other in rapid succession: He created the sun, the moon, and the stars, (all) governed by laws under His command. Is not His to create and to govern? Blessed be Allāh, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds!"*⁴

It is obvious that *Allāh* (SWT) does not exercise His authority directly in political matters, but delegates it to human-beings. The viceregency of man rests on the principle that *Allāh* (SWT) exercises His power and authority which He delegates to man who in turn manages

1. Sherwani, H.K. *Studies in Muslim Political Thought and Administration*. Lahore. Sh. Muhammad Ashraf. 1970. 7th Edition, p. 265.

2. *ibid*, p. 23.

3. *Qur'ān*, 3:189

4. *Qur'ān*, 7:54

and administers according to the commands of *Allāh* (SWT) which cannot be challenged.¹ Hence, this means that the vicergent of *Allāh* (SWT) must fear Him and must be prone to good deeds, as well as obey and implement the *Shari'ah* (Divine Law).

The Islamic ruler is, therefore, different from the "sovereign" as conceived by Western political scientists, for according to Islamic teachings, no person can be an autocrat. Within the Islamic system the very basis of political power implies *amānah* (trust) and *wilāyah* (delegation), which entails responsibility.² Moreover, the idea of absolute ownership is foreign to the Islamic spirit, for everything is owned by *Allāh* (SWT), and therefore, by the community in the practical sense and is held in *amānah* (trust) by the person using it. This is also applied to all those who exercise political authority. Hence, it is quite clear that the ruler as well as the ruled have to fulfil their moral, legal and social obligations as decreed by Divine Law, for their ultimate accountability is with *Allāh* (SWT). Thus, the person to whom political power is delegated has to accept the universal principles laid down in the Qur'an, to regard all power as a sacred trust according to the *Sunnah*.

Sovereignty in the sense of unlimited, indivisible, permanent and inalienable power belongs to *Allāh* (SWT) only. No human-being can rightfully claim such attributes of sovereignty, for *Allāh* (SWT) alone is the Real Sovereign and all others are merely the subjects. The political authority is thus derived from Him, the Sovereign of the Universe. The *Shari'ah* signifies the ultimate supremacy. This means that *Allāh* (SWT) is the real Law Giver and the authority of absolute legislation rests on Him. Believers cannot resort to total indepen-

1. *Studies in Muslim Political Thought and Administration*, op. cit., pp. 274-275.

2. Ahmed, Manzooruddin. *Islamic Political Thought in the Modern Age - Theory and Practice*. Karachi. Saeed Publications. 1983, p. 27.

dent legislation, nor can they amend or modify any law which has been Divinely ordained. An Islamic state must therefore in all respects be founded upon the laws laid down by *Allāh* (SWT), through the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). The government of a state will be subjected to obedience in its capacity as a political agency to enforce the laws of Allah. If it however, disregards the laws revealed by *Allāh* (SWT), its commands or rules will not be binding on the believers.¹

Mankind is subservient to *Allāh* (SWT), and as such is morally and legally obligated to strive in the cause of *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) i.e. to convey the message of Islam so as to create a world order conducive to moral and spiritual upliftment. Hence, mankind must perceive the fact that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is the greatest role model to be followed unconditionally, for he (s.a.w.s.) was bestowed with the highest degree of perfection and has left behind the most perfect norm by which mankind can govern his life ranging from moral, legal to social aspects.

Dr. Ansari outlines the obligation of the Islamic State from a moral perspective by stating:²

- i) To organize and institute moral education of the people.

- ii) To take all positive steps, including the enactment and enforcement of laws, for ensuring the proper practice of Islamic morals, with a view to preserve and promote moral welfare.

1. Maududi, S. Abul A'la. *The Islamic Law and Constitution*. Lahore. Islamic Publications Ltd. 1977. 6th Edition, p. 211.

2. *The Qur'anic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society*, op. cit. Vol. 2, p. 361.

iii) To adopt all measures necessary, including the enactment and enforcement of laws for combating all tendencies, acts and forces that are detrimental to the cause of moral welfare, and for punishing the actual offenders.

Having thoroughly scrutinised the various verses of the *Qur'ān* as well as relevant *Aḥādīth* which pronounce obedience to *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), it is now essential to define the term law within the Islamic context.

The function of law in a society is to preserve harmony in human relation. To achieve this, law defines the rights and duties towards each other. In jurisprudence, law is based on state legislation which is primarily enacted into law.¹ Islamic law, on the other hand, is based on Divine Revelation and *Sunnah*. Hence, the term "law" applies only to those rules which are enacted or enforced by authority. Therefore, Islam does not advocate absolute power in the hands of a representative assembly nor in the hands of any autocrat.

It is also appropriate to briefly discuss the primary sources of Islamic Law, since the various *mufasssīrūn* (scholars of *Tafsīr*) unanimously declare that verse 1 of the *Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt* establishes that the primary sources of Islamic Law are the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*.²

Islamic Law is a body of rules framed to regulate human conduct and is based on the following:³

1. *Islamic Political Thought in the Modern Age - Theory and Practice*, op. cit., p. 89.

2. *The Meaning of the Quran*, op. cit. Vol. 2, p. 296.

3. Islahi, Amin Ahsan. *Islamic Law - Concept and Codification*. Trans. by S.A. Rauf. Lahore. Islamic Publications Ltd. 1979, pp. 27 and 31.

- *Qur'ān* which is the verbatim Word of *Allāh* (SWT).
- *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) which is the practice of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in application of the commandments of *Allāh* (SWT).
- *Ijtihād* (intellectual deliberation) and its two essential wings, namely, *Ijmā'* (consensus) which is the agreement of the *fuqahā'* (Muslim jurists) and *Qiyās* (inference through precedent) in order to extend Divine Law to such issues that are not specifically addressed in the original sources.

The concept of the law according to the *Qur'ān* is in reality the Law of *Allāh* (SWT), and not the law of man. In the lifetime of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), the primary sources of Islamic Law were established and implemented. However, provisions are made for man to establish certain laws whenever new problems arise, but they must conform to the broad teachings of the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*, deriving its authority from these two sources.

Therefore, *Allāh* (SWT) clearly commands:

*"Judge between them by what Allāh has revealed."*¹

The *Qur'ān* was revealed over a period of 23 years. Most of the verses which embody rules of law were revealed in order to settle questions that actually arose for decision or were revealed to censure objectionary customs like infanticide, gambling, usury, etc. or they were revealed to effect social reforms such as the establishment of the legal status of women, settling the question of inheritance on an equitable basis, providing protection for

1. *Qur'ān*, 5:52.

the rights of minors, orphans, etc. or they were revealed to lay down the various forms of punishment, in order to secure peace and order in society.¹ These rules have primarily been dealt with in the following Chapters: *al-Baqarah* (2), *Āl 'Imrān* (3), *al-Nisā'* (4), *al-Mā'idah* (5), *Banī Isrā'īl* (17), *al-Nūr* (24) and *al-Talāq* (65). However, it cannot be denied that some rules and regulations have not been dealt with in detail. The authority of the *Sunnah* as expressed and defined by *Allāh* (SWT) in the revelation of the following *Qur'ānic* verse which implies that full authority has been vested in the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) to interpret the *Qur'ān* either in word or deed:

*"(We sent them) with Clear Signs and Scriptures; and We have sent down unto you (also) the Message; that you may explain clearly to men what is sent for them, and that they may give thought."*²

From the above it is also evident that since the *Qur'ān* is the final Testament of *Allāh* (SWT), it henceforth supersedes the authority of all earlier revelations. It further emphasises the finality of the institution of Prophethood to which all believers must submit. Hence, adherence to the teachings of the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* are fundamental for one's moral and spiritual development.

It must be emphasized here that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) besides being commanded to convey the Message of *Allāh* (SWT) to mankind, he (s.a.w.s.) was equally entrusted to act upon it and to explain it to the people. *Allāh* (SWT) describes the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) as the

1. Iqbal, Afzal. *Culture of Islam*. Lahore. Institute of Islamic Culture. 1974. Second Revised Edition, pp. 160-161.

2. *Qur'ān*, 16:44.

"expounder of the *Qur'ān*"¹ "legislator",² "model behaviour",³ and emphasises the fact that Muslims should strictly obey the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).⁴ It is, therefore, imperative that the Prophet's (s.a.w.s.) example should be emulated by Muslims. Moreover, the Prophet's (s.a.w.s.) decisions, judgements and commandments have binding authority in all spheres of life. The *Qur'ān* stresses the point as to how one ought to obey the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in order to attain the pleasure of *Allāh* (SWT). In very clear terms *Allāh* (SWT) commands thus:

*"Say if you do love Allāh, follow me, then Allāh will love you."*⁵

It is the conviction of Muslims that *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) possess the ultimate legislative authority. In other words, they maintain that *Allāh* (SWT) is the absolute Law-Giver and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), by virtue of having received the direct Divine Revelation, exercised that authority on His behalf.

Hence, a thorough study of the *Qur'ān* would reveal that any injunction which pertains to obeying *Allāh* (SWT) is always integrated with obeying the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). The following verse may be cited as an example:

*"Obey Allāh and obey the Apostle"*⁶

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1. *Qur'ān*, 52:2.
 2. *Qur'ān*, 7:157.
 3. *Qur'ān*, 33:21.
 4. *Qur'ān*, 4:64.
 5. *Qur'ān*, 3:31.
 6. *Qur'ān*, 5:95.

From the above verse it may safely be deduced that the authority vested in the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) by the Creator Himself cannot be separated from the Creator. As a result, obedience rendered to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is in reality obedience rendered to *Allāh* (SWT). The *Qur'ān* verifies this fact:

*"He who obeys the Apostle, obeys Allāh."*¹

In *Sūrat al-Najm* further light is shed on why submission to the authority of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) serves as a pre-requisite for one's submission to the Will of *Allāh* (SWT). The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is described thus:

*"Nor does he say (aught) of (his own) desire. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him: he was taught by one Mighty in Power..."*²

From the above, one gathers that the statements, decisions and directives of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) are actually the Will and Intention of *Allāh* (SWT). Therefore the pronouncements of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) have Divine approval. Hence, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) can be described most definitely as the spokesman of *Allāh* (SWT) on earth. In other words, *Allāh* (SWT) conversed directly to His Prophet (s.a.w.s.), and in this way what was conveyed to him was passed on to the Muslims. Some of the injunctions were in detail whilst others needed explanations and elaborations. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.), through his *Sunnah*, supplemented the details. For example, the commandment to establish the

1. *Qur'ān*, 4:80.

2. *Qur'ān*, 53:3-5.

regular five times daily *ṣalat* (prayer) does not provide details pertaining to the method of praying. It is the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) who provided the details as how to pray. He is reported to have said: "*Pray as you see me praying.*"¹

Therefore, it is evident that without the guidance of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), mankind would not be in a position to worship *Allāh* (SWT) nor fulfil any Divine Obligation. Thus, in order for one to be in a position to obey one's Creator, it is imperative that one accepts the authority of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

Moreover, from *Sūrat al-Najm* one becomes aware of the fact that the Teacher of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is the Supreme Being, *Allāh* (SWT) Himself, and that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) does not acquire knowledge from any other source. From this it follows that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is the *bona fide* teacher of mankind.

Furthermore, *Allāh* (SWT) also emphasises that the deeds of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) are not of his own free will, but are enacted under Divine motivation and control:

*"Verily those who pledge their allegiance to you do no less than pledge their allegiance to Allāh. The Hand of Allāh is over their hands."*²

The revelation of this verse dates back to the negotiation process at Ḥudaybiyah, when the believers in large numbers placed their hands on that of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and swore

1. Alvi, Khalid. "Indispensibility of Hadith" in *The Place of Hadith in Islam*. Maryland. International Graphics Printing Service. 1977, p. 58.
2. *Qur'ān*, 48:10.

allegiance to him.¹ Their absolute surrender, obedience and loyalty to him actually demonstrated their total surrender and obedience to *Allāh* (SWT).

Another example that may be cited to ascertain that the action of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is under Divine control is the revelation of the following verse which relates to the Battle of Badr which took place in 2 A.H.:

*"It is not you who slew them; it was Allāh when thou threw (a handful of dust), it was not thy act, but Allāh's..."*²

The above examples confirm that *Allāh* (SWT) directly controlled the actions or deeds of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and from that one can deduce that the institution of Prophethood is a God-created institution. Furthermore, by revealing the special characteristics of the utterances and deeds of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), *Allāh* (SWT) makes it clear to mankind that the Prophet's (s.a.w.s.) designation is extraordinary and that he (s.a.w.s.) occupies the highest position amongst all the creations of *Allāh* (SWT). Hence, discrimination between the directives or laws of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and that of *Allāh* (SWT) in relation to any issue is absolutely forbidden in Islam.

Since all Divine Injunctions are exclusively mediated through the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and since *Allāh* (SWT) declares that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is vested with the authority to explain to mankind the Divine Message, it is mandatory upon mankind to accept whole-

1. *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, op. cit. Vol. 2, p. 1393.

2. *Qur'ān*, 8:17.

heartedly that which was ordained by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and to refrain from that which he (s.a.w.s.) cautioned us not to indulge in. Thus the *Qur'ān* commands:

*"So take what the Apostle assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you. And fear Allāh."*¹

Here it ought to be pointed out that although the legislative authority is vested in *Allāh* (SWT), but the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is obliged by *Allāh* (SWT) to interpret Divine injunctions for practical application in all walks of life. It would be an act of disbelief, as well as an act of disobedience to *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), if one were to contradict the verdicts of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). In this regard the *Qur'ān* stipulates:

*"But no, by thy Lord, they can have no (real) Faith, until they make thee judge in all disputes between them, and find in their souls no resistance against thy decisions, but accept them with the fullest conviction."*²

Therefore, when decisions are to be made, judgements are to be passed or disputes are to be settled concerning any matter, Muslims should be cautious so as not to contradict the authority of *Allāh* (SWT) and that of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). *Allāh* (SWT) spells out the serious consequences that would befall those who act contrary to His injunctions and the verdicts of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in the following *Qur'ānic* verses:

1. *Qur'ān*, 59:7.

2. *Qur'ān*, 4:65.

*"Know they not that for those Who oppose Allāh and His Apostle is the fire of Hell?
- Wherein they shall dwell. That is the supreme disgrace."*¹

*"But those who disobey Allāh and His Apostle and transgress His limits will be
admitted to a Fire, to abide therein: And they shall have a humiliating punishment."*²

*"Unless I proclaim what I receive from Allāh and His Messages: For any that
disobey Allāh and His Apostle, for them is Hell: they shall dwell therein for ever."*³

As discussed earlier, and substantiated by certain *Qur'ānic* injunctions, obedience rendered to *Allāh* (SWT) is dependent upon obedience rendered to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Similarly, any form of disobedience rendered to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) would equally be considered to be an act of disobedience to *Allāh* (SWT). The above verses emphasize the fact that whosoever is guilty of transgression shall be accountable in the Hereafter.

An examination into the lives, administration and achievements of *al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidah* (Rightly Guided Caliphs) bears testimony that none of the pious Caliphs claimed to be a new source of legislation. *Hadrat 'Abū Bakr* (r.a.) refused to use any authority other than that prescribed by the *Qur'ān* or by the *Hadīth*. Only in certain unique matters he would

1. *Qur'ān*, 9:63.

2. *Qur'ān*, 4:14.

3. *Qur'ān*, 72:23.

take counsel from the "Council of Elders" who represented the will of the people.¹

Hadrat 'Umar (r.a.) in his letter addressed to *qādī* (judge) Shurayḥ (r.a.), advised him thus:

" If you find anything in the *Qur'ān* bearing on the matter in question, then judge accordingly; if no direction is found therein, then look into the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and decide accordingly; and neither the *Qur'ān* nor the *Sunnah* nor any subordinate authority has said anything about it, then judge according to personal judgement, but that should be the last resort."²

If mankind can emulate the examples and the precedence laid down by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and the *ṣaḥābah* (r.a.), then society can be assured that justice will always be coupled with mercy. This is the hallmark of any judicial institution.

True obedience to *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) can be attained only if there is absolute fear of *Allāh* (SWT) in the inner self of a human being. Thus, *Allāh* (SWT) concludes verse 1 with a directive to fear Him at all times and in all spheres of life. Any form of deception or superficial devotion to spiritual matters for the attainment of one's personal desires or ulterior motives cannot surpass the knowledge of *Allāh* (SWT), since the knowledge of *Allāh* (SWT) is not confined to time and space. Therefore, *Allāh* (SWT) declares His two powerful qualities, i.e. the Knower and the Hearer of all things in the closure of verse 1. This verifies that the inner intentions behind man's deeds are known

1. Naz. *Abu Bakr*. Lahore. Ferozsons Ltd. 1970, pp. 104-105.

2. Numani, Maulana Shibli. *Al-Farooque*. Trans. by Syed Abu Zafar Zain. Karachi. Educational Press. 1975, p. 204.

to *Allāh* (SWT), and the verbal pronouncements of human-beings are heard by *Allāh* (SWT) at all times.

In view of the real obedience to *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), 'Allāmah Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uthmānī reinforces the idea of fear of *Allāh* (SWT) by stating that: "It should be remembered that God hears that which is pronounced by the tongue and knows that which is in the heart. Then how will this device or deception do before God? So a man should engage in his work fearing Him."¹

Philips adds to this view by stating that verse 1 is sealed with two of *Allāh*'s (SWT) qualities, both of which produce a real state of God-consciousness in all who comprehend their implications. It is real fear of *Allāh* (SWT) that brings to the understanding of the believer the question of accountability to *Allāh*, for he realizes that any form of disrespect to *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* are known to *Allāh* (SWT).²

The only path to sincere and absolute obedience to *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is by strict adherence to the concepts of *iṭā'ah* (obedience) and *ittibā'ah* (adherence) which appear in the following *Qur'ānic* injunction: "Say if you do love *Allāh*, follow me, then *Allah will love you*."³ Both the terms, *iṭā'ah* and *ittibā'ah* are synonymous in meaning, but there is a slight difference in their practical application. The former is classified into two

1. *The Noble Quraan - Tafseer-e-Usmani*, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 2223.

2. *Tafseer Soorah Al-Hujuraat - A Commentary on the 49th Chapter of the Quraan*, op. cit., p. 45.

3. *Qur'ān*, 3:31.

caterogries. Firstly, a believer must mentally be ready to accept the authority of *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). The second step is to obey the authority of *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in totality and unconditionally. If one does not totally submit to the authority of *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.); then it means that one is arrogant and possesses pride, and such actions can be compared to the actions of Iblīs (Satan) who refused to obey the orders of *Allāh* (SWT), eg. the *Qur'ān* states:

*"And behold, We said to angels: "Bow down to Ādam:" and they bowed down: Not so Iblīs: he refused and was haughty He was of those who reject Faith."*¹

It is thus evident that man is subservient to the Laws of *Allāh* (SWT). Although man has the capacity to make laws, he has to guard against the violations of Divine Law. In other words, man ought not to enforce any such law that would be detrimental to humanity and in direct contradictionary to the doctrines of the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*. Therefore, the *Hadīth* clearly refutes any form of innovation which contradicts the principles laid down by the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) condemned innovations in religious matters as is evident from the following *Aḥādīth*:

*"If anyone introduces into this affair of ours anything which does not belong to it, it is rejected."*²

1. *Qur'ān*, 2:31.

2. Robson, James. *Mishkat al-Masabih - English Translation with Explanatory Notes*. Lahore. Sh. Muhammad Ashraf. 1968. 5th Edition. Vol. 1, p. 39.

*"To proceed: the best discourse is God's Book. The best guidance is that given by Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) and the worst things are those which are innovations. Every innovation is an error."*¹

Hence, the consequence of disobedience to Divine Law is further stressed in the following *Hadīth*: *Hadrat* Abu Hurayrah (r.a.) reports that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) states: "All my people will enter paradise, except those who refuse." On being asked who refused, he replied: "He who obeys me will enter paradise, and he who disobeys me has refused."²

3.2 RESPECT FOR THE PROPHET (s.a.w.s.)

The moral and social conduct, established by Divine Decree, when in the presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) must be implemented in a believer's daily life. It may be appropriate to mention that presently the inscription of verse 2 in *al-Masjid al-Nabawī* (Mosque of the Prophet - s.a.w.s.) brings to the realization of believers that just as it was sacreligious to raise one's voice in the presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) during his lifetime, similarly, it is detestable at any time to raise one's voice near his grave. Philips states that scholars have classified the raising of voices near his mausoleum as being *makrūh* (a detestable action). It follows then that the raising of voices in prayer to a deafening pitch at this particular place would also be in violation of the Laws of Islam.³

1. *Mishkat al-Masabih - English Translation with Explanatory Notes*, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 39.

2. *ibid.* Vol. 1, p. 39.

3. *Tafseer al-Hujuraat*, op. cit., p. 50.

Hence, Muslims must be conscious of their conduct in the vicinity of *al-Masjid al-Nabawī* and the grave of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). They ought to enter the *Masjid* with humility, submission, respect and reverence for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), although they may not be able to perceive the physical presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). This means that it is also incumbent upon them to safeguard their tongues from engaging in worldly or materialistic matters once inside the Prophet's (s.a.w.s.) *Masjid* and in the proximity of his grave. In fact, they must realize that they are not only standing at the grave of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), but that they are in reality in the presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Therefore, the recitation of *ṣalāt* and *salām* (blessings and salutations) at the grave of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) should be done in a moderate tone with great spiritual love for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), with politeness and respect, and above all with sincerity from the innermost recesses of one's heart, for *Allāh* (SWT) is fully aware of whatever transpires in the heart of a believer. Hence, if a believer does not adhere to the strict moral and spiritual code of discipline in his/her attitude and approach to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), then Divine Law decrees that there will be nullification of all good deeds without the believer becoming aware of that.

Although the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) has transcended this physical plane, his powerful authority and impact is still felt by the true believers in every nook and corner of the world. Hence, a true believer must accept the fact that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) should be accorded due respect and reverence, just as was the case during his lifetime.

Another important issue which needs to be elaborated upon is that a study of verse 1 of *Sūrat al-Hujurāt* reveals that there is a combination of the authority of *Allāh* (SWT) and

the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), while verse 2 pronounces only the authority of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). From a study of the structure of the verses, it is explicit that by the revelation of verse 2, *Allāh* (SWT) Himself defines the unique status of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Hence respect and reverence for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is most definitely an integral part of *īmān* (faith), and an essential ingredient for salvation. The fear of *Allāh* (SWT) is best demonstrated by the respect and reverence shown to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). A believer must therefore affirm absolute allegiance to him (s.a.w.s.) and this is a condition of faith. Thus it follows that any form of denial of the divinely bestowed authority of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) would result in his/her expulsion from the fold of Islam.

An incisive study into the status and duties of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) reveals that besides being designated as a Prophet of *Allāh* (SWT), he equally played a vital role in the religious and temporal affairs. For example, as head of State his duties were as follows:

- administration of the state and facilitating its smooth running;
- the appointment of religious teachers, governors and other administrators;
- the protection of citizens, whether Muslims or non-Muslims;
- the promotion of social welfare and peace;
- the granting of equal rights to all who were under his care;
- the solution of domestic and civil problems;
- the proper administration of economic affairs of the State;
- the institution of democracy in the truest sense of the word.

Mawlānā Islāhī states that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) discussed a number of issues with his

ṣahābah (r.a.). He would even go to the extent of asking them for their opinions on certain issues which related to the functioning of the State. They used to put forward their opinions and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) would either correct, condone or reject them.¹ However, they never voiced their opinions above that of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), not did they discard his instructions in the religious, political or social sphere. Their unwavering faith led them to maintain a low profile. They were aware of the fact that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) fulfilled all tasks through *Allāh*'s (SWT) guidance, and as such, if anyone were to voice one's opinion above that of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), then it would in reality be tantamount to voicing one's opinion above that of *Allāh* (SWT).

Pīr Karamshāh al-Azharī is of the view that all religious leaders should be accorded due respect. This is appropriate because the '*ulamā*' and spiritual guides are indispensable for propagating the teachings of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).² However, it may be appropriate to point out here that such leaders, while discoursing on matters that relate to the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*, ought to be careful and try to refrain from their personal opinions. If one indulges in such a practice then it is obvious that one would in reality be showing disrespect to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), thus negating the pronouncements of the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*. *Mawlānā Iṣlāhī* re-enforces this view by furnishing us with an example of a student and a teacher so as to demonstrate the relationship between a believer and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). He states that if a student disrespects his teacher, then he would not be able to acquire knowledge. Similarly it is impossible to attain the blessings and mercy of *Allāh* (SWT)

1. *Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān*, op. cit. Vol. 7, pp. 486-487.

2. *Diya' al-Qur'ān*, op. cit., p. 580.

without showing respect to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).¹ In other words, the one who endeavours to question the authority of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) or endeavours to amend the *Sunnah* is most definitely a transgressor and as such will be guilty of superseding the authority of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Thus, if one claims that one reveres and respects the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) then one should regard the *Sunnah* as a binding authority in every aspect of one's life. A believer must adhere to the *Sunnah*, not just theoretically but practically too. Hence, acquisition of the knowledge of the *Hadīth* or *Sunnah* are of paramount importance for implementation so that a believer may progress to a higher level of morality and spirituality. Thus, when the '*ulamā*' or spiritual guides teach their followers the *Sunnah* which is substantiated by authentic *Ahādīth*, then the followers must accept it without any doubt.² This means that a follower must not undermine the validity of the *Sunnah* by giving priority to the practices of one's ancestors above that of the sayings of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). From this it may be deduced that the actions and the statements of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) should be held in high esteem and should not be equated to the actions and statements of any other ordinary human-being. Figuratively, in present day context, the raising of voices above that of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) could be interpreted as the raising of status of an ordinary person over and above that of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). One's understanding of the concept of obedience and respect by emphasizing the combinations of obedience and respect for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and the conditions for the same are enunciated in the following *Qur'ānic* verse:

*"Obey Allāh and the Apostle and those in authority over you."*³

1. *Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān*, op. cit. Vol. 7, p. 490.

2. *Diya' al-Qur'ān*, op. cit., p. 581.

3. *Qur'ān*, 4:59.

It is quite obvious from the above that obedience and respect accorded to *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) are unconditional, whereas obedience and respect for those in authority is conditional. In Islam there is no distinction between religious and secular affairs. The life of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) bears testimony to the fact that during his term of office both as a Prophet and as a ruler there was no distinction between religious and temporal affairs, and between law and morality. Therefore, a righteous leader who derives authority from the discourses of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) must be obeyed and respected. If a leader or any authority does not possess qualities of righteous conduct, or takes decisions which are contrary to the teachings of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), then the followers are not obliged to obey or respect that leader's personal views either in spiritual or temporal affairs.

Although the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is no longer on this mortal plane, his traditions are alive. Therefore, when the traditions are recited and explained, politeness and respectful attention should be paid.² One should not doubt the authenticity of the teachings of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.); nor should one engage in debates pertaining to the status and the teachings of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). In present day context when Muslims assemble in gatherings of a religious nature such as a *mawlid al-Nabī* (commemoration of the birth of the Prophet s.a.w.s.) or an *ijtimā'* (religious gathering), whereby dissemination of religious knowledge takes place, they should then adhere to a code of conduct in accordance to the norms laid down by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

Here it ought to be noted that believers must exercise the same code of conduct in every other *masjid* of the world wherein *Allāh* (SWT) is worshipped according to the teachings

1. *Diyā' al-Qur'ān*, op. cit., p. 580.

of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). They should therefore refrain from the following detestable acts when in any *masjid*:

- i) Conducting business-transaction or the indulgence in conversations pertaining to worldly matters.
- ii) Raising of voices in arguments or jokes.
- iii) The inciting of violence.
- iv) Being inattentive when a sermon or prayer is in progress.
- v) Sitting in a disrespectful manner.
- vi) Engaging in any act which may disturb the peace and serenity or may disturb other worshippers.
- vii) To engage in slander or backbiting of a fellow-being or the *Imām* (leader of the congregation).
- viii) To voice one's own personal opinions during religious discourses above that of the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*.

In Islam the raising of voices in general is viewed as a violation of the moral and social code of conduct. A study of the various *Aḥadīth* of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) reveals that he encouraged the avoidance of talking loudly and shouting out at each other. For engaging in such behavioural pattern may lead to other devastating or sinful acts such as violence, unjustified murder, false allegations, etc. The degree to which Islam condemns the unnecessary raising of voices can be gauged from a statement in the *Qur'ān* wherein the raising of voice is said to be the same as that of the braying of an ass:

"And be moderate in thy pace, and lower thy voice; for the harshest of sounds without doubt is the braying of the ass."¹

However, it must be emphasized that the raising of voices is not totally condemned in Islam. *Pīr Karam Shāh Al-Azhari* gives an insight as to when the raising of voices is allowed in Islam by stating the following:²

- i) the giving of *adhān* (call to prayer) as was given by *ḥadrat Bilal* (r.a.);
- ii) the warcry or slogan as was permitted by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), eg. during the Battle of Hunayn. He instructed *ḥadrat ‘Abbās* (r.a.) to get the people’s attention by calling out loudly;
- iii) the recitation of *nā‘āth* (compositions in praise of the Prophet) audibly, but respectfully as was recited by *ḥadrat Ḥasan* (r.a.) in the presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.); and
- iv) raising the voice is allowed in the *masjid* during delivering the *khutbah* (sermon) for the purpose of emphasis and drawing the attention of the congregation.

It is via the revelation of verses 4 - 5 that *Allāh* (SWT) provides guidelines which relate to moral and social conduct whereby invasion of privacy of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is censured. From this a general norm against the invasion of privacy is laid. The *Qur’ān* further lays down the law pertaining to entering another person’s home by declaring:

1. *Qur’ān*, 31:19.

2. *Diyā’ al-Qur’ān*, op. cit., p. 581.

*"O you who believe! enter not houses other than your own, until ye have asked permission and saluted those in them: that is best for you, in order that you may heed (what is seemly). If you find no one in the house, enter not until permission is given to you: if ye are asked to go back, go back: that makes for greater purity for yourselves: and Allāh knows well all that you do."*¹

As far as the legal implication of any form of disrespect shown to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is concerned, this is viewed as tantamount to blasphemy and apostasy. As pointed out in chapter 2, any form of disrespect shown to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is detrimental to one's *īmān* (faith). Disrespect towards the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is regarded as a criminal and sinful act. Thus, it follows that any Muslim who uses obscene language against *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) or indulges in character-assassination of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) will be executed under the due processes of law. However, there is a difference of opinion whether or not that person ought to be allowed to repent before being executed. The general opinion of *Mālikī* School is that no form of repentance for blasphemy is accepted. If a person who used obscene language against *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) who is a non-believer, and if the language does not constitute part of his belief system, he should not be executed; otherwise he should be absolved.²

Most of the jurists of the *Hanafī* School have ruled in favour of the institution of capital punishment to a *dhimmi* (non-Muslim citizen in an Islamic State) who uses obscene

1. *Qur'ān*, 24:27

2. Zuhaylī, Wahbah. *Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuh*. Damascus. Dār al-Fikr. 1986. Vol. 6, p. 184.

language against the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) irrespective of his embracing Islam after being arrested. They reason out that such execution would be of a political nature. Muslim jurists also concur that a Muslim must be executed if he uses obscene language or insulting terms against *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).¹ They base their view on the following *Qur'ānic* injunction:

*"Those who annoy Allāh and His Apostle - Allāh has cursed them in this world and in the Hereafter, and has prepared for them a humiliating punishment."*²

'Abd Allāh Yūsuf 'Alī, commenting on the above, states that to annoy means to vex, to cause hurt or injury, to insult, to ill-treat by slander or unseemly conduct or hurt the feelings of someone. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) came with a Divine Mission to teach and reclaim the world, and he is entitled to the respect of all, even though there are those who do not consciously acknowledge his mission.³ In other words, anyone hurting the feelings of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in any way or insulting him, would deserve to be executed. It ought to be pointed out here that whenever a report is received, including an allegation that someone has blasphemed *Allāh* (SWT) and His Prophet (s.a.w.s.), then such a report must first be verified before that person is tried and executed. Philips points out that Islamic scholars have unanimously ruled that the testimony of an unrighteous person should be rejected as evidence in court, unless verified by authentic sources.⁴

1. *Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuh*, op. cit. Vol. 6, p. 184.

2. *Qur'ān*, 33:57.

3. *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, op. cit. Vol. 2, p. 1125.

4. *Tafseer al-Hujuraat*, op. cit., p. 63.

3.3. MORAL RECTITUDE

As far as moral rectitude is concerned, Muslims are expected to display exemplary character in all facets of life. Hence, the gravity of suspicion, spying and backbiting are viewed in a serious light within the ambit of Islamic Law; for indulgence in such activities are in direct violation of the moral and social laws of Islam. Cohesion in the society can only be achieved if people do not indulge in these vices. Suspicion breeds distrust among people. Sometimes on the basis of suspicion alone, without proper investigation, may lead a person to form a wrong notion about another person.

In contemporary times this principle needs to be applied expediently. Very often dissensions and disputes arise out of false information at various levels, eg.:

- a) in family circles
- b) at community levels
- c) in business circles
- d) at national and international levels.

Hence, any information given at random should not be accepted without proper investigation being carried out first. For example, if a person whose honesty is suspect, complains against a certain family member to another member of the same family, emotions may run high and the receiver of such information may pounce upon the one being accused. He would realize his folly later on when he would discover that he was misinformed. It is better to verify the report first before taking any drastic step.

Mawlānā Thanvī adds another dimension to the transmission and verification of information. It pertains to the publication of information via the news media. While publication of certain information may turn out to be news for the general public, yet it may be harmful for the nation as a whole. There are instances when the news media publish rumours without thorough investigation and this can be detrimental to an individual, members of a community, citizens of a country and also to the population of the whole world.¹ Here attention ought to be drawn to the following *Qur'ānic* injunction:

"When there comes to them some matter touching (public) safety or fear, they divulge it. If they had only referred it to the Apostle, or to those charged with authority among them, the proper investigators would have tested it from them (direct)." ²

‘Abd Allāh Yūsuf ‘Alī comments on the above by stating that:

"In times of war or public panic, thoughtless repetition of gossip is rightly restrained by all effective states. If false, such news may cause needless alarm: If true, it may frighten the timid and cause some misgivings to the bravest, because the counterpart of it - the preparations made to meet the danger is not known. Thoughtless news, true or false may also encourage the enemy. The proper course is quietly to hand all news direct to those who are in a position to investigate it. They can then shift it and take suitable measures to checkmate the enemy. Not to do so, but to deal with news either

1. Thanvi, Mawlana Ashraf ‘Ali. *Hayaatul Muslimeen*. New Delhi. Adams Publishers and Distributors, n.d., pp. 206-207.

2. *Qur’ān*, 4:83.

thoughtlessly or maliciously, is to fall directly into the snares of evil."¹

It is through this injunction that leaders of a community are provided with discourses pertaining to the delegation of responsibilities to persons. This means that a leader is expected to know the members of his community as well as their ability and character. Therefore, when entrusting an important task to someone, only such a person whose integrity and character are unquestionable must be chosen to accomplish the task. It must also be noted that sometimes a person may be of excellent character, but owing to a lack of education may not be able to interpret information conveyed to him in the correct perspective. Unintentional transgression can also be disastrous and lead to strained relationships at all levels of society. Thus, the slightest doubt created by a certain piece of information or its informant deserves to be thoroughly scrutinized and investigated so as to prevent severe consequences.

As far as spying is concerned this will be in contravention of the privacy of another person. Islam upholds privacy to such an extent that one may not enter the home of another person without permission. There is a *Hadīth* in which mention is made that eavesdropper will not enter Paradise.²

The invasion of human privacy in any form is totally shunned for it leads to friction, enmity, corruption and dismemberment of a sound society. In this context, *Mawlānā Mawdūdī* points out that "in the modern civilized world we find that not only the letters

1. *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, op. cit. Vol. 1, p. 205.

2. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī - Arabic English*, op. cit. Vol. 8, p. 52.

of other people are read and their correspondence censored, but even its photostat copies are retained for future use or blackmail. Even bugging devices are secretly fixed in the houses of the people so that one can hear and tape from a distance the conversation taking place behind closed doors. In other words, it means that there is no such thing as privacy and for all practical purposes the private life of an individual does not exist."¹

Islam does not only lay down the prohibition of espionage on the part of an individual only, but also makes it unlawful for governments to indulge in espionage on their citizens. Espionage on the lives of individuals were carried out in the apartheid era (1960-1992). The aim was to suppress the liberation movement. People were detained, some without receiving a fair trial. Some of them were tortured and killed in prison, like Steve Biko. Others had to spend long term imprisonment, like President Nelson Mandela who remained in jail for 27 years. The *Qur'ān* condemns such oppression:

*"The blame is on those who oppress men with wrong-doing and insolently transgress beyond bounds through the land, defying right and justice: For such there will be a grievous penalty."*²

While one must try to avoid suspicion as much as possible, at times it is inevitable for those in authority to carry out investigations in order to convict criminals on the basis of available evidence.

1. Maududi, Abul A'la. *Human Rights in Islam*. Leicester. The Islamic Foundation. 1976, p. 27

2. *Qur'ān*, 42:42.

Backbiting i.e. to speak ill behind a person's back is prohibited. It has been compared to "eating the flesh of one's brother" which is most abominable and must thus be avoided at all cost. Slander is not only detrimental to the slandered but also to the slanderer for it is indicative of the wavering faith of the slanderer which in reality means self-destruction of morals and ethics. It must be borne in mind that no man has the prerogative to judge others. In this regard *Allāh* (SWT) strongly poses the following rhetorical question:

*"Is not Allāh the wisest of Judges?"*¹

As for the legal implications of backbiting or slander, Islamic law has placed serious consequences on backbiting or slander which may also be associated with lying. Hence, the *Qur'ān* prescribes the following punishment:

*"And those who launch a charge against chaste women, and produce not four witnesses (to support their allegations) - flog them with eighty stripes; and reject their evidence ever after: for such men are wicked transgressors..."*²

Backbiting or slander destroys family ties, bonds of friendship and can even jeopardize business relationships, hence those who indulge in it ought to be punished. However, within an Islamic state the slanderer must meet the following conditions before the punishment is meted out:³

1. *Qur'ān*, 95:8.

2. *Qur'ān*, 24:4.

3. *Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuh*, op. cit. Vol. 6, p. 26.

- i) Sanity, i.e. the accused must be sane.
- ii) Puberty, i.e. the accused person should be an adult so that he can be charged for the allegation of adultery. If a minor is accused of slander, then the complainant, according to *Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal* should be punished. *Imam Malik* is also of the view that the punishment of slander should be given to the complainant of a minor.
- iii) Islamic faith: the accused should be a Muslim.
- iv) The required number of witnesses, as in the case of adultery should be four.

However, it must be noted that sometimes statements made under unforeseen circumstances may bear semblance to *ghībah* (backbiting), but yet would not fall within the same category. Here are some examples:

1. The process of litigation i.e. to lodge a complaint in a court of law against an aggressor or oppressor in order to demand justice from those in authority. In this regard the *Qur'ān* states: "*Allāh does not love that evil should be noised abroad in public speech, except where injustice has been done, for Allāh hears and sees everything.*"¹
2. To speak against those who are publicly violating Islamic norms and inviting people to disobey or show indifference to the authority of *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) or subjecting them to exploitation, torture and sedition.²
3. Character reference for the establishment of matrimonial relationship or employment.²

1. *Qur'ān*, 4:146.

2. *The Islamic Attitude to Social Relations in the Light of Sūrah al-Hujurāt*, op. cit., p. 8.

3.4 EQUALITY OF MANKIND

The pen-ultimate theme discussed in depth in chapter two dealt with the equality of mankind. As already discussed, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) was not only a spiritual head, but also the most profound head of state. History reveals that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) was not only responsible for the Muslims. In Madīnah there were various tribes consisting of Jews who were equally under his (s.a.w.s.) direct responsibility. Although he (s.a.w.s.) held political supremacy, he nevertheless granted non-Muslims freedom of worship. This was highlighted in a pact known as **The Madīnah Charter** among which there were 3 other political clauses as follows:³

- i) In cases of war with any third power the Muslims and the Jews will help each other.
- ii) None of the parties will grant amnesty to the Quraysh of Makkah.
- iii) In case of attack on Madīnah, both the parties will help each other in defending the city and if either of the parties will sign a treaty with any enemy the other party will also have to sign the treaty.

Through the example of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), it is evident that social justice is a combination of moral and spiritual values. The two main features of social justice in Islam are absolute coherent unity, and the general mutual responsibility of individuals and the society. Hence, Islam stands on equal opportunity for all in every sphere of life. Social justice in Islam, based on the principle of Divine Law, may be briefly classified as

1. *Taddabur-e-Qur'ān*, op. cit. Vol. 7, p. 511.

2. Nadvi, Syed Salman. "The Truce of Hudaibiya, A Great Victory of Islam" in *The Muslim History Journal*. Hyderabad. Sind University, Summer 1962, p. 3.

follows:¹

- i) to treat the individual with liberty and equality as his right.
- ii) to provide equal opportunities to develop the personality that he may be able to fulfil his duties according to his abilities.
- iii) to give the individual due in whatever field of life he adopts, provided he does not violate any Divine Law.
- iv) to regulate his relation with society, without causing harm to the interest of society, and contributing to the moral values and welfare. Hence, the approach to social justice on the principles set out by Divine Law, most definitely guarantees a sound system of life.

In a pluralistic society, Muslims are expected to live in peace and harmony with the other non-Muslim citizens. The *Qur'ān* commissions Muslims to invite non-Muslims to the eternal message of Islam and this constitutes one of the noblest tasks in the life of a Muslim. The *Qur'ān* stipulates the following in this regard: "*Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to Allāh, works righteousness, and says, 'I am of those who bow in Islam'?*"²

However, it must be noted that propagation must be undertaken without segregation. Muslims are prohibited by Divine Law to revile, ridicule or condemn people of other faiths. The duties of a Muslim involves preaching and practising, but the ultimate decision for the acceptance of Islam rests solely on the individual. Therefore, the *Qur'ān* categorically states:

1. Dadu, Y. and Jaffer, I.E. *Islamic Studies Study Guide 2*. Pretoria. University of South Africa. 1989, p. 75.

2. *Qur'ān*, 41:33.

*"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allāh has grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. and Allāh hears and knows all things."*¹

Islam thus recognizes equality of mankind as a birthright. Therefore, no one should be discriminated against on the grounds of colour of skin, place of birth, the race or nation that one belongs to.²

1. *Qur'ān*, 2:256.

2. *Human Rights in Islam*, op. cit., p. 23.

CONCLUSION

Sūrat al-Hujurāt focuses on the ethical and moral teachings of Islam which ought to be upheld in any given Islamic society. In the present materialistic environment, ethics and morality do not feature as a necessary priority. There is, therefore, a need to restore ethical values in all facets of life and this particular *Sūrah* touches upon some of the basic norms that ought to be implemented in the socio-political spheres of human life.

The objective of this dissertation was to study the major themes envisaged in Chapter 49 of the *Qur'ān* and to discuss the moral, social and legal implications of each directive. In the process of accomplishing this, it was necessary to mention that in Islam, there exists a relationship between morality and Divine Law. Morality, as analysed throughout this dissertation, is subject to Divine Law and both are inextricably bound in the sense that they can neither be seen as separate independent entities, nor are they violable. In other words, what constitutes right and wrong is determined by Divine Revelation. Success for Muslims in this life and the life to come is dependent upon their upholding the code of conduct as decreed and determined by the *Sharī'ah* (Divine Law).

The first major theme discussed pertains to the obedience to *Allāh* (SWT) and the Messenger (s.a.w.s.). Adherence to the teachings of the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* is a prerequisite to restoring the status of mankind as the vicegerents of *Allāh* (SWT) on earth and ensuring peace and harmony in society.

It was pointed out that moral and spiritual evolution can be achieved through the

inculcation of *taqwā* (God-consciousness). If human beings were to bring to realization that God is fully aware of all their activities, and were to acknowledge the fact that they would have to face serious consequences in this life and the life to come for their immoral behaviour, then such realization would most certainly serve as a deterrent to their indulging in sinful acts.

As for respect that ought to be accorded to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), it was pointed out that Muslims must uphold the teachings of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) either in the form of his (s.a.w.s.) *Hadīth* or *Sunnah*. The *Hadīth* is an indispensable source of Islamic Law, which is termed as *wahī khafī* (minor revelation), and as such its validity cannot be challenged nor denied. Prophethood is a God-ordained institution. *Allāh* (SWT) commands Muslims to respect and revere the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) unquestionably and unconditionally for it is *Allāh* (SWT) alone Who has empowered the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) to occupy the highest position amongst all His creations. It is thus incumbent upon Muslims to safeguard respect and reverence for the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in action, word, deed, and thought. According to the *Shari'ah*, there is no forgiveness for any form of disrespect shown towards the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) as was discussed in chapter three of this dissertation.

Leadership of Muslims emanate from the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Elected leaders are regarded to be the successors of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), not on the level of Prophethood, but in the realm of the spiritual and temporal affairs of Muslims. Hence, leaders who are righteous and who administer jurisdiction as defined by the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* must be respected. Muslims are thus expected to obey and respect the righteous leaders so that peace, love, and harmony may prevail in society. On the other hand it is incumbent upon the leaders

to uphold the ethical code as expressed and defined by the Divine Decree.

Chapter 49 of the *Qur'ān* also deals with the concept of brotherhood. Brotherhood of human beings in general and Muslims in particular demonstrates the greatest social ideal in Islam. Thus reviling people, defaming them and being sarcastic with them must be shunned. Sarcasm depicts contempt for one's fellow human being. Reviling others is the antithesis of compassion, love and mercy. Negative and unwarranted criticisms are indicative of transgressing the rights of others and as such will most definitely lead to the entrenchment of hatred, disunity and disharmony in the society. Hence *Sūrat al-Hujurāt* prescribes some basic norms which are essential to be upheld so as to bring about cohesion within the society. This means that the moral and ethical code as prescribed by the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* must be upheld by Muslims *vis-a-vis* Muslims and between Muslims and others in a pluralistic society. It was thus imperative to touch upon the significance of *imān* (faith). What one believes in, it was pointed out, ought to be translated into action and this constitutes true obedience to *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Hence the essence of faith is an expression of voluntary submission to the authority of *Allāh* (SWT) and the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

The directives laid down in *Sūrat al-Hujurāt*, if strictly adhered to, will inevitably assist in bringing about peace and harmony in the society and it will also ensure one's success in this life and the Hereafter. These directives are enumerated hereunder:

- i. recognition of *Allāh* (SWT) as the Supreme Authority;
- ii. furtherance of universal moral values based on Divine Injunction;

- iii. manifestation of true belief in one's daily transactions;
- iv. avoidance of false allegations;
- v. avoidance of emotional distress by refraining from sarcastic remarks, suspicion, backbiting, etc.;
- vi. realization of universal brotherhood i.e. all mankind are the descendants of *ḥadrat* Ādam (a.s.) and *ḥadrat* Hawā, and hence the common parentage;
- vii. demolition of the concept of inferiority or superiority in all walks of life;
- viii. implementation of justice by playing the role of impartial arbitrators between opposing factions at all levels;
- xi. reconciliation at all levels;
- x. cultivation of patience and tolerance;

It is earnestly hoped that this dissertation will form the basis for future research and study by prospective students of the *Qur'ān*.

GLOSSARY

<i>Adhān</i>	- Call to Prayer
<i>‘Ām al-Wufud</i>	- Year of Deputation: 9 A.H.
<i>‘Amal</i>	- deed
<i>Amānah</i>	- trust
<i>Anṣār</i>	- Helpers i.e. those who provided refuge to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and the immigrants in the city of Madinah
<i>Dhimmī</i>	- a non-Muslim citizen in an Islamic State
<i>Dīn</i>	- religion, way of life
<i>Fāsiqūn</i>	- transgressors against Divine Injunctions
<i>Fatwā</i>	- religious decree
<i>Fitnah</i>	- corruption, trial, temptation, mischief
<i>Fisq</i>	- transgression
<i>Fuqahā’</i>	- Muslim jurists
<i>Ghībah</i>	- backbiting
<i>Ḥadīth</i>	- pronouncement of the Prophet (s.a.w.s)
<i>Hijrī</i>	- Islamic year
<i>Ijtihād</i>	- legal judgement or inference of laws through reasoning
<i>Ijtimā’</i>	- gathering
<i>Imām</i>	- leader/also one who leads the congregational prayer
<i>Īmān</i>	- faith
<i>Al-Khulāfā’ al-Rāshidah</i>	- The Rightly Guided Caliphs
<i>Khuṭbat al-Wadā’</i>	- The Farewell Sermon of the Prophet (s.a.w.s)

<i>Al-kadhhdhāb</i>	- the liar
<i>Makrūh</i>	- an action which is detestable
<i>Al-Masjid al-Nabawī</i>	- the Prophet's (s.a.w.s.) Mosque in Madīnah
<i>Muhājirūn</i>	- the immigrants from Makkah to Madīnah
<i>Mufasssirūn</i>	- exegesists of the <i>Qur'ān</i>
<i>Muhaddithūn</i>	- scholars of the Traditions of the Prophet (s.a.w.s)
<i>Qādī</i>	- judge in an Islamic State
<i>Qiyās</i>	- inference through precedence/analogical reasoning
<i>Radiya Allāhu 'anhu</i> (r.a.)	- May <i>Allāh</i> be pleased with him
<i>Ridwān Allāh 'alayhinna</i> (r.a.)	- May <i>Allāh's</i> pleasure be upon them (used for females)
<i>Risālah</i>	- Prophethood
<i>Sabab al-Nuzūl</i>	- Causes of the <i>Qur'ānic</i> revelations
<i>Sala Allāh 'alayhi wa sallam</i> (s.a.w.s.)	- May the Peace and Blessings of <i>Allāh</i> be upon him (used for the Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.s.)
<i>Sharī'ah</i>	- The Divine Law
<i>Sīrat</i>	- Biography of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.)
<i>Subḥāna Hu wa ta'ālā</i> (SWT)	- Glory be to Him, the Almighty (used for <i>Allāh</i>)
<i>Al-Sunnah al-'Ilāhiyah</i>	- The Divine Pattern
<i>Sunnah</i>	- the practice of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.)
<i>Ṣaḥābah</i> (sing. <i>ṣaḥābī</i> - r.a.)	- Companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.)
<i>Tafsīr</i>	- <i>Qur'ānic</i> exegesis
<i>Taqwā</i>	- God-consciousness
<i>Tawḥīd</i>	- Oneness of <i>Allāh</i> (SWT)
<i>Ummah</i>	- Islamic community

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