

## Sūrah 49: al-Hujurāt

### Period of Revelation

Ahādith show that this Sūrah is a collection of the commandments and instructions sent down on different occasions. Moreover, the hadith also show that most of these commandments were sent down during the final stage of the Prophet's life at Madinah. For instance, about verse 4, the commentators state that it was sent down concerning the Bani Tamim whose deputation had arrived in Madinah and started calling out to the Prophet from outside the apartments (hujurat) of his wives, and according to all biographical books on the Prophet's life this deputation had visited Madinah in 9 A.H. Likewise, about verse 6 a large number of the hadith confirm that it was sent down concerning Walid bin Uqbah whom the Prophet had sent to collect the Zakāh from the Bani al-Mustaliq, and it is well known that Walid bin Uqbah had become a Muslim on the conquest of Makkah.

### Subject Matter and Topics

The subject matter of this Sūrah is to teach the Muslims the manners worthy of true believers. In the first five verses they have been taught the manners they should observe with regard to God and His Messenger.

Then, they have been given the instruction that it is not right to believe in every news blindly and to act according to it, without due thought. If information is received about a person, a group or a community, it should be seen carefully whether the means of the information is reliable or not. If the means is not reliable, it should be tested and examined to see whether the news is authentic or not before taking any action on it.

Then, it has been told what attitude should the other Muslims adopt in case two groups of the Muslims fall to mutual fighting. Then the Muslims have been exhorted to safeguard against the evils that corrupt collective life and spoil mutual relationships. Mocking and taunting each other, calling others by nicknames, creating suspicions, prying into other people's affairs and backbiting are the evils which are not only sins in themselves but they also corrupt society. God has mentioned all these evils separately and forbidden them as unlawful.

After this, the national and racial distinctions that cause universal corruption in the world have been condemned. Nations and tribes and families pride of ancestry and their looking down upon others as inferior to themselves and their pulling down others only for the sake of establishing their own superiority is an important factor that has filled the world with injustices and tyranny. God in a brief verse has cut at the root of this evil by stating that all men are descendants of the same one pair and their division into tribes and communities is only for the sake of recognition, not for boasting and pride, and there is no lawful basis of one man's superiority over the other except on the basis of moral excellence.

In conclusion, the people have been told that the real thing is not the verbal Profession of the Faith but to believe in God and His messenger truly, to obey them in practical life and to exert sincerely with one's self and wealth in the cause of God. True believers are only those who adopt this attitude. As for those who profess Islām merely orally without affirmation by the heart and then adopt an attitude as if they had done someone a favor by accepting Islām, may be counted among the Muslims in the world, may even be treated as Muslims in society, but they cannot be counted as believers in the sight of God.

**Sūrah 49: al-Hujurāt**<sup>1414</sup>

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate,  
the Most Merciful

1. O you who have believed, do not put [yourselves] before God and His Messenger<sup>1415</sup> but fear God. Indeed, God is Hearing and Knowing.
2. O you who have believed, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet or be loud to him in speech like the loudness of some of you to others, lest your deeds become worthless while you perceive not.
3. Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of God - they are the ones whose hearts God has tested for righteousness. For them is forgiveness and great reward.
4. Indeed, those who call you, [O Muhammad], from behind the chambers - most of them do not use reason.
5. And if they had been patient until you [could] come out to them, it would have been better for them. But God is Forgiving and Merciful.
6. O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.
7. And know that among you is the Messenger of God. If he were to obey you in much of the matter, you would be in difficulty, but God has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance and disobedience. Those are the [rightly] guided.
8. [It is] as bounty from God and favor. And God is Knowing and Wise.
9. And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of God. And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, God loves those who act justly.
10. The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear God that you may receive mercy.
11. O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name [i.e., mention] of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers.
12. O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear God; indeed, God is Accepting of repentance and Merciful.
13. O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may

<sup>1414</sup> *Al-Hujurāt*: The Chambers, referring to the rooms in which the wives of the Prophet lived.

<sup>1415</sup> Rather, wait for instruction and follow the way of the Prophet.

know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of God is the most righteous<sup>1416</sup> of you. Indeed, God is Knowing and Acquainted.

14. The bedouins say, “We have believed.” Say, “You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], ‘We have submitted,’ for faith has not yet entered your hearts. And if you obey God and His Messenger, He will not deprive you from your deeds<sup>1417</sup> of anything. Indeed, God is Forgiving and Merciful.”
15. The believers are only the ones who have believed in God and His Messenger and then doubt not but strive with their properties and their lives in the cause of God. It is those who are the truthful.
16. Say, “Would you acquaint God with your religion while God knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, and God is Knowing of all things?”
17. They consider it a favor to you that they have accepted Islām. Say, “Do not consider your Islām a favor to me. Rather, God has conferred favor upon you that He has guided you to the faith, if you should be truthful.”
18. Indeed, God knows the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth. And God is Seeing of what you do.

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<sup>1416</sup> Literally, “he who has the most *taqwā*,” i.e., consciousness and fear of God, piety and righteousness.

<sup>1417</sup> i.e., the reward thereof.