

## **Surah Hujrat's Reformative Religious and Social Themes and Subjects for Mankind**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The surah is madinan and surah takes its name from verse 4 in which the word hujrat has occurred. Surah is collection of the commandments and instructions sent down on different occasions. The themes/ subjects of this surah are to teach the Muslims regarding manners worthy of true believers. In the first five verses they have been taught the etiquettes they should observe with regard to ALLAH Almighty (Subhana hu Wa Ta'ala) and His Messenger (Peace Be upon Him). Then, Muslims have been given instructions that it is not right to believe in every news blindly and to act accordingly, without due thought. Then, it has been told what attitude the other Muslims should adopt in case two groups of the Muslims falls to mutual fighting. Then, the Muslim's have been instructed to safe guard against the evils of life, mocking, taunting, calling other with nicknames, creating suspicion, spying others and back biting. ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) has mentioned all these evils separately and forbidden them as unlawful.

After this, the national and racial distinctions that causes universal corruption have been condemned. ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) in a brief verse has cut at the root of this evil by stating "All human beings are descendants of the same one pair and there are no lawful basis of one man's superiority over the others except on the basis of moral excellence". At the end, the people have been told that the real thing is not the verbal profession of the Faith but to believe in ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) and his Messenger truly.

**Keywords:** Hujrat, Madinan, Commandments, Mocking, Taunting, Back Bite, Suspicion, Spying, Racial distinctions

### **Introduction**

The word hujrah (Plural-Hujrat) literally mean room, chamber or compartment. Al Hujrat appears only once in the Quran in verse 4 of the surah. It particularly refers to one room apartment of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be upon Him). Hence, due to the specific usage of this word, this chapter of Holy Quran was thus named; when one scan through this chapter of the Holy Quran one notices that it is through the initiation of ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) that the apartment of Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) to be accorded due reverence. Hence, the apartment of Holy Prophet (Peace Be upon Him) symbolize abodes of absolute peace and tranquility which can be described as "Sanctum Sanctorum". Form this one gather that the apartment of Holy Prophet (Peace Be upon Him) are characterized by an aura of reverence.

Therefore, even today when Muslims who go to pay homage to the Holy Prophet (Peace Be upon Him) must adhere to the Divine Code of Conduct in this regard while entering Masjid-Al-Nabwi and while they stand in front of ROZA-E-RASOOL<sup>1</sup>.

### **Significant of Surah-Al-Hujrat.**

1. The surah has 2 x Rukus, 18x Verses and 335x words. It deals with a numbers of issues and directive which affect the day to day life of a Muslim and also the Islamic community and the state as a whole. The surah spell out the manners in which Muslims ought to approach ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) and the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), what they ought to do when they receive nefarious news, how they should treat their fellow brother-in-Faith, and touches upon the essence of Iman (Faith) and virtuous deeds. The content of the Chapter lay down the moral and social norms that are to be upheld in any given Islamic society<sup>2</sup>.
2. Themes / subjects in surah Hujrat can be broadly discussed in following two categories:-
  - a. Religious Reformative Themes
  - b. Social Reformative Themes

### **Religious Reformatory Themes**

3. Religious themes/ subjects mentioned in Surah Al-Hujrat can be discuss as following:-

a. **Obedience of ALLAH (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) and Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him).**

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْدِمُوا يَدَيَّ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولَهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ

سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ \* 3

“O you who believe make not (a decision) in advance before ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) and His Messenger (Peace Be Upon Him) and fear ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala). Indeed! Allah is all hearing, omniscient”

Believers are hereby asked not to obey any-one besides ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) and His Messenger (Peace Be Upon Him). They are supposed not to say anything against the book and Prophetic traditions (Sunnah). Obedience and faith on ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) and His Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) are the basic pillars of Islam.

“Faith ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala)” and withhold from disobeying divine commands and know that :-

“Indeed! Allah is all hearing, omniscient”.

He hears yours words and He is All Aware of your deeds. It is worthy to note that ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) strictly forbids making decision before the leader of Islamic Community. Since one who makes decision in advance before ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) and His Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), cause disorder in the management of the Islamic system and leads the society to chaos and infect plays with the legislative system through his personal inclinations.

b. **Etiquettes of Treating Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) with the highest respect**

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ

كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَنْ تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ \* 4

“O you who believe! Raise not your voices above the voices of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), nor speak aloud to him in talk as you speak aloud to one another's, lest (for the sake of such indecency) your deeds should be rendered fruitless while you perceive not”.

The verse forbade believers from speaking aloud in the presence of the Noble Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him). The 1<sup>st</sup> clause:-

“Raise not your voices above the voice of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him)”.

Designates that such manners of speech before the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) is an act of indecency. One is not even suppose to show such indecency before one's parents and teachers. The 2<sup>nd</sup> clause:-

“Nor speak aloud in talk as you speak aloud to one another”.

May either lay further emphasis on the preceding one or make a reference to a novel point which is forbidding believers to address the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) by the Phrase:-

“O Muhammad! Rather than “Messenger of ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala)”.

It is evident that the 1<sup>st</sup> clause results in rendering one's good deeds fruitless and the 2<sup>nd</sup> clause may also lead to the same since such acts of indecency end in rendering may a good deed fruitless owing to committing certain sins.

c. **“Taqwa” Selection of Hearts by Allah Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala)**

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَغُضُّونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ  
لِلتَّقْوَى لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ \* 5

“Indeed, those who lower their voices in the presence of Allah Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) and Messenger (Peace Be Upon Him) for the sake of good manners and their respect for him, they are the ones whose hearts ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala)” has tested (and prepared) for (entertaining) piety. For them are forgiveness and a great reward”.

The criteria for “Taqwa” by ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) is mentioned clearly in this Holy verse. All those who lower their Avoice in front of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) selects them for Taqwa. So the blessed verse makes a reference to the pious where characteritics include speaking softly in the presence of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and never raise their voices above that of the exalted Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him). Divine rewards and forgiving are in store for such people.

d. **Making decision against the order of Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him)**

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَبٌ  
إِلَيْكُمْ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيْنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ، أُولَئِكَ  
هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ، فَضِلَّا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً، وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ \* 6

“And know that among you there is the Messenger of ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta’ala) (Whom you should obey). If he were to obey you in much of the matter, you would surely be in trouble. But ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta’ala) has endeared your faith to you and has beautified it in your hearts, and has made disbelief, disobedience (to ALLAH Almighty Subhana Hu Wa Ta’ala), and committing sin hateful to you, such are they who are the rightly guided

The blessed verse says that the people are basically supposed to obey the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), and the divinely appointed leader is not supposed to be affected by the reports imparted by wrong-doers, mention was made under false report by Walid ibn Uqba about the people’s failure to pay tax.

While addressing believers, verse aims at guiding them saying that the Messenger (Peace Be Upon Him) is amongst you and you are supposed to obey his commands rather than expect Him to obey you, since had he acted upon your wish, you believers, un aware of your gain and loss, would have been in trouble and hardship.

e. **Sincerity of Iman (Faith) and its Impact on Action**

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ نُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَمَا يَدْخُلُ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ  
وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ\*7

“The Bedouin Arabs say “We believe”. Say you believe not but you only say, we have submitted (to the will of ALLAH Almighty Subhana Hu Wa Ta’ala), for faith has not yet penetrated your hearts. But if you obey ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta’ala) and His Messenger (Peace Be Upon Him), He will not decrease an iota in reward for your deeds. Indeed, ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta’ala) is oft-forgiving, most merciful”.

The verse in question and the all following verses remind the Arabs (newly converted Muslims) that they have nominally converted to the Islamic faith and faith has not penetrated to their hearts. Besides, even if they converted to Islam, they should not remind the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) of their so-called favors but ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta’ala) reminds them of His guidance bestowed upon them.

The blessed verse reflects the difference between Islam and faith, saying Islam is the outward and legal aspect of faith and whoever says:-

“There is no God but ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta’ala) and Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is the Messenger of ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta’ala)”.

is recognized as a Muslim but faith is real and inward affair where place in heart rather than his tongue and appearance.

### **Social Reformatory Themes**

4. Following social reformatory themes have been discussed in Surah Al-Hujrat:-

a. **Carefully Ascertaining the Truth of News or Verification of News**

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ مِّن بَنِي فَتَنِيُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا مَّ بَجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصِيبُوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ 8

“O you who believe! If an evil doer comes to you with important news, verify it, lest you should harm people in ignorance (out of haste in belief and making decision), and afterwards you become regretful for what you have done”.

The Holy verse saying that if an evil-doer comes to you with intelligence, do not acknowledge it unless you investigate its truthfulness, otherwise if you do something in ignorance, you may have done something wrong and thereafter you may regret.

b. **Maintenance of Peace and Brotherhood of Muslims**

وَإِن طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِن بَغْت إِحْدَهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِن فَاتَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ \* 9

“And if two parties or groups among the believers engage in fighting, then make peace between them both. But if one of them outrages against the other, then fight you against the one that outrages till it complies (and ceases outrages), then make reconciliation between them justly and be equitable. Indeed! ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta’ala) loves those who are equitable”.

The verse provided instructions to muslims that if two muslim brothers fight then other must try to stop it as early as possible. When the ground is paved for conflict and contention it is incumbent upon muslims to take reconciliatory measures. Islam requires that wrong-doing be hindered and justice is to be administered through reconciliation.

c. **Universal Brotherhood of All Muslims**

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ \* 10

“The believers are nothing else than brothers so make reconciliation amongst your brothers (in case contention and conflict arise) and fear ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta’ala) that you may receive mercy”.

The blessed verse treats of the relationship amongst believers like that between brothers. It is narrated that two brothers are like two hands washing each other. The verse lays emphasis upon reconciliation among Muslim brothers. In that part of verse, one of the most significant social responsibilities of Muslim against one another in administration of justice is clarified with all its dimensions.

“The believers are nothing else than brothers” is one of the fundamental and deeply rooted Islamic slogan and also a very remarkable, profound, effective and meaningful slogan.

d. **Slandering, Taunting, Backbite and Spying on other are Evils**

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَرُوا بِالْألقَابِ بِئْسَ الإِسْمُ الفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُم الظَّالِمُونَ\*11

“O you who believe! Let not a group divides another. It may be that the latter are better than the former. Nor let women divide other women. It may be that the latter are better than former. Neither defame one another, nor insult one another by nick names (Since) doing wrong after having faith is an evil practice (unbefitting you). And who so ever does not repent (of committing such deeds), then they are indeed wrong doers”. (11)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْنَاهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ  
اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ\*12

“O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion. Indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not (on other), neither backbite on another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? By no means, (since) you would hate it. And fear ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta’ala), Indeed, ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta’ala) is the one who forgives and accepts repentance, Most Merciful.”

Factor perturbing the peace and brotherhood amongst believers, mention may be made of suspicion, slandering, spying, backbite etc. It is worthy of note that the Holy Quran recommends believers to entertain good intentions towards other and refrain from entertaining suspicion about others.

e. **Equality of Mankind**

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

“O people! We have created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, that most

honorable of you with ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) is that (one) who fear ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala). Indeed, Allah is omniscient, All Aware”.

The Islamic faith rejects all racial, political, ethnological, tribal, geographical, economic, intellectual, cultural, social and military segregations and places fear of God as the standard for distinction between virtues and vice.

5. **Lessons/ Impacts on Society**. Twelve (12) lessons/ impacts can be very beneficial for any society for peaceful co-existence. Specially muslims have complete religion, spiritual and social code of conduct:-
- a. It improves faith on ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) and His Messenger.
  - b. Mankind especially muslims must understand the importance of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him).
  - c. Taqwa- Yard stick for Taqwa is the highest respect for the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him).
  - d. Investigate: whenever you receive an information, must investigate it.
  - e. Make settlement between your brothers as believers are brothers.
  - f. Act Justly: Act justly among both parties as ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) loves those who act justly.
  - g. Do not ridicule people, perhaps they may be better than you to ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala).
  - h. Do not insult one another.
  - i. Do not call each other with offensive nicknames.
  - j. Avoid negative assumptions, indeed some of the assumptions are sin.
  - k. Do not spy on each other.
  - l. Do not back bite on each other. <sup>14</sup>

### **Conclusion**

6. The Surah Hujrat teaches us the obedience of ALLAH Almighty (Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala) and Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) with Faith. It also teaches the etiquettes of interacting with Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) with the highest respect. Equality of mankind is also an important lesson of the surah.
7. The surah is to elucidate upon a series of life-giving commandments of ethics, morality and social interaction which if put in practice, would lead to an ideal civilization. Those in turn could create and cultivate a pure society that is far away from all sorts of blame worthy moral traits.



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