

SURAH AS A STORY



Surah Al-Hujurat

The Chambers

The complete journey — the manners of a believing society —
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 49 • 18 Ayahs • Medinan

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The Surah at a Glance

*Yaaa ayyuhal-lazeena aamanoo laa tuqaddimoo
bayna yadayil-laahi wa Rasoolih*

1. O you who believe! Do not put yourselves before Allah
and His Messenger.

*Yaaa ayyuhal-lazeena aamanooo in jaaa'akum
faasiqum binaba'in fatabayyanoo*

6. O you who believe! If a wrongdoer comes to you with
news, verify it.

*Innamal-mu'minoona ikhwatun fa-aslihoo bayna
akhawaykum*

10. The believers are but brothers, so make peace
between your brothers.

Wa laa yaghtab ba'dukum ba'daa

12. And do not backbite one another.

*Yaaa ayyuhan-naasu innaa khalaqnaakum min
zakarinn-wa unsaa*

13. O mankind! We created you from a male and a
female...

Inna akramakum 'indal-laahi atqaakum



13. Indeed, the most noble of you with Allah is the most righteous of you.

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The Surah of Manners

Beta, this surah has a special place: the scholars call it 'Surah al-Akhlaq' — the surah of manners — because in eighteen ayahs it lays down the complete etiquette of a believing society.

And notice something remarkable, beta: it is addressed mostly to people who ALREADY believe. Five times it begins: 'YA AYYUHAL-LAZINA AMANOO' — O you who BELIEVE. These are not instructions to disbelievers about how to become Muslim. They are instructions to Muslims about how to behave with one another.

Because a person can pray, fast, and give — and still be a disaster in his dealings with people. And Allah did not leave that to chance.



'YA AYYUHAL-LAZINA AMANOO LA TUQADDIMOO BAYNA YADAYILLAHI WA RASOOLIH — O you who believe! Do NOT PUT YOURSELVES FORWARD before Allah and His Messenger — WATTAQUILLAH — and FEAR Allah — INNALLAHA SAMEE'UN 'ALEEM — indeed, Allah is Hearing, Knowing.'

Beta, this first ayah sets the foundation of everything. Do not run ahead of Allah's ruling with your own opinion. Do not decide what is right and then look for a verse to support it. Do not say 'in my view this should be allowed' about a matter Allah has already settled.

Abu Bakr and Umar (radiyallahu anhuma) once differed in front of the Prophet ﷺ about appointing a leader over a tribe, and their voices rose in the disagreement — and this passage came down. Beta, after that, Abu Bakr would speak to the Prophet ﷺ almost in a whisper, and Umar's voice became so low that the Prophet ﷺ sometimes had to ask him to repeat himself.



'YA AYYUHAL-LAZINA AMANOO LA TARFA'OO
ASWATAKUM FAWQA SAWTIN-NABIYY — do NOT
RAISE YOUR VOICES above the voice of the Prophet —
WA LA TAJHAROO LAHU BIL-QAWLI KA-JAHRI
BA'DIKUM LI-BA'D — and do not speak loudly to him
as you speak loudly to one another — AN TAHBATA
A'MALUKUM WA ANTUM LA TASH'UROON — lest
your DEEDS BECOME WORTHLESS while you PERCEIVE
NOT.'

Beta, feel the weight of that warning: deeds destroyed by
a raised voice, and the person does not even notice it
happening. Adab is not a decoration on top of religion; it
is part of its structure.

And the reward for those who lower their voices:
'ULA'IKAL-LAZINAM-TAHANALLAHU QULOBAHUM
LIT-TAQWA — those are the ones whose HEARTS Allah
has TESTED and PURIFIED for righteousness —
LAHUM MAGHFIRATUN WA AJRUN 'AZEEM — for
them is forgiveness and a great reward.'



Beta, a lowered voice was accepted as evidence of a purified heart. Think about what that says regarding our own arguments — in homes, in comment sections, in family gatherings.

Verify Before You Believe

'YA AYYUHAL-LAZINA AMANOO IN JA'AKUM
FASIQUN BI-NABA'IN FA-TABAYYANOO — O you who
believe! If a FASIQ comes to you with NEWS, then
VERIFY IT — AN TUSEEBOO QAWMAN BI-JAHALATIN
— lest you HARM a people in IGNORANCE —
FA-TUSBIHOO 'ALA MA FA'ALTUM NADIMEEN — and
become, over what you have done, REGRETFUL.'

Beta, the background of this ayah is instructive. A man was sent to collect zakah from a tribe; there had been old hostility between them. He saw them coming out toward him, took fright, and returned with the report that they had refused to pay and intended to kill him. An expedition was almost dispatched — and then the tribe's delegation arrived, saying they had come out to



WELCOME the collector. And this ayah came down.

Beta, look at how much was at stake: an entire community was moments away from being attacked over one unverified report.

Now think about our own time. A message arrives on the phone. It is shocking, it confirms what we already suspect about someone, and it is easy to forward. And in two seconds, without checking a single fact, a person can destroy a reputation, break a marriage, or start a rumour that outlives him.

'Fa-tabayyanoo' — VERIFY. Beta, this ayah alone would clean up most of what is wrong with our communities. Before you believe a claim about a person, ask: who told me? Do they have a grudge? Have I heard the other side? Would I say this in front of the person concerned?

And notice the two consequences Allah names: harming people 'bi-jahalah' — in ignorance — and then 'nadimeen' — regretful. Beta, that regret is the worst part, because by then the words have travelled and



cannot be recalled.

Make Peace Between Your Brothers

Then the surah addresses conflict — and it is startlingly practical: 'WA IN TA'IFATANI

MINAL-MU'MINEENAQ-TATALOO FA-ASLIHOO

BAYNAHUMA — and if two groups AMONG THE BELIEVERS fight, then make PEACE between them.'

Beta, notice: even while they are fighting, Allah still calls them BELIEVERS. He does not expel them from iman for a quarrel. And the community's duty is not to take sides or enjoy the spectacle — it is to reconcile.

And if one party refuses and oppresses the other, the community must stand with the wronged one until it returns to Allah's command — 'then make peace between them WITH JUSTICE, and act JUSTLY. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.'

Beta, note: even when you are stopping an aggressor, the instruction is 'bil-'adl' — with justice. Fighting wrong



does not license wrong.

'INNAMAL-MU'MINOONA IKHWATUN FA-ASLIHOO
BAYNA AKHAWAYKUM — the BELIEVERS ARE BUT
BROTHERS, so make peace between your two brothers
— WATTAQUILLAHA LA'ALLAKUM TURHAMOON —
and fear Allah that you may receive mercy.'

Beta, this ayah is the constitution of Muslim
brotherhood in five words: 'innamal-mu'minoona
ikhwah'. Not 'should be like brothers' — ARE brothers.
It is stated as a fact of existence, not an aspiration.

And the Prophet ﷺ taught what this brotherhood means
practically: the believer to the believer is like a building,
parts of it supporting other parts — and he interlaced
his fingers. And: the example of the believers in their
mutual love and mercy is like one body; when one limb
complains, the whole body responds with sleeplessness
and fever.

Beta, so making peace between two quarrelling Muslims
is not interference — it is repairing your own body.



Six Diseases of a Community

And now, beta, come two ayahs that name six social diseases — and if a community avoided just these six, it would be a garden.

'LA YASKHAR QAWMUN MIN QAWMIN 'ASA AN YAKOONOO KHAYRAN MINHUM — let not a people RIDICULE another people; PERHAPS THEY ARE BETTER THAN THEM — WA LA NISA'UN MIN NISA'IN 'ASA AN YAKUNNA KHAYRAN MINHUNN — nor women ridicule other women; perhaps they are better than them.'

Beta, that phrase — "asa an yakoonoo khayran minhum", perhaps they are better — should stop every mocking tongue. You are laughing at someone whose rank with Allah may be far above yours. The man with the shabby clothes may pray at night while you sleep.

'WA LA TALMIZOO ANFUSAKUM — and do not INSULT ONE ANOTHER.' Beta, look at the wording: literally 'do not insult YOURSELVES'. Because the ummah is one



body — insulting another believer is like the hand striking the face.

'WA LA TANABAZOO BIL-ALQAB — and do not call each other by offensive NICKNAMES.' Beta, a small thing, apparently. And Allah legislated against it — because a name that mocks a person's body, family, colour or past can wound for a lifetime. Ask any adult about the nickname he was given at school.

'BI'SAL-ISMUL-FUSOOQU BA'DAL-IMAN — wretched is the name of disobedience after faith — WA MAN LAM YATUB FA-ULA'IKA HUMUZ-ZALIMOON — and whoever does not repent — those are the wrongdoers.'

Then the next ayah names three more: 'YA AYYUHAL-LAZINA AMANOOJ-TANIBOO KATHEERAN MINAZ-ZANN — AVOID MUCH ASSUMPTION — INNA BA'DAZ-ZANNI ITHM — indeed, some assumption is SIN.'

Beta, 'zann' — suspicion, assuming the worst. He didn't reply to my message, so he must be arrogant. She wasn't



at the gathering, so she must be jealous. Allah says: avoid MUCH of it, because some of it is outright sin. And the Prophet ﷺ said: beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the most false of speech.

'WA LA TAJASSASOO — and do not SPY.' Beta, do not investigate people's private affairs, do not read what is not yours to read, do not go looking for faults that Allah has covered.

'WA LA YAGHTAB BA'DUKUM BA'DA — and do not BACKBITE one another.'

And then Allah gives the most unforgettable image in the entire Quran on this subject: 'A YUHIBBU AHADUKUM AN YA'KULA LAHMA AKHEEHI MAYTAN FA-KARIHTUMOOH — WOULD ONE OF YOU LIKE TO EAT THE FLESH OF HIS DEAD BROTHER? YOU WOULD DETEST IT.'

Beta, feel the force of that. Allah did not say gheebah is 'bad' or 'unbecoming'. He compared it to cannibalism — and not merely eating a man, but eating your BROTHER,



and eating him DEAD, when he cannot defend himself.

That is precisely what backbiting is: the person is absent, unable to reply, and you are consuming him for the entertainment of others.

'WATTAQULLAH — and fear Allah — INNALLAHA TAWWABUN RAHEEM — indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance, Merciful.' Beta, notice the mercy at the end of such a severe ayah: the door of tawbah is opened immediately.

The Most Noble Among You

And now, beta, we reach one of the greatest ayahs ever revealed on human equality — an ayah the Prophet ﷺ quoted in his farewell sermon before the largest gathering of his life:

'YA AYYUHAN-NASU — O MANKIND!' Beta, note the change of address. The whole surah has been saying 'O you who believe'. Here Allah speaks to ALL people — believer and disbeliever, every race, every century.



'INNA KHALAQNAKUM MIN ZAKARIN WA UNTHA — indeed, We created you from a MALE and a FEMALE — WA JA'ALNAKUM SHU'OOBAN WA QABA'ILA LI-TA'ARAFOO — and made you PEOPLES and TRIBES that you may KNOW ONE ANOTHER.'

Beta, look at the purpose given for all human diversity: 'li-ta'arafoo' — SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW ONE ANOTHER. Not to compete, not to rank, not to dominate. Nations, languages, colours and tribes exist as a system of recognition and acquaintance — the way a name tag helps, nothing more.

And every human being is traced back to one male and one female — so every claim of racial superiority is a claim against your own ancestry.

'INNA AKRAMAKUM 'INDALLAHI ATQAKUM — INDEED, THE MOST NOBLE OF YOU IN THE SIGHT OF ALLAH IS THE MOST RIGHTEOUS OF YOU.'

Beta, this single sentence abolished every hierarchy humanity has ever invented. Not the wealthiest. Not the



fairest. Not the most educated. Not the one from the noble tribe or the right family or the right country. THE MOST GOD-CONSCIOUS.

And the Prophet ﷺ, in his farewell address at 'Arafah, declared: O people, your Lord is One and your father is one. There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor of a non-Arab over an Arab; nor of a white over a black, nor a black over a white — except by taqwa.

Beta, and the beauty of taqwa as the measuring stick is that it is INVISIBLE. You cannot see who has more of it. Which means no human being is ever in a position to rank another. The scale exists, but only Allah reads it — and that is exactly why the ayah ends: 'INNALLAHA 'ALEEMUN KHABEER — indeed, Allah is Knowing, Acquainted.'

Iman Has Not Yet Entered Your Hearts

And the surah closes, beta, with a lesson in humility about faith itself.



'QALATIL-A'RABU AMANNA — the BEDOUINS said:
WE HAVE BELIEVED. QUL LAM TU'MINOO WA LAKIN
QOOLOO ASLAMNA — say: you have not (yet) believed;
but say: we have SUBMITTED — WA LAMMA
YADKHULIL-IMANU FEE QULOBIKUM — for FAITH
HAS NOT YET ENTERED YOUR HEARTS.'

Beta, this is a precise and gentle distinction. ISLAM is the outward submission — the shahadah, the prayer, belonging to the community. IMAN is the inward reality that settles into the heart. Every mu'min is a Muslim, but not everyone who has entered Islam has yet had iman enter his heart.

And notice the mercy in the wording: 'LAMMA' — NOT YET. Allah does not reject them; He tells them the journey is not complete. 'WA IN TUTI'ULLAHA WA RASOOLAHU LA YALITKUM MIN A'MALIKUM SHAY'A — and if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not deprive you of anything from your deeds.'



Beta, so the door stands open: keep obeying, and it will enter.

'YAMUNNOONA 'ALAYKA AN ASLAMOO — they consider it a FAVOUR to you that they have accepted Islam. QUL LA TAMUNNOO 'ALAYYA ISLAMAKUM — say: do NOT CONSIDER YOUR ISLAM A FAVOUR TO ME — BALILLAHU YAMUNNU 'ALAYKUM AN HADAKUM LIL-IMAN — RATHER, ALLAH HAS DONE YOU A FAVOUR IN GUIDING YOU TO FAITH — IN KUNTUM SADIQEEN — if you are truthful.'

Beta, what a correction. Some of them felt they had done Islam a service by joining it. And Allah reverses it completely: the favour runs the other way, entirely.

Sit with that yourself, beta, and never lose it. Your prayer, your fasting, your reading of Quran — these are not favours you are doing for Allah. That you were BORN into this, that the words of the Quran reach your ears, that your heart still responds — those are favours done TO you. Millions never received them.



So this surah, which began by telling us not to run ahead of Allah, ends by telling us not to feel proud of following Him. Between those two, it gives a whole society its manners: verify news, reconcile brothers, never mock, never suspect, never spy, never backbite, and never rank people by anything except a taqwa that only Allah can see.

Beta, if we lived these eighteen ayahs, our homes and communities would change beyond recognition.

What This Surah Teaches Us

- 1.** Never put your opinion ahead of Allah's ruling — and never underestimate adab; deeds can be lost through a raised voice.
- 2.** Verify before you believe or forward — one unverified report almost destroyed an entire tribe.
- 3.** 'The believers are but brothers' is stated as a fact — so reconciling two quarrelling Muslims is repairing your own body.



4. Avoid the six: mockery, insults, offensive nicknames, suspicion, spying, and backbiting.

5. Gheebah is described as eating your dead brother's flesh — the person is absent and cannot defend himself.

6. Diversity exists 'li-ta'arafoo' — to know one another, never to rank one another.

7. Nobility is taqwa, and taqwa is invisible — so no human is ever in a position to rank another. And your guidance is a favour TO you, never from you.

Ya Allah, beautify our manners with our brothers, guard our tongues and our assumptions, and grant us the taqwa by which You measure. Ameen.

— This is a simplified, faithful retelling for understanding, based on the Quran's translation and established tafseer (Ibn Kathir and others). For deeper study, always read with a qualified teacher. —

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