

## Explanation of the First Verse in Soorah al-Hujuraat

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O Believers, do not be hasty and forward in Allaah and His Messenger's presence but instead fear Allaah; for verily, Allaah is Hearer and Knower. [Soorah al-Hujurat (49):1]

This Soorah opens with Allaah's command to the Believers not to interrupt the Prophet's (sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam) conversations or obstinately contradict him. Instead, they are advised to fear Allaah by being patient and to obey the Prophet (sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam) by following him in all their affairs. Respect for the Prophet (sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam) and what he had to say is portrayed as an expression of the fear of Allaah because the Prophet (sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam) did not speak of his own accord. He was guided by Allaah, the Most High; therefore, his statements and actions should be looked at as divine guidance from Allaah. The Prophet Muhammad (sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam) was the means by which Allaah chose to convey His last message to mankind. This vital point was emphasized and immortalized by Allaah in the following verse, "**And, he (the Prophet) does not speak from his desires; verily, what he says is revelation from(God)**" [Soorah an-Najm (53):3] We are required to revere the Qur'aan and quietly listen to its message based on Allaah's statement "*When the Qur'aan is being recited, listen to it attentively and be quiet.*" [Soorah al-A'raaf (7):204] We are also required to revere the Prophet (sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam) and listen attentively to his pronouncements. Ibn 'Abbaas, the greatest Qur'anic commentator among the Sahaba, added another dimension to the meaning of this verse and similar verses by interpreting it to mean that the Believers should not say anything which goes against the Qur'aan and *Sunnah* [Quoted by Ibn Katheer in *Tafseer al-Qur'aan, al-AdHeem*, vol. 4, p. 315]. Figuratively speaking, one is in Allaah's presence when he or she reads the Qur'aan, and likewise when the *Hadeeths* which describe the Prophet's *Sunnah* [the sayings and actions of the Prophet (sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam) intended as law for all Muslims] are studied, one also enters into the presence of the Prophet (sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam). Hence "**Allaah and His Prophet's presence**" can be said to refer today to the Qur'aan and *Sunnah*. Forwardness and haste in Allaah's and His Prophet's presence could then be interpreted to mean the making of snap judgements based on superficial reading or making unauthorized and unfounded interpretations of the Qur'aan and the *Sunnah*. Giving one's personal opinions or cultural habits

precedence over the divine commands of the Qur'aan and *Sunnah* also represents another aspect of forwardness in Allaah's and His Prophet's presence. Great care has to be taken when explaining the principles of Islaam in order that no statements contrary to those of Allaah and His Apostle are inadvertently made which may consequently lead people astray. If at any time ideas in opposition to the Qur'aan and the *Sunnah* are held and clear proofs of their inaccuracy are later presented, a true Believer is required to immediately give up his or her mistaken concepts and submit to the authentic commands of Allaah and His Messenger. If one does otherwise, claiming his ideas and practices were that of his forefathers, he would be, in fact, no better than the pagans of Makkah who replied to the Prophet's call to one God by saying **"Verily, we found our forefathers on this path and we intend to follow their steps."** [Soorah az-Zukhruf (13):22] He would also be guilty of the crime of **"believing in a part of the Book and disbelieving in a part"** [Soorah al-Baqarah (2):85]; a crime for which Allaah cursed the Jews. Instead, one should **"Obey Allaah and obey the Messenger"** [Soorah Aal-'Imraan (3):32] without the least hesitation otherwise one's Islaam, which itself means submission to Allaah and His Apostle, would be in question.

Allaah then closes the verse with a reminder to fear Him at all times, for it is only the consciousness of Allaah, a longing for His pleasure and a fear of His displeasure, which can create a real and lasting improvement of human habits. The verse is then sealed with two of Allaah's qualities both of which produce a state of real God consciousness in all who comprehend their implications. Allaah is the Hearer of all statements, plans or plots and He is the Knower of the secret intentions behind all deeds. His knowledge knows no bounds of time and space. Hence, any disrespect to Allaah and his Prophet (sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam), His Qur'aan, and the *Sunnah* is known to Allaah; and those who dare to commit such acts will be held to account for them.