

Fast 26: Manners to be observed towards the Holy Prophet

- When large numbers of people started joining Islam, it became necessary to teach them rules and manners of how to behave towards the Holy Prophet so that his work of teaching was honoured, his guidance was followed, his privacy was respected and his time was not wasted. The believers were thus instructed:

“¹O you who believe, do not be forward in the presence of Allah and His Messenger, and keep your duty to Allah. Surely Allah is Hearing, Knowing. ²O you who believe, do not raise your voices above the Prophet’s voice, nor speak loudly to him as you speak loudly to one another, in case your deeds become fruitless, while you do not perceive. ³Surely those who lower their voices before Allah’s Messenger are they whose hearts Allah has proved for dutifulness. For them is forgiveness and a great reward.” — 49:1–3

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْدُمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ اللَّهِ وَ
رَسُولِهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ
النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ
أَنْ تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
يَغْضُونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ
امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوَى لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ
عَظِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

In verse 1, the “presence of Allah” means the gathering where the commandments of Allah are being taught. “Be not forward” means *not to get ahead of them*. Getting ahead of them means, for example, that after listening to the start of what is being said to you, you presume to know what is coming next and stop paying attention, or that you allow your own ideas and interpretations to have precedence over the teaching which is being given to you.

The command in verse 2, not to raise your voice above that of the Prophet, or talk to him loudly as you do to one another, is again a matter of manners in front of your guide and teacher. The natural loudness of someone’s voice is not meant here. A Companion of the Holy Prophet, Thabit ibn Qais, had a loud voice by nature. On hearing this revelation, he went and sat in his house, dejected and crying, because he thought it was directed at him and his “deeds would become fruitless”. When the Holy Prophet missed him for a while, he asked about him. Someone went to his house and found him in this depressed state. When the Holy Prophet heard about his condition he sent him a message to say that he was not destined for hell but was among those destined for paradise. (See Bukhari, hadith 3613 and 4846.) His voice was not meant in this verse. What is meant is that one must not be argumentative and try to talk down the Holy Prophet as if he were an ordinary man.

- The next two verses are as follows:

“⁴Those who call out to you from behind the private apartments, most of them have no sense. ⁵And if they had patience till you come out to them, it would be better for them. And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” — 49:4–5

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُنَادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥﴾

Some people, not knowing any better, used to shout questions at the Holy Prophet from outside his house, expecting him to leave everything and come out to answer them.

The rules and manners taught in the above five verses are not only historical, which were to be observed towards the Holy Prophet by his followers, but they are a permanent guidance on how people should conduct themselves before their teachers and leaders.

- Another passage covering the same kind of subject is as follows:

“⁶²Only those are believers who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and when they are with him on an important matter, they do not go away until they have asked permission from him. Surely they who ask permission from you, are they who believe in Allah and His Messenger; so when they ask permission from you for some affair of theirs, give permission to whom you will from among them, and ask forgiveness for them from Allah. Surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. ⁶³Do not make the Messenger’s calling among you as your calling of one another. Allah indeed knows those who steal away from among you, concealing themselves. So those who go against his order should beware that a trial may afflict them or there may befall them a painful punishment.” — 24:62–63

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِذَا كَانُوا مَعَهُ عَلَىٰ أَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ لَّمْ يَذْهَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَسْتَأْذِنُوهُ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۖ فَإِذَا اسْتَأْذَنُوكَ لِبَعْضِ شَأْنِهِمْ فَأَذِنَ لِمَنْ شِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ لَا تَجْعَلُوا دُعَاءَ الرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَاءِ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا ۗ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ يَتَسَلَّلُونَ مِنْكُمْ لِوَاذًا ۗ فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾

It is first stated that no one should leave without the Holy Prophet’s permission, when they are gathered together for some important matter requiring their presence. Then it is said: “Do not make the Messenger’s calling among you as your calling of one another”, meaning that the Holy Prophet’s call to the believers should be respected by them, and not treated as the call of one ordinary person to another. This is because the Holy Prophet’s call relates to some important affair affecting the welfare of the

community, while their mutual calling of one another relates to their own private affairs.

This shows how vitally important it is *to take seriously* meetings which are held relating to national or communal affairs, at which decisions have to be made affecting everyone in the community, *to give up your time* for them, and *to participate in them* with full attention. When asked to attend such a gathering, we should give that call a higher priority than the calls to attend some private function.