

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۗ وَٱتَّقُوا ٱللَّهَ  
إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١﴾

*Al-Hujurat (The Dwellings) 49:1*

**O You Who Believe!**

- Do not put yourselves forward before Allah and His Messenger.
- But fear Allah.
- For Allah is He Who hears and knows all things.

## **Commentary**

Allamah Taba Tabai (AR)

This chapter is based on religious and Shariah problems through which the lives of people are purified and which helps establishing a clean and healthy society in which man can express his obedience to God and His Messenger.

- The initial verses of the chapter are about those deeds that are related to man in a sense to depict his status in the society and
- about those very important problems through which a clean and healthy society is guided.
- It differentiates between the truths of religion with the non-truth.
- It includes the collective Sunnahs and laws.
- The chapter ends on the reality of belief and the mercies of God and Islam connected with the radiance of faith is hinted at.

The issues dealt with in the chapter prove it to be a Madina chapter excepting for this verse that says, " O People We have created you from a male (man) and a female (woman)."

God says, " O you who believe! Do not put (yourself) forward before God and His Messenger and Fear God. Verily God is all- hearing and all-knowing."

The words "Put forward" refers to the manifest things and this is a literal usage commonly done or it may be construed to be symbolic and refer to God and His messenger at the same time and not just the Messenger. This means that this commandment is common between God and His messenger and is a stage where both their orders converge as one. The books says, (Yusuf 40) " The command is for none but God" and in Surah Nisa (64) the book says, " We sent no Messenger, but to be obeyed by God's permission." The words, " Fear God, verily He is all-hearing" stand as witness and the words " God and His Messenger" refer to stage and place that is reserved for God, His Messenger and the Pious Muslims. This is the stage of command through which the orders and advices are obtained regarding the believer's deeds and beliefs.

This clarifies that the words, " Do not put forward", means that you should not give preference to compulsions in comparison with the orders of God and His Messenger or to proceed in anything before the command of God and His Messenger in that regard. The words, " Verily God is all-hearing", warns the believer not to proceed in deeds and or else it would have said, " god is all-hearing and all-seeing", as God has sometimes reminded us. God says, " And God is the all-seer" (Hadid-4). The result of this discussion is that you should not attribute commands to God and His Messenger in things where the commands are already in place or that you have no right to issue commands and it is imperative upon you to obey the commands of God and His Messenger.

In case we reflect we will find that every deed done or not done by man is not without a command that has already been issued. The decision to do something or not to do it or the things that are to be done or not done are also included in it. So is the decision to follow something or not. It is commands to desist from giving preference to any order over that of God's or His Messenger and nothing should be done that have not been heard from God or His Messenger. Man prior to the command from God or His Messenger should not decide upon such deeds or refusal to do them. Now this verse comes closer to the meaning of the verse that describes the attributes of the angels in chapter Ambia (27) " They speak not before He speaks and they act only on His bidding."

The compliance being asked in verse, " Do not put yourself before God and His Messenger", refers to God's supremacy under which we have to live and obey. Man has to abide by the decision of God as he was obedient when he was under the natural (Takwini) command in his early stages of life. This is easily understood from the verse 30 of the chapter" Prophets", " You do not desire anything but that which God desires.". Surah Imran verse 68 says, " And God is the protector of all believers", then again Surah Al Jathiya (19) says, " God is the protector of the pious."

The Ulama have expounded some reason for the verse " Do not put yourself forward before God and His Messenger", and the first is that we should be hasty in doing anything before the command of God and His Messenger and we should not prefer any order other than those given by them. It is also explained the "put forward" is in the sense that God is all encompasses and it is He, " who gives life and takes it." ( Al Hadid 2) In short anything that is given preference to shall be given first by God and His Messenger and this word includes both words and deeds even in the sense that you should not walk ahead of the Messenger when you walk with him or deeds or utterance related to any particular incident or time.

Among these explanations is the issue that we should not speak ahead of the Messenger or raise our voice above his and we should not be hasty in answering any thing before the Messenger answers. Then again you should not do or say anything before the Messenger gives you the order to do or say that. Do not give preference to your words over the words of the Messenger. When we are asked to desist in the above verse, it is not merely for the reasons stated above, but that God has highlighted his status as the chosen one and pre-empting him in words or deeds or anything else for that matter is giving preference to our deeds and words before that of God. And this suffices for all things, deeds words and thoughts.

God orders piety through the words, " Obey God and God is all-hearing." Because man holds no station excepting that of obedience and piety. " And God is all knowing". therefore we should desist from overtly or covertly doing that which He has not asked and we should fear Him the most or as we fear no other. He hears and knows all that you do. so nothing is hidden from Him.

#### Mir Ahmed Ali (AR) and Aqa Mahdi Puya (AR)

In the commandment of "Do not be forward or presumptuous", Allah has joined the Holy Prophet with Himself. This implies that no irreverence should be shown to either Allah or His Prophet in any matter. The believers must be mannerly, decorous, feeling and showing reverence in the presence of the Holy Prophet. It is not allowed to give advice in any matter before the Holy Prophet asks a believer to do so, if he pleases. Obey Allah and His Prophet in every matter, small or great; in the whole conduct of your life.

Judgement or verdict is given by Allah in all matters through His messenger. So obey and revere the Holy Prophet as you should obey and revere Allah. Some ill-mannered companions used to show positive disrespect to the Holy Prophet by their behaviour. Bad manners and rudeness destroy the value of any services which have been rendered. Those who had true piety in their hearts really and sincerely respected, honoured and revered their leader. Those who did the opposite surely undid the work of years by weakening the leader's authority. See commentary of Nisa: 65 and always keep in mind the person who said about the Holy Prophet: *The old man is in a delirium. The book of Allah is sufficient for us.*

Apart from the derogatory comment on the infallible messenger of Allah which had rendered all his deeds null and void, his ignorance of the book of Allah had also become known to the whole world. It is because of such "wandering in the darkness of ignorance", the Holy Prophet had advised his followers to refer to his Ahl ul Bayt whenever they desire to understand the true meanings of the verses of the Qur'an (see hadith al thaqalayn on page 6). So think twice before following such ignorant and self conceited persons as your leaders who ridiculed and slandered the Holy Prophet, when even walking ahead of him or beside him, or talking loud before him or interposing while he is speaking, has been prohibited .

It is reported in a tradition mentioned in Sahih Bukhari that a group of men of Qa-aqa came to the Holy Prophet; and before he could give his verdict, Abu Bakr proposed Qa-aqa bin Mu-ud and Umar suggested Qara to be appointed as the leader of the group. Then they began to dispute with each other on that issue. So these verses were revealed to establish the supreme authority of the Holy Prophet.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

Unwarranted interference in the issues of religion already decided by the Holy Prophet emerged in full force after his departure from the world and continues in every age.

The occasion of revelation shows that the most prominent companions of the Holy Prophet indulged in what has been forbidden in these verses.

Bukhari says:

"The two good men were very near (a certain) perdition"  
(Kadal khayyiran an yahlika).

Notwithstanding this reprimand, according to Bukhari, disrespectful behaviour of the companions continued and lasted till the Holy Prophet's departure. The well known tradition of qirtas throws sufficient light on the ignorance of the companions.

Verse 3 mentions the men of sublime character around the Holy Prophet who are referred to in order to distinguish good from evil, because behaviour unto the Holy Prophet has been made a test of the faith of his followers.