

## Surah Mujadila, Chapter 58

(The Disputing Woman)

Section (juz')

Number of Verses: 22

### General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

***In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful***

The Chapter in question has twenty-two Verses and it was revealed in Medina. The blessed Chapter opens with a question of disputation hence the designation. The blessed Chapter treats of the law of zihar, a kind of divorce in pre-Islamic times; positive and negative aspects of whispering; greeting with those entering a meeting; distinction of the party of God and that of Satan.

### The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

Two traditions have been narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and Imam Sadiq (as).

According to the former:

*"One who recites Surah al-Hadid and Surah al-Mujadila and reflects and acts upon them, will be regarded as a member of the party of God."*

The latter says:

*"One who recites Surah al-Hadid and Surah al-Mujadila in their obligatory prayers will neither be afflicted with any torment in his life, nor will he or his family suffer from evil, nor will he be entangled with*

*poverty and destitute."*

The contextual meaning of these Chapters is clearly consistent with the said rewards indicating that the goal of reciting them is to apply them in one's life rather than mere recitation devoid of reflecting and acting upon them.

## **Surah Mujadila – Verse 1**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

***In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful***

قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ  
تَحَاوُرَكُمَا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ

***1. Verily Allah has heard the statement of the woman who disputed with you concerning her husband and complained to Allah. And Allah hears the argument between you both. Indeed, Allah is All-Hearer, All-Seer.***

There was a kind of divorce in pre-Islamic times called zihar as per which the husband was not allowed to revoke the divorce nor was the wife allowed to remarry.

A certain man divorced his wife in this manner at the time of the Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) thus addressing her:

*"You are to me like my mother's back."*

The man came unto the Noble Prophet (S) and informed him of the case.

The Noble Prophet (S) said:

*"Allah has not specified such law."*

Terrified, the woman said:

*"I complain to Allah about my misfortune and my lost youth and health. If I leave my children to my husband, they will be ruined. If they stay with me, they will starve."*

The blessed Verses of the Chapter in question were revealed before long according to which whoever

acts in this fashion will be required to expiate. Further, it is said that there is no divorce.

Since the husband could not afford to purchase a slave and act upon the manumission ordainment nor could he feed sixty poor people nor was he able to fast for two months, the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) rendered him some sufficient aid such that he could feed sixty poor people and thus expiated his sin and returned to his former life. 1

It is worthy of note that in the blessed Verse in question, God Almighty says three times that He is the All-Hearing (sami') and people may speak unto Him. Thus, it is incumbent upon us to take heed of our words, since God Almighty hears them. He hears our supplications and invocations. Therefore, we may invoke him to answer our prayers. We may take refuge in God Almighty in vicissitudes.

## Surah Mujadila – Verse 2

الَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْكُمْ مِمَّن نِّسَائِهِمْ مَا هُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِهِمْ ۖ إِنَّ أُمَّهَاتِهِمْ إِلَّا اللَّائِي  
وَلَدْنَهُمْ ۖ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَقُولُونَ مُنْكَرًا مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَزُورًا ۖ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُوفٌ غَفُورٌ

**2. Those among you who make their wives unlawful to them by saying to them "You are like my mother's back" (zihar), they cannot be their mothers. None can be their mothers except those who gave them birth. And indeed, they utter an ill word and a lie. And indeed, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Oft-Pardoning.**

Mention was made in the preceding Verse of the type of divorce in pre-Islamic times as per which the husband said:

*"Sleeping with you is like sleeping with my mother."*

Islam sanctioned this type of divorce and obliged the husband to expiate for this sin. Úihar, as an instance of injustice done to women, was sanctioned by the Islamic law and those committing such sin had to pay dearly for expiating it.

Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that those of you who say unto their wives:

*"You are like my mother to me"*

utter falsehood, since their wives are not like their mothers as their mothers are those who gave birth to them. Being a mother or a child depends neither on words nor sophistry, but it is an indisputable reality. If a husband says one hundred times unto his wife that she is like his mother, it would be merely falsehood and superstition.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say

***"they utter an ill word and a lie and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Oft-Pardoning."***

Therefore, in case a Muslim committed such vice prior to the Revelation of these Verses will be forgiven by God Almighty. It is noteworthy that the Arabic word zur denotes untruth and lie.

### **Surah Mujadila – Verse 3**

وَالَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسَا ۚ ذَلِكُمْ تُوَعَّظُونَ بِهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

***3. And those who make unlawful to them their wives by zihar and wish to redeem themselves of what they uttered, [the expiation] in that case is the manumission of a slave before they touch each other. That is an admonition to you. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.***

Manumission as an expiation for involuntary homicide, unredeemed oath, and zihar is attested in the Holy Qur'an2.

Since such abominable act could not be ignored by the Islamic faith, the blessed Verse in question says:

***"Those who make unlawful to them their wives by zihar and wish to redeem themselves of what they uttered, [the expiation] in that case is the manumission of a slave before they touch each other."***

Qur'an exegetes have thought of different interpretations regarding the blessed Verse in question and in his Tafsir Kanz al-'Irfan, Fa'ail Miqdad presents six interpretations.

However, the literal sense of the word, taking into account the clause:

***"before they touch each other,"***

is that they repent their words and intend to return to their family life and sexual intercourse. Such interpretation is also attested in traditions narrated from Ahl al-Bayt.3

The blessed Verse proceeds to say:

***"That is an admonition to you. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do,"***

i.e. He is All-Aware of your zihar, refraining from expiation, and your intentions.

## Surah Mujadila – Verse 4

فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسَا ۖ فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ  
فَأِطْعَامُ سِتِّينَ مِسْكِينًا ۚ ذَلِكَ لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۚ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ۚ  
وَاللَّكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

**4. And he who finds not a slave for manumission must fast to successive months before they both touch each other. And he who is unable to do so, should feed sixty poor people. That is in order that you may have faith in Allah and His Messenger. These are Divine Laws. And for disbelievers, there is an excruciating torment.**

The word hudud denoting limits and connoting laws is attested more than ten times in the Holy Qur'an most of whose instances are pertained to family law. Failure to act upon Divine Laws and indifference to the same are on a par with disbelief. It is worthy of note that Divine chastisement lead to loss of property and physical strength, but one may thereby increase one's faith.

The blessed Verse is saying that one who cannot find a slave, as in our time, or may not afford to purchase one for manumission, he must fast for two consecutive months before touching his wife.

Jurisprudents maintain that the Arabic word mutatabi'in in the blessed Verse designates two consecutive lunar months or sixty days; however, if one fasts for a month and a day, but breaks the fast thereafter and fast the remaining days later on, the fast is still valid, but he may not touch his wife before the completion of the two month fast.

Now, one who is unable to fast owing to decrepitude, weakness, or any other reason, it is incumbent upon such person to feed sixty poor people with the food, e.g. bread, wheat, and rice, consumed by the majority of the inhabitants of the city.

The Arabic word

**ta'am** ("food")

seemingly indicates that the person is supposed to fill them up in one meal. However, the measure has been specified in Islamic traditions as almost 750 grams, though some jurisprudents have specified the quantity as double the amount.

The blessed Verse proceeds to reiterate the main goal of such expiations, saying:

**"That is in order that you may have faith in Allah and His Messenger."**

Compensation for the sins through expiating strengthens the pillars of faith and makes man knowingly and practically committed to acting upon Divine Laws.

To make all Muslims regard such expiation as a serious question, the blessed Verse says:

**"These are Divine Laws. And for disbelievers, there is an excruciating torment."**

## Surah Mujadila – Verse 5

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ كُبِتُوا كَمَا كُبِتَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ وَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا  
آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ ۚ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ

**5. Indeed, those who oppose Allah and His Messenger have been crushed, as those before them were crushed. And We have sent down clear Āyat (signs, Verses). And for the disbelievers is a disgracing torment.**

The Arabic clause yuhaddun Allah denotes "opposed Divine Bounds through either use of power and weaponry or animosity, sabotage, and conspiracy." The verbal form kubitun derives from the root k-b-t ("crush, subdue").

The last clause in the preceding blessed Verses warned all people against transgressing Divine Bounds and the blessed Verse in question treats of those who transgress such Bounds and thereby struggle against God Almighty and His Messenger (S) whose fate in this world and the Hereafter is explicated herein.

The blessed Verse opens by saying that those who oppose God Almighty and His Messenger (S) are disgraced as the same was in store for their predecessors. Then, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that God Almighty sent down clear Signs and Verses. Thus, ultimatum has been given leaving no room for any pretext as to opposition.

However, if they oppose God Almighty and His Messenger (S), they shall be chastised in this world and a humiliating torment shall be in store for disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection. Therefore, the preceding sentence makes a reference to the torments in store for them in this world and this sentence refers to the torment in store for them in the Hereafter.

## Surah Mujadila – Verse 6

يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا ۚ أَلْحَسَاةُ لِلَّهِ وَنَسْوُهُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ

## شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

**6. On the Day when Allah will resurrect them all together and inform them of what they did. Allah has kept account of it, while they have forgotten it. And Allah is Witness over all things.**

Depicting the torment in store for them in the Hereafter, the blessed Verse in question says that on the Day of Resurrection God Almighty shall resurrect and inform them of what they have done. God Almighty has kept account of their deeds even if they have consigned them to oblivion.

Consequently, when they see their record of deeds, they will cry:

*"Woe to us! What kind of Book is this that leaves neither a small thing nor a big thing, but has kept account of them all"4.*

It will be an excruciating torment when God Almighty reminds them of their forgotten sins hereby they shall be disgraced before all men on the Day of Resurrection.

The blessed Verse in question closes by saying:

**"God Almighty is Witness over all things [and is Omnipresent]."**

The closing clause substantiates the previous one by saying that Divine Omnipresence requires that He keeps account of not only our deeds but also of our intentions and He will disclose them all on the Day of Emergence (yawm al-buruz) such that those who committed the deeds and others know the reason behind severe chastisements and torments.

## Surah Mujadila – Verse 7

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا أَدْنَىٰ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرَ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا ۗ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

**7. Have you not seen that Allah knows whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth? There is no confidential talk of three but He is their fourth, nor of five but He is their sixth, nor of less than that or more, but He is with them wherever they may be and afterwards on the Day of Resurrection. He will inform them of what they did. Indeed, Allah is the Omniscient.**

The verbal form

**tara ("you saw")**

deriving from r-'-a denotes "see" but also connotes "perceive," intended herein.

Further, to emphasize Divine Omnipresence and Omniscience, mention is made of

**"confidential talk" (najwa),**

saying:

**"Do you know not that God Almighty is All-Aware of whatever is in the heavens and the earth."**

The blessed Verse is addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), but It is actually addressed to all mankind.

It is in fact a prelude to the question of confidential talks:

**"There is no confidential talk of three but He is their fourth, nor of five but He is their sixth, nor of less than that or more, but He is with them wherever they may be and afterwards on the Day of Resurrection. He will inform them of what they did. Indeed, Allah is the Omniscient."**

It is worthy of note that God Almighty being the fourth or sixth of them connotes that He is Omniscient and Omnipresent rather than His Pure Essence were limited to spatial bounds or specified by numbers. His Unity is not subject to measurement, but the blessed Verse connotes that He is Unique and Unrivalled.

## **Surah Mujadila – Verse 8**

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نُهُوا عَنِ النَّجْوَى ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَيَتَنَاجَوْنَ بِاللَّيْلِ  
وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَتِ الرَّسُولِ وَإِذَا جَاءُوكَ حَيَّوْكَ بِمَا لَمْ يُحَيِّكَ بِهِ اللَّهُ وَيَقُولُونَ  
فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَوْلَا يُعَذِّبُنَا اللَّهُ بِمَا نَقُولُ ؟ حَسْبُ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ يَصَلُّونَهَا ؟ فَبئسَ الْمَصِيرُ

**8. Have you not seen those who were forbidden to hold confidential talks, and afterwards returned to that which they had been forbidden and conspired together for sin and wrong doing and disobedience to the Messenger. But when they come to you, they greet you with a greeting wherewith Allah greets you not, and say unto themselves: "Why should Allah chastise us not for what we say?" The Hell will be sufficient for them in which they will enter. And worst indeed is that place and destination.**

Two Occasions of Revelation have been transmitted regarding the blessed Verse in question each of which is related to one part of the blessed Verse. According to the former, a group of Jews and

hypocrites held confidential talks and at times cast unpleasant glances at believers.

Thus, believers thought that Jews and hypocrites had been informed of unpleasant news about their kith and kin who had joined jihad. Sorrowful, they complained to Allah's Messenger (S) about their unpleasant glances.

The Noble Prophet (S) warned them against holding secret counsels before Muslims, but his warnings fell upon dead ears. Then, the blessed Verse in question was revealed and severely threatened them against holding such counsels.<sup>5</sup>

The second Occasion of Revelation is mentioned in Bukhari's and Muslim's Sahihayn and many exegetic sources according to which, a group of Jews came unto the Noble Prophet (S) and instead of greeting him by saying al-salamu 'alayka they said al-samu 'alayka ya Aba al-Qasim intending to say death, weariness, and reproach be unto you.

The Noble Prophet (S) replied:

*"The same unto you."*

"À'isha is reported as saying:

*"I noticed that they had said may death, God's curse and wrath be upon him. However, the Noble Prophet (S) asked me to be tolerant and refrain from violence and slander. I insisted:*

*"Do you not hear that they said: 'Death unto you'?"*

*He asked me:*

*"Did you not hear that I replied by saying 'Unto you'?"*

*Then, the blessed Verse was revealed saying that when such group come unto you, they greet you in a manner by which God Almighty has never greeted you."<sup>6</sup>*

The blessed Verse in question resumes the discussion on confidential talk by asking:

***"Did you not see those who were forbidden from holding confidential talk but they engage themselves in the same thereby committing sins and disobeying Allah's Messenger (S)?"***

It is explicitly mentioned that they had been forbidden from holding confidential talk and thereby causing suspicion and concern in others. Nonetheless, they did not act upon Divine Command but committed sins and disobeyed Allah and His Messenger (S).

The Arabic terms ithm, 'udwan, and ma'siyat al-rasul are different in semantic terms in that the first denotes sins against oneself, such as drinking alcoholic beverages, the second constitutes instances of

transgressing the rights of other people, and the third is concerned with disobeying the commands issued by the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith as the head of the Islamic state regarding the interests of the Muslim community.

Therefore, they raised any wrong in their secret counsels regarding themselves, others, Muslim state, and the Noble Prophet of Islam (S). The present verbal forms ya'udun and yatanajun connote the recurrence of their deed thereby aiming to hurt believers. The point is that the blessed Verse disclosed their evil deed as a piece of news from the unseen thus revealing their deviation.

The blessed Verse makes mention of another evil deed committed by hypocrites and Jews, saying:

***"When they come unto you, they greet you such that God Almighty has never greeted you."***

The Arabic verbal form hayyuka, cognate with tahiyya ("greeting, salutation") connotes praying for someone else's health and life.

The clauses:

***"greeting unto you" (al-salamun 'alayka)***

and

***"God's greeting unto you" (salam Allah 'alayka)***

are intended herein which is also recurrently attested in the Holy Qur'an an instance of which is:

***"And peace be on the Messengers"<sup>7</sup>.***

However, they uttered the sentence:

***"Death, censure, and weariness be unto you" (asamun 'alayka).***

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that they not only commit such grave sins but also are they so self-conceited that they say if their deeds are evil and God Almighty is All-Aware of them, how come that He does not chastise us for our words and deeds. Thus, they proved their disbelief in the Prophethood of Allah's Messenger (S) and Divine Omniscience.

Thus the Holy Qur'an replies to them:

***"Hell is sufficient for them and there is no need to other chastisements. They will enter Hell before long and what a worst place it is."***

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse does not negate the torments in store for them in this world, but it is explicitly expressing the truth that even if there will be no other torment for them but Hell, it will be sufficient for them since they will meet the recompense of all their deeds there.

## Surah Mujadila – Verse 9

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَنَاجَيْتُمْ فَلَا تَنَاجَوْا بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَةِ الرَّسُولِ  
وَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَى ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

**9. O you who believe! When you hold confidential talk, do it not from sin and wrong-doing and disobedience toward the Messenger, but do it for righteousness and fear of God and fear Allah unto Whom you shall be gathered.**

Holding secret counsels and confidential talks may lead to disclosure of secrets and thus it is obligatory when such act entails benefits to the Islamic faith and Muslims. It is unlawful and forbidden when it leads to fear and anxiety for others. It is supererogatory when it assists others and enjoins them to fear God Almighty.

The blessed Verse is saying that believers must heed that when they hold confidential talks, they should not thereby commit sins and disobey God Almighty and His Messenger (S), but their confidential talks should be pure and divine. Believers are supposed to hold secret counsels regarding good deeds and fear of God Almighty. It is incumbent upon them to refrain from disobedience to God Almighty to Whom they shall all return.

The blessed Verse is saying that holding confidential talks by believers will create neither suspicion nor concern since such talks aim at enjoining righteous good deeds. But holding secret counsels by Jews and hypocrites is unlawful since they aim at hurting pure hearted believers let alone when the contents of such talks be satanic.

## Surah Mujadila – Verse 10

إِنَّمَا النَّجْوَى مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ لِيَحْزَنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَيْسَ بِضَارِّهِمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ  
اللَّهِ ۚ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

**10. Secret counsels are only from Satan in order that he may cause grief to the believers. But he cannot harm them in the least, except as Allah permits. Therefore, let the believers put their trust in Allah.**

Any explicit or implicit talk leading to causing fear and anxiety among Muslims is satanic. Thus, the blessed Verse as the last one treating of the question reflects that such talk only stems from satanic

temptations aiming at Muslims' concerns and grieves. However, Muslims should know that without Divine Permission, Satan may not harm believers, since no cause in the world of existence is dependent on Divine Command.

Even fire and sword may neither burn nor sever without God's Command. When God Almighty forbids something, even His friend may not do anything. Thus, it is incumbent upon believers to put their trust solely in God Almighty and set their hearts on no one but Him nor are they supposed to fear one but Him. Relying on their trust in God Almighty, they may easily remove such problems and neutralize the designs and stratagems of Satan's followers.

## Surah Mujadila – Verse 11

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۗ وَإِذَا قِيلَ انشُرُوا فَانشُرُوا يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

**11. O you who believe! When you are told to make room in the assemblies, make room. Allah will give you room. And when you are told to rise up, rise up. Allah will exalt those of you who believe and those who have been granted knowledge. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.**

Regarding the Occasion of Revelation of the blessed Verse, some Qur'an exegetes, e.g. Tabarsi in Majma' alBayan and Àlusi in Ruh al-Ma'ani, maintain that the Noble Prophet (S) sat on a huge ledge (suffa) beside the Noble Prophet's (S) mosque on a Friday when he was encircled by people and there was enough room for others.

It was the Noble Prophet's (S) habit to revere Badr warrior irrespective of being from immigrants (muhajirun) or helpers (ansar). Then, a group of Badr warriors entered and paid homage to the Noble Prophet (S). The Noble Prophet (S) returned their greetings. They exchanged greetings with those present there. They were still standing awaiting people to make room for them, but none of them moved.

Annoyed by such conduct, the Noble Prophet (S) turned to some of the people encircling him asking them to move such that the newcomers may sit. Thus, he gave them a lesson to revere the veterans of jihad and faith. Those who had moved to make room for newcomers were annoyed such that their faces reflected such annoyance.

Taking advantage of the opportunity as usual, hypocrites said that the Noble Prophet (S) had failed to administer justice as he had made those lovingly encircling him move to make room for newcomers.

Thus, the blessed Verse was revealed indicating the manners required for attending meetings.<sup>8</sup>

The preceding Verses treated of abstention from holding secret counsels at meetings and restricting the same to few specific instances and the blessed Verse reflects another instance of etiquette to be observed at meetings, saying:

***"O you who believe! When you are told to make room in the assemblies, make room. Allah will give you room. And when you are told to rise up, rise up. Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe and those who have been granted knowledge. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do."***

The blessed Verse is saying that if believers act upon the same, God Almighty will grant you spacious abodes in Paradise and better provisions, sustenance and a nobler heart in this world.

The verbal form tafassahu deriving from f-s-h denotes give room as a precept of etiquette according to which when a newcomer arrives at a meeting, those already present are supposed to make room for him lest he may be perplexed, weary, or ashamed. Such manners strengthen the ties of friendship. Au contraire, holding secret counsels at meetings, as reflected in the preceding blessed Verses, lead to hatred, suspicion, and animosity.

It is worthy of note that many a delicacy of moral questions and social life of Muslims are treated in the Holy Qur'an which is the constitutional law of Muslims where such delicate points are also mentioned amongst fundamental injunctions such that Muslims bear in mind that following general rules is sufficient for them. Those who act upon such precepts will be rewarded by God Almighty in this world.

It is to be noted that the blessed Verse in unconditional and its contextual meaning reflects Divine Generosity in this world, paradise, soul, thought, life, and sustenance. It is not a source of wonder that God Almighty, out of His Graciousness and Generosity bestow such great reward against such seemingly insignificant act as Divine Reward is bestowed upon people out of His Generosity rather than the significance of our deeds.

At times, meetings are so crowded that those already present must rise up to make room for newcomers lest there will be no suitable room for them to be seated. The blessed Verse proceeds to say that when people are told to rise, they are supposed to rise without procrastination or annoyance, since newcomers may be weary, weak owing to their advanced age, or highly respected as a consequence of which others must make a sacrifice and observe such Islamic precept of etiquette.

It was in the same vein that as mentioned above, the Noble Prophet (S) ordered some people to rise up and give their place to some newcomers who were amongst the warrior fighting in the battle of Badr and were superior to others in terms of knowledge and virtue.

Some Qur'an exegetes maintain that rising is herein employed in a broader sense such that it reflects

rising at the meeting as well as rising for jihad, establishing prayers, and doing other righteous good deeds. The blessed Verse proceeds to treat of the rewards of such Divine Injunction saying that if you do so, God Almighty will grant elevated ranks to those who believe and possess knowledge.

***"Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe and those who have been granted knowledge. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do"***

reflects that obeying such Injunctions indicate faith, knowledge, and awareness. It may also reflect that if the Noble Prophet (S) ordered some people to rise and make room for newcomers since he aimed at a sacred and Divine goal which is revering forerunners in faith and knowledge.

The Arabic plural noun darajat connotes the exalted ranks bestowed by God Almighty upon those who possess both faith and knowledge. In fact, those who make room for newcomers beside them enjoy such rank and those who possess knowledge and faith and make room for newcomers, will be granted even more elevated ranks.

The blessed Verse closes with:

***"Allah is All-Aware of what you do"***

saying that God Almighty is fully Aware of those who are satisfied to do so and they are sincere in their acts and also those who are dissatisfied and annoyed or they act upon hypocrisy and dissimulation.

## **Surah Mujadila – Verse 12**

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَةً ۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ ۚ فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

***12. O you who believe! When you intend to hold confidential talks with the Messenger, spend something in charity before your private counsel. That will be better and purer for you. But if you fail to afford it, then indeed, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Gracious.***

The blessed Verse completes the preceding discussion on holding private counsels, saying that if you want to hold private counsels with Allah's Messenger (S), expend alms in Allah's Cause beforehand.

According to the Occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verse, some people particularly some among the affluent bothered him by holding private counsels with him such that they annoyed others or aimed to seek privileges in vain. Besides, they wasted the precious time of the Noble Prophet (S). Revelation of the blessed Verse was a trial for them, a source of charitable offerings for the poor, and an efficient means for lessening such troubles.

The blessed Verse further adds:

***"It s better and purer for you."***

Expending alms was better for the affluent since it was to the benefit of them as well as the poor. It was purer since expending in the Cause of Allah purifies the hearts of the affluent from cherishing worldly possessions and those of the needy from hatred and grief. When the affluent were supposed to expend alms before holding private counsels with the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) they held less counsels leading to purity for the intellectual and social milieu of the Muslim community.

The blessed Verse says:

***"If you fail to afford [expending in Allah's Cause], God Almighty is Oft-Forgiving and Most Gracious,"***

thereby the poor were able to hold private counsels with the Noble Prophet (S).

Therefore, those who could afford expending in Allah's Cause, had to pay alms and those who failed to afford it were still able to hold private counsels with the Noble Prophet (S). The majority of Shi'i and Sunni exegetes maintain that the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), was the only one who acted upon the Injunction.

According to a tradition narrated from Imam 'Ali (as), transmitted by Tabarsi, the Noble Imam (as) said:

*"There is a Verse in the Qur'an upon which no one but me has acted or will act. I had a dinar which I converted to ten dirhams and whenever I intended to hold private counsels with the Noble Prophet (S), I expended a dirham before meeting with him."*<sup>9</sup>

## **Surah Mujadila – Verse 13**

أَشْفَقْتُمْ أَنْ تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَاتٍ ۚ فَإِذْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَتَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ  
فَأَقِمْوَا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

***13. Are you afraid of spending in charity before your private consultation? If then you do it not and Allah has forgiven you, then establish prayers and pay alms-tax and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.***

The Injunction mentioned in the preceding Verse served as an interesting trial and engendered a wondrous effect such that except the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), no one acted upon it. Muslims took a clear lesson out of the Injunction.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question abrogated the Injunction by saying:

***"Are you afraid of spending in charity before you private counsel?"***

It is then clear that loving worldly possessions is stronger than that for holding private consultations with the Noble Prophet (S). It also reflects that significant issues were not raised in such private consultations, otherwise such people could pay alms before holding such private counsels as no specific amount had been specified for paying alms and they could conveniently afford a meager amount to solve the problem.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that now that you failed to act upon the Injunction and noticed your negligence and God Almighty is Oft-Forgiving and accepted your repentance, establish prayers, pay alms-tax, obey God Almighty and His Messenger (S), and know that He is All-Aware of what you do.

It is worthy of note that the word repentance (tawba) reflects that they had committed sins in holding their private consultations either through dissimulation and hypocrisy or hurting the Noble Prophet (S) and poor believers.

Although there is no explicit permission in holding private counsels, but the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse reflects that the former Injunction was abrogated, but owing to their significance, people were called to establish prayers, pay alms-tax, and obey God Almighty and His Messenger (S). It also alludes that such private consultations should aim at the exalted goals of the Islamic faith and obedience to God Almighty and His Messenger (S).

The Arabic word ishfaq denotes concern for some loss.<sup>10</sup> The blessed Verse reflects that paying alms before holding private consultation with the Noble Prophet (S) served as a test to distinguish sincere and loving believers from others rather than a retreat through the abrogation of the Divine Injunction.

The Arabic particle

***wa ("and")***

in

***"and Allah has forgiven you"***

reflects that abrogation of the Injunctions was not due to people's failure to act upon it. Since some of the Companions of the Noble Prophet (S) abandoned holding private counsels with him owing to their fear of expending in Allah's Cause, they were censured by God Almighty though holding private consultations with the Noble Prophet (S) was neither obligatory nor supererogatory.

## Surah Mujadila – Verses 14-15

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَّا هُمْ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا مِنْهُمْ وَيَحْلِفُونَ  
عَلَى الْكُذِبِ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا ۗ إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

- 14. Have you not seen those who take as friends a people upon whom is the Wrath of Allah? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to a lie to be amongst you while they know.**
- 15. Allah has prepared for them a severe torment. Evil indeed is that which they do.**

The blessed two Verses partially disclose hypocrites' conspiracies reflecting their tokens as well. Such disclosure preceded by the blessed Verses treating of holding private counsels reveals that there were also hypocrites holding private consultations with the Noble Prophet (S) who used such stratagems to take advantage of their intimacy with the Noble Prophet (S).

Thus, the Holy Qur'an treats the same on general terms, asking:

**"Have you not seen those who take as friends a people upon whom is the Wrath of Allah?"**  
**"A people upon whom is the Wrath of Allah"**

seemingly reflects Jewish people, since they have been referred to in the Holy Qur'an by the clause

**"They drew upon themselves the Wrath"<sup>11</sup>.**

The blessed Verse 14 proceeds to say

**"They are neither of you nor of them [Jews]."**

They are neither you friends in hardships nor are they their intimate friends, but they are hypocrites changing their masks each and every single day. They take false oaths to indicate that they stand by you, but they know that they are dissimulating. Hypocrites habitually cover their ugly and disgusting countenances through resorting to false oaths, whereas their deeds reflect their true identity.

The blessed Verse 15 makes a reference to such obstinate hypocrites saying:

**"Allah has prepared for them a severe torment."**

Such torments are just, since:

**"Evil indeed is that which they do"**

and evil deeds entail Divine torment and retribution.

## Surah Mujadila – Verse 16

اتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَهِمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ

**16. They have made their oaths a shield and hindered men from the Path of Allah. Therefore, they shall have a humiliating torment.**

They take oaths saying that they are Muslims aiming at nothing but improvement, but they use such oaths as pretexts for their corruption, sabotage, and conspiracy. In fact, they take advantage out of the Sacred Name of God Almighty to impede men from treading the Path of Allah. Taking false oaths disclose hypocrites. Their attributes are also found elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an<sup>12</sup>.

The blessed Verse closes by saying that as a consequence of their hypocrisy;

**"they shall have a humiliating torment."**

## Surah Mujadila – Verse 17

لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا ۖ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

**17. Their children and their wealth will avail them nothing against Allah's Wrath. They will be the dwellers of the Fire to dwell therein forever.**

Qur'anic warnings are quite serious. Worldly possessions and children shall be of no avail in the Hereafter. Hypocrites often rely on their worldly possessions and children as economic and labor resources.

In this vein, the Holy Qur'an says that their worldly possessions and children may never be of any avail against Divine torment, but they serve as shackles and fetters leading to their excruciating torment. There shall be no refuge but God Almighty on the Day of Resurrection, since besides Him all others shall be inefficient.

The same theme is also reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an13:

**"All their relations shall be cut off from them."**

The blessed Verse closes by the warning:

**"They will be the dwellers of the Fire to dwell therein forever."**

The torments in store for them have been depicted as severe, humiliating, and everlasting, each of which proportionately reflects their evil deeds.

## Surah Mujadila – Verse 18

يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَحْلِفُونَ لَهُ كَمَا يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ

**18. On the Day when Allah will resurrect them all together, they will swear to Him as they swear to you imagining that they rely on something. Indeed, they are liars.**

When lying turns into a natural disposition, liars even falsely swear on the Day of Resurrection. Thus, the blessed Verse in question is reminding people of the Day when God Almighty shall resurrect them and He shall present their evil deeds unto them.

God Almighty shall question them at His Just Tribunal, but they falsely swear to Him in the same manner that they falsely swore to people in this world. The Day of Resurrection shall be the scene of manifestation of human deeds and intentions.

Hypocrites take their intentions and deeds to their graves and purgatory, but they shall be manifest on the Day of Resurrection. They know that God Almighty is All-Aware of the Unseen. Nothing is concealed from Him. However, they are habitually inclined toward taking false oaths.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say:

They imagine that they rely on something through taking such false oaths and may thereby gain benefits and ward off loss, but it will be sheer illusions. They had been accustomed to resort to such pretexts in order to ward off predicaments and losses from themselves, hence the reinforcement of such natural dispositions and their manifestations.

The blessed Verse closes by saying:

**"Indeed, they are liars."**

They are disgraced before all men in this world and the Hereafter.

## Surah Mujadila – Verse 19

اسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَأَنسَاهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ حِزْبُ الشَّيْطَانِ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ  
حِزْبَ الشَّيْطَانِ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

**19. Satan has overpowered them. Thus, he has made them forget the remembrance of Allah. They are the party of Satan. Indeed, it is the party of Satan that will be the losers!**

The more we neglect remembering God Almighty, the closer we will be to the party of Satan. Real loss lies in following Satan.

The antecedent of the pronoun

**"them" ('alayhim)**

are hypocrites overpowered by Satan such that they forget God Almighty and follow devils and concupiscent desires.

It is incumbent upon believers to be aware that the hosts of Satan have incurred loss, namely they have wasted their precious lives.

Satan works such that he absorbs men by steps, as it is reflected in 24:21:

**"Follow not the footsteps of Satan."**

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an<sup>14</sup> that:

**"Satan threw [some falsehood]."**

At times, men follow Satan and he totally overpowers them. The blessed Verse is saying that the more we neglect remembering God Almighty, the closer we will be to the party of Satan. In this vein, two traditions have been narrated.

It is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as):

*"Distinction between truth and falsehood does not entail evil consequence but confusion of the twain leads to seditions and Satan's conquest."*<sup>15</sup>

Imam Husayn (as) is reported as saying unto Yazid's hosts at Karbala':

"Satan has overpowered you and made you forget remembrance of God Almighty..."<sup>16</sup>

## Surah Mujadila – Verses 20-21

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ فِي الْأَذَلِّينَ

كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَأَغْلِبَنَّ أَنَا وَرُسُلِي ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

**20. Those who take a stance against Allah and His Messenger will be among the most humiliated people.**

**21. Allah has decreed: "Verily, it is I and My Messengers who shall triumph over hypocrites and disbelievers. Indeed, Allah is the Omnipotent, the Invincible."**

Hypocrisy and dissimulation lead man to take a stance against God Almighty and His Messenger (S). As the Messenger's (S) commands are those issued by God Almighty, struggling against him is on a par with struggling against God Almighty. We should know that God Almighty and His Messenger (S) are triumphant, so those who take a stance against them are amongst the most humiliated and disgraced people.

Thus, the blessed Verse 20 says:

**"Those who take a stance against Allah and His Messenger will be among the most humiliated people."**

It is substantiated by the blessed Verse 21, saying:

**"Verily, it is I and My Messengers who shall triumph over hypocrites and disbelievers."**

God Almighty and His Messengers are triumphant, since

**"Indeed, Allah is the Omnipotent, the Invincible."**

It is worthy of note that according to traditions, the Divine Promise as to the decisive conquest of truth over falsehood shall be actualized upon the rise of the Imam of the Age (may God Almighty hasten his arrival).

## Surah Mujadila – Verse 22

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا  
آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ ۗ أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ  
وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ ۗ وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۗ  
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ۗ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ  
الْمُفْلِحُونَ

**22. You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, befriend those who take a stance against Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers, their sons, their brothers, or their kindred. For such He has strengthened faith in their hearts and strengthened them with true guidance from Himself. And He will admit them to Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever. Allah is pleased with them and they with Him. They are the Party of Allah. Indeed, it is the Party of Allah that will be the triumphant and saved.**

Satisfaction is more elevated in rank than submission, namely God's servant is not only submits to Divine Ordainments and His Commands, but also he is satisfied with them in his heart and accepts them out of satisfaction.

Thus in the last blessed Verse which is one of the most decisive Qur'anic Verses, God Almighty warns believers that one may not love God and His enemies, but they are supposed to select one of the two. If they are true believers, they should refrain from befriending God's enemies; otherwise they should not pretend being Muslims.

One who believes in God Almighty and the Day of Resurrection should not befriend the enemies of God Almighty and His Messenger (S), even if the enemies happen to be their fathers, children, siblings, or other relatives. One may not foster love for the twain and those who claim to befriend both, are either weak of faith or hypocrites.

Thus, Muslims struggled against and even killed some of their own relatives in battles, since their relatives had joined the hosts of enemies. It is befitting to love one's father, children, siblings, and other relatives as such love is a token of humane emotions, but when such love confronts that of God Almighty, it loses its value.

The blessed Verse further treats of the great rewards bestowed upon those who solely love God Almighty. In this vein, the blessed Verse treats of five points concerned with Divine assistance and triumph some of which are the fruits of such love.

The first two points indicate that such people are those upon whose hearts God Almighty has written faith in Him and His Messenger (S) and has also strengthened their faith;

***"For such He has strengthened faith in their hearts and strengthened them with true guidance from Himself".***

The third point is that:

***"He will admit them to Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever."***

The fourth point is that

***"Allah is pleased with them and they with Him."***

There is no Blessing more exalted than such bilateral satisfaction as it leads to further Blessings and Bounties. When God Almighty is satisfied with someone, He will grant him whatever he desires, since He is All-Generous and Omnipotent. The expression is quite of interest, reflecting that God Almighty is satisfied with them and they are also satisfied with Him, namely they have attained to such rank that they and their satisfaction is mentioned beside God Almighty and His Satisfaction.

The last point which is a call addressed to all reflects another Blessing:

***"They are the Party of Allah. Indeed, it is the Party of Allah that will be the triumphant and saved."***

Such people are not only triumphant in the Hereafter and will be granted all kinds of material and spiritual Blessings and Bounties on the Day of Resurrection, but as mentioned in the preceding blessed Verses, thanks to Divine Grace, they are also triumphant over enemies and the rule of truth and justice will be in their hands in the last days of the world.

In this vein, mention will be made of some traditions. Salman, the Persian, said unto the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) that whenever he had gone to the Noble Prophet (S), he put his hand on his shoulder, referred to repentance and said:

***"O Salman! This man and his party are triumphant."***<sup>17</sup>

According to another tradition, the Noble Prophet (S) said:

***"For believers, love for God Almighty is one of the most significant bases of faith."***<sup>18</sup>

According to the third tradition, Imam Sadiq (as) said:

***"No one's faith in God Almighty may be purified unless he loves God Almighty more than his life, father, mother, children, possessions, and all people."***<sup>19</sup>

O my Lord! If you bestow such spirit of faith upon us, you have granted these weak servants the greatest

of Bounties and they will grieve no more.

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1. Tafsir Qurtubi; Durr; Ruh al-Bayan; al-Mizan; Fakhr Razi; Fi Úalal al-Qur'an; Abu al-Futuh Razi; Kanz al-'Irfan, and many other historical and tradition sources with minor alterations.
  2. 4:92; 5:89; 58:3 respectively
  3. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan.
  4. 18:49
  5. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
  6. Tafsir Maraghi, vol. 28, p. 13.
  7. 37: 181
  8. Tafsirs by Fakhr Razi, Qurtubi, and Suyuti; see also Fi Halal al-Qur'an.
  9. Traditions with the same theme have been transmitted by Shawkani (on the authority of 'Abd al-Razzaq), Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Íatim, and Ibn Marduya and they are also attested in al-Bayan, Sayyid Qutb's Fi Halal al-Qur'an, and Suyuti's Durr al-Manthur and also exegetic works by Fakhr Razi and Tabari. Such virtue is attributed to Imam 'Ali (as) in most of exegetic and tradition sources and it is so well-known that there is no need to quote further sources.
  10. Tafsir al-Mizan.
  11. ba'u bi-ghaab-in; 2:61, 91; 3:112; 5:60
  12. 63:2
  13. 2:166
  14. 22:52
  15. Nahj al-Balagha, sermon 50.
  16. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
  17. The tradition is mentioned in Tafsir Burhan (under the blessed Verse in question) transmitting it on the authority of Sunni sources.
  18. Usul Kafi, vol. 3, Chapter on Love for God (hubb Allah), tradition no. 3; Safinat al-Bihar.
  19. Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 1, p. 201.

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