

## Surah al-Hujurat: A Charter of Ideal Social Life

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**Abstract:** The main purpose of the research is to study *surah* al-Hujurat of the *Qur'an*, which includes some fundamental principles and important rules and regulations for laying the foundations of an ideal society, which if followed properly; the society could live in peaceful harmony and mutual respect and love towards each other. Sayyid Abul A`la Mawdudi (1903-1979) and Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) wonderfully explained those social etiquettes, norms and principles through their commentaries of the *Qur'an*. Both Tafsirs merged at some crucial points, and also differed at others. Since they lived in the contemporary ages, their Tafsirs have high impacts on the society and people today. They continue to influence society to a larger extent. The paper presents an introduction to Sayyid Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb, their Tafasir and *surah* al-Hujurat, fundamental guidelines and principles for ideal social system based on their tafasir while drawing the similarities and differences between both the scholars. The paper concludes that the *surah* al-Hujurat contains important principles of Islam for a noble societal living, which if followed, the society turns into an ideal community, where all people live in perfect harmony, peace, mutual respect and love.

**Keywords:** Surah al- Hujurat, Mawdudi, Qutb, Commentary and Social system.

### Introduction

Sayyid Abu Ala Mawdudi (1903-1979), born in Hyderabad of Inida, played an active role in propagation of Islam throughout the sub-continent, and through the translation of the *Qur'an*, even abroad. He, though did not have proper traditional

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education from colleges and universities, mastered different disciplines through self-learning and education, and contributed in almost all branches of knowledge. He was a prolific writer, orator, organizer and the founder of the Jamaat e Islami.

Mawdudis pen is prolific, forceful and versatile. The range of subjects covered by him are usually wide. Disciplines such as *Tafseer*, *Hadith*, Law, Philosophy, History, Politics, Economics, Sociology, Ethics all have received due share of his attention. The list of his books given in “A Bibliographical Study on the Works of Sayyid Abul A‘la Mawdudi” by AKM Shahed appears 150 published works and pamphlets (Shahed, 2001a: 65-77) and made over 1000 speeches and press statements of which about 700 are available on record. In 1930, his first major and monumental work was *Al-Jihad fi al-Islam*, which was highly acclaimed both by the famous poet-philosopher Dr. Muhammad Iqbal (d.1938) and Maulana Muhammad Ali Johar. *Al-Jihad fi al-Islam* is an excellent treatise on Islamic law of war and peace (Shahed, 2001a: 120-121). However his magnum opus contribution is the translation and commentary of the glorious *Qur’an* entitled ‘*Tafhim al-Qur’an*’ in six volumes. It took almost 30 years to complete this monumental work. This exegesis (*Tafseer*) has made a tremendous and far-reaching impact on the contemporary Islamic thinking all over the world.

On the other hand, Sayyid Qutb Ibrahim Husayn Shadhili (1906-1966), born in Asyut of Egypt, made tremendous contribution to Islamic movement throughout the world. He is widely known as Islamic ideologue to the Arab world. He had not only crystallized the idea of Islamic state, but also gave his blood and soul for it. His books and essays are the main references for the ideological workers all over the world. He was a writer, literary critic, poet, educator, Islamic thinker, religious leader and Egypt’s most famous Islamic activist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For some, his thought even surpasses the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood Imam Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949) who was his contemporary (Alam, 2005: 423).

His life turned into different phases as he began as a simple young teenager of a remote village of Musha in Asyut, with a deep Islamic dedication in mind, who moved to the capital, and got influenced by the towering figure, ‘Abbas Mahmud Al-‘Aqqad, in Arabic literature. Sayyid became a literary critic, strong supporter and defender of al-‘Aqqad, wrote quite a number of works to present the beauty of the *Qur’an* and its literary arts. Later, he got engaged in Ministry of Education, and travelled to America to study their Education systems and to implement it in

Egypt upon his return. But Sayyid turned to staunch Islamic activist from America, and upon his return, he joined Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun in 1951.

It was immediately after his joining Ikhwan al-Muslimun that he felt the need of writing a Tafsir of *Qur'an* from linguistic point of view, but gradually his focus changed to Islamic dynamism and movement. He wrote the Tafsir largely inside Jail. It took about 13 years (1952-1965) to complete the Tafsir.

His *magnum opus tafsir* "*Fi Zilal Qur'an*" (In the Shade of the *Qur'an*) is a highly influential commentary of the holy *Qur'an*. The book outlines Qutb's vision of an Islamic state and society. It is considered by some scholars to be a comprehensive and far-reaching commentary that takes a clear and lucid interpretation of the holy *Qur'an*. It has much influence throughout the Islamic world, especially amongst the ordinary lay practitioners of Islam in the Arab world.

### **Surah Al-Hujurat: A Charter of Ideal Social Life**

*Surah al-Hujurat*, a Madinan chapter, is the 49<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *Qur'an*. It underlines the fundamental social values and etiquettes for a healthy social life. Sayyid Mawdudi (RA) specifies the date of its revelation, according to his usual style, that the Surah was revealed in the 9<sup>th</sup> year of Hijrah. Sayyid Qutb did not highlight about its revelation time; rather he focused on the issues and the major theme highlighted in the chapter.

According to Mawdudi, the Surah was revealed in the 9<sup>th</sup> year of Hijrah. He derived this conclusion based on the *Ayah* 4 and *Ayah* 6 of the Surah. The historians have unanimously mentioned that the *Ayah* 4 of the Surah "Those who shout out to thee from without the inner apartments - most of them lack understanding" was revealed about the Bani Tamim tribe who came to visit the Prophet (SAAS) in the 9<sup>th</sup> year of Hijrah. And the *Ayah* 9 of the Surah, which reads, "O ye who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest ye harm people unwittingly, and afterwards become full of repentance for what ye have done" was revealed about Walid bin 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'yit who was sent by the Prophet (SAAS) to Bani Mustalaq tribe to collect charities and prescribed taxes of the state. It was a fact that he reverted to Islam during Fath Makkah (8<sup>th</sup> AH). Hence the incident took place naturally in the 9<sup>th</sup> year of Hijrah (Mawdudi, 1993: 65, Vol.15).

Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb highlighted the important issues in the Surah. Mawdudi wrote each and every topic that the Surah has covered, and Qutb picked up the two major themes and the issues that the Surah addressed.

According to Sayyid Qutb, the Surah, which just contains 18 verses in it, covers great fundamental pillars in it, which could be equal to a few hundred *ayat* of the *Qur'an*. The Surah covers two fundamental issues in it. First, it lays down the foundations of an ideal society and nourishes it to its height. Second, it follows the gradual process in its development. The community did not turn to its height overnight; rather it followed a gradual transformation plan (Qutb, 1995: 201, Vol. 6).

On the other hand, Sayyid Mawdudi highlighted the important topics that the Surah has covered. In the initial *ayat*, it addresses the principles and norms that we have to follow with regards to Allah and His Prophet. From 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> *ayat*, it teaches that the Muslims are not supposed to believe each and every information relayed, without proper verification. In the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> *ayat*, the Muslims are commanded to make peace among other Muslims when they get engaged in fighting. The *Ayah* 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> lays down the golden rules and principles for a healthy social living no one is allowed to make mockery of others and call others with a bad name or title. The *Ayah* 13<sup>th</sup> highlights the universal charter of equality and brotherhood that all human kind are created from a pair of a male and a female, and that they should come in contact with each other. From 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> *ayat*, the *Qur'an* catches on the people who claimed to be Muslims and try to “show off” their Islam on the Prophet, by saying that the real consideration should be for their hearts and its conviction, and not on a mere confession by tongue.

### **Principles of Islamic Social System**

*Surah al-Hujurat* contains many important principles for a healthy Muslim society. Seven of these principles have been detailed below in this chapter, which are as follows:

#### *1. A Believer's Attitude towards Allah and Prophet*

A believer should show complete respect and reverence towards the Prophet (SAAS), which demands that he should not make any decision in any matter before Allah (swt) and the Prophet (SAAS), nor should he raise his voice over the voice of the Prophet (SAAS). While addressing the Prophet (SAAS), a believer

should not forget that he is addressing the messenger of Allah, and not an ordinary person of the public. However, this directive was primarily given to the people who lived during the lifetime of the Prophet (SAAS), but each and every believer even after the era of the Prophet (SAAS) should consider this while dealing with the Prophet (SAAS) and his sayings. In this regard, Allah (SWT) says:

O you who believe! Put not yourselves forward before Allah and His messenger: Allah is He Who hears and knows all things. O you who believe! Raise not your voice above the voice of the Prophet (SAAS), nor speak aloud to him in talks, as you may speak aloud to one another, lest your deeds become vain and you perceive not. Those that lower their voices in the presence of Allah's messenger, these are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested for piety: for them is forgiveness and a great reward (*Qur'an, 49: 1-3*).

Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi beautifully explains: "These orders include all aspects of human life. These are not limited in personal life only. These are the basic principles of Islamic law. A man who believes in Allah cannot give preference to his opinions over the decision of Allah and His Prophet (SAAS). At first, he should try to know what Allah and His Prophet (SAAS) asked him to observe. The people, who used to come to the *Majlis* of the Prophet (SAAS) were taught these teachings. We also can estimate the dignity and personalities of the messenger of Allah (SWT) throughout these verses" (Mawdudi, 1993: 68, Vol.15).

Sayyid Qutb echoed the same in his commentary of the verse, as he says: "Do not give any proposal in advance before Prophet (SAAS), neither in personal matter nor in public matter until Allah (SWT) says anything through His Prophet (SAAS) and do not take any decision without knowing anything about the order of Allah and His messenger" (Qutb, 1995: 204, Vol. 6).

Mawdudi asserts further that there is difference between the dignity of the Prophet (SAAS) and the dignities of other people. Any slight humiliation with the Prophet (SAAS) may wipe off lifetime credits of a person; but humiliation to any other people may cause indecency. A devout Muslim (*Muttaqi*) is the one who has complete respect for the Prophet (SAAS). So, the person who does not respect the Prophet (SAAS) is not to be considered a true believer. The believers should not call on the Prophet (SAAS) at any time without considering his situations, but they should wait until the Prophet (SAAS) comes out in his convenience. This

directive is also a lesson for the members of the Muslim society, which requires showing respect to the leaders and the elders of the society and not to demand their appointment or services without considering their convenience (Mawdudi, 1993: 69, Vol. 15).

## 2. *No Decision on Mere Assumption without Proper Investigation*

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> basic principle for the establishment of an ideal Muslim society that no important decision should be made on the basis of mere information of someone, unless the authenticity of this information is properly investigated and verified. Especially when the matter relates to punish someone or some communities, the need for verification becomes of utmost significance. In this regard, the *Qur'an* categorically says:

O believers, when an ungodly person brings to you a piece of news, carefully ascertain its truth, lest you should hurt a people unwittingly and thereafter repent at what you did (*Qur'an*, 49: 6).

Sayyid Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb both related the background of the *Ayah* saying that the *Ayah* was revealed concerning Walid bin 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'ait when he was sent to the people of Banu Mustaliq by the Prophet (SAAS) to collect Zakah and charities after they had embraced Islam (Mawdudi, 1993: 71, Vol. 15).

Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi adds: When Walid bin 'Uqbah reached their territory, he became scared due to some reasons and without visiting the people of the tribe he returned to Madinah and complained to the Holy Prophet (SAAS) that they had refused to pay the *Zakah* and had even wanted to kill him. On hearing this, the Prophet (SAAS) became very angry and wanted to send a contingent to punish them. According to some reports the Prophet had dispatched a contingent. This time the leader of Banu Mustaliq Harith bin Dirar (father of Ummul Mu'minin Juwairiyah, wife of the Prophet (SAAS)), came to the Prophet (SAAS) and told, by Allah, we did not refuse to pay *Zakah* to him and nor did we want him to kill. We have not even seen him. We are steadfast to the faith and have no intention to withhold the *Zakah* (Mawdudi, 1993: 72, Vol. 15).

Sayyid Qutb says in his *Tafsir*, referring to *Ibn Kathir*: Walid bin 'Uqbah said to the Prophet that the Banu Mustaliq was preparing for war against the Muslims. Then the Prophet (SAAS) sent Khalid bin Walid (RA) to them and instructed him not to hurry but to investigate the truth. Khalid bin Walid (RA) went to them in the night and sent prime associates to them. They came back to Khalid bin Walid

(RA) and told that they were on firm status of faith (*Iman*) and they had listened to their *Azan* and *Salah*. Khalid bin Walid (RA) went to them in the morning and became astonished to see the reality and came to the Messenger and told him the real fact. Then this *Ayah* came down (Qutb, 1995: 07, Vol. 6).

### 3. *Making Peace and Reconciliation among Muslims*

This is the third principle which gives a directive to the leaders of the Muslim society regarding their responsibilities while two conflicting groups in a Muslim society are about to fight each other. In this situation, they have been ordered to stop fighting through reconciliation in a just and proper way. In this regard, Allah says:

If two parties among the believers fall into a fight, make peace between them but if one of them transgresses against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah; but if it complies, then make peace between them with justice and be fair, for Allah loves those who are (fair and just) (*Qur'an*, 49: 9).

It is not expected from the Muslims to keep silent without taking proper measures while two groups of Muslims begin to fight against each other. But if a situation arises like this, all the believers should become anxious and employ utmost effort to normalize the situation. They should advise both the groups to abstain from fighting. They should be reminded of fearing Allah (SWT). The influential persons of the Muslim society should meet the leaders of each group and to remind them of the causes and consequences of fighting and shall try their level best to stop fighting.

Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi further explains the verse by saying that if two groups of Muslims are found to be fighting each other, the Muslims should try their best to stop the fighting. If their efforts do not give expected result in mitigating the fighting, then they should fight against the group that is found as transgressor. Because the Muslims cannot let the transgressors continue in their act and let the other group be oppressed helplessly. They should identify which one of these fighting groups is on the way of truth and justice, and which one is the transgressor. The Muslim society should stand behind the group which is just and fair, and fight against the group which is the transgressor. This is an obligatory command of Allah for all Muslims. Whenever a rebel group is found ready to come back to the way of Allah, then fighting against them must be stopped

immediately, because this is the ultimate goal of this fighting (Mawdudi, 1993: 76, Vol. 15).

Sayyid Qutb concurred with Mawdudi in this respect and said that Muslims should work to stop the fighting and if one group or both of them do not want to return to the way of justice, then the Muslims should fight against those rebel groups (Qutb, 1995, Vol.6, p. 209).

### **Rebellion against the Muslim Rulers and Islamic Stance**

The *Ayah* Nine and Ten of *Surah Al-Hujurat* clearly indicate that it is obligatory on Muslims to make peace and reconciliation among the Muslims who are involved in bloody conflict and fighting. Sayyid Mawdudi adds that 'making peace' must coincide with justice. If it links with injustice and unfairness, it will lead to continuing anarchy and lawlessness (Mawdudi, 1993: 76, Vol. 15).

The *Ayah* further commands that if anyone or any community rebels against the state or against a community, it becomes obligatory on the Muslims to fight against the rebels (*Hujurat*: 9)

Mawdudi explained in detail about the ruling of rebellion based on the different schools of law. He says that this *Ayah* acts as the principle of *Shari'ah* in a situation when a fighting breaks out between Muslim groups. The explanation of this principle is found in only a *Hadith* of the Prophet (SAAS) related by Hakim and al-Jassas on the authority of 'Abdullah bin 'Umar: "The Holy Prophet asked 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud: O Ibn Umm 'Abd: Do you know what is Allah's Command concerning the rebels of this *Ummah*? He replied: Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge. The Holy Prophet said: Their wounded ones will not be laid hands on and their captives will not be killed, and the one who flees, will not be pursued, and their properties will not be distributed as spoils."

The battle of Camel (*Harb al-Jamal*) also sheds clear light about it from the stand of Sayyiduna Ali (RA). Upon victory, he announced; "Do not pursue him who flees; do not attack the wounded; do not kill the captives; give shelter to him who surrenders; do not make forcible entry into the people's houses; and do not raise your hands at the women even if they are abusing and cursing you." Some of his soldiers made the demand that the opponents and their family members be taken prisoners and distributed. At this, he became furious and said: "Who among

you will take ‘Aisha, mother of the Faithful, as his share’? (Mawdudi, 1993: 76, Vol. 15).

Ali’s (RA) direction has been accepted unanimously by a large number of companions of the Prophet (SAAS) and the *Fuqaha* as the main principle. Major schools of law regard this as the basis of Islamic law on rebellion.

Sayyid Mawdudi beautifully summarized the law of rebellion and its punishment in Islam. It is as follows:

- I. It should be determined that what kind of fighting is going on between the two groups of Muslims and which group is more closer to the right in the eye of *Sari’ah*.
  - a. If the two fighting Muslim groups are the subject to any Muslim government then executing truce and peace or finding the group which transgresses and making pressure on that group to accept the truce and justice is obligatory upon the Muslim government.
  - b. If the two warrior Muslim groups are two powerful parties or they are two Muslim governments and both of them are fighting for material interest then it is obligatory upon the Muslims to avoid supporting any of these two groups and keep themselves aloof from them and remind them of fearing Allah and admonish them.
  - c. If one of the parties mentioned above in no (2) is the follower of truth and the other transgressor is not ready for making truce, it is then the duty of the believers to support the group which is on justice against the one which transgresses.
  - d. If one of the two groups rebels against the Muslim government then the rebel group is considered to be transgressor according to the opinion of the *Fuqaha*.
- II. The rebel groups who take part in rebellion against the government are of different types:
  - a. The ones who are trying to create lawlessness have no legal justification in the eye of *Shari’ah*. The government has every right to fight against this group and the believers should support the government in this situation regardless of the fact whether the government is upright or not.

- b. Those rebels whose rebellion is to topple down a government, have no legal justification or legitimate cause in the eye of *Shari'ah* in support of this rebellion and their activities show that they are unjust and wrong doers, in this situation the government is a just one, they should be supported and even if the government is unjust one, they should also be supported against the rebels to prevent anarchy and lawlessness.
- c. Those who revolt against a government on the basis of a legal ground, but their ground may be false and their belief vicious and perverse, e.g. the *Khwarij*. In this case also a Muslim government, whether it is just or unjust, has a lawful right to fight them and it is obligatory on the Muslims to side with it.
- d. The rebels who are against such a government and whose leadership is established in the right way, at this condition whether the rebel groups have religious justification or not, the government has every right to fight against them. In this situation it is obligatory for all to support the government.
- e. Those people who are fighting against such unjust government, whose leadership is established by force on the righteous, are struggling to establish law of Allah and it is seen that they are just and good. In this situation, there is a great controversy among the jurists whether they should be called rebels and be fought against them or not.

The jurists and the *'Ahl al-Hadith* are of the opinion that the leader whose power has been established on power whether through a legitimate way or not, but the law and order situation prevails during his rule, no rebellion is permissible against him, excepting if he involves himself infidelity. Imam Sarakhsi writes: "In a case when the Muslims are agreed on a ruler and they enjoy peace under him and the roads are safe, if a group of the Muslims rises in revolt against him, everyone who has power is under obligation to side with the ruler of the Muslims and wage war against the rebels" (*Al-Mabsut, Bab al-Khwarij*, quoted in Mawdudi, 1993: 76, Vol. 15).

Imam Nawawi writes in his commentary of *Sahih al-Muslim*: "It is forbidden to rise in revolt and fight against the Imams (i.e. the Muslim rulers) even if they are wicked and unjust." Imam Nawawi claims that there is consensus on this. But this claim of the consensus is found baseless. A large group of the jurists of Islam which includes some major scholars,

declares those rising in revolt as “rebels only in case they rise in revolt against a just ruler.” The scholars do not regard as rebellion in the *Qur’anic* terminology the rising in revolt of the righteous against the unjust and wicked rulers, nor declare the waging of war against them as obligatory. The view of Imam Abu Hanifah about fighting against unjust rulers is well known among the scholars. Abu Bakr al Jassas clearly writes in his *Ahkam al-Qur’an* that the *Imam* regarded this fighting not only as permissible but obligatory in favourable conditions (*Al- Jassas*, quoted in Mawdudi, 1993: 82, Vol. 15).

He had not only supported the rebellion of Zayd bin Ali (RA) against the Umayyad dynasty, but also assisted him financially. He had supported Nafs al-Zakiyyah (RA) against Abbasi ruler Al-Mansur. Imam Abu Hanifah viewed that fighting against them was better than fighting against infidels. The opinion of Imam Sarakhsi which has been mentioned earlier is not the unanimous opinion of the Hanafi scholars. Ibn Humam explains in *Fath al-Qadir* (commentary of *Hidayah*), that rebel is one who goes on rebellion against a just ruler. Hambali’s opinions are alike.

- III. If the rebels are small in number and no big group are not patronizing them and they do not possess much weapons of destruction, then the rules about rebellion will not be applied to them. General law will be applied to them. That means if they kill people, *Qisas* or revenge would be taken from them. If they harm financial condition of the country, then financial penalties will be imposed. The law of rebellion will only be applied on those big groups, which possess much power and rebel with more organizing capacity and large weapons of destruction.
- IV. As long as the rebel group believes in rebellion or expresses their views of rebellion against the government or head of state, but they do not lodge any rebellion or do act of bloodshed or killing, they cannot be killed or arrested. War can only be announced against them if they start armed rebellion or do any act of killing.
- V. Before initiating war against the rebels, they should be asked to give up the idea of rebellion in the light of the *Qur’an* and they shall be called upon to follow the path of justice and righteousness. If they have any doubt or question then it should be tried to remove through logic and argument. If

- they do not refrain from rebellion and the war is started by them, only then armed forces will be used against them.
- VI. Regarding the wealth and the belongings of the rebels, the policy which was adopted by Sayyiduna ‘Ali (RA) was that the wealth and the belongings of them can never be considered as booty and cannot be distributed to the soldiers whether they were held by the army or kept in the house or whether its owner is alive or dead.
  - VII. The prisoners of them maybe punished as the rulers deemed fit, or may even be set free on undertaking for not doing rebellion again.
  - VIII. Cutting off the heads of the rebels who were killed in the war and demonstrating them are very heinous deeds indeed, because these are dishonor towards the dead bodies, which is seriously abhorred in Islam. The Prophet (SAAS) has prohibited to do this, it is reported that the head of a Roman Pope was brought to Abu Bakr (RA), on that he had shown extreme anger and said it is not our duty to be the blind followers of the Romans and the Persians. So the behavior which is prohibited even with the disbelievers cannot be applied to the Muslims when they were killed in the wars.
  - IX. The life and wealth which were lost in the hands of the rebels, the compensation of blood money of that cannot be demanded from them, after the war has ended and peace is established. The same policy was adopted in the war between the companions of the Prophet (SAAS).
  - X. The area which was captured by the rebels and was ruled by them including the collection of taxes and Zakat if regained, the taxes and Zakat cannot be claimed from the people. If the rebels spent this in accordance with the principle of *Shari‘ah*, then it will be considered as if the payers have paid them in the path of Allah. But if the rebels spent them in the way not approved by *Shari‘ah*, in this situation the payers shall be left on freedom between paying again or not (*Fath al-Qadir*, al-Jassas; Ibn al-‘Arabi quoted in Mawdudi, 1993: 82, Vol.15).
  - XI. If the judges have been appointed by the rebels and had the judgments in accordance with the principles of *Shari‘ah*, then they will be allowed to continue in their position, though their employers were rebels. If their judgments are taken to the court of government for trial, and the rebellion is subdued, then their judgment will be considered void.

- XII. Because starting war against the followers of right and justice is an act of sin, Imam Muhammad says: Until they announce a war against the followers of justice, their witness will be acceptable, but if they once enter into the war, I am not going to accept their witness. It has become clear from this discussion the difference between the Muslim rebels and the infidel rebels (Mawdudi, 1993: 82, Vol. 15).

#### 4. *Universal Islamic Brotherhood*

The Muslims as they love one another are not expected to get involved in quarrel. A Muslim is the one who loves for his Muslim brother what he loves for himself. A Muslim should always give priority to his Muslim brother over himself. Allah says:

The believers are none but brothers unto one another. So make peace and reconciliation between you brothers, and fear Allah that you may receive Mercy (*Qur'an, 49: 10*).

According to Sayyid Mawdudi, this verse unites all the Muslims of the world with the bondage of brotherhood. Such a brotherhood and fraternity is found among the followers of the Islamic ideology or the Muslims who are rightly guided. This is due to the positive impact of this verse. The Prophet (SAAS) has mentioned in many of his sayings to uphold the strong bond of brotherhood among the Muslims. The main objectives of this verse may be understood well by these traditions. Jarir bin 'Abdullah says: The Holy Prophet took a pledge from Me on three things: That I will establish the Prayer; that I will continue to pay the *Zakah* and that I will remain as a well-wisher of every Muslim (*Sahih al-Bukhari: Kitab-al-Iman*, quoted in Mawdudi, 1993: 82, Vol. 15).

In another Hadith, Abu Sa'id Khudri and Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "A Muslim is a brother to the other Muslim: he does not treat him unjustly; he does not leave him alone; and he does not dishonor him. There is no greater evil than that one should hold a Muslim in contempt" (*Musnad Ahmad* quoted in Mawdudi, 1993: 83, Vol. 15).

Sayyid Qutb sheds more light into the *Ayah* and says: "It is the normal situation of the Muslim society to maintain the relation of brotherhood, fellow-feeling, sense of co-operation and peaceful co-existence situation. If there happens any difference in opinion or war among them, it may happen as an accident and abnormal situation" (Qutb, 1995: 210, Vol. 6).

He further adds this is the principle of the Muslim *Ummah* that single leadership and brotherhood will prevail throughout the world, and after installing a ruler through supporting him, any claim for holding power should be stopped (Qutb, 1995: 211, Vol. 6).

##### 5. Do Not Criticize and Defame Others

Criticizing others without a valid ground is a big sin. We cannot criticize others for our interest. Calling others with bad names is also prohibited in Islam. Allah (SWT) says:

O you who believe! let not a group (of men) scoff at another group, it may well be that the latter (at whom they scoff) are better than they; nor let a group of women scoff at another group, it may well be that the latter are better than they. And do not taunt one another, nor revile one another by nicknames. Ill seeming is a name connoting wickedness (to be used of one) after he has believed and those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong (*Qur'an*, 49: 11).

Sayyid Mawdudi interpreted the verse and says: No one should laugh at others, nor a man to woman and nor a woman to a man also. This also includes laughing in talks, works or implication (Mawdudi, 1993: 84, Vol. 15). He also adds: We cannot call a person with a bad name or we cannot name someone with an unpleasant nick name which he does not like or which humiliates him. For example: to call any one blind or lame, to call any one Jew or Christian after becoming Muslim (Mawdudi, 1993: 86, Vol. 15).

Sayyid Qutb says in his commentary: Islam establishes such a society that upholds a moderate social system. In that society, everyone enjoys social dignity and self respect. No one should break this status (Qutb, 1995: 212, Vol. 6).

Islamic society is a society that puts human being into his rightful position and dignity. No one is allowed to mock at others, laugh at others, shame others or defame him/her to demolish his/her social status. The real status of a person is known to Allah (SWT). We have no right to judge others and declare negative comments about them, whereas Allah (SWT) alone has the real knowledge.

##### 6. Taqwa Is the Basis for Dignity

Allah (SWT) created all human beings from a single man and a woman. Later on they spread all over the world, and categorized into nations and tribes, so that they

may recognize each other. The position, physical structure, macho men's build, wealth or social dignity does not give one higher ranks with Allah (SWT). The best of humanity is the one who have the Fear and Love of Allah the most (Taqwa).

Allah says in *Qur'an*:

O mankind we created you from a single pair of male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other, not you may despise each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. For Allah (SWT) has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things of you) (*Qur'an*, 49: 13).

Sayyid Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb asserted clearly that all the people are from one being. No one can be considered honorable on the basis of color, race, region or speaking a particular language, but the honor and dignity is to be on the basis of good character, moral trait and sound religiosity. The honorable person is he who fears Allah the most and who has gained the virtue of *Taqwa*. We see how the Israelites humiliate the non Israelites. We have seen how the Europeans hate the Asians, and Americans hate and persecute the Red Indian people. Their criminal extortion and terror activities are very extreme oppress. They do this on the basis of nationalism. Islam denounces the source of nationalism and declares that the honor and dignity is on the basis of *Taqwa* only (Mawdudi, 1993: 99, Vol. 15) and (Qutb, 1995: 218, Vol. 6).

### 7. The Characteristics of Devout Muslims

The Surah also highlighted the identity of a devout Muslim and his characteristics and said that a true believer is the one who have unequivocal faith in Allah (SWT) and His Prophet, have no doubts in it, and devote his/her life for the satisfaction of Allah through sacrificing his life and wealth. One who could do it, is the real and true to his faith.

Allah says:

Only those are believers who have believed in Allah and His messenger and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their possessions in the cause of Allah, such are sincere ones (*Qur'an*, 49: 15).

Sayyid Qutb says: *Iman* is such a quality that it must be free from guess or suppose, it must be determined. So the people, who stayed *Mu'min* in cordial examination are the true Muslims (Qutb, 1995: 220, Vol. 6).

Muslims have made this transaction with Allah (SWT) that they would offer their precious lives and all properties in the way of Allah, and in return will get the Place of Eternal Bliss and happiness in Jannah. All their Sins will be wiped off if they accomplish this transaction with Allah (SWT) into reality (*Qur'an*, 9: 111).

### **Similarities and Differences between Mawdudi and Qutb**

#### *Similarities*

- 1) It has been observed in both *tafsir* that the author of each of them gives a brief introduction to each *Surah* before starting its commentary, which gives a clear idea about the topics and issues discussed in the *Surah*.
- 2) We find this as a common characteristic of both of the *Tafsir* that they refer to the Prophetic tradition as one of the primary sources of *Tafsir*. For example, Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi quotes a *Hadith* in explanation of the verses 1, 9, 10, 12 and 13; whereas Sayyid Qutb quotes a *Hadith* in explanation of the verses 1 and 12.
- 3) Both of the *Tafsirs* have avoided referring to any narrations from the Israeli sources in this *Surah* and this has become the common practice for Sayyid Qutb in his *tafsir*. However, at times, they quote the Israeli tradition to show the differences between the *Qur'an* and the *Isra'ili* narrations.
- 4) They did not enter into any philosophical debate. Most of their discussions are of intellectual nature about the regulation, guidelines and teachings that contained in the *Surah*.
- 5) Both of them have referred to some narrations about the background for revelation of the *Surah* and its *ayat* (*Asbab Al-Nuzul*).
- 6) Both *Tafsirs* referred to famous Books on a *Hadith* and on *Tafsir* such as *Bukhari*, *Muslim*, *Tafsir Ahkam Qur'an* of Jassas, *Ahkam Qur'an* of Ibn al-'Arabi and *Fath Qadir*.
- 7) Both *Tafsirs* analyzed the *Surah* with an objective and critical approach.

- 8) Both *Tafsirs* focus on socio-moral reform of the Muslim societies (*Al-Tafsir al-Ijtima`i*).

### *Differences*

- 1) Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi analyzed the *Fiqh* in detail and narrated the *Fiqhi* issues with the opinion of the different schools of *Fiqh*; but Sayyid Qutb did not get engaged into the details of *Fiqh* (*Masai'l*).
- 2) Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi discussed the issues related to Islamic social order in more details compared with Sayyid Qutb.
- 3) Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi explained the naming of the *surah* unlike Sayyid Qutb, which is usually derived from a particular word within the *surah*. In the case of *surah al-Hujurat* the name of the *surah* is derived from verse number Four, where the word *al-Hujurat* exists. However, Sayyid Qutb does not seem to follow this fashion.
- 4) Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi followed an easy-to-understand method, as his target group was common masses; whereas Sayyid Qutb's method was artistic and literary, which is only accessible to those with high command of Arabic literature.
- 5) *Tafsir Fi Zilal Al-Qur'an* was originally written in Arabic, whereas Mawdudi's *Tafhim Qur'an* was written in Urdu. However, *Tafhim Qur'an* has been translated in full into a number of languages, while *Fi Zilal* was also translated, either partly or fully, into a few languages.
- 6) Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi's reference to other similar *Qur'anic ayat* is much more than Sayyid Qutb especially in this *surah al-Hujurat*. *Qur'anic* interpretation by other similar verses is regarded to be one of the best methods of interpretation in the *Qur'an*.
- 7) Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi explained the *Mufradaat Qur'an* (*Qur'anic* terms) by using the similar words in the *Qur'an*. This helps one to understand the meaning of the different words in a clearer manner. This aspect is rarely present in the *Tafsir* of Sayyid Qutb (See for example, *Tafhim Qur'an, Al-Hujurat, Ayah* no. 9 in the explanation of *Ta'ifah* and *Firqah* and their differences).

- 8) Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi elaborated with some details about the contemporary scientific inventions and its latest findings. (See for example, *Tafhim, Tafsir of Ayah* Number 13 of this *surah*).

### Findings

*surah al-Hujurat* lays down the foundations of an ideal social living, and as such, provides fundamental *Ahkam* and principles in this regard. These *Ahkam* are permanent in nature, as they were revealed in the final stage of the Prophet's life. The objective of this *surah* is to formulate and guide the Muslims towards such unique disciplines, individual, socio-cultural manners, which are suitable with *Iman*. A man should not go in advance before Allah and His Prophet (SAAS) in any subject, order and prohibition. We should be careful in dealing with the Prophet's commands and be grateful to him. He is the greatest benefactor for humanity. In his absence, the world was full of darkness, and Allah (SWT) sent the best of Prophets to the last nation and revealed His Lasting Message, *Al-Qur'an*. Any misbehavior or misdemeanor with that of the Prophet and his *Sunnah* would destroy our lifetime credit.

We must pay attention and caution to any types of news; and must analyze the news before we actually believe it. Muslims are urged to avoid anything that makes social disorder and eventually causes hatred and enmity among the people. If two groups of people, communities or even countries are engaged in fighting, the Muslims should play their roles as peacemakers, and not as peace destroyers.

The foundations of the social system of Islam rest on the belief that all human beings are equal and constitute one single fraternity. Allah created a human pair to herald the beginning of the life of mankind on the earth and all persons inhabiting this world today have sprung from this pair remained a single group. It had one religion and spoke the same language. There were little or no differences among them. But as their numbers gradually increased, they spread all over the earth and as a natural result of their diversification and growths, they were divided into various tribes, races, and nationalities. Their languages became different; their modes of dress varied; and their manners of living also became distinct from one another. The climate and environment of various places altered their color and physical features. All these differences are natural. They do exist in the world of reality. Hence, Islam recognizes them as matters of fact. It does not seek to wipe them out or to ignore them but affirms that their advantage consists in affording

the only possible means of distinguishing one from the other. But the prejudices, which have arisen among mankind out of these differences in the shape of groupings and organizations, based on race, color, language, nationality, etc. are disapproved in Islam.

Islam regards all distinctions of birth of high and low among men, of upper and lower classes, of natives of the soil and aliens as manifestation of sheer ignorance. It announces to all men in the world that they have sprung from the same parents and therefore are brothers and are equal in their status as human beings.

### **Conclusion**

The *surah* teaches the style or etiquette between a teacher and his disciple. It also trains Muslims how should one approach with Allah, His Prophet and their Commands. The *surah* also teaches us the manners how to reconcile and make peace between two fighting groups. One should focus on reforming and correcting himself before searching the faults of others. The *surah* guarantees dignity to human kind that they were created from the same pair of male and female, and that no one has superiority over others. Sayyid Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb have amply explained the issues of social and moral order in their commentaries on the *surah*. This paper will pave the way for other researchers who have passion for social welfare activities and will shed lights for the leaders of the Muslim community in formulating the ideal welfare based-states in their respective countries.

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