

## Surah 33. Al-Ahzab

Asad: O YOU who have attained to faith! Do not enter the Prophet's dwellings unless you are given leave; [and when invited] to a meal, do not come [so early as] to wait for it to be readied: but whenever you are invited, enter [at the proper time]; and when you have partaken of the meal, disperse without lingering for the sake of mere talk: that, behold, might give offence to the Prophet, and yet he might feel shy of [asking] you [to leave]: but God is not shy of [teaching you] what is right.<sup>68</sup> And [as for the Prophet's wives,] whenever you ask them for anything that you need, ask them from behind a screen.<sup>69</sup> this will but deepen the purity of your hearts and theirs. Moreover, it does not behove you to give offence to God's Apostle - just as it would not behove you ever to marry his widows after he has passed away.<sup>70</sup> that. verily, would be an enormity in the sight of God.

Malik: O believers! Do not enter the houses of the Prophet without permission, nor stay waiting for meal time: but if you are invited to a meal, enter, and when you have eaten disperse and do not seek long conversation. Such behavior annoys the Prophet, he feels shy in asking you to leave, but Allah does not feel shy in telling the truth. If you have to ask his wives for anything, speak to them from behind a curtain. This is more chaste for your hearts and for theirs. It is not proper for you to annoy the Rasool of Allah, nor ever to marry his wives after him; this would be a grievous offence in the sight of Allah.

Pickthall: O ye who believe! Enter not the dwellings of the Prophet for a meal without waiting for the proper time, unless permission be granted you. But if ye are invited, enter, and, when your meal is ended, then disperse. Linger not for conversation. Lo! that would cause annoyance to the Prophet, and he would be shy of (asking) you (to go); but Allah is not shy of the truth. And when ye ask of them (the wives of the Prophet) anything, ask it of them from behind a curtain. That is purer for your hearts and for their hearts. And it is not for you to cause annoyance to the messenger of Allah, nor that ye should ever marry his wives after him. Lo! that in Allah's sight would be an enormity.

Yusuf Ali: O ye who Believe! enter not the Prophet's houses until leave is given you for a meal (and then) not (so early as) to wait for its preparation: but when ye are invited enter; and when ye have taken your meal disperse without seeking familiar talk. Such (behavior) annoys the Prophet: He is ashamed to dismiss you but Allah is not ashamed (to tell you) the truth. And when ye ask (his ladies) for anything ye want ask them from before a screen: that makes for greater purity for your hearts and for theirs. Nor is it right for you that ye should annoy Allah's Apostle or that ye should marry his widows after him at any time. Truly such a thing is in Allah's sight an enormity. **3755 3756 3757 3758**

Transliteration: Ya ayyuha allatheena amanoo la tadhkuloobuyoota alInnabiyyi illa an yuthana lakum illa tAAamin ghayra nathireena inahu walakin itha duAAeetum faodkhuloo faitha taAAaimitum faintashiroo wala mustaniseena lihadeethin inna thalikum kana yuthee alInnabiyya fayastahyee minkum waAllahu la yastahyee mina alhaqqi waitha saaltumoohunna mataAAan faisaloohunna min warai hijabin thalikum atharu liquloobikum waquloobihinna wama kana lakum an tuthoo rasoola Allahi wala an tankihoo azwajahu min baAAadihi abadan inna thalikum kana AAinda Allahi AAatheeman

Khatab:

O believers! Do not enter the homes of the Prophet without permission ?and if invited? for a meal, do not ?come too early and? linger until the meal is ready. But if you are invited, then enter ?on time?. Once you have eaten, then go on your way, and do not stay for casual talk. Such behaviour is truly annoying to the Prophet, yet he is too shy to ask you to leave. But Allah is never shy of the truth. And when you ?believers? ask his wives for something, ask them from behind a barrier. This is purer for your hearts and theirs. And it is not right for you to annoy the Messenger of Allah, nor ever marry his wives after him. This would certainly be a major offence in the sight of Allah.

## Author Comments

68 - Connecting with the reference, in verses {45-48}, to the Prophet's mission, the above passage is meant to stress his unique position among his contemporaries; but as is so often the case with Qur'anic references to historical events and situations, the ethical principle enunciated here is not restricted to a particular time or environment. By exhorting the Prophet's Companions to revere his person, the Qur'an reminds all believers, at all times, of his exalted status (cf. note [85] on [2:104](#)); beyond that, it teaches them certain rules of behaviour bearing on the life of the community as such: rules which, however insignificant they may appear at first glance, are of psychological value in a society that is to be governed by a genuine feeling of brotherhood, mutual consideration, and respect for the sanctity of each other's personality and privacy.

69 - The term hijab denotes anything that intervenes between two things, or conceals, shelters or protects the one from the other; it may be rendered, according to the context, as "barrier", "obstacle", "partition", "screen", "curtain", "veil", etc., in both the concrete and abstract connotations of these words. The prohibition to approach the Prophet's wives otherwise than "from behind a screen" or "curtain" may be taken literally - as indeed it was taken by most of the Companions of the Prophet - or metaphorically, indicating the exceptional reverence due to these "mothers of the faithful".

70 - Lit., "to marry his wives after him".

3755 - The rules of refined social ethics is as necessary to teach to-day as it was with the rude Arabs whom the holy Prophet had to teach in his day. Those mentioned in this verse may be briefly recapitulated thus: (1) Enter not a friend's house without permission; (2) if invited to dine, don't go too early; you are asked to dine, not to wait for the preparation of the food; (3) be there at the time appointed, so that you enter when you are expected and invited; (4) after the meal, don't get familiar with your host, especially if there is a great distance between him and you; (5) don't waste time in tittle-tattle, causing inconvenience and perhaps annoyance to your host; (6) understand what is proper behaviour for you: he may be too polite to ask to depart. All this has a social bearing: respect and delicate consideration for others are among the highest virtues.

3756 - The actual manner of showing respect to ladies may be different in different circumstances. But it is an essential principle of good society to show the greatest deference to them. To the "Mothers of the Believers" this respect was due in an exceptional degree.

3757 - Considering his position, the holy Prophet deserved to be respected before all other men and nothing should be done to cause him the least harm and annoyance. This applied not only during his lifetime, but it applies now, because his teaching and personality are alive to us. It was not fitting that his widows, both for their own position and for the position of the Prophet, should be married by other men after him. And this mark of respect was duly observed in history.

3758 - "Annoy": Aza (IV) may equally mean: to vex, to cause hurt or injury, to insult, to ill-treat by slander or unseemly conduct, or hurt the feelings of (some one). The Prophet came with a divine mission to teach and reclaim the world, and he is entitled to the respect of all, even of those who do not consciously acknowledge his mission, for his mission works constantly like the forces of nature. In a minor degree the "Mothers of the Believers" are also entitled to respect.

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