

Fast 26

Manners to be observed towards the Holy Prophet:

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

“¹O you who believe, do not be forward in the presence of Allah and His Messenger, and keep your duty to Allah. Surely Allah is Hearing, Knowing. ²O you who believe, do not raise your voices above the Prophet’s voice, nor speak loudly to him as you speak loudly to one another, in case your deeds become fruitless, while you do not perceive. ³Surely those who lower their voices before Allah’s Messenger are they whose hearts Allah has proved for dutifulness. For them is forgiveness and a great reward. ⁴Those who call out to you from behind the private apartments, most of them have no sense. ⁵And if they had patience till you come out to them, it would be better for them. And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” — 49:1–5

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

The command in verse 2, not to raise your voice above that of the Prophet, or talk to him loudly as you do to one another, is again a matter of manners in front of your guide and teacher. The natural loudness of someone’s voice is not meant here. A Companion of the Holy Prophet, who had a loud voice by nature, burst into tears on hearing this verse because he thought it was directed at him. But the Holy Prophet comforted him and said that his voice was not meant here. What is meant is that one must not be argumentative and try to talk down the Holy Prophet as if he were an ordinary man.

Verses 4–5: Some people, not knowing any better, used to shout questions at the Holy Prophet from outside his house, expecting him to leave everything and come out to answer them.

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

“Only those are believers who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and when they are with him on an important matter, they do not go away until they have asked permission from him. Surely they who ask permission from you, are they who believe in Allah and His Messenger;

so when they ask permission from you for some affair of theirs, give permission to whom you will from among them, and ask forgiveness for them from Allah. Surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. Do not make the Messenger's calling among you as your calling of one another. Allah indeed knows those who steal away from among you, concealing themselves. So those who go against his order should beware that a trial may afflict them or there may befall them a painful punishment." — 24:62–63

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

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