

ANSWER

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

O those who believe, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and be not loud when speaking to him, as you are loud when speaking to one another, lest your good deeds become void while you are not aware. [49:2]

COMMENTARY

(... **do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet - 49:2**) This is another etiquette to be observed while in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This verse teaches the believers that they should not raise their voices above the voice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ nor speak aloud to him as one speaks aloud to another in general discussions. The verse warns that neglecting this etiquette may entail nullification of one's virtuous deeds, because this is a kind of disrespect to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Thus when this verse was revealed, the blessed Companions became very apprehensive and very cautious. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr *radi'allāhu 'anhu* said: "By God! O Messenger of Allah, from now till my last breath, I shall speak to you as if someone is whispering." (Ad-Durr-ul- Manthūr on the authority of Baihaqī) When this verse was revealed, Sayyidnā 'Umar's *radi'allāhu 'anhu* voice became so low that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had to ask him to repeat what he said, so that he could understand what he was saying to him (Sihah). Thābit Ibn Qays *radi'allāhu 'anhu* had a naturally loud voice. When he heard this verse, he feared that his good deeds would be rendered void, he wept and lowered his voice (Ad-Durr-ul- Manthūr on the authority of Baihaqī).

It is Prohibited to Greet and Speak Aloud in front of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ Mausoleum

Qādī Abū Bakr Ibn 'Arabī says that respect for the Holy Prophet ﷺ after his demise is just as compulsory as it was during his life-time. Therefore, some of the scholars have expressed the view that it is disrespectful to say salām or speak very loudly in front of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ mausoleum. Likewise it is discourteous to make noise where Prophetic traditions are recited, because when the blessed words of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are being recited, it is compulsory to listen to them silently. In the same manner, it is an unmannerly behaviour to raise voices after his demise when his noble words are repeated.

Ruling

As the Qur'ānic injunction "do not proceed ahead of Allah and His Messenger" applies to 'Ulamā' as the heirs of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, likewise the injunction "do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet" is applicable to the great scholars of Islam also. When sitting in their assembly, it is impolite to raise voices so loudly that their voices are suppressed (Qurtubī).

(lest your good deeds become void while you are not aware - 49:2) This clause is indicating the



reason why the Muslims are directed not to raise their voices above the voice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. They are warned that non-compliance of the rule may nullify their virtuous deeds. According to the axioms of Sharī'ah and universally established principles, a few perturbing questions arise here. First of all, according to the unanimous view of Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, the only thing that can destroy righteous deeds is kufr or disbelief. No sin can destroy good deeds. Here the Qur'ān addresses the noble Companions and the believers. It addresses them by calling them “**O believers**” which goes to show that they are “believers” and not “disbelievers” - so how can their righteous works be rendered void? The second point is that “faith” is an act of free will. A person cannot be a believer unless he embraces faith with his own free will. Likewise “disbelief” [*kufr*] is an act of free will. A person does not become *kāfir* [unbeliever] unless he adopts disbelief with his own free will. The concluding phrase “**while you are not aware**” seems to be against this principle: Failure of good deeds is the punishment of disbelief which ought to be a result of one's own free will and the phrase shows that the punishment lacks “freewill”. So how can the good deeds go to waste?

My master, the honorable sage of the Ummah has in his Bayān-ul-Qur'ān explicated the passage in such a manner that all these perturbations are resolved. He says the meaning of the verse is thus: O Muslims, avoid raising your voices above the voice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ or speaking loudly to him, because in so doing there is the fear that your deeds should be thwarted. The danger in raising your voices above that of the Holy Prophet ﷺ lies in the fact that it is tantamount to discourtesy to the Holy Prophet ﷺ which is the same as vexing him. It is unthinkable that the noble Companions would intentionally attempt to hurt him. However, it is possible that certain deeds and actions, such as “**advancing forward**” and “**raising voices**”, without the intention of hurting could upset or offend him. Therefore, all such conducts have been absolutely prohibited, forbidden and regarded as sin. The essential characteristics of some of the sins are such that the people who commit them lose the Divine aid of repentance and the ability or capacity to perform righteous works. As a result, he gets so engrossed in sins that they lead him to “disbelief” and thus the righteous deeds fail. Likewise hurting one's religious leader, teacher or spiritual guide is a sin that runs the risk of losing the Divine aid. Thus conducts such as “advancing before the Holy Prophet ﷺ” or “raising voices” are such sinful conducts that can cause the Divine help to be taken away. This situation eventually leads one to “disbelief” which destroys one's good works. Because the believer may not have intentionally performed the act of hurting, thus he would not even perceive how he got involved in the process of “disbelief”, and “thwarting of good deeds”. Some of the scholars have expressed the view that if someone has taken a righteous, holy person as his spiritual guide, then he shows disrespect to him, then such a person may suffer the same consequences: that is, sometimes it becomes the cause of Divine aid being removed and of incurring His wrath which eventually destroys the treasure of “faith”. We seek refuge with Allah from it!

End.

