



“Ethical Guidance And Interpersonal Development In Surah Al-Hujrat: A Quranic Perspective”.

Kazima Khursheed

Student

Aligarh Muslim University

Abstract: *Surah-al-Hujurat* a Madinan surah of the Qur’an, is widely regarded as a comprehensive code of ethics that governs the moral and social conduct of Muslims. The surah provides essential guidance for maintaining harmony within society by emphasizing respect, brotherhood, justice and equality. This paper explores the ethical teachings of *Surah-al-Hujurat* with a special focus on interpersonal development. The study highlights the central principles, including reverence for Allah and his Messenger ﷺ, the verification of reports, the pursuit of justice and reconciliation in times of conflict, the prohibition of ridicule, backbiting, and unfounded suspicion, and the affirmation of human equality grounded in Taqwa. By analyzing these verses from a Qur’anic perspective, the paper demonstrates that the surah offers enduring guidance for resolving social conflicts, strengthening interpersonal bonds, and promoting peace both within Muslim societies and in the broader global context. The study concludes that *Surah-al-Hujurat* serves not only as a source of spiritual guidance but also as a timeless framework for ethical conduct and interpersonal harmony, with enduring relevance for contemporary society.

Key Words: *Surah-al-Hujurat, Quranic ethics, Interpersonal development, social harmony, moral conduct, Justice, Equality, Taqwa.*

1.Introduction: *Surah-al-Hujurat*, the forty-ninth surah of the Qur’an, offers profound guidance on oral conduct and social behavior, shaping the ethical framework of Muslim society. This surah consisting of eighteen verses and provides divine guidance on moral discipline, respect, justice and brotherhood. The word AL-Hujurat means “the private rooms” or “chambers”, which were the living quarters of the prophet (SAAS). The name *Surah-al-Hujurat* reminds Muslims about the importance of respecting personal and social boundaries. The surah not only teaches religious faith but also emphasizes good manners and proper behavior in both private and public life. Ethics are very important in Islam. The Quran repeatedly teaches that faith alone is not enough without good behavior. A person’s true goodness is reflected in their faith in Allah and their behavior towards others. This Surah gives a complete moral guide that combines these two aspects, teaching Muslims to balance spiritual devotion with good social conduct.

This surah was revealed in the early days of Muslim society in Madinah, a time of different tribes, new social system and building of Islamic rules. Its guidance helped Muslims build discipline, unity, and respect among each other. Every verse of this surah focuses on a specific aspect of ethical and social behavior: respecting leaders, checking news before believing it, solving disputes/conflicts, avoiding mockery and backbiting, and treating all human equally. The significance of *Surah-al-Hujurat* goes beyond the time it was revealed. In today's modern world, with social divisions, online false information, and moral confusion, the surah's teachings give lasting guidance on how to live ethically and understand emotions wisely. It's reminds Muslims that true piety is not just about worship, but also about being kind, truthful and humble towards others.

This research paper will look at the ethical lessons and social development taught in *surah-al-hujurat* from a Qur'anic perspective. It will try to answer the main question: How does *Surah-al-Hujurat* build a moral and social framework that develops both personal character and community harmony? By analyzing selected verses and scholarly interpretations, the study will show that *Surah-al-Hujurat* provides a timeless example of good behavior that is important for personal growth and peace in society.

2.Literature Review

Scholars who study *Surah-al-Hujurat* agree that this surah holds a special place as the Quran's central guide for moral and social conduct. It connects faith, ethics and relationships, showing that being spiritual also means treating others with justice and kindness. Both early and modern scholars have studied this surah to understand how the Quran builds a morally balanced and peaceful society.

2.1 Classical Exegesis (old explanations): Famous classical scholars like Ibn-Kathir, Al-Tabari and Al-Qurtubi gave detailed explanations of this Surah. They saw it as Allah's guide for good manners and discipline among Muslims.

Ibn-Kathir, in *Tafsir-al-Quran-al-Azim (vol:4,p.no:205-220)*, said that the first few verses of this Surah teach Muslims how to behave with the Prophet ﷺ. He explained that good manners are part of faith, and respecting the Prophet means respecting Allah.

Al-Qurtubi, in *Al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Quran (vol:16, p.no:255-299)*, called this surah 'Surah-al-Adab'. He said the peace and unity among Muslims depend on good character and proper manners.

Al-Tabari, in *Jami-al-Bayan 'an ta-wil ay al-Qur'an (vol:26, p.no:134-168)*, said that verse 6 which talks about checking news before believing it shows the Quranic concern for truth and justice, especially for leaders and communities.

2.2 Modern Scholars:

Modern Scholars have studied *Surah-al-Hujurat* from social, moral and psychological point of view.

Abul-Ala-Maududi (1972), In the introduction in *Tafheem-al-Qur'an (vol:5, p.no:68-105)*, he states that this surah the "Construction of Islamic Morality". He said it gives the moral system needed for a healthy and united society.

Fazlur Rahman (1982), explains that these verses teaches that all human beings are equal. He rejects the idea that any race or tribe is better than another, and says that only a person's *Taqwa* makes them truly honorable.

Reference: "Major themes of the Qur'an" in this Book he explained (verse 11-13) (chapter 3,p.no: 31) Man in Society.

Dr. Akram Nadwi (2013), in "The Prophet as a teacher", described Prophet ﷺ as the best example of this surah's teachings. His humility and kindness show how Qur'anic morals should appear in daily life.

Ethical Guidance In Surah-al-Hujurat:-

Surah-al-Hujurat teaches Muslims how to live ethically, balance faith with behavior, and maintain social harmony. It highlights Sincerity, humility, justice and respect as key virtues for both personal growth and community peace.

1. Respect for Authority and Leadership (verses 1-5):

The surah begins by directing believers to be mindful in their interactions with the Prophet ﷺ:

Verse 1:

O you who have believed, do not put yourself before Allah and His Messenger but fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is hearing and knowing [\(Q:49:1\)](#)

This verse teaches believer's not to act or decide anything before Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. It encourages patience, humility, and awareness that Allah knows all, even what is in the heart.

Verse 2:

O you who have believed, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet or be loud to him in speech like the loudness of some of you to others, lest your deeds become worthless while you perceive not [\(Q:49:2\)](#)

This verse was revealed when some companions spoke loudly before the Prophet ﷺ. It teaches that respectful speech shows true faith, and disrespect can harm one's good deeds.

Verse 3:

Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allah, they are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested for righteousness. For them is forgiveness and great reward [\(Q:49:3\)](#)

This verse praises those who speak gently and humbly before the Prophet ﷺ. Their calmness and respect show their *Taqwa*. Such people, Allah says, will receive his forgiveness and a great reward in the hereafter.

Verse 4:

Indeed, those who call you, O Muhammad, from behind the chambers most of them do not use reason [\(Q:49:4\)](#)

This verse refers to some desert Arabs who shouted for the Prophet ﷺ from outside his house, showing impatience and lack of manners. Allah corrects this behavior, teaching that respect and calmness are signs of true understanding.

Verse 5:

And if they had been patient until you come out to them, it would have been better for them. But Allah is forgiving and merciful [\(Q:49:5\)](#)

This verse advises patience and manners. It shows that waiting respectfully for the Prophet ﷺ is better than acting hastily/ quickly. Allah still describes himself as forgiving and merciful, encouraging believers to learn from mistakes. The first five verses of *Sursh-al-Hujurat* teach respect, patience, humility, and good manners, especially towards Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. These verses remind believers that faith is not only about belief, but also about showing proper behavior and discipline in words and actions.

2. Confirmation Of Information (verse 6):

O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful [\(Q:49:6\)](#)

This verse teaches Muslims to verify any news before believing or acting on it. This verse was revealed when false information nearly caused a fight between Muslim tribes. In today's world, it reminds us to avoid sharing rumors or fake news, especially on social media. It reminds us that truthfulness protects justice and peace in society.

3. Justice and Reconciliation (verse 9):

And if two groups of believers fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allah. And if it returns, make settlement between them with justice and act justly. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly [\(Q:49:9\)](#)

This verse recognizes that disagreement can occur even within the believer community but calls for reconciliation based on fairness and not revenge. This verse highlights that justice and reconciliation is a main value in Islam, it brings unity, and prevents hatred. This verse ends with *inna Allaha yuhibbu al-maqsitin*, Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly shows that moral justice is worship.

4. Encouragement Of Brotherhood and Unity (verse 10):

The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy [\(Q:49:10\)](#)

This verse shows that all Muslims are one family. Faith connects them beyond race, tribe, or cultural barriers. Maududi explains in (Tafheem-ul-Qur'an), that this verse builds the idea of equality, forgiveness, and compassion among Muslims. Brotherhood (ukhuwwah) in Islam means caring for each other and staying united. The final line of the verse, *wa-ttaqu Allaha la'allakum turhamun* "And fear

Allah that you may receive mercy”, suggests that society’s mercy depends on the exercise of *Taqwa* and reconciliation among one another.

The first part of *Surah-al-Hujurat* gives the moral foundation of an Islamic society:

- Respect authority and show good manners.
- Verify information before acting.
- Bring peace and act justly.
- Strengthen brotherhood and unity.

Together, these values create a comprehensive code of ethics that join faith with action and belief into behavior.

Interpersonal Development in Surah-al-Hujurat

Surah-al-Hujurat refines interpersonal conduct and emotional intelligence by guiding Muslims towards respect, unity, and moral self-control. It addresses how believers should interact to maintain harmony and dignity in society.

1. Avoiding Mockery and Taunts (verse 11):

O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule another people, perhaps they may be better than them, not let women ridicule other women, perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by offensive nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after one’s faith. And whoever does not repent then it is those who are the wrongdoers [\(Q:49:11\)](#)

This verse prohibits mockery and contempt, emphasizing that an individual’s true worth is based on piety and moral conduct rather than social and material status. It promotes humility, compassion, and respect essential elements for maintaining dignified and harmonious interpersonal relations.

2. Avoiding Suspicion, Backbiting and Spying (verse 12):

O you who have believed, avoid much negative assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah, indeed, Allah is accepting of repentance and merciful [\(Q:49:12\)](#)

This verse warns against destructive habits that harm trust and relationships. It explains, true interpersonal growth requires moral awareness and self-discipline. By avoiding gossip and negative assumptions, believers preserve privacy, peace, and sincerity in society.

3. Promoting Equility and Diversity (verse 13):

O mankind, indeed we have created you from male and female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is knowing and acquainted/aware [\(Q:49:13\)](#).

This verse highlights equality and respect for diversity, teaching that social differences are natural and meant for mutual understanding. It sets *Taqwa* as the true measure of honor, not wealth or status. It promotes a moral vision based on respect, empathy, and cooperation__ essential for a just and harmonious society.

This part of Surah teaches that interpersonal development is both ethical and spiritual.

- Avoiding ridicule builds humility.
- Avoiding suspicion and gossip builds trust.
- Embracing diversity builds unity.

Together, these principles cultivate emotionally intelligent, morally upright individuals who contribute to a peaceful and ethical society.

A Quranic Perspective On Ethical and Social Development:

Surah-al-Hujurat presents a holistic Qur'anic framework where ethics, faith and social responsibility are closely connected. It shows that moral character and human relationships are essential parts of true faith, not separate from it.

1. Synthesis of Faith and Ethics: The Surah teaches that ethics and piety work together. Believers are reminded that their behavior, speech, social manners reflect their spiritual state. The verses about respect for the Prophet ﷺ ([Q:49:1-5](#)) show that faith is incomplete without righteous behavior. And the verses on the verifying information ([Q:49:6](#)) and maintaining justice ([Q:49:9](#)) emphasize that morality must extend to society. The Qur'an connects personal righteousness with collective responsibility, ensuring justice, truth, and respect in all dealings.

2. Emotional and Interpersonal Intelligence: The surah builds emotional intelligence by forbidding mockery, suspicion, and backbiting ([Q:49:11-12](#)). These teachings train Muslims to control emotions, show empathy, and maintain social harmony. By appreciating human diversity ([Q:49:13](#)), Muslims are urged to respect all people and value *Taqwa* above social or racial status. This shows a Quranic way of teaching emotional maturity combining self-control, kindness, and a sense of right and wrong to build good and respectful relationships.

3. Social Cohesion and Community Development: From the Qur'anic perspective, moral actions is a foundation of a united and peaceful society. This surah promotes respect, truthfulness, justice, reconciliation, and brotherhood values essential for social peace and cooperation. These teachings also address modern issues like misinformation, conflicts within society, and unfair behavior, offering timeless principles for ethical social governance.

4. Timeless Relevance: This Surah was revealed during the early Madinan period, yet its message remains universal and timeless. It calls for:

- Decent and respectful communication.
- Verification of information.
- Justice and reconciliation.
- Humility, compassion and unity.

Surah-al-hujurat gives a clear Quranic guide for moral and social growth. It connects faith with good actions, personal godness with public behavior, and self-improvement with unity of the community. Its lessons help Muslims become morally responsible, kind, and help people build a fair and caring society.

Conclusion:

Surah-al-Hujurat gives a complete guide for moral and social development by connecting personal character with social responsibility. In its eighteen verses, it teaches respect, honesty, justice,

reconciliation, and the importance of avoiding mockery and backbiting. It also reminds people that all humans are equal and true faith must show through good behavior and respect for others.

The surah helps believers develop emotional intelligence by encouraging self-control, humility, empathy, and peace in relationships. It presents a Qur'anic modal for building unity in society, where justice and mutual respect are the foundation of good community. By teaching these ethics both personal and social duties, it inspires Muslims to take part in creating responsible and caring communities. Even today, the message of this surah is deeply relevant. In times of division, false information, and moral confusion, its lessons promote trust, cooperation, and fairness. It shows us how divine guidance can shape both personal character and social life, helping to build a society based on justice, compassion and moral strength.

Thus, *Surah-al-Hujurat* reminds us that good character and social harmony are central parts of Islam. Its teachings continue to guide people towards moral growth and the building of peaceful, ethical, and united communities.

References:

1. Ibn Kathīr, Ismail. Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm .(volume 5, Arabic). Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah
2. Al_Qurtubi, Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Ahmad. Al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān (volume 20, Arabic). Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah,Beirut-Lebanon.
3. Al-Tabari, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir. Jami' al-bayan 'an Ta'wi Ay Al-Quran, (volume 30, Arabic). Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī.
4. Maududi, Abul A'la. Tafheem-ul-Qur'an (Volume 6, Urdu). Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, (2003).
5. Nadwi, Akram. The Prophet as a Teacher. Oxford: Al-Salam Institute (2013).
<https://alsalam.ac.uk/the-prophet-as-a-teacher> ,Accessed on:14/11/2025.
6. Fazlur Rahman. Major themes of the Quran.
http://showpdf.rahnuma.org/religion/Fazlur_Rehman/Fazlur_Rehman-Major-Themes-of-the-Qur-an.pdf , Accessed on:14/11/2025.
7. The Qur'an (Arabic text with English translation) *Surah-al-hujurat* . <https://quran.com/49>