An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an Vol. 2

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Compiler: A Group of Muslim Scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani

Translated by
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An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 2 From Surah al-Baqarah (2) v. 154- to Surah al-Baqarah (2) v. 252 The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, "An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an" compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

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Translator(s):

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Topic Tags:

Qur'anic Exegesis (Tafsir) [7]
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Important notice:

The Ahlul Bayt DILP team would like to inform readers of the following regarding this digitised text.

During the editing and digitisation process, the DILP team identified various typographical, spelling, transliteration, and referencing inconsistencies. To improve clarity, readability, and accuracy, grammatical and orthographic corrections have been made, and the transliteration of Arabic names and terms has been standardised where appropriate.

In addition, sections and subheadings have been introduced to improve navigation and make the content

more searchable in an online environment. As a result, the digital version diverges from the printed volume.

Users wishing to see the translation as it was published should refer to printed copies available in bookshops.

Those who understand are advised to refer directly to the original text.

Miscellaneous information:
An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 2 From Surah al-Baqarah (2) v. 154- to Surah al-Baqarah (2) v. 252 Compiler: A Group of Muslim Scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani. Translator: Mr. Sayyid Abbas Sadr-Ameli Published by: The Scientific and Religious Research Center Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a s.) Public Library, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani. Address: Shekar Shekan Crossroads, Ahmadabad Street Post Office Box 1465/5151, Esfahan Islamic Republic of Iran, Tehran: 281000, 282000, 296487 Fax 0098 31 297028

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Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani [9]

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

إِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا

Verily this Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (***or stable***) (***to run societies***)***, and giveth the Glad Tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward*** (***17:9***)***.***

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيدًا عَلَىٰ هٰؤُلَاءِ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ

...We have sent down to thee the Book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to

Muslims (***16:89***).

وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوءًا بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, Say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (***the rule of***) ***mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended*** (***his conduct***)***, lo! He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful'*** (***6:54***).

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (*of people*) *which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself* (*follows it*)*; and he who puts it behind himself* (*neglects it*) *will be driven to Hell.*

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in *which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining* (*of goals*)*. It is the Separator* (*of right and wrong*)*.* [1]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir'.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three years, a

translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, 'honour' and 'honor'.

Not All English Versions of Qur'an Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed. And it should be noted that:

بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَجِيدٌ

Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an (***85:21***).

فِي لَوْحٍ مَحْفُوظٍ

(***Inscribed***) ***in a tablet preserved*** (***85:22***).

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (***from corruption***) (***15:9***).

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of '**References**') which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What Is A 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

فَاقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ

…Read you ye, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy (***for you***) ***…*** (***73:20***).

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as Allah says:

إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ

That this is indeed a Qur'an Most Honourable (***56:77***).

فِي كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ

Which none shall touch (***In Book well-guarded***) (***56:78***).

لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ

But those who are purified (***Which none shall touch but those who are clean***) (***56:79***).

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous / mutashabihat /; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the / rasixuna fil 'ilm /; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself, viz, Ahl al-Bayt, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations as He says:

وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا...

...And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence (***18:65***).

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the Holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith ath-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the

Ahl al-Bayt, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahl al-Bayt's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the Holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam 'Ali ('a) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So, the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skilfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled **"An Enlightening Commentary Into The Light Of The Holy Qur'an",** begin with Surah Al-Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the

Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on this kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skilfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyse and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

> وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيدًا عَلَىٰ هَٰؤُلَاءِ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ

We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims (***16:89***).

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems In Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like / amrun bayn al amrayn / in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the Holy Prophet or Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf 'Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ

***He said: 'Our Lord is He Who gave to each* (*created*) *thing its form and nature and further gave* (*it*) *guidance'* (*20:50*).**

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy

Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11–16 from Surah 'Abasa, 80:11–16, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

You will not wish unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise (***76:30***).

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side–by–side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of **"An Enlightening Commentary Into The Light Of The Holy Qur'an"** has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time, it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

رَبَّنَا إِنَّنَا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ

***Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling* (*Us*) *to Faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,' and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous* (*3:193*).**

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought **A. Yusuf 'Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an,** basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنْهُ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ...

***... Hail Mary!* (*Chaste, pure, chosen above other women*)*, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of* (*the company of*) *those nearest to Allah"* (*3:45*).**

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found –no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible –nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined

message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe – did I really submit to His Will – was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ...وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ

And say to the believing women…; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers … (***24:31***).

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making; however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا

And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood' (***17:24***).

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا

Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error; whoever rejects Evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks (***2:256***).

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for Allah bestows His abundance on whom He will (***2:212***).

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran––the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ

Not equal are those believers who sit (***at home***) ***and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause of Allah with their goods and their persons. Allah hath granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons than to those who sit*** (***at home***) ***...*** (***4:95***).

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا...

... And for those who fear Allah, He (***ever***) ***prepares a way out*** (***65:2***).

وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

And He provides for him from (***sources***) ***he never could imagine...*** (***65:3***).

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time–consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to

continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ

Allah is the Protector of those who have faith: from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light (***2:257***).

Wa as-Salam.

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1. Usul al-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 599.

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Acknowledgment

Tafsir Nemunah is compiled by the great writer and researcher, His Eminence Ayatullah al-Uzma Nasir Makarim Shirazi, and with the cooperation of an estimable group of Muslim scholars, Hujaj Aali slam:

1. Hujjat al-Islam Muhammad Ridha' Ashtiyani

2. Hujjat al-Islam Muhammad Jafar Emami

3. Hujjat al-Islam Abdur-Rassul Hasani

4. Hujjat al-Islam Sayyed Hasan Shujaiee

5. Hujjat al-Islam Mahmud Abdellahi

6. Hujjat al-Islam Muhsen Qara'ati

7. Hujjat al-Islam Muhammad Muhammadi

By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

****

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بُرْهَانٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مُبِينًا

O mankind! verily there has come to you a convincing proof (***the Messenger and the Qur'an***) ***from your Lord: For We have sent unto you a light*** (***that is***) ***manifest*** (***4:174***).

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly Guard it (***from corruption***) (***15:9***).

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَىٰ

But whosoever turns away from My Message, (***the Qur'an***), ***verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement*** (***20:124***).

وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

And We send down (***stage by stage***) ***of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe: to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss*** (***17:82***).

[1] [1]
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A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you (***4:59***).

'Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams ('a) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In '*Ikmal ad-Din*' a tradition, through 'Jabir al-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir Ibn Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah*, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that* Allah *has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'*

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! They are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib; then (*Imam*) *Hasan, and* (*Imam*) *Husain; then 'Ali Ibn il-Husain; then Muhammad Ibn 'Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.*

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, Ja'far Ibn Muhammad; and after him Musa Ibn Ja'far; then 'Ali Ibn Musa; then Muhammad Ibn 'Ali; then 'Ali Ibn Muhammad, then Hasan Ibn 'Ali; and after him (*there comes*) *Al-Qa'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.*

He is the son of (*Imam*) *Hasan Ibn 'Ali* (*al-Askari*)*. This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'*[1]

قال الله تعالى:

Allah Ta'ala said:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ

***Nor does he* (*the Apostle*) *speak out of desire* (*53:3*).**

إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ

***It is naught but revelation that is revealed* (*53:4*).**

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

“I leave behind me two weighty (*very worthy and important*) *things:*

The book of Allah (*i.e. the Qur’an*)*, which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahl al-Bayt; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar* (*the Pond of Abundance*)*.*

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (*after me*)*”*

...and in another tradition, it is added:

“Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two”.[2]

Abul Hasan ar-Ridha’ (‘a) said:

“May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment”.

I asked him (‘a) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (‘a) said:

“He (*can*) *learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact, if people knew* (*the merits*) *and goodnesses of our speech, surely, they would follow us.”*[3]

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1. Ikmal ad-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi al-Mawaddah, p. 117.
2. Ma’ani al-Akhbar, p. 90, tradition 2, and Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi ‘ah School mentioned in Ihqaq al-Haqq, Vol. 9, p. 309 to 375.
3. Ma’ani al-Akhbar, p. 180 and ‘Uyun al-Akbar ar-Ridha’, Vol. 1, p. 207.

[1] [1]
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Section 19 - Surah Al-Baqarah – Verses 155 - 163

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verses 155 - 157

Note: Part 2 of the Qur’an begins from verse 142 in Surah Al-Baqarah, and the commentary of its

beginning verses were added to the previous volume in order to give the exegesis of the verses concerning the theme of Qiblah together. Now, this volume begins from verse 155 added to those verses of part 2.

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

And We will surely test you (***all***) ***with something of fear and hunger and loss of property, lives and fruits; but give glad tidings to the*** (***steadfast***) ***patient*** (***2:155***).

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Who, when a calamity befalls them, (***by showing perseverance***)***, say: 'Verily we belong to Allah, and certainly unto Him shall we return'*** (***2:156***).

أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

Those are they on whom are blessings and Mercy from their Lord, and they are the ones that are guided (***aright***) (***2:157***).

Commentary

Trial, an Indisputable Divine Rule

Imam Amir Al-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a) said: *"Even though Allah, the Glorious, knows them more than they know themselves, yet He does so to let them perform actions with which they earn reward or punishment."*[1]

Concerning the sense of trial, in a sermon, he ('a) also has remarked:

"...Certainly, Allah tries His servants in respect of evil actions by decreasing fruits, holding back blessings and closing treasures of good, so that he who wishes to repent may repent, he who wishes to recall (*forgotten good*) *may recall, and he who wishes to abstain* (*from evil*) *may abstain...."*[2]

Allah (SWT) tests all human beings, but with varieties. All the different sites of the world are the testing-places, and all the members of humanity, even the prophets, are under trial, and all the pleasant and unpleasant things are the means of trial. We ought to know that the Divine examinations are not done in order to clear out the ambiguity, but they are to evoke and train the capacities and abilities of humankind.

The means of this trial are all bitter and sweet happenings of Man, including: fear, hunger, loss of

property, lives, agricultural products, fear from enemies, economic siege, and taking part in Holy War himself, or by sending children and dear ones to the battle of war. These trials were experienced in the first war of Islam (battle of Badr), and will also come forth at the time of the reappearance of the Expected Mahdi, the twelfth Imam (May Allah hasten his glad advent), for which Muslims should be prepared.

The inflictions, which human beings encounter with, are usually concerned with wealth, life, children, or the fear of the loss of either of them.

The secret of mentioning 'fear', among the means of trials, first, may be that the purpose is the fear for the lack of either of those three things. It is always before the loss of the very things that one fears of losing them.

Then, next to fear, hunger is pointed out, which comes into being as a result of poverty. Yet, in this respect, fasting is counted one of the examples of hunger.

Loss of property has been situated in the third degree. The loss of wealth, of course, is very bitter, especially for a rich person when he becomes poor.

Then there comes the loss of life, which often occurs because of different ailments or after being wounded: in a battle-field and Holy War in the way of Allah, and so on.

And, finally, the loss of fruits comes forth. Some of the commentators have rendered this loss into the death of one's child, which is the heaviest calamity.

...but give glad tidings to the (steadfast) patient (2:155).

It addresses the prophet of Islam (S) that he gives glad tidings to those people who persevere with patience in their calamities and difficulties.

Some commentators have said that this 'glad tidings' points to the reward of Heaven and the merit of Divine forgiveness for them, as Imam al-Sadiq ('a) has said: *"Allah, Mighty and Glorious, said: '...but give glad tidings to the (steadfast) patient', or, (that is), with Paradise and forgiveness."*[3]

But in another tradition, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) has rendered the concept of 'glad tidings' into the reappearance of Imam Al-Mahdi ('a), where he says:

"Before the rise of Qa'im (Al-Mahdi) (May Allah hasten his auspicious reappearance) there will appear some signs by which Allah tries the Muslim believers." Muhammad-ibn-Muslim, (who was one of the special followers of the Imam), said that he required to know what those signs were; and he ('a) answered: *"Those are the same that Allah, the Glorious, has expressed in the Qur'an, thus:*

And We will surely test you (all) with something of fear and hunger and loss of property, lives

***and fruits* (*2:155*).**

So far as he (‘a) recited:

***‘…but give glad tidings to the* (*steadfast*) *patient’* (*2:155*),**

and continued to say: *‘This means to give glad tidings to the believers who show patience and perseverance in these calamities for the advent of the Qa’im* (*‘a*), (*viz., Hadrat Mahdi, may Allah* (*SWT*) *hasten his glad advent.*)*”*[4]

Yes, the world is anxiously awaiting the advent of this great reformer (‘a). When he comes, he will fill the world full of justice. Then, there will be no inequity, no cruelty, and no transgression. Allah will open the doors of blessings out of the earth and heaven because of his auspicious appearance. At that time, the believing people can continue to live peacefully and easily under his esteemed government, to prove their worship and servitude to Allah.

Concerning this meaning, in a tradition, the Holy Prophet (S) has said: *“Al–Mahdi is mine. His luminous forehead is high and wide, while over whose nose there is a little projection. He will fill the earth with justice, just as it is filled up with aggression and cruelty.”*[5]

***Who, when a calamity befalls them,* (*by showing perseverance*), *say: ‘Verily we belong to Allah, and certainly unto Him shall we return’* (*2:156*).**

After recounting different calamities, and giving glad tidings to the patient, it introduces this group of patient who, with this competency, rightfully deserve to be given glad tidings, It is clear that every ordinary person is not fit to be rewarded with all these excellences and dignities. Hence, that reward, i.e. the glad tidings, is specialized to the ones whose patience originates from a firm foundation. This particular glad tiding is qualified by a special blessing and Mercy from the side of Allah. These kinds of people are those ones whose hearts turn to their Lord at the moment of meeting with a calamity when, they say:

***‘…Verily we belong to Allah, and certainly unto Him shall we return’.* (*2:156*).**

They treat such because they have realized, through knowledge of certainty or by visual certainty, that whatever exists, belongs to Allah and is under His Will. So, whatsoever He has given to human–kind in this world, such as soul, property, children, and all other similar respects, are fictitious.

They also know that whatever Allah has bestowed upon them has been based upon His Wisdom, and when He takes it from them, it is not taken because of miserliness, but it is for His good that He takes a blessing from a person to mercifully impart a better one. They have found out that their return, their destination, as well as the return of everything, is undoubtedly unto Him.

However, he who, based on these foundations, knows and remembers that his soul, wealth, and

whatever he possesses belongs to Allah and is under His Authority, surrenders to His divine decrees. The one, with this awareness, will be patient and thankful properly and reasonably. Such a person, of course, is one of those eligible believers for whom Allah says;

Those are they on whom are blessings and Mercy from their Lord ... (***2:157***)

and they are prosperous.

Some of the commentators have said that /salawat/ (blessings and peace), which comes from Allah (SWT), is the same as 'forgiveness', while some others believe that it is 'praise'.

The term /salawat/ (blessings) is said in the plural form because it refers to the abundant mercy of Allah. It may mean that there are many frequent blessings for these steadfast patients from Allah which do not cease.

It is narrated from the Prophet (S) who said: *"The person who receives a calamity and thereafter, whenever the one remembers it, utters the phrase 'Verily we belong to Allah, and certainly unto Him shall we return', Allah gives the believer once again the reward of the day when the one received that calamity".* (*Even though there has passed a long time after that calamity*).6

He (S) has also said in another tradition that, for such a person, Allah will amend that calamity with a better quality than before and his destiny will conclude well.7

...and they are the ones that are guided (***aright***) (***2:157***).

This group of the patient, as was mentioned in the above, when they entangle with a calamity, are patiently steadfast, since they have known that they themselves and what they have are all Allah's and in His possession. They also know that their return is unto Him, and they express this fact, too, by their tongue and with uttering the above holy phrase. Such people have attained the rank and position of nearness to Allah. Their march is gain after gain, i.e. an ever-progressive gain. They are, in fact, guided aright.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 158

إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ ۖ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ أَوِ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا ۚ وَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ

Behold, Safa and Marwah are among the Symbols (***appointed by***) ***Allah; so whoever makes the pilgrimage*** (***Hajj***) ***to the House, or Performs 'Umrah, therefore it is no blame on him to go round them both. And for whoever*** (***obeys Him and***) ***initiates good, then verily Allah is Grateful, All-Knowing*** (***2:158***).

Occasion of Revelation

Running between Safa and Marwah, is obligatory with the Shi'ah, the followers of Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a), and it is one of the main actions in both greater pilgrimage (Hajj) and lesser pilgrimage (‘Umrah). But, at the beginning of Islam, those Muslims were not willing to perform it because they had imagined that there had been something wrong in it, for, at the Age of ignorance, there had been an idol in Safa called ‘Usaf, and another in Marwah named Na'ilah, which pagans used to touch both while running therein. So, this very verse was revealed to make the Muslims free from that false imagination. This very meaning is cited in *at-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (‘a) and Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (‘a)[8] The idea is also cited with more details in *Majma' al-Bayan*, narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (‘a). It begins thus:

"Muslims had usually seen some signs of innovation from the pagans of pre-Islamic era of Ignorance, (so they disliked to circumambulate them). Then, Allah sent this verse down (to remove that aversion)."[9]

The expansion of this description is thus that before the advent of Islam and also at the time of revelation some pagans and idol-worshippers used to go to Mecca to make Hajj pilgrimage with a particular form which was common at that time. Their fulfilment of Hajj pilgrimage was principally originated from Prophet Ebrahim (Abraham) (‘a) but with a mixture of superstitions and polytheism. Some of their ritual actions were; halt at ‘Arafat, sacrifice, circumambulation, and run between Safa and Marwah, which were done in a special state.

Islam, clearing out that noble performance from superstitions, accepted Hajj pilgrimage as a great worship and approved all of its correct and pure ceremonies.

One of the deeds which was to be done then was /Sa‘y/, i.e., running between two hillocks called Safa and Marwah, over which the aforementioned idols were kept and pagans touched them when climbing those two hillocks.

Hence, Muslims were averse to going to these hillocks and thought that in that circumstance it was not right for them to perform running between Safa and Marwah.

Then, it was at the time of ‘Umrat al-Ghada (in seventh A.H.) that the above verse was revealed and announced that Safa and Marwah are among the Symbols of Allah and, although some ignorant people have polluted them with idols, it is not right that Muslims abandon the obligatory running between them.

Commentary

Acts Done Ignorantly

This verse, regarding the particular psychological condition that was mentioned in the occasion of revelation, preliminarily informs Muslims that Safa and Marwah are among the symbols of Allah:

Behold, Safa and Marwah are among the Symbols (***appointed by***) ***Allah…*** (***2:158***).

After this introductory sentence, it subsequently comes to the meaning that:

…so, whoever makes the pilgrimage (***Hajj***) ***to the House, or Performs 'Umrah, therefore it is no blame on him to go round them both…*** (***2:158***).

The wrong behaviour of pagans, that had polluted the symbols of Allah with those idols, should never decrease anything of the importance of those two sacred sites.

At the end of the verse, it says:

…And for whoever (***obeys Him and***) ***initiates good, then verily Allah is Grateful, All-Knowing*** (***2:158***).

Therefore, the Lord, by giving good rewards bountifully, thanks the servants for their obedience and doing right actions; while He is completely aware of their intentions and knows who is interested in the idols and who is averse to them.

Explanation

It may be worthy to say that the terms Safa and Marwah are referred to in the Qur'an only once.

These two hillocks stand nearly 420 meters opposite each other. This distance is now set up as a covered hall under whose ceiling the pilgrims perform the running, /sa'y/. The height of Safa Mount is 15 meters, and that of Marwah is 8 meters.

These two terms, used now as proper names for those two hillocks, are philologically meaningful, too. The term /safa/ means a hard smooth stone, while /marwah/ means a hard rough stone.

The Qur'anic term /sa'a'ir/ is the plural form of /sa'irah/ which means 'ritual sign'. Therefore, the phrase /sa'a'irillah/ means anything which reminds a person of Allah, and revives a sacred remembrance in one's mind which, itself, would be an act of virtue or devotion to Allah.

The term /'i'tamara/, derived from /'umrah/, originally means the additional parts that are added to a building in order to complete it. This word, used in religious terminology, is applied for special deeds added to the performances of Hajj Pilgrimage. (When 'Umrah is done separate from Hajj pilgrimage, it is called /'umrah mufradah/, a single 'Umrah). This minor pilgrimage to Mecca is very much similar to Hajj pilgrimage in many aspects, but its difference is not so minute, of course.

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verses 159 – 160

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ ۙ أُولَٰئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ

اللَّاعِنُونَ

Verily, those who conceal what We have revealed of the clear evidence and the guidance, after We made it clear for mankind in the Book; they are those that Allah does curse them and (***also***) ***curse them*** (***all***) ***those who curse*** (***such ones***) (***2:159***).

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَبَيَّنُوا فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ وَأَنَا التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

Except those who repent and amend (***themselves***) ***and make manifest*** (***the truth***). ***These it is unto whom I turn*** (***mercifully; and I am the Oft-Returning*** (***to mercy***), ***the Merciful*** (***to people***) (***2:160***).

Occasion of Revelation

Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti has narrated in his book, '*Asbab al-Nuzul*, from Ibn Abbas that several Muslim people, such as Mu'adh ibn Jabal, Sa'd ibn Mu'adh, and Kharijah ibn Zayd asked scholars of the Jews several questions about some subjects in the Torah (which concerned the advent of the Prophet (S)). They concealed the reality of the subject and, (in their answers), did not refer to the main idea. The above verse was revealed about them.[10]

Commentary

In the occasion of revelation, it was mentioned that the addressees in this verse were the scholars of the Jews, but the meaning is general and never limits the concept of the verse to them only. It covers all whosoever that conceal the truth.

This holy verse intensively blames such people, saying:

Verily, those who conceal what We have revealed of the clear evidence and the guidance, after We made it clear for mankind in the Book; they are those that Allah does curse them and (***also***) ***curse them*** (***all***) ***those who curse*** (***such ones***) (***2:159***).

By this verse, we realize that both Allah and the servants of Allah and angels totally hate this action. In other words, concealing the fact is an action that stimulates the wrath of all adherents of truth from jinn, mankind, and angels.

What a treachery is greater than that the scholars, for the sake of their personal interest, hide the Messages and evidences of Allah, which are His deposits, and cause people to go astray.

The phrase:

...after We made it clear for mankind in the Book... (***2:159***),

indicates that such persons, in fact, attempt to spoil the struggles of prophets and the devotions of the godly people alongside the path of the propagation of the Messages of Allah. This action is really a great sin so that none can ignore.

The Qur'an, as a book of guidance, never blocks up the way of return and does not shut the windows of hope to people. It never makes people despair for the Mercy of Allah, however much they are sinful. Hence, in the next verse, it shows the way of repentance of this great sin, thus:

***Except those who repent, and amend** (**themselves**) **and make manifest** (**the truth**). **These it is unto whom I turn** (**mercifully**); **and I am the Oft-Returning** (**to mercy**), **the Merciful** (**to people**) (**2:160**).*

The phrase:

***and I am the Oft-Returning** (**to mercy**), **the Merciful** (**to people**) (**2:160**)*

regarding that it has occurred next to the phrase:

***These it is unto whom I turn** (**mercifully**) (**2:160**)*

refers to the particular affection and kindness of Allah unto the repentant ones.

It says if they return, Allah will return, too. If they return to the obedience and servitude, and reveal the fact, Allah will return to Mercy and again shower over them the blessings He had ceased.

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verses 161 – 163

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

Verily those who reject faith, and die while they are infidels, upon them shall be the curse of Allah, (of) the angels, and (of) mankind all together (2:161).

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۖ لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُونَ

Abiding therein forever, the torment shall not be lightened for them nor shall they be given respite (2:162).

إِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۖ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ الرَّحِيمُ

And your God is One God. There is no god but He; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful (2:163).

Commentary

It was described in the former verses that if the people who conceal the fact repent and express the reality, they will be involved in the mercy and grace of Allah. But in this verse, they are warned that if they do not repent and remain in the state of infidelity until they die, they will be in the same situation that Allah, angels and all people curse them. Of course, the repentance that occurs before death is accepted, but the repentance at the moment of death is not helpful.

At first, it says:

Verily those who reject faith, and die while they are infidels, upon them shall be the curse of Allah, (of) the angels, and (of) mankind all together (2:161).

This group of infidels, similar to the aforementioned group, is involved in the curse of Allah, angels, and people, too. The difference is that this group, because of their continuous insistence on being faithless, cannot have a way to return to the right path.

Then, it adds;

Abiding therein forever, the torment shall not be lightened for them nor shall they be given respite (2:162).

Since the principle of the Faith in theism can put an end to all these misfortunes, in the last verse of this group of verses, it says:

And your God is One God... (2:163).

Again, to emphasize more, it says;

...There is no god but He... (2:163).

Then, at the end of the verse, as the reason for that statement, it adds:

...He is the Beneficent, the Merciful (2:163).

Yes, only the One, Whose general mercy encompasses all creatures, on one side, and on the other side, Whose specific Mercy reaches the true believers, deserves servitude, and no one else.

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1. Nahj al-Balagha, Saying No. 93.
2. Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 143.
3. al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, Vol. 1, p. 169.
4. al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, Vol. I, p. 197.
5. al-Tara'if, by Sayyid-ibn-Tawus, p. 177; and Sunan Abi Dawud, Vol. 4, p. 152.

6. Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 82, p. 142.
7. Makhzan al-'Irfan, Vol. 2, p. 143.
8. at-Tibyan fi-Tafsir al-Qur'an, Vol. 2, p. 44.
9. Majma' al-Bayan, Vol. 1, p. 240.
10. Lubab al-Nuqul fi 'Asbab al-Nuzul, p. 22.

[1] [1]
SHARES

Section 20 – Unity of Allah, Fate of the Polytheists

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verse 164

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَاحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day, and (***in***) ***the ships that sail on the sea with what profits mankind, and*** (***in***) ***the water which Allah sends down from heaven and enlivens therewith the earth after its death, and spreads in it all kinds of animal, and in the change of the winds and the clouds controlled*** (***for service***) ***between the sky and the earth; surely there are signs for a people having understanding*** (***2:164***).

Commentary

The previous verse spoke about the Oneness of the Lord. Then, here in this verse, there is the reason and evidence to prove the existence of the Providence and that there is only One God, the Glorious. He, the Almighty, is the cause of all causes and the source of knowledge, power, order, and regularity.

Primarily, we attract attention to the fact that uniformity and order, in general, are signs for the existence of intelligence and knowledge, where harmony is a reason for the being of unity. Based on this principle, the explanation of which has been stated in the books of theism, when we deal with the various aspects of 'order' in the world of existence, we come to the harmony and the unity of action in the regular working of the universe, on one side, and on the other side, we encounter with a single source of knowledge and power that all these glorious effects originate from.

So, the native uniformity and the perfect and the never disturbed harmony in the working of the universe, loudly and most eloquently suggests and clearly manifests the Unity of the Creator and the unchallengeable or unquestionable supremacy of its Single Master or Lord. Man is exhorted to reflect over the creation and realize the divine unity in the midst of the diversity and the manifoldness of the innumerable objects in the heavens and the earth and in the forces of nature and the perfectly harmonious working of the natural phenomena. The uniformity and the harmony in the objects and the working of the universe is constantly referred to in the Holy Qur'an as a sign of the Unity of the Maker.

Taking this short introductory explanation into consideration, we continue explaining the commentary of the verse again.

In this verse, there are six aspects of the indication of regularity in the world of existence, each of which is a symbol for the unity of that Infinite Essence or an indication to the Eternal One, the pure Essence, the Supreme Being.

1. The first symbol, which refers to the Unity of the Creator, is the creation of the heavens and the earth:

Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth… (***2:164***).

Yes, this glorious universe with all its stars and planets, including millions and millions of illuminating suns, some of which meaningfully twinkle at us when we look at the sky at night or show themselves far from behind some great telescopes, all in all are the signs and means of reflection of His Power, Knowledge, and Unity.

It is surprising that the more the knowledge of the human race increases, the clearer the greatness and vastness of this universe is recognized, and it is not evident that how large and up to when this scientific expansion of the recognition of the still secrets of the universe will continue.

Today, scientists and astronomers inform us that there are thousands and thousands of galaxies in the universe where our solar system is only a part of one of them. In our galaxy alone, there are hundreds million suns and bright stars among which, according to the scientists' data, there can be found some millions of inhabitable planets. What a Splendour! What a Power.

In addition to the tradition narrated from the holy Prophet (S)[1] and Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) about some of the verses of the Qur'an confirming the existence of the living creatures in the Heaven and other planets (earths) besides our dwelling earth, there have been written many scientific books on this subject by a lot of Islamic and non-Islamic scholars that the followings are a few examples out of hundreds of similar examples:

a) *The Earth, the Sky and the Stars from the View of the Qur'an*; by Dr. Muhammad Sadiqi.

b) *The Qur'an and the Modern Science*; by 'Abdal-Qani, Al-Khatib; translated by Dr. Asadullah Mubashshiri.

c) *Jahan ‘Afarin*; by Husayn Nuri, one of the esteemed scholars in the Religious Teaching Center of Qum.

d) *The Earth and the Sky*; by A. Welkuf, translated by ‘Ali Dukhaniyati.

e) *Galaxies and Quasars*; by William J. Kaufmann, III (Department of Physics, San Diego, State University).

It should be noted that the life found on other planets may be, of course, rather in a different form from what exists on our globe. Therefore, in investigations of the matter, we must not consider only the kind of the life on the earth as a standard, because those globes have their own life-conditions for themselves which are certainly different from the circumstances of the life on the earth, so that, in a great deal of cases such as temperature, water, air and light, they are incomparable with that of the earth.

2. The second indication is seen in the constant change of the day and the night, where it says:

...and the alternation of night and day... **(*2:164*).**

Yes, the constant change of night and day, the absence of darkness and the presence of light, with that regularity that they have, and, that one ceaselessly becomes shorter and the other one becomes longer, that as a result of which the four seasons come into being, when trees, plants, and animals obtain their evolutions under these gradual changes are totally the signs of His Exalted Essence and Attributes.

If these gradual changes were not, or they happened without order, or they were always either day or night alone, there would be no life throughout the world at all.

3. Then, it points to the ships which move on the water of the seas for the benefit of Man:

...and* (*in*) *the ships that sail on the sea with what profits mankind... **(*2:164*).**

Man travels long voyages over the seas and oceans by small and large ships towards different points of the world to perform his purposes. This kind of transportation over sea-water can be afforded by employing some factors, particularly when it is done by a sailor.

The first factor is the regular winds that blow from the surface of the seas towards the land and vice versa, including the ceaseless winds blowing from the North Pole and South Pole called ‘Arctic winds and Antarctic winds’, or the regional winds which blows in their own proper times and let the ships utilize this natural force gratuitously setting forth to their destinations.

Another factor is the natural property of wood against the special pressure of water which causes that it floats over water.

Again, there are the two invariable magnetic poles of the earth which fix the hands of a compass.

The arrangement of the stars in the sky, which lead people to their destinations, is also counted a factor.

Yes, it is with the combination of all these arrangements that the application of ships, with their abundant benefits alongside the help of men, can be made possible. Thus, all these processes are indications of His Pure Essence.

Concerning the sailing ships, it is surprising that today, with the invention of the force of powerful engines used in the ships, not only this meaning has not lost its importance but it has also gotten a higher position in this respect, because the great gigantic ships are still among the best means of transportation and communication between people of different spots. Some kinds of modern ships are as large as a town, having arenas, pleasure centres, playgrounds, and even a market-place for shopping. Or, in some particular ships, there are airports where several airplanes can land on or take off from.

4. Now, the rain, the life-giving water which is sent down from the sky to the earth, is pointed out. It says:

***...and** (**in**) **the water which Allah sends down from heaven and enlivens therewith the earth after its death, and spreads in it all kinds of animal...** (**2:164**).*

Yes, wherever the pure life-giving drops of rain fall down, thereby, life, freshness, blessing, abundancy, and movement may appear therein. This lifeless but splendid water, which falls down with special order, and waters all those plants and living creatures continually, is the harbinger of His Power and Grandeur.

5. Then, for the useful currents and regular and irregular blowing of the winds, it says:

***...and in the change of the winds...** (**2:164**).*

The winds blow not only over the seas and oceans and cause ships to move about, but also over the surface of lands, mountains, valleys, and plains. They sometimes take the male pollen from stamens and pollinate the pistil and help their pollination in order to yield us fruits. They also scatter seeds in different spots of the land to grow. They, at a time frequently move the waves of the seas to stir them and make the conditions conducive for the living creatures.

With transferring the hot weather of the warm regions to the cold regions, and transferring the cold weather of the cold regions to the warm regions, the winds are effective in making the climate of the globe moderate.

Sometimes, the winds push the polluted and poisonous air of the cities, which has not enough oxygen, out into the deserts and forests and cause the fresh air, full of oxygen, to come unto the reach of human beings and other living creatures.

Yes, the wind, that blows and gifts man with benefits and blessings is another sign of His Infinite Grace and Wisdom.

6. The last indication, mentioned in this verse, is clouds which, as servants, in spite of the gravity, are suspending between the sky and the earth to be moved here and there, carrying millions of tons of water easily with them without posing the least danger for anybody. Hence, they are counted as a sign of the Greatness of the Creator, where He says:

...and the clouds controlled (***for service***) ***between the sky and the earth...*** (***2:164***).

However, if there were not the management of the irrigation of the clouds, there would not be any water throughout the world for man to drink, nor any spring or stream for plants to grow and, everywhere, the lands would be dry and dead. Therefore, this is also another trace of the Knowledge and Might of Allah.

...surely there are signs for a people having understanding (***2:164***).

Yes, all of the above-mentioned indications are the evidence of the existence of that Pure Essence, but for the people who understand and contemplate, not for the unaware ones and the people of little wisdom who have eyes but have not eyesight or have ears but are deaf.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 165

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ ۗ وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ

And yet, of men, there are some who take unto themselves (***for worship***) ***objects other than Allah and love them as the love due to Allah; but for those who have faith, their love of Allah is more intensive. And if only those who are unjust could see*** (***what they will realize***) ***when they behold the punishment, that the Power is wholly Allah's, and that Allah is severe in*** (***enforcing***) ***the Penalty*** (***2:165***).

Commentary

Disbelievers have gone astray. Their affection to things other than Allah is like the wish and desire of a sick person unto eating the food which is harmful for his sickness but the patient ignorantly persists on having it. In contrast with them are the believers. So those who have Faith surely love Allah very intensively and more than anything or anybody else.

The pagans, who have done unjustly to themselves, will see their miserable destination on the Day of Reckoning, when they will recognize their wrong thought and their deviation. On that Day they will understand fully that the entire Power belongs to Allah and that they had gone a wrong way when they had referred to other than Him. The intensive punishment of Allah, on that Day, will be upon those who, thoughtlessly and unreasonably, had left out the attachment to Allah and clung to some vain and chaffy imaginations.

Then, it is so that in **Surah al-An'am,** to guide them, Allah warns them thus:

That is Allah, your Lord, there is no god but He; the Creator of all things, therefore serve Him, and He has charge of all things, therefore serve Him, and He has charge of all things **(*6:102*).**

By the way, it is narrated by Muhammad ibn Muslim that Imam Muhammad Baqir ('a) and Imam al-Sadiq ('a), speaking about the phrase,

...but for those who have faith, their love is more intensive **(*2:165*).**

had said: *"They are the progeny of Muhammad (S)".*[2]

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 166

إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتُّبِعُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا وَرَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ وَتَقَطَّعَتْ بِهِمُ الْأَسْبَابُ

When would those that were followed disown those who followed, and they would see the torment and their ties **(*between them*)** ***are cut asunder*** **(*2:166*).**

Commentary

Beware who your leader is and whose love you carry in your heart! Those of you who love these tyrants and pay your affections to other than Allah, should know that they (the tyrants) want you for their own interests in this world. Therefore, they abuse your abilities and sincerity to obtain their own wishes, power and authority. But, on the Resurrection Day, they will avoid you and, hating you, will leave you alone.

This meaning should also be noted that in *Tafsir al-Burhan* and in the book '*Ikhtisas*', by Shaykh Mufid, there are some traditions cited about the meaning of the phrase:

When would those that were followed disown those who followed... **(*2:166*).**

Among them, there is a tradition from Imam al-Baqir ('a) who said: *"By Allah, O' Jabir, these are the leaders of transgressors and their means for injustice."*[3]

Therefore, in contrast with this group, as was referred in the previous verse, are the truly faithful ones, who bear the intensive love in their heart for Allah. They love not only the genuine leaders of the religion but also everything that Allah loves. The basic reason for this is that everything they love is only for gaining Allah's pleasure. Even when they love their own family and issues, they love because it is their duty to do so as prescribed by Allah.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 167

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا لَوْ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَتَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُمْ كَمَا تَبَرَّءُوا مِنَّا ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ اللَّهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ حَسَرَاتٍ عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ وَمَا هُمْ بِخَارِجِينَ مِنَ النَّارِ

And those who followed shall say: 'Had there been for us a return (to the world), then we would disown them even as they have (now) disowned us.' Thus, Allah will show them their deeds; bitter regrets will be upon them. And never shall they get out of the Fire (2:167).

Commentary

These mislead followers, who see the unfaithfulness of their leaders so evident, console themselves by saying:

...'Had there been for us a return (to the world), then we would disown them even as they have (now) disowned us.'... (2:167).

But, what a pity! It is too late, because there is no possibility for them to return to life again.

Then, at the end of the verse, it says:

...Thus, Allah will show them their deeds; bitter regrets will be upon them. And never shall they get out of the Fire. (2:167).

Yes, they can afford nothing but sigh and regret bitterly. A regret for the wealth they gathered but others took the benefit of it. A regret for the extraordinary opportunities that they had had for attaining prosperity and being saved, but they missed them all easily. Regret for adoring some incapable worthless leaders instead of adoring Allah, the Almighty.

But it is a vain regret, because it is neither the time of action nor the occasion for making up for the past. Nay! it is only the time of punishment and receiving the results of one's own deeds.

According to some traditions, there are some different halts in the Hereafter. In a few of these halts people cannot speak anything and silence dominates lips, where they can merely look at others regretfully and shed tears. In some other of these halts, there are people who ask each other for help, while some others curse and hate each other for their former deeds.

This verse indicates that at this time when the cruel leaders, who were adored, loved, and followed formerly, here, disown their followers and accept no responsibility for them. So, the followers disown them, too, and regret very much why they loved them, supported them, and followed them. But they gained naught. They regret in heart and express their regret by tongue in this manner that if they could

return to life once more, they would never follow them. They say that these people who are so disloyal that they denounce their followers here on this Day (the Reckoning Day), they (the followers), too, would denounce them if they could return to the world again. They regret, but what is the use of this regret? It is of no use, and they cannot come out from the blazing Fire of Hell.

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1. Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 58, p. 102-106.
2. Tafsir al-Burhan, Vol. 1, p. 172.
3. Tafsir al-Burhan, Vol. 1. p. 172.

[1] [1]
SHARES

Section 21 - Only lawful and clean food should be taken

Injunction about the use of food-stuff - Blind following disallowed. Concealing of truth and corrupting the Word of God and bartering it for worldly gains amounts to the eating of Fire.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verses 168 - 169

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۚ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

O' mankind! eat of what is in the earth lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Surely, he is a manifest foe for you. **(*2: 168*).**

إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوءِ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Verily, he **(*Satan*)** ***enjoins you evil acts and indecency and that you should speak against Allah what you know not.*** **(*2: 169*).**

Commentary

One of the signs of a complete religion is that it considers the usage of the unlawful food-stuffs a Satanic deed (as the Qur'an says:

…intoxicants and games of chance… are an abomination of Satan's work **(*5:90*)).** [1]

and the inappropriate avoidance of eating the lawful ones originated from the temptations of Satan (as the Qur'an says:

…eat of what Allah has given you and do not follow the footsteps of Satan… **(*6:142*)).** [2]

Therefore, in the current verse, too, it says:

O' mankind! eat of what is in the earth lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of Satan… **(*2:168*).**

In some of the historical narrations it is cited that a few of the Arab tribes had unreasonably forbidden a part of their crops and their animals for themselves, where they used to sometimes attribute those prohibitions to Allah. Then, the above verse was revealed to dismiss that ambiguity.

Islam pays also specific attention to the material life of people. At the top of these things is the food necessities about which there are found tens of Qur'anic verses and hundreds of traditions in Islamic literature.

One of the duties of prophets has been to define the lawful and unlawful edible materials and drinks beside the introduction of the advantages and disadvantages of each of them. This verse emphasizes that we have to consume from what is religiously lawful and pure /halal/ on the earth:

O' mankind! eat of what is in the earth lawful and good… **(*2:168*).**

And that we must not prohibit ourselves from some things under the effect of the Satan's temptation, because it is certain that Satan is our open enemy:

…and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Surely, he is a manifest foe for you **(*2:168*).**

Imam al-Baqir (ʿa) has narrated a tradition from the Prophet (S) who said: *"Worship of Allah is divided into seventy divisions, the best of which is earning a living lawfully."* [3]

Again, in another tradition, the very holy Imam, the fifth Imam, (ʿa) has said: *"He who seeks for sustenance in this world in order to be independent of people for his needs, to provide for his family members, and to stretch affection unto his neighbours, will meet Allah, Almighty and Glorious, on the Day of Judgement while his face will be as bright as the full moon."* [4]

It is cited in *Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan* that Satan has some different stages in his invitations unto temptations. At first, he invites to infidelity. If he fails in this phase, he invites to innovation. If he does not succeed, he invites to lesser sins. Failing in these stages, Satan invites to doing good and lawful deeds instead of worshipping Allah. When he fails in this phase, too, he invites to performing worships with lower qualities than the noble ones in order to stop a person from promoting to higher degrees. [5]

Thus, the statement of the verse is a warning against what Satan does and how he leads men astray by his different forms of evil whispers when the Qur'an says:

Verily, he (Satan) enjoins you evil acts and indecency and that you should speak against Allah what you know not. ***(2:169).***

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verses 170 – 171

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا ۗ أَوَلَوْ كَانَ آبَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ

And when they are told: 'Follow what Allah has sent down,' they say: 'Nay! We follow what we found our fathers upon,' even though their fathers had no understanding of anything nor were they guided aright. ***(2:170).***

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي يَنْعِقُ بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَاءً وَنِدَاءً ۚ صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمْيٌ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

And the parable of those who reject Faith is as the likeness of the one who shouts to that which hears no more than a call and a cry; deaf, dumb, and blind (are they) wherefore they do not understand. ***(2:171).***

Commentary

Blind following of the ancestors is condemned

The previous verse warned us to avoid following the whispers and footsteps of Satan. Now, in this verse, one of the examples of those footsteps, which is the blind following of others, is pointed out. It says:

And when they are told: 'Follow what Allah has sent down'. They say: 'Nay! We follow what we found our fathers upon'… ***(2:170).***

They mean that they do not care what the verses of Allah say, or what the messenger of Allah invites to. So, in answer to them, the Qur'an says:

…even though their fathers had no understanding of anything nor were they guided aright. ***(2:170).***

This statement refers to the fact that: if their fathers had no wisdom and understanding by themselves nor had they accepted the godly guidance of the prophets, then, would they follow their fathers yet? If their ancestors or the infidels themselves had wisdom or were guided, it would not matter, but it is not so.

There are two comparisons in this verse: 1) the likening of the caller of Truth to a shepherd; 2) the likening of infidels to some beasts that understand nothing from the speech of the shepherd save a call and a cry. This simile has been confirmed in a tradition by Imam al-Baqir ('a), too. The parable means that the invitation of the Prophet (S) from that faithless crowd to Truth and breaking the dam-like barrier of blindly imitation is similar to the person who shouts to cattle of sheep or some animals in order to save them from danger but they do not understand this message.

And the parable of those who reject Faith is as the likeness of the one who shouts to that which hears no more than a call and a cry… (***2:171***).

Then, at the end of the verse, to emphasize more and to explain it more clearly, it adds:

…deaf, dumb, and blind (***are they***) ***wherefore they do not understand.*** (***2:171***).

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 172

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

O' you who have Faith! eat of the good things We have provided you with, and be grateful to Allah, if Him it is you worship. (***2:172***).

Commentary

In this verse, too, Allah advises us to be grateful for using the blessings and bounties and thank Him. There is a tradition from the holy Prophet (S), cited in Tafsir al-Safi, stating that Allah says that He creates people, but they worship other than Him; and He provides (them) sustenance, but they thank others save Allah.[6]

It is made clear in this verse that we ought to eat from the good wholesome foods that Allah has provided us sustenance and be thankful to Him.

O' you who have Faith! eat of the good things We have provided you with, and be grateful to Allah… (***2:172***).

Intellect necessitates the act of thankfulness to the giver of a bounty, too.

… if Him it is you worship. (***2:172***).

However, being thankful to Allah is a means of continuity and abundancy of bounties. And, to be grateful to Allah is a sign of sincerity and the purity of one's Faith.

It is narrated from Imam Hadi ('a) who said that the wrath of Allah encompasses those who prohibit or

deprive themselves from the godly lawful things and permissible deeds.[7]

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verse 173

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ ۖ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Verily, He has forbidden you only carrion, blood, swine flesh, and whatever has other (***name***) ***than Allah's been invoked upon it. But whoever is forced*** (***by necessity***), ***not desiring nor transgressing, no sin shall be on him; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.*** (***2:173***).

Commentary

Following the previous subject, this verse states that certain edible things are lawful to eat, and we should not prohibit the lawful things of Allah to ourselves opinionatedly and because of some vain imaginations. Yet, Allah has forbidden us carrion, blood, swine flesh or the flesh of any animal slaughtered invoking the name of anybody else other than God, as it says:

Verily, He has forbidden you only carrion, blood, swine flesh, and whatever has other (***name***) ***than Allah's been invoked upon it…*** (***2:173***).

There are some logical and acceptable reasons cited for this Divine law of prohibition, of course. For example, it is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (ʻa) who said:

"No one obtains anything from carrion but weakness of his body, decrease of his strength, and cease of his offspring. And, the consumer of carrion dies not but by a sudden death. Those who consume blood (*as food stuff*) *become hard-hearted…."*[8]

According to some hygienical advice, the flesh of swine is the carrier of two kinds of microbes called tapeworms and trichina. (The latter is a very small nematode worm trichinella, whose larvae infest the intestines and voluntary muscles of man, pigs etc., causing trichinosis). Today, it is forbidden to use swine flesh even in some Eastern countries. In former divine religions, such as the religion of the Jews, the flesh of swine has been held in great detestation. In the Bible, the sinners are also likened to swine.

There is an exception, of course, where the term /qayrabaqin/ denotes not for enjoyment but forced by unavoidable necessity, and term /ʻadin/ means without any intention to revolt against the prescribed laws of Allah or not exceeding the bare limits of the actual want or the bare necessity. If anybody under circumstances beyond his control or forced by necessity, to save his life, takes such things, it will not be a sin upon him.

…But whoever is forced (***by necessity***), ***not desiring nor transgressing, no sin shall be on him…***

(***2:173***).

This permission is because of the Mercy and Grace of Allah, as the verse itself says:

…surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful… (***2:173***).

It is cited in *Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn* in an expressive tradition from Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) who said: *“Whoever is forced* (*to eat*) *carrion or blood, or swine flesh and he avoids eating something of it until he dies, then he is an infidel.”*[9]

Explanations

1. Islam has paid full attention to the problem of food-stuffs. It has frequently warned Muslims against the putrid, harmful, and unlawful food. The prohibition of swine flesh, carrion and blood is found in four occurrences in the Qur’an. The Messages of this prohibition were preached two times in Medina and two times in Mecca.

2. Considering Allah and invoking His name at the time of slaughtering animals, is necessary. This is to warn us to know and be aware that everything belongs to Allah and therefore, none of our deeds should be done out of the circle of theism.

3. Islam is a complete and an easy religion. It stops in no circumstance. Every ritual duty or religious prohibition can be changed when there is an emergency.

4. No one must misuse the necessary circumstances in this respect.

General Conclusion

Here in this verse, and in the similar other verses of the Qur’an, is laid down the principle of the Islamic law to be observed under normal conditions and the law of exception for the state of emergency. The things forbidden under normal conditions may be permissible in the emergency. The spirit of the law to be observed in both the cases is the sense of obedience and sticking to the prescribed limits. Under no circumstances any revolt against any law is allowed.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verses 174 - 176

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَشْتَرُونَ بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۙ أُولَٰئِكَ مَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ إِلَّا النَّارَ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

Surely those who conceal any part of the Book which Allah has sent down (***to them***)***, and sell it for a small price - they shall eat naught but Fire into their bellies, and Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them, and theirs will be a painful punishment.***

(*2:174*).

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَالْعَذَابَ بِالْمَغْفِرَةِ ۚ فَمَا أَصْبَرَهُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ

Those are they who have bought error for guidance and punishment for forgiveness; how they shall endure the Fire! (*2:175*).

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِي الْكِتَابِ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ

This is because Allah has sent down the Book with the Truth; and surely those who differ in the Book are in flagrant schism. (*2:176*).

Commentary

Before the advent of the holy Prophet of Islam (S), the Jewish scholars used to tell their people about that happy advent and described the signs of that promised Prophet for them from the Torah. But as soon as the Prophet of Islam (S) was divinely appointed and announced his Call, they did not confess the prophethood of Muhammad (S) for they thought they would lose their position, wealth, etc. It was why they neglected everything and concealed the Truth. Such people, by concealing the fact, might remain in their position receiving some presents and gifts for a length of time but this is a little price comparing to that great sin of theirs.

Surely those who conceal any part of the Book which Allah has sent down (***to them***)***, and sell it for a small price…*** (*2:174*).

What they take and eat in this bargain is naught indeed, but Fire. This meaning is similar to the content of the verse where eating the wealth of orphans is likened to Fire, too, as if they ate Fire in their bellies.[10] So, it says:

…they shall eat naught but Fire into their bellies… (*2:174*).

On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will not speak to these people mercifully, while the believers can speak with Him then. This talk, of course, may be either through some waves created in the space, or by inspiration and the mute tongue of the heart. On that Day all believing people can become interlocutors of Allah.

Those persons, who tried to bar the influence of the sound of truth from reaching the ears of people, have shut, in fact, the way of the speech of Allah on the Reckoning Day to themselves. They will not hear a word of kindness, but hear the word of wrath in Hell, being addressed with words such as:

Go away into it and speak not (***to Me***)***…*** (*23:108*).

Allah will not purify them from their sins then, because there will be a painful punishment prepared for them as a result of their evil actions in this world.

…and Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them, and theirs will be a painful punishment. (***2:174***).

Explanations

1. Selling Faith, in any case and rate, is a loss and the obtained price is a little:

…and sell it for a small price… (***2:174***).

2. The unlawful food or drinks of this world will incarnate in the form of Fire in the Hereafter, ***…but Fire…*** (***2:174***).

3. Punishment should be appropriate to the crime. Those who bar the way of reaching the word of Allah for people to hearken in this world must be deprived from the pleasure of hearing the speech of Allah in the next world.

4. Concealing the truth is not only about the holy Prophet (S). Those who conceal the truth about the true successors of Prophet Muhammad (S), receive the same punishment, too. That is, those who have hidden the announcement of the Messenger of Allah in Ghadir Khumm and obliterated it from their history and commentary books and perverted the process of the verses of the Qur'an with their own justifications in order to mislead Muslims towards some particular ones other than the immaculate Imams have concealed the Truth, too.

Those who conceal the Truth are some persons who exchange misguidance for guidance and punishment for forgiveness.

Those are they who have bought error for guidance and punishment for forgiveness… (***2:175***).

Do they not know that they somehow share with the corruption and aberration of mankind throughout history by their action when they conceal the Truth? Do they think that they are able to bear the punishment of Allah*?*

…how they shall endure the Fire! (***2:175***).

It is narrated in a tradition that the holy Prophet (S), speaking with 'Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a), said: *"The worst of men is he who sells his coming world for his present life, and more evil than this is the one who sells his coming world for the present life of someone else."*[11]

The people who conceal the Truth are severely warned and threatened with Divine punishments, because Allah has sent down the Book so clearly and reasonably that no doubt or ambiguity remains for anyone.

This is because Allah has sent down the Book with the Truth… (***2:176***).

Yet, there are some people who, to protect their personal interests, take action in justification and falsification of the concepts of the revealed Book and cause people to differ in it. In this way, they intend to gain some profits without any due, or unlawfully. Then, Allah, introducing them, says:

…and surely those who differ in the Book are in flagrant schism… (***2:176***).

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1. Sura Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 90.
2. Sura Al-'An'am, No. 6. verse 142.
3. Tafsir al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an Vol. 1 p. 173.
4. Al-Kafi, Vol. 5 p. 78.
5. Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan, Vol. 1. p. 272.
6. Tafsir al-Safi, Vol. 1, p. 193.
7. Tafsir al-Nur, Vol. 1, p. 329.
8. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, Vol. 16, p. 310.
9. Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn, Vol. 1, p. 155.
10. Refer to the Holy Qur'an, 4:10.
11. Man La Yahduruh al-Faqih, Vol. 4, p. 253.

[1] [1]
SHARES

Section 22 - Genuine Righteousness, Retaliation and Bequest

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 177

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَٰكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا ۖ وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteous is he who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the Apostles, and for the love of Him gives (***of***) ***his wealth, although he likes it, to the kindred, the orphans, the needy, the***

***travellers, beggars and for the* (*emancipation of*) *slaves, and keeps up the prayer, and pays the poor-rates* (*zakat*)*; and those who fulfil their promise whenever they make a promise, and are patient in distress, adversity, and in the time of war, these are they who are the truthful* (*in Faith verbally and actually*) *and these are the pious ones.* (*2:177*).**

Commentary

The Faith of a person in Allah causes him to be humble before Him and to stand firm, with no obedience, before tyrants; where the Faith in Resurrection creates eyesight and magnanimity; and Faith in angels refers to the existence of belief in the processes of supernatural including the Faith in revelation, Providence, etc.

Faith in prophets is a belief in a straight way and true guidance existing throughout history. It is evidence leading to the fact that Man has never been aimless and absolutely free in this world.

***It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteous is he who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the Apostles...* (*2:177*).**

The Qur'anic phrases;

***gives* (*of*) *his wealth* (*2:177*),**

indicates the assistance and humanity of believers;

***keep up the prayer* (*2:177*)**

refers to the direct link with Allah;

***pay the poor-rates* (*zakat*) (*2:177*)**

leads to planning the social life for solving the problem of different layers of the society;

***Those who fulfil their promise whenever they make a promise* (*2:177*),**

strengthens the coherence and connection between people;

and the concept of

***are patient* (*2:177*)**

is an active factor in Man to become persevering and stable.

...and for the love of Him gives* (*of*) *his wealth, although he likes it, to the kindred, the orphans, the needy, the travellers, beggars and for the* (*emancipation of*) *slaves, and keeps up the prayer, and pays the poor-rates* (*zakat*)*; and those who fulfil their promise whenever they make a

promise, and are patient in distress, adversity, and in the time of war, these are they who are the truthful (***in Faith verbally and actually***) ***and these are the pious ones.*** (***2:177***).

Explanations

1. This verse is one of the most consistent verses of the Qur'an. It is cited in Al-Mizan, that the Messenger of Allah said in a tradition that everyone who acts according to this verse has a complete Faith.[1]

2. We should heed the content and essence of the religion rather than to go after the mere mottoes, which hold us back from the main godly aims.

3. The number of those who claim Faith is very large, but the true believers, who follow all the details of this verse, are a particular small group:

These are they who.... (***2:177***).

4. Belief in Allah, Resurrection and revealed Book is mentioned before the fulfilment of the righteous deeds.

5. In this verse, the act of attachment to Allah:

Faith in Allah (***2:177***).

and connecting with the poor and deprived people, and also social aids upon accidents and afflictions have been stated together, one after another, in the verse.

6. For reaching a true piety, donation in both obligatory and non-obligatory forms are necessary. There are some people who sometimes help the poor while they do not pay their religious obligatory payments. There are also some other believing people who pay their obligatory payments but are often indifferent to the poor and the deprived. Here, in this verse, the true pious believers are introduced as those who pay both their obligatory alms and recommended donations; as well:

...and for the love of Him gives (of) his wealth... **(*2:177*).**

Regarding this meaning, that is why that some Islamic narrations say that in the wealth of the rich, besides the poor-rates, there is a portion for the deprived and the poor.[2]

And also, the one who goes to bed while he is satiated but someone in his neighbourhood is hungry, has faith neither in Allah nor in the Hereafter.[3]

Therefore, to feel responsibility for the hungry people, is a duty on us, whether we have paid the obligatory alms or not.

7. It is necessary to show patience and perseverance in all the followings:

Being patient and firm in facing with poverty and afflictions.

To show patience and endurance in having ailments.

To be patient in battle and at the time of Holy War.

However, patience is the cause of all virtues. So, the Qur'an introduces patience as one of the factors for entering Heaven, where it says:

These shall be rewarded with high places because they were patient... **(*25:75*).**

These are given high positions as a reward for the patience they had, while some others are honoured by angels in Heaven with these words:

Peace be on you because you were constant... **(*13:24*).**

And one of the conditions of obtaining the position of Imamate is to be patient, as the Qur'an says:

And We made of them Imams to guide by Our command when they were patient... **(*32:24*)**

8. The application of the term /birr/ (righteous) is similar to the application of honey. Whoever or whatever is very sweet and wholesome is likened to honey, Then, whosoever is very good and benevolent is called 'righteous'; viz, such a one is absolutely a right-doer.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verses 178 - 179

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلَى ۖ الْحُرُّ بِالْحُرِّ وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأُنْثَىٰ بِالْأُنْثَىٰ ۚ فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ

أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ فَاتِّبَاعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدَاءٌ إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَانٍ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۗ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

O' you who have Faith! Retaliation (***Qisas***) ***is prescribed for you in the matter of the*** (***unlawfully***) ***murdered: the freeman for the freeman, the slave for the slave, the female for the female. But for him who is forgiven somewhat by his*** (***aggrieved religious***) ***brother, then prosecution*** (***for blood-wit***) ***should be made according to a fair manner*** (***ma'ruf***) ***and let the payment be made to him with kindliness. This is an alleviation from your Lord, and a mercy; so, whoever transgresses the limits after this, he shall have a painful punishment.*** (***2:178***).

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

And in (***the law of***) ***retaliation there is*** (***saving of***) ***life for you, O' people of understanding, so that you may guard yourselves*** (***against evil***). (***2:179***).

Occasion of Revelation

The custom in the Age of Ignorance among some Arabs was so that when an individual was murdered from their tribe, they would decide to kill as many members from the murderer's tribe as they could. That thought was so harsh that they were ready to destroy even the entire people of the murderer's tribe for only a single murder. Then, the above verse was sent down and announced the just law of retaliation, (Qisas).

This Islamic decree was, indeed, a medial status between the two different injunctions which were current at that time. Before the revelation of this ordinance of Islam, some people considered retaliation necessary, with no changes, so that nothing else was permissible to substitute it, while some other groups believed that only the rule of blood-wit should be followed. So, Islam decreed the law of retaliation in the case of the discontent of the heirs of the murdered, and blood-wit when both parties agree upon it.

Commentary

Saving of Life in Retaliation

From this verse on, in the current Surah, a series of decrees and ordinances of Islam are stated and completed.

At first, it begins with the protection of the value of blood which is an extraordinary important problem in social connections. Through this verse, Islam makes all the concerning old customs invalid. The Qur'an, addressing the believers, says;

O' you who have Faith! Retaliation (***Qisas***) ***is prescribed for you in the matter of the*** (***unlawfully***) ***murdered…*** (***2:178***).

The Holy Qur'an, in the case of some indispensable commands, sometimes makes use of the phrase:

It is prescribed for you (***2:178***)

to state the matter. The above verse, for example, is an instance of this application where the coming verses, which speaks about 'making bequest' and 'fasting', are other ones. In any case, this particular phrase makes the importance and emphasis of the theme clear, because those matters are always written that, from any point of view, have reached to the state of positiveness and are earnest.

As it was pointed out in the occasion of revelation, these verses, with the application of the term retaliation and in order to moderate the intemperance which the Age of Ignorance fulfilled about murder, show that the heirs of the murdered are rightful to accomplish, against the murderer, exactly the same that that person has committed upon the murdered.

But the Qur'an does not suffice only to this amount. In this very verse, it exposes the problem of equality to discussion with a particular explicitness where it continues saying:

'…the freeman for the freeman, the slave for the slave, the female for the female…' (***2:178***).

Allah willing, we will explain that this idea is not a piece of evidence, as some have considered, for the superiority of the male-blood to the female-blood, and that a male murderer, under certain conditions, can be punished by the law of retaliated for the murder of a woman.

Then, to make it clear that the subject of retaliation is merely a right for the heirs of the murdered and it is not a convincing ordinance for them when they can simply forgive the murderer, if they wish, and take a blood-wit, or even, they can take no blood-wit at all, it immediately adds:

…But for him who is forgiven somewhat by his (***aggrieved religious***) ***brother, then prosecution*** (***for blood-wit***) ***should be made according to a fair, manner*** (***ma'ruf***) ***and let the payment be made to him with kindliness…*** (***2:178***).

Thus, on one hand, the avengers of blood are advised not to be immoderate in taking a blood-price if they dispense with retaliation and take the blood-wit with a fair price and according to what Islam has appointed and also by instalments so that the party be able to pay it.

And, on the other hand, through the sentence:

…let the payment be made to him with kindliness (***2:178***)

it recommends the murderer to pay the blood-price in a right style and without any negligence so that his debt be entirely paid on time. Therefore, the Qur'an has defined the duty of each party and how they

should treat to each other.

At the end of the verse, for emphasis and to attract the attentions to the fact that transgressing the limits of Allah, from the side of whoever it may be, deserves a severe punishment, it says:

…This is an alleviation from your Lord, and a mercy; so, whoever transgresses the limits after this, he shall have a painful punishment (***2:178***).

This equitable command for 'retaliation' and 'forgiveness' which makes up a quite logical manly assemblage, condemns, on one hand, the wrong method of the Ignorance Age which considered no equality in retaliation and, similar to the tyrants of this very age of space, sometimes killed hundreds of people in excuse of the murder of one person.

And, on the other hand, it does not shut the door of pardon to people. In the meantime, it does not lower the respect of blood and does not allow murderers to become bold and presumptuous. And also, thirdly, it announces that neither of the two parties is permitted to transgress the limits after accepting the principle of pardon and blood-wit. This command was issued in spite of the old custom of the Ignorant tribes where the heirs of the murdered might kill the murderer even after forgiving him and taking the blood-wit.

The next verse, in a short but very expressive sentence, answers a great deal of questions in regards to the problem of retaliation. It says:

And in (***the law of***) ***retaliation there is*** (***saving of***) ***life for you, O' people of understanding so that you may guard yourselves*** (***against evil***). (***2:179***).

This verse, which in the Qur'anic text consists of ten particles, is expressed in utmost eloquence and clarity. It is so interesting that its first phrase has become as an Islamic motto used by common Muslim people. It clearly shows that Islamic law of retaliation is not for revenging at all, but it is a door-way to life for men to let them continue living.

Retaliation, on one hand, guards the safety of the life of the society, because if the ordinance of retaliation were not in any form at all, the hard-hearted persons would feel security and, consequently, the lives of people would be in danger. The evidence for this is the countries wherein the law of retaliation has been nullified and the number of murders and crime has incredibly increased.

On the other hand, the law of retaliation causes the life of a homicidal person be saved since it prevents him considerably from the thought of murder and brings him under control.

For the sake of the necessity of equality and order, the law of retaliation is a hinder against the frequent slaughters and puts an end to the customs of some Ignorant tribes in which a single murder has been the pretext of several murders and the latter, in turn, has been the cause of further slaughters, too. By this way, the law of retaliation has also stopped some of those homicides and caused a few societies

continue to live peacefully.

Regarding the fact that it is only in the absence of pardon that the ordinance of retaliation can be executed, the existence of the Islamic law of retaliation, in general, is also another phase opened to life and living.

The concluding phrase which says:

...so that you may guard yourselves (***against evil***) (***2:179***)

completes this wise ordinance of Islam. This meaning is also considered as a warning which halts or retards any oppression and transgression.

Retaliation and Pardon, a Complete Assemblage

Islam, in all respects, follows the problems inclusively and with their proper practical aspects. It has stated the right perfect idea about the proposition of unlawfully murdered, far from any injustice or excessive progressiveness. This Islamic law is similar neither to the perverted Jewish law, which emphasizes only on mere retaliation, nor to the present Christianity, which advises its followers to pave only the way of either pardon or compensation; because the latter causes to embolden the homicides and the former can become a factor of harsh vengeance and brutality.

Suppose that the murdered and the murderer be two brothers, or they have some background of friendship or social connections. In this case, bonding to retaliation, may produce a new additional grievance for the family of the murdered, especially when the concerning people are full of human love and affection, then, forcing them to execute the act of retaliation, itself, can be considered another grief and torture upon them. On the other hand, limiting the law to pardon and compensation alone, also makes the corruptive people bolder.

This is why Islam has decreed the law of retaliation as the main ordinance and, to moderate it, has added the ordinance of pardon beside it and along with it.

In other words, the heirs of the murdered are rightful to choose one of the following varieties:

1. The execution of retaliation

2. To pardon without taking any blood-wit.

3. To pardon with taking the blood-wit. (In this case, of course, the consent of the murderer is also necessarily considered.)

Explanations

It is possible that some groups object that the command in the verses of retaliation is that a 1 man' should not be killed for the murder of a 'woman then, what is the difference between the life of a man and that of a woman? Why should a male not be killed under the punishment of the law of retaliation for the slaughter of an innocent female, – a gender (i.e. the feminine gender) that forms half of the population over the earth?

The answer to this question is that: the verse does not mean a 'male' should not be retaliated against by capital punishment for a 'female'. But according to what is detailed in the books of Islamic jurisprudence, the heirs of the murdered woman can punish the male–murderer by the law of retaliation (i.e. capital punishment) on condition that they pay half of the blood–price.

In other words, the purpose of the lack of retaliation (Qisas) of a 'man' for the slaughter of a 'woman' is retaliation without any condition; but his killing is permissible, of course, when half of the blood–price is paid.

No explanation is necessary here that the payment of the aforementioned sum for the execution of the punishment under the law of retaliation does not mean that a woman, from the point of philanthropy, is lower than a man or a female is less dear than a male. This is, indeed, absolutely a wrong and illogical imagination. The apparent form of the term 'blood–price' may have been the origin of the appearance of this imagination. The act of the payment of the half sum of blood–price is only for the compensation of the loss that the man's family members suffer from his capital punishment by the law of retaliation.

The expansion of the explanation is that males are usually the effective financial factor of their families. It is often men, in families, who earn a living and pay money for the expenditures, in general, and run the economic affairs therein. Therefore, the difference between a man and a woman, from the point of economy and finance in their own family, is quite clear to everybody. If this difference be not observed, the remaining family members and the innocent children of the murdered man have surely to suffer an amount of unreasonable financial damage. Hence, Islam, with the rule of the payment of half of the blood–wit for the punishment of a 'man' by the law of retaliation, has considered the rights of all members, and prevented the unforgivable injury and stroke that a family may be given. Islam never lets the rights of some individuals, such as the children of the person who has been punished by the law of retaliation, be trod under the pretext of the term 'equality'.

It is possible, of course, that some women earn a living in their own family better than men there. But we know that a law or an ordinance does not turn around the pivot of an individual, and we must compare the totality of men with the totality of women.

Another point that attracts the attention, and is understood from the phrase

...by his brother... (***2:178***)

is that Islam strengthens the relation of brotherhood between its followers so firm that even after the illegitimate shedding of blood it is still valid. So, to encourage the heirs of the murderer to forgiveness and moderation, and also to put their affection in motion, Islam introduces them as the brothers of the murderer. And, this meaning is both surprising and interesting. The mentioned situation, of course, is about those murderers who have taken action in this great heinous sin under the force of emotion, wrath, and the like of them, and the murderers have also become regretful and repented of their wrong action. But the murderers who are proud of their crime and, with no regret or repentance, boast about it, are neither worthy of the appellation of 'brethren' nor are they eligible for pardon.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verses 180 - 182

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةُ لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۖ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ

It is prescribed for you, when death approaches (any) one of you, and if he leaves behind wealth for parents and near relatives that he makes a bequest in a fair manner - (this is) a duty (incumbent) on the pious ones. (2:180).

فَمَنْ بَدَّلَهُ بَعْدَ مَا سَمِعَهُ فَإِنَّمَا إِثْمُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يُبَدِّلُونَهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Whoever then changes it (the bequest) after he has heard it, the sin thereof shall be on those who change it. Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (2:181).

فَمَنْ خَافَ مِنْ مُوصٍ جَنَفًا أَوْ إِثْمًا فَأَصْلَحَ بَيْنَهُمْ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

But if anyone fears injustice or sin on the part of a testator, and establishes agreement among them (the parties concerned), then there is no sin upon him; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (2:182).

Commentary

Bequest in a Fair Manner

The speech in former verses was about problems such as life, murder, murdered, and retaliation, while in these verses a part of the ordinances of bequest in relation with the financial affairs is referred to, where it says:

It is prescribed for you, when death approaches (any) one of you, and if he leaves behind wealth for parents and near relatives that he makes a bequest in a fair manner... (2:180).

Then, at the end of the verse, it adds:

...(***this is***) ***a duty*** (***incumbent***) ***on the pious ones.*** (***2:180***).

Bequest should not be considered as a bad omen. Some persons think that bequest is a sign of death or passing away soon, while bequest is a kind of providence and farsightedness. So, if the verse tells us to leave a bequest at the presence of death by saying:

When death approaches (***any***) ***one of you...*** (***2:180***)

it is for the reason that those moments are the last occasions; else, an individual can lay down a bequest years before the time of death.

Some Islamic groups have considered the bequest an obligatory ordinance, but as it is understood from the phrase

... (***this is***) ***a duty on the pious ones.*** (***2:180***)

this action is voluntary, otherwise it would say: this is a duty on the believers.

According to the attitudes of the Islamic commentators and jurisprudents, leaving a bequest is, of course, incumbent when the one is in debt to people or there is a religious duty upon the one which must be fulfilled. These duties may be such as one fifth levy (khums), poor–tax (zakat), performance of pilgrimage (Hajj), etc., and in other ordinary cases, similar to them, leaving a bequest is emphatically praiseworthy.

By the way, in this verse, the Arabic term 'khayr' has been applied for 'wealth' to make it manifest that Islam knows wealth a good thing and a blessing from Allah when it has been earned in a lawful way and is spent alongside the path of the help and benefit of people. This idea nullifies the wrong attitudes of those who think of wealth substantially as a bad thing. Islam hates those deviated pretenders to piety who have not recognized the spirit of Islam and think of Islamic piety as a quality equivalent to poverty. The wrong thought and behaviour of such apparent believers cause the stagnation of some Islamic societies and, consequently, the development of the exploiters.

In the meanwhile, this very meaning of the verse is a slight hint to the idea that the logical abundance of wealth is lawful in Islam. The evidence is that the unlawful wealth that a person leaves behind in this world is not 'fair', but it is adversity and evil.

Some Islamic traditions indicate that the word 'khayr', here, refers to the considerable wealth that needs being bequeathed. Therefore, the inconsiderable properties, which the heirs can divide between themselves according to the canonical law of heritage, need not be bequeathed. In other words, a small amount of wealth is not something that one separates one third of it to leave a bequest for.[4]

The phrase:

…when death approaches **(*any*)** ***one of you…*** **(*2:180*)**

is for the statement of the last opportunity available for leaving down a bequest so that if it be postponed, it may be missed. At any rate, it is fairly appropriate that we, having forethought and utilizing our opportunity, prepare ourselves by writing down our bequest. This manner, as it is understood from the Islamic literature, not only is good but also quite admirable.

The Messenger of Allah said: "*Whosoever dies and has left a bequest has died as a martyr."*[5] This meaning is considerably mentioned in some other traditions, too. Then, it is from improvidence of a person who imagines that leaving a bequest is a bad omen through which a person pushes his death forward. But bequeathing is a kind of undeniable factual farsightedness which, although it might not prolong the longevity, will surely never shorten the lifetime.

Bequest restricted with the term /bil ma'ruf/ (in a fair manner) shows that a bequest must be reasonable in all respects. It should be done in a fair manner both from the point of amount of wealth and in respect of the person to whom the bequest is addressed, so that customary law and common-sense know it rationally a good action; not a sort of unjust discrimination which usually causes conflicts and deviation from the limits of justice and truth.

When a bequest contains all the above-mentioned qualities, it is respectable and sacred in all aspects. Hence, any change or conversion in it is forbidden and is counted unlawful (haram), as the verse itself says:

Whoever then changes it **(*the bequest*)** ***after he has heard it, the sin thereof shall be on those who change it…*** **(*2:181*).**

And, if they imagine that Allah does not know their plots, they are intensively in err, as it says:

…Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. **(*2:181*).**

This verse may also point to this fact that the wrong actions committed by the executor of testament never nullifies the reward of the testator. When such an evil happens, the sin is only upon the executor of testament who has changed something from the quality or quantity of the testament or has interfered with the fundamentals of the testament itself. Yet, the testator will obtain his own concerned godly reward whether the testament that he has left be changed later, in any form, or not.

Another probability has also been cited in the commentary of the verse. It says that the purpose is: when the property of the dead, as the result of the wrong actions of the executor of testament intentionally is given to some ones who are not deserving of it, (and they are not aware of that wrong action), there is no sin on them. So, the sin is only on the executor of testament who deliberately has committed such a wrong.

It should be also noted that there is no contradiction between these two commentaries, and both can be gathered from the meaning of the verse.

So far, concerning this Islamic decree, it has become quite clear that any change, of any kind and of any amount, in testaments is a sin. But, since there may be exceptions in a law or ordinance, then, in the last verse of this group of verses, it says:

But if anyone fears injustice or sin on the part of a testator, and establishes agreement among them (the parties concerned), then there is no sin upon him; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (2:182).

Thus, the exception is only due to the instances where the testament has not been arranged properly. It is only in this status that a change made by the executor of testament is permissible. Then, if the testator is still alive, the executor must notify him/her of that intention to change the testament, but if the testator has passed away, the executor takes action on changing it himself. This situation, from the point of the Islamic jurisprudence, is restricted to the following cases:

1. When the testator has bequeathed more than one third of his total wealth. According to the Islamic literature based on the traditions narrated from the Holy Prophet (S) and the Immaculate Imams (Ahl Al-Bayt ('a)), a person can make a bequest on his wealth only up to one third of it, since more than that is not religiously permissible in Islam.[6]

Therefore, making bequest over the entire property benevolently for good intentions, which is common among some unaware people, is, regarding the Islamic laws, perfectly wrong. So, the duty is upon the executor of the bequest to decrease it up to one third of the remaining wealth.

2. If the testator has bequeathed something of sin, transgression, and evil to be performed, it is up to the executor to change it. For example, when the testator makes bequest that a part of his wealth be spent on the spread and development of some mischievous centres, or, also, when the bequest causes a necessary duty to be abandoned unreasonably, the executor is allowed to change it.

3. When something of the bequest brings about means of conflict, corruption, or blood shedding, in this case, the circumstance should be adjusted under the direction of the Islamic judge.

By the way, the Arabic term /janaf/, which means a deviation from the path of Justice and a unilateral inclination, hints to the deviations that seize the testator unconsciously; while the term / ‘ithm/ (sin) refers to the intended deviations.

The final phrase of the verse which says:

…Surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (***2:182***).

may point to the fact that if the executor of testament effectively removes or improves the wrong that the testator has done and returns him to the right way, Allah forgives him, too.

Explanation

The Philosophy of Testament

Regarding the law of heritage, only a particular group of relatives, and with a definite portion, inherits the wealth. This situation may be in the case that some other near and far relatives, or some of the close friends and local people, are in dire need of some financial aid.

In addition to that, sometimes it happens that the religiously ordained portion, ordained concerning the amount of heritage, is not sufficient to supply the needs of some heirs.

The inclusiveness of the Islamic laws does not let these gaps be left unfilled. So, it has issued the law of testament alongside the law of heritage. It lets Muslims decide on one third of their wealth to be spent after their death in a manner they like.

Besides that, sometimes a person wishes to do some good actions, but during his life-time he is not able to perform them, because of some financial necessities that he has. The logic of intellect demands that he decides on a part of the wealth, that he has suffered to earn during his life, to be spent on these good affairs after his death, at least, and not to be deprived of them.

All these circumstances have caused that the law of testament be decreed in Islam, and it has been emphasized with the phrase:

…this is a duty on the pious ones. (***2:180***).

Testament is not restricted only to the above-mentioned aspects, of course, but a person should explain all his debts to people, the deposits that others have given him to charge of, and the like of them in the testament so clearly that there may remain no ambiguous subject concerning the rights of men or the rights of Allah which have been upon him.

In Islamic literature, testament is frequently emphasized on. For example, a tradition narrated from the Holy Prophet (S) says: *“It is not appropriate for a Muslim believer to sleep at night except that his testament is under his head.”*[7]

The phrase ‘under his head’, mentioned in the above tradition, is, of course, for emphasis and the purpose is that he must always be prepared in this respect.

Justice In Testament

Taking the above-mentioned explanation about the lack of transgression in testament in mind, there are many traces in Islamic traditions emphasizing upon the lack of ‘transgression’ and ‘damage’ in testament which, on the whole, indicate that as much as making a testament is a good and worthy deed, the same quality transgression in it is blameworthy and counted among grievous sins.

Imam Muhammad Baqir (‘a), in a tradition, says: *“He who regards justice in his testament is like the person who has given the same amount as charity* (*in the way of Allah*) *during his own life; but the one who treats unfair in his testament will meet Allah on the Day of Judgment while He will have turned away His Grace from him.”*[8]

Transgression, treating unfair, and damage in testament is that a person bequeaths more than one third of his wealth and deprives the heirs from their religiously lawful rights. Or he may make some undue distinctions for the sake of his unreasonable loves and hatreds. In the cases that the heirs are in dire need, even, the recommendation is that bequeathing one third of the wealth be decreased to a quarter or one fifth of the wealth.[9]

When we study the Islamic narrations and the statements of the leaders of Islam in relation to the subject, we understand the emphasis and importance that they have considered for the existence of Justice in testament. The following tradition is one of the concerning instances:

Once at the time of revelation, one of the men from the Ansar tribe passed away. He had some little children, but he had spent his wealth on the path of Allah in a manner that there remained no more property from him. When the Prophet (S) became aware of it, he asked: *“What did you do with that man?”*

Then, the people thereby answered that they had buried him. The Holy Prophet (S) said: *“If I had been informed of it before, I would not have permitted you to bury him in the graveyard of Muslims, because he has left his little children reduced to beggary.”*

Bequest, Obligatory or Recommended

As it was said before, making testament, in essence, is among the emphatically recommended actions, but sometimes it becomes obligatory for some people. For instance, when a person has neglected or failed to pay the godly obligatory rights, or there are some things with him belonging to people, (formerly deposited to him), and the one thinks that their rights may be transgressed if he does not bequeath, then bequeathing is obligatory. More important than that is when the position of a person in a society is so that if he does not make a bequest, it is probable that the safe system of that society or their religion be

inflicted an irreparable severe blow upon. So, in all of these circumstances, it is obligatory to bequeath.

Bequest, is Changeable During the Life

The testator is not restricted by Islam to what he has bequeathed himself. A person is allowed to review the amount, the manner, and the executor of the bequest as long as he is alive, because when the time passes, circumstances may vary and his attitudes upon the aforementioned subjects change, too.

This point is also necessary to be mentioned that we must make use of bequest as a means of repairing our former shortcomings, in a manner that even if some of our relatives had shown unkindness to us, we display affection to them by the way of testament.

It is cited in some Islamic narrations that the leaders of Islam bequeathed some money especially for those relatives who were not kind to them in order to attract their affection again.

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1. al-Mizan, Vol. 1, p. 615 (Persian version).
2. Tafsir al-Qurtubi, Vol. 2. p. 242.
3. Usul al-Kafi, Vol. 2. p. 660.
4. Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn, Vol. 1, p. 159.
5. Wasa□il al-Shi□ah, Vol. 13, p. 352.
6. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, Vol. 13, p. 361.
7. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, Vol. 13, p. 352.
8. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, Vol. 13, p. 359.
9. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, Vol. 13, p. 360.

[1] [1]
SHARES

Section 23 – Fasting during Ramadan – Rights of Property

To fast during the month of Ramadan – Prayer and supplication to God – Discipline to be observed during the month – Rights of property to be respected

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verses 183 – 185

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

O' you who have Faith! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard yourselves (***against evil***). (***2:183***).

أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَاتٍ ۚ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۚ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ ۖ فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ ۚ وَأَنْ تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ ۚ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

(***Fast for***) ***a certain number of days. But whoever among you is sick or on a journey, then*** (***he shall fast***) ***the same number of other days, and for those who are hardly to do it,*** (***there is***) ***a redemption by feeding an indigent. But whoever volunteers to do good, it is better for him; and it is better for you that you fast, if you did*** (***only***) ***know.*** (***2:184***).

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۚ فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَنْ كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۚ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

The month of Ramadan that wherein the Qur'an was sent down to be a guidance for mankind, and as clear signs of guidance and a criterion (***between right and wrong***). ***Therefore, whoever of you is present*** (***at his home***) ***during the month, he shall fast therein and whoever is sick or on a journey, he shall then*** (***fast***) ***the same number of other days; Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire hardship for you; so you should complete the number*** (***of days decreed***), ***and exalt Allah for His having guided you, and that haply you might be grateful*** (***to Him***). (***2:185***).

Commentary

Fasting, the Origin of Piety

Next to several important ordinances of Islam stated in the former verses, these current verses refer to another ordinance, i.e. fasting, which is one of the most serious acts of worship. The Qur'an, with the same tone of emphasis that was applied for the previous verses, says:

O' you who have Faith! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you... (***2:183***).

Then, immediately after this, it refers to the philosophy of this humanizing worship and, in a short but meaningful sentence, says:

...so that you may guard yourselves (***against evil***). (***2:183***).

According to what the Late Kulayni says in his famous book (*Al-Kafi*), piety is rendered into one's restriction from sin. Most sins originate from wrath and lust. Fasting brings the extravagance of this

instinct under control, which, consequently, decreases corruption and increases piety.[1]

Yes, fasting is a great effective factor in the process of training the spirit of piety in all dimensions of every field; this will be addressed in detail later.

Since this worship is accompanied with deprivation from some material pleasures and one must suffer some troubles especially when it is in summer, there are different particular meanings used in the above verse to make the mind of believers ready for the acceptance of this decree.

To attract the attentions and to make the subject an interesting one for the addressees, it begins with the phrase:

O' you who have Faith! (***2:183***).

Then, it refers to the statement of the fact that fasting is not appointed only for Muslim Ummah but it had been practiced by the former nations, too.

Finally, the philosophy of fasting, and that the fruitful results of this Divinely ordered duty return totally to you, is stated.

A tradition narrated from Imam al-Sadiq ('a) says:

"The pleasure found in (the phrase: 'O' you who have Faith!' is so that) it has removed the tiredness of this worship and effort."[2]

In the next verse, again, in order to reduce the hardship of fasting, it states a few other commands regarding this. It initiates the subject thus:

(***Fast for***) ***a certain number of days...*** (***2:184***).

It is not so that you be obliged to fast all the year through or a considerable part of it, but fasting is for only a small section of the year.

Another matter is that:

...But whoever among you is sick or on a journey, then (***he shall fast***) ***the same number of other days...*** (***2:184***).

Then there comes the third group, those who are absolutely unable to fast, such as elderly men, elderly women, the constant patients with chronic diseases, where it says:

...and for those who are hardly able to do it, (***there is***) ***a redemption by feeding an indigent. But whoever volunteers to do good, it is better for him...*** (***2:184***).

And finally, at the end of the verse, the fact is restated, which itself is another emphasis on the

philosophy of fasting, thus:

…And it is better for you that you fast, if you did **(*only*)** ***know.*** **(*2:184*).**

This meaning also refers to the fact that the worship of fasting, as other worships, does not add anything to the Glory and Dignity of Allah but all its merits are for the worshipper. Islamic traditions confirm the same meaning, too.

The Holy Prophet (S) has said: *"He who fasts during the fasting month for the sake of Allah, all his sins will be forgiven."*[3]

It is also cited in a divine tradition that Allah says: *"Fasting is Mine, and I do reward it."*[4]

Also, in another tradition it is narrated from the Holy Prophet (S) who said:

"There is an alms for everything, and the alms of bodies is fasting."[5]

Hence, it makes clear that the phrase:

…it is better for you that you fast… **(*2:184*)**

addresses all those who fast, not only a particular group of them.

The last verse of this group of verses introduces the time of fasting and a part of its ordinances and their philosophies. At first it says that those certain days that you must fast are the month of Ramadan, and:

The month of Ramadan is that wherein the Qur'an was sent down… **(*2:185*).**

And this Qur'an is the same that is:

…to be a guidance for mankind, and as clear signs of guidance and a criterion **(*between right and wrong*)** ***…*** **(*2:185*).**

Then again, the command for the passengers and the sick is restated and, as an emphasis, it says:

…Therefore, whoever of you is present **(*at his home*)** ***during the month, he shall fast therein, and whoever is sick or on a journey, he shall then*** **(*fast*)** ***the same number of other days…*** **(*2:185*).**

The repetition of the ordinance of the sick and passenger in this verse and the previous one may be for the purpose that some people, thinking that not to fast is absolutely a disgraceful action, insist on fasting when they are sick or are on a journey, so the Qur'an, by this repetition, makes the Muslims understand that fasting is a divine duty for the safe and sound persons while, in the same manner, not fasting is also a divine command for the sick and passengers (with their proper conditions) so that the offense of it is a sin.

At the end of the verse, it pays attention to the philosophy of the divine legislation of fasting once more, and says:

…Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire hardship for you… (***2:185***).

It points to this fact that although fasting is apparently a kind of strictness and limitation, its conclusion is ease and tranquillity of man, both spiritually and materially.

This sentence may hint to this matter that the Divine commands are not similar to the commands of tyrants. In the case that the fulfilment of an action is very laboursome, Allah enjoins an easier duty to be performed. Therefore, the ordinance of fasting, with all its importance, was exempted for the sick, passengers, and those feeble ones unable to perform it.

Then, it adds:

…So you should complete the number (***of days decreed***) ***…*** (***2:185***).

This means that everyone who is safe should fast one month a year because it is necessary for his health. For this reason, if a person is sick or on a journey during the month of Ramadan, the one must belate the accomplishment of fasting those days until the same number is completed. Even menstruous women, who are excused from establishing prayers, are not exempted from fasting at a later date.

So, in the final sentence of the verse, it says:

…and exalt Allah for His having guided you, and that haply you might be grateful (***to Him***). (***2:185***).

Yes, we must exalt Allah for the guidance He has endowed upon us and be thankful to Him for all those blessings He has mercifully given us.

It is noteworthy that the act of thanksgiving is mentioned with the term ‘haply’, while the matter of exalting Allah is stated conclusively. This difference of statement may be for the reason that the fulfilment of this worship (fasting) is, at any rate, the exaltation of the Essence of Allah, but thanksgiving, which is the same as using the blessings if, their proper sites and taking benefit from the effects and practical issues of fasting, has some conditions which will not be fulfilled unless those conditions be obtained, the most important of which are: a perfect sincerity, the recognition of the reality of fasting, and acknowledgement about the philosophy of fasting.

Explanations

Fasting and Its Educational, Social, and Hygienical Effects

1. From the point of various affects that fasting may spiritually and materially produce in the unity of man, it has different dimensions that can be discussed. The ethical dimension and the philosophy of fasting

are the most important of all.

Fasting makes the soul of man elegant, then strengthens his will, and moderates his instincts.

The one who observes the fast, although he is hungry and thirsty, must restrain himself from eating food and drinking water, and also, from the pleasure of sexual intercourse when he is fasting. One must prove that he/she can hold the rein of his/her restive passions and is able to dominate his/her desires and lusts.

Indeed, the most important philosophy of fasting is this very spiritual status of it. A person who has many kinds of food and drinks available at his reach to use of them whenever he is hungry or thirsty cannot be so tolerant at the time he is in lack of them. But the one who observes the fast is like a plant which grows in a dry desert. It resists when water is rare, stands steadfast against strong storms and intense cold. Such people can deal with deprivations when they are challenged with them, and, therefore, can be firm and perseverant.

Fasting trains the soul of a person. With temporary restrictions, fasting gives man perseverance, authority in will, ability of challenging with severe deprivations, and, since it controls restive instincts, it showers light and inner purity into the heart.

However, fasting causes man to promote from the animate nature so that he can ascend unto the rank and the world of angels.

The phrase:

***…haply you might be grateful* (*to Him*). (*2: 185*)**

may point to the same fact.

And, also, the famous tradition from Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) is another hint to the same matter which says: *“Fasting is a protector from Fire.”*[6]

Another tradition narrated from Amir al-Mu’minin ‘Ali (‘a) says that the Prophet (S) was asked what they would do that Satan be banished, and he (S) answered: *“Fasting blackens his face; charity breaks his back; the love in* (*the path of*) *Allah, and persistence in righteous deeds put an end to him, and seeking* (*Allah’s*) *forgiveness cuts his aorta.”*[7]

When ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a), stating the philosophy of worship, speaks about fasting and he, says: *“*(*Allah has laid down*) *fasting as a trial of the people in their sincerity...”*[8]

In another tradition, the Holy Prophet (S) has said: *“Verily, there is a door for* (*entering*) *Heaven by the name of ‘Al-Rayyan,* (*quenched of thirst*) *none enters therein but fasting ones.”*[9]

Explaining this tradition, the Late Saduq cites in his book ‘*Ma’ani al-Akhbar*’ the reason that this name

has been taken for that door of Heaven is that much of the toil of a fasting person is because of his thirst. So, when the fasting ones enter this door, they will be so saturated that they will never become thirsty thereafter.

The Social Effect of Fasting

Every intelligent person realizes that fasting works as a lesson of equality among the members of a society. By practicing the religious command, the rich realize perceptibly both the state of the hungry and the deprived of their society, and, with saving in their daily meals, can help them well.

It is possible, of course, that by explaining the status of the hungry and the deprived to the rich, it will make them understand that status, but if this condition becomes perceptible and objective, it will react more effectively. Fasting gives this great social subject a perceptible form to those who observe it.

It is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) in a well-known tradition that Hisham ibn Hakam asked him about the reason for the divine legislation of this ordinance when he (‘a) said: *“Allah has enjoined fasting in order to settle equivalence between the rich and the poor, and this is for the sake that the rich feel the taste of hunger and, consequently, be merciful toward the poor (by giving them their rights). And, since the things are usually available for the rich, then Allah, the Exalted, is pleased when equivalence is erected between His servants. So, He, thereby, has ordained that the rich feel the taste of hunger and pain so that they feel sympathy for the weak and be merciful toward the hungry.”*[10]

Verily, if the populations of rich countries throughout the world customarily fast a few days a year and feel the taste of hunger, will there still remain so many hungry people in the world?

Fasting and Its Hygienical and Remedial Effects

In modern medicine, as well as the old one, the miraculous effect of ‘abstinence’ in curing kinds of sicknesses have been proven so evidently that it cannot be deniable. Few of physicians have not pointed out this fact in their scientific notes. As all of us know, the reason of the origin of many diseases is gluttony, because the unabsorbed extra materials of food-stuffs in the form of obtrusive tallow or additional sugar in blood remain in different parts of the body. These additional materials, inside the levies of muscles of body, are, in fact, as some putrid oozy sites where kinds of microbes of some infectious diseases can grow. The best way of defending against these sicknesses is to annihilate them by means of abstinence and fasting.

Besides this property of fasting, which causes the additional and unabsorbed materials of the body to be burnt; fasting is a considerable factor for servicing the body with giving a rest to the organs of digestion. This rest is extremely necessary for these organs. They are the most important parts of the body and are continuously busy working throughout the year.

It is clear that one who observes the fast, as Islam advises, ought not to eat too much food at the time of

breaking the fast and just before the dawn during the fasting month of Ramadan in order to enjoy the result of the hygienical effect of fasting, otherwise the consequence may become contrary.

Alexei Suvorin, a Russian scientist, writes in his book that by means of fasting a specific result can be obtained in treating diseases such as: anaemia, dyspepsia, chronic extended enteritis, furuncle and inner abscess, consumption, rheumatism, gout (podagra, chiragra, gonagra), dropsy, sciatica, some ophthalmic diseases, diabetes, skin diseases, renal diseases, and so on.

Treatment through fasting is not limited to the foregoing diseases alone, but also the sicknesses concerning the fundamentals of the body involving the bodily cells like cancer, syphilis, and plague can be cured by means of fasting.[11]

The Holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said in a famous tradition: *'Fast to be healthy.'*[12]

Again, in another tradition he (S) has said: *"The stomach is the site of all ailments, while dietary (abstinence) is the head of all remedies."*[13]

Fasting in Former Religions

The existing Torah and Bible indicate that the Jews and the Christians had fasting, too, (Math. 6/16–17; and Luke 5/33–35). The followers of some other religions used to fast in times of sorrow and affliction.

In the Lexicon of the Bible, it is cited that fasting, in general, has always been practiced among every nation and in any religion at the time of an unexpected sorrow or disaster.[14]

It is also caught from the Torah that Moses ('a) had forty days of fasting. It is cited in the Old Testament thus: *"When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of covenant which the Lord made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water."*[15]

Also, at the time of repentance and seeking the pleasure of the Lord, the Jews fasted. So, it is cited in the Lexicon of the Bible that when the Jews got the opportunity that they wanted to state their weakness and humility before the Lord, they fasted in order that they confess their faults and to obtain the pleasure of His Essence by means of that fasting and repentance.[16]

It is probable that 'the Great Fasting with atonement', which was for one particular day a year, was common among the Jewish people. They had, of course, some other temporary days to fast in remembrance of the destruction of Jerusalem, etc., too.[17]

As the Bible indicates, Jesus ('a) had also forty days of fasting. It says thus:

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2) *And when he had fasted forty days and nights, he was afterward an hungered."*[18]

It is also understood from the Evangel that the disciples of Jesus used to fast. It says:

33) *And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?*

34) *And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?*

35) *But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast those days*.[19]

Again, it is cited in the *Lexicon of the Bible* that the lives of disciples and believers, in old times, were full of negation of pleasure and tremendous toils accompanied with observing the fast.[20]

Thus, the Qur'anic sentence saying:

...as it was prescribed for those before you... (***2:183***)

is also confirmed with many historical religious evidences existing in other divine religions even after they had been perverted.

Ramadan, the Transcendent Month

The month of Ramadan has been selected for fasting because it has a preference to other lunar months of the year. In the verse under discussion, this preference is stated such that the Qur'an, which is the Book of Guidance for humankind and, with its commands and legislations, has separated the right from wrong to lead man toward prosperity, was revealed in the month of Ramadan. Besides that, both some verses of the Qur'an and the Islamic literature indicate that all the great heavenly Books, such as the Torah, the Bible, the Psalms of David, the Books of Ibrahim, and the Qur'an, have all totally been sent down in this month.

In this respect, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said: *"The Torah was sent down on the sixth of Ramadan, the Bible on the twelfth, the Psalms on the eighteenth and the Qur'an by the Night of Destiny* (*Laylat al-Qadr*) *in Ramadan."*[21]

Thus, the month of Ramadan had always been the month of the great heavenly Books to be sent down. This month had been the month of education, since training without teaching and practice is fruitless. The training aim of Fasting should also be parallel with the more and the utmost profound knowledge about the divine instructions so that it wipes out the soul and self of man from sin.

Once, on the last FRidhay of Sha'ban, the Prophet of Islam (S) delivered a sermon about the significant of the month of Ramadan to prepare his companions for receiving this sacred month. In that great sermon he (S) said:

"O' people! Allah's month has approached you laden with blessing, mercy and forgiveness. It is a month which Allah regards as the best of all months."

"Its days, in the sight of Allah, are the best of days; its nights are the best of nights; and its hours are the best of hours."

"It is a month in which you are invited to be the guests of Allah, and you are regarded during it as worthy of Allah's Grace."

"In this month, your breathing praises Allah, and your sleeping adores Him. Your deeds (of worship) are accepted, and your pleas are answered therein."

"Therefore, ask Allah, your Lord, in sincere intentions and pure hearts to enable you to observe the fast and to recite His Book (the Qur'an) during this month, for only a wretch is the one who is deprived of Allah's Forgiveness in this great month."

"Let your hunger and thirst during it remind you of the hunger and the thirst of the Day of Judgment. Give alms to the poor and indigent among you, respect your elderly and be kind to your youngsters, and strengthen blood-kinship of yours."

"Safeguard your tongues (from sin), do not look at what Allah has prohibited your eyes from watching it, and do not listen to what your ears are forbidden to hear. Be kind to the orphans of other people, so that your own orphans be consequently given affections, too..."

The Principle of 'No Hardship'

In the above-mentioned verse, this matter was pointed out that Allah's Will is not that you be troubled and uneasy, but He ordained so that you feel ease. It is certain that this ordinance here is about the proposition of fasting and its benefits together with the concerning commandment due to passengers and sick persons. But, regarding its universality, this ordinance has been used as a general principle upon all Islamic rules, and the verse has been taken as a reference for it which is known as the rule of 'No Hardship' (la-haraj) among jurisprudents.

This religious rule says that the foundation of the Islamic legislation is not based upon hardship. So, if, somewhere, an ordinance creates intense hardship, it can be exempted temporarily. For instance, the jurisprudents have said that when performing one's ablution or standing erect, and the like of them, due to establishing prayers requires much pain, it changes to dry ablution and prayers in sitting position.

Concerning the lack of hardship in Islam, it is also stated in Surah al-Hajj, thus:

***...He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion.* (*22:78*).**

Also, another hint to this subject is the famous tradition of the Messenger of Allah (S) where he says: *"I*

was appointed to a tolerant and facile religion."[22]

Conclusion

In these verses, the philosophy of fasting accompanied with some concerning ordinances are stated for the benefit of Muslim believers to follow.

By the way, fasting had been in vogue in every religion in some form or other. It is one of the cardinal doctrines of the practice of the faith, in Islam, taking its rank next only to the obligatory five times daily prayers. These verses of the Qur'an show that fasting was enjoined by all the prophets of Allah who preceded the holy Prophet Muhammad (S).

It should also be noted that fasting in Islam is to train to suppress our natural appetites and shun evil. It does not mean abstaining only from food but from every kind of evil. Abstention from food is only a step towards the realization that if one has to abstain from that which is lawful, how much more he must abstain from what had been forbidden by Allah. The main object of the Islamic fast is to purify the conduct and character and get the soul charged with divine attributes of Allah in the practical life for one complete month. It helps the Muslims to guard themselves against evil as well as conditioning with restrain by habituating themselves to suffer physical affliction and self-control and resistance and fortitude which they must always be prepared to suffer in the defence of faith and the faithful.

On the other hand, since Islam is a tolerant and easy religion, fasting is not allowed for those who are on lawful journey. Or, it is exempted for Muslims in the case of the risk of any illness being aggravated, testified by a reliable doctor. This status is for that Islam does not will intense hardship for its followers.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 186

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۖ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

***When My servants ask you concerning Me, then* (*say unto them:*) *verily I am nigh: I answer the prayer of every supplicant when he calls on Me; so* (*they should*) *hearken unto My call, and believe in Me, in order that they may be led aright.* (*2:186*).**

Occasion of Revelation

Once someone asked the Holy Prophet (S) whether Allah was near so that they could whisper to Him or He was far so that they would speak to Him loudly. Then, the above verse was revealed (to answer that Allah is close to His servants.).[23]

An Armament Called Supplication

Since one of the means of approaching to Allah for His servants is the phenomenon of supplication, next to the statement of a great part of Islamic ordinances in the former verses, this verse pays particular attention to this subject. This phenomenon is a general process for all supplicants and those who want to resort to Allah, yet its occurrence among the verses related to fasting gives it an additional concept. The reason is that the spirit of every worship is obtaining nearness to Allah by the sincere wailing or cry of the heart.

This verse, addressing the Prophet (S) says:

***When My servants ask you concerning Me, then* (*say unto them*) *verily I am nigh...* (*2:186*).**

I am closer (to them) than they may consider. I am closer than you to yourself; and closer than your life-vein to you. In another occurrence in the Qur'an, Allah, referring to man, says:

***...and We are nearer to him than his life-vein.* (*50:16*).**

Then, it adds:

***...I answer the prayer of every supplicant when he calls on Me. So* (*they should*) *hearken unto My call, and believe in Me, in order that they may be led aright.* (*2:186*).**

It is noteworthy that, in this verse, Allah has pointed to His pure Essence seven times, and to His servants, too, seven times. Thus, He has illustrated thereby His utmost connection, nearness and love unto His servants.

'Abdullah-ibn-Sanan says that he heard that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said: *"Try to pray very much because it is the key of Allah's forgiveness and the means of obtaining any want. There are some blessings and graces with Allah that reaching them is impossible but via supplication. And, do know that any door which you knock it will finally be opened."*[24]

Yes, He is near to us. How can He be far from us while His site is between the self of man and his heart, as the Qur'an says:

***...and know that Allah intervenes between man and his heart*... (*8:24*).**

How Are Supplications Answered?

Before that we expect our supplications be answered, we must practice purifying our heart and soul, repent from our sins, and follow the way of the divine leaders' career.

1. Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is narrated who has said: *"Be aware, anyone of you, not to ask his Lord any thing of the necessities for this world and the coming one unless the one initiates with praising Allah and*

paying tribute to Him, and with benediction upon the Prophet and his progeny (*S*). *Thereafter, he ought to confess his sins* (*before Him*) *and then asks his want."*[25]

2. A person should strive to sanctify his life from properties that he has obtained by usurpation, oppression and cruelty so that his food-stuff would not be from any unlawful origin. There is a tradition from the Holy Prophet (S) who has said: *"He who wishes that his supplications be answered must surely purify his food and his earnings* (*to be lawful*)*."*[26]

3. A person should not restrain from struggling against corruption and inviting others unto right and truth, since those who abandon the act of enjoining right and forbidding wrong, their supplications are scarcely ever answered. It is narrated from the Prophet (S) who said: *"You should enjoin right and forbid wrong, or Allah may set up your wicked ones as absolute masters over your good ones. Then, whatsoever the good pray it will not be answered."*[27]

The abandonment of this great duty, in fact, creates some disorders in the society, the result of which is boldness of the vicious of the society with no defence therein. In this case, supplication for the removal of its fruits is useless, because those evil effects are the direct consequence of the behaviour of those people themselves.

4. True faith, righteous deed, faithfulness and uprightness are some other conditions of the fulfilment of supplications. Hence, the person who does not keep his promise before Allah should not expect to be involved among those whom Allah has promised to answer.

Once, someone went to Imam Amir Al-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a) and complained about why his supplications were not answered though Allah had said:

...call upon Me, I will answer you... (***40:60***).

In answer to that question, the holy Imam ('a) said: *"Your hearts* (*minds*) *have acted treacherously toward eight characteristics,* (*so, your supplications are not answered*)*:*

1. You have known Allah but you have not paid His right such that has been enjoined upon you. Therefore, your cognition does not benefit you anything.

2. You have believed in His Messenger while thereafter, you have opposed his Sunnah. You are in his religion, then, where is the fruit of your Faith?

3. Surely you have recited his revealed book but you do not act accordingly. And, you said:

We have heard and we obey (***4:46***)*,* whereas you opposed it then.

4. You say you fear the Fire (of Hell), While you always commit your own sins, and you approach it thereby; then, where is your fear?

5. You say you are eager and interested in Heaven (the Divine reward) but you always do some things which send you away from it; so, where is that inclination that you have to it?

6. Verily, you eat the blessing of Allah but you do not show gratitude about it.

7. Certainly, Allah has ordered you to be the enemy of Satan, and He has said:

Surely the Satan is your enemy, so take him for an enemy… (***35:6***).

Verbally you claim that you are his enemy but actually you make friends with Satan without opposing him.

8. You have put the faults of people before your eyes and your own ones at your backs. Then, what supplication of yours can be answered for you with this case that you yourselves have closed its doors? So, fear Allah and improve your deeds, purify your intentions, and enjoin right and forbid wrong. It is in this case that Allah answers you your supplications."[28]

This expressive tradition clearly says: the promise of Allah to answer supplications is a conditioned promise, not an absolute one. It is conditioned that you fulfil your promises and covenants, too; whereas you have broken promises in eight ways. So, if you put an end to this breach of promise, your call will be answered.

Practicing upon the foregoing eight instructions which are, in fact, the conditions of supplications to be answered, is enough for training Man and employing his faculties alongside a productive and fruitful path.

5. Another condition of the answering of supplication is that it should be accompanied by struggle, effort and studious action. Imam Amir Al-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a) says: *"He who prays but does not exert effort is like the one who shoots without a bow-string."*[29]

Regarding to the fact that a bow-string is the means of sending an arrow towards the target, the function of effort and action in the efficacy of prayer is made manifest.

All the aforementioned five conditions illustrate this reality that not only supplication should not substitute the natural phenomena and ordinary means of obtaining the goal, but for its being answered, a general change is also necessary to occur in the career of the supplicant. His spirit should be renewed, and his former deeds must be reviewed so that the demanded results come into existence for the supplicant.

Thus, reverting to supplication or the efficacy of prayer does not at all exclude the necessity on the part of the supplicant of the use of the necessary external means of achieving the desired object. The connection between the practical means and prayer is indissoluble.

Any sincere seeker of an object will naturally look for the practical means to achieve it. In the search for

the means, one must endeavour as best as possible for him, employing all his native faculties, devoting the necessary time and attention to achieve the desired object. When one is in his search for the means, open and hidden, he naturally desires guidance from the Higher Power from which nothing is hidden and for which nothing is impossible or difficult. Prayer blesses the supplicant by granting him the guidance necessary for the realization of the desire.

A Few Narrations Upon Supplication

1). It is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) who said Imam Amir Al-Mu’minin ‘Ali (‘a) said: *“The most beloved deeds on the earth with Allah, Mighty and Glorious, is prayer; and the best worship is piety”.* Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) added that Amir Al-Mu’minin ‘Ali (‘a) was a man who used to pray very much.30

2). Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) narrated from the Prophet (S) who said: “*Prayer is the believer’s armour, the pillar of religion, and the* (*spiritual*) *light of the heavens and the earth.”*31

3). Amir Al-Mu’minin ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) said: *“Prayer is the key of* (*safety and*) *success and the key to* (*the doors of*) *prosperity. The best supplication is that which arises from a pure chest and a pious heart…”.*32

4). The Holy Prophet (S) said: *“Shall I not lead you to a weapon which saves you from your enemies, and increases your sustenance* (*abundantly*)*?”* They answered him positively. Then he said: *“Call your Lord both in night and day, because supplication is the armour of a believer.”*33

5). Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) has narrated from Amir Al-Mu’minin ‘Ali (‘a) who said: *“Supplication is the shield of a believer; whenever you knock on a door very much, it will be opened for you.”*34

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verse 187

أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَىٰ نِسَائِكُمْ ۚ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ ۗ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ ۖ فَالْآنَ بَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَابْتَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۚ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ۖ ثُمَّ أَتِمُّوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ ۚ وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ ۗ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرَبُوهَا ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

It is made lawful for you to go in unto your wives on the night of the fasts; they are a garment for you and you are a garment for them. Allah knew that you used to act unfaithfully among yourselves, so He has turned to you* (*mercifully*) *and pardoned you. So now you may associate with them and seek what Allah prescribed for you. Eat and drink until the white thread* (*of dawn*) *becomes manifest unto you from the black thread* (*of night*) *at the dawn-break, then complete the fast till nightfall and do not approach them* (*your wives*) *while you are at your devotion in the mosques. These are limits* (*set by*) *Allah, therefore do not approach* (*violate*) *them. Thus Allah

makes clear His Signs for mankind, so that they may guard themselves (***against evil***). (***2:187***).

Occasion of Revelation

It is so understood from the Islamic literature that at the advent of the revelation of the command of fasting, Muslims were allowed to eat a meal before sleeping at night. So, if anyone occasionally fell asleep at night and then awoke, eating and drinking was unlawful (*haram*) for the one.

Once, one of the companions of the Prophet (S) by the name of Mat'am–ibn Jubayr, who was a weak man, fasted in that situation. In the evening, he entered home for breaking the fast. When his wife went to prepare food for him, he fell asleep because of fatigue and weariness. After some while he woke up and, then, he said he was not allowed to eat and he could not break the fast, and, therefore, with the same state of hunger, he slept. Next morning, in the state of fasting, he attended a place around Medina to dig ditches in order to prepare them for the battle of Ahzab. While he was in the effort and struggle of digging, he fainted as a result of hunger and weakness. Then, when the Prophet (S) came to him he was touched upon seeing his situation.

Also, a group of young Muslims, who could not control themselves, associated with their wives during the nights of Ramadan.

It was in that circumstance that the revelation was sent down and let Muslims eat and drink during the length of night and associate (sexual intercourse) with their own wives as well.

Commentary

As it was mentioned in the occasion of revelation, at the advent of Islam, association with wives was forbidden during night and day in Ramadan. Eating and drinking after sleeping was also not permissible. That was, perhaps, a trial as well as a preparation for Muslims so that they would accept the ordinances of fasting.

The verse under discussion, which consists of four Islamic ordinances about fasting and the act of devotion in the mosques, initiates the matter thus:

It is made lawful for you to go in unto your wives on the night of the fast… (***2:187***).

Then, it pays to the philosophy of this subject and says:

…they are a garment for you and you are a garment for them… (***2:187***)

The primary thought or the meaning accommodated in the description of clothing used here relating to the mutual relation of husband and wife and the mutual comfort and protection they afford to each other, is superb and unique in its expression. There cannot be a better description of the position of a man and wife and their relation to each other, which is unsurpassed in beauty.

Clothing, on one hand, protects man against heat and cold, and also against the danger of foreign bodies scraping or penetrating the skin. On the other hand, clothing not only covers the disgraces of the body, but also is an ornament for a person. The metaphor mentioned in this verse is a hint to all of these meanings.

Two spouses protect each other from deviations. They hide the faults and blemishes of each other. They provide the means of rest and tranquillity for each other. Each of them is counted as the ornament of the other.

This meaning makes the utmost spiritual connection and coherence of man and woman clear as well as their nearness to each other. It also points to the equality of man and woman in this respect, since whatever thing is said about men equally, and with no change, is mentioned about women.

Then, the Qur'an refers to the reason of the change of this divine law and says:

Allah knew that you used to act unfaithfully among yourselves, so He has turned to you (***mercifully***) ***and pardoned you…*** (***2:187***).

Yes, in order that you commit no more sin, Allah mercifully made that duty easy for you and decreased the length of its restriction.

…So now you may associate with them and seek what Allah prescribed for you…. (***2:187***).

This matter is certainly not in the sense of obligation but it is permission after that state of prohibition. So, the idea can be taken as a piece of evidence of permissibility.

The phrase:

…and seek what Allah prescribed for you… (***2:187***)

points to this fact that utilizing this permission and reduction, which is on the path of the laws of creation and preservation of the regularity of 'seed permanence', is no problem at all.

Then, it refers to the second ordinance and says:

…Eat and drink until the white thread (***of dawn***) ***becomes manifest unto you from the black thread*** (***of night***) ***at the dawn-break…*** (***2:187***).

Therefore, Muslims could eat and drink all the night long until the dawn when they would stop

Then the statement is upon the third ordinance, thus:

…then complete the fast till nightfall… (***2:187***).

This statement is another emphasis on the prohibition of eating and drinking and sexual intercourse

during the daytime for those who observe the fast. It is an indicative point to the beginning and the end of a fast which begins from the dawn and ends at night.

Finally, it points to the fourth ordinance when it says:

…and do not approach them (***your wives***) ***while you are at your devotion in the mosques…*** (***2:187***).

The statement of this ordinance is like an exception for the former ordinance, because in this situation, the length of which is at least three days, they fast but during this limited time they can have sexual intercourse neither in days nor at nights.

At the end of the verse, alluding to all the foregoing ordinances, it says:

These are limits (***set by***) ***Allah, therefore do not approach*** (***violate***) ***them…*** (***2:187***).

Approaching the bounds is sometimes tempting and causes that man violates them and commits sins. Yes,

…Thus Allah makes clear His Signs for mankind, so that they may guard themselves (***against evil***). (***2:187***).

Explanation

Allah's Limits

As is was mentioned in the commentary of the above verses, the Holy Qur'an, after stating some ordinances about fasting and being at devotion, renders these ordinances, as the 'limits set by Allah': the bounds between lawful (halal) and unlawful (haram) matters, and the limits between prohibited and permissible things. It is noteworthy that the Qur'an does not say 'do not pass the limits', but it says:

…do not approach them… (***2:187***)

because approaching the limits is tempting and sometimes, under the influence of lusts or because of being involved in mistakes, a person may violate them.

It is for this very reason that some Islamic laws forbid man from stepping into the situations that may cause him to slip and commit sins, such as taking part in a society of sinners, even though he himself does not share in it; or being with a non–relative, of the opposite sex in a lonely private place wherein no one can enter.

The term originally means 'to seclude oneself in a place, or to remain a long time beside something'. In religion it means keeping to the mosques for the purpose of worship. The duration of this retreat is three days during which the person fasts and abandons some pleasures. This worship has a profound effect in

purification of the soul and attending to the Providence. The manner and conditions of this worship are mentioned in the books of Islamic jurisprudence. This worship, of course, is essentially counted among the recommended deeds, but in some particular circumstances, exceptionally, it becomes obligatory. At any rate, the verse under discussion refers to only one of its conditions because of its connection to the proposition of fasting, i.e. the lack of association with wives whether at night or in the daytime.

The Dawn

The term /fajr/ basically means 'break open', hence the light of the dawn, which breaks the gloom of night with its bright advent, in the Qur'anic term is called /fajr/.

In the verse under discussion, in addition to the above term, the dawn has been rendered thus:

…until the white thread (***of dawn***) ***becomes manifest unto you from the black thread*** (***of night***) *…* (***2:187***).

It is interesting that a tradition says that 'Udayy-ibn-Hatam, one of the believers, once came to the Prophet (S) and said that he had put two white and black threads in front of him watching them, but it (the dawn) did not become manifest for him. Then, the Prophet (S) laughed so that his holy teeth appeared. Then, he (S) *said*: *"O' son of Hatam! verily, it is the whiteness of day* (*dawn*) *and the darkness of night. Then, begin from this time."*[35]

At the end of the night, at first a very weak white colour rises in the sky without extending laterally and appears to be black, presenting itself like an obstacle on the horizon, and is compared to the tail of a fox whose narrow end is onto the horizon and its conical shaped end is in the mid-sky. This is the 'False Dawn'. But after a while a clear white light appears, rising, filling the horizon with its whiteness, like a white thread stretched beside a black thread, and, thereafter, spreads throughout the sky with a special brightness by which the night ends and the day begins. This is the 'True Dawn' when the Morning Prayer can then be performed.

Piety, the Beginning and the End

It is interesting that in the first verse concerning the ordinance of fasting it was stated that the ultimate aim of it is piety. This very meaning is also exactly repeated at the end of the last verse of this group of verses saying:

So that they may guard themselves (***against evil***). (***2:187***).

This shows that all of these rites are a means of training the spirit of piety and self-restraint in man in order to produce a faculty of guarding against evil and to feel responsibility before the duties of mankind.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 188

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتُدْلُوا بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا مِنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

And do not devour your property among yourselves by wrongful means, nor offer it as a bribe to judges, with intent that you may unlawfully swallow up a portion of other people's property, while you know. (***2:188***).

Commentary

This verse prohibits Muslims from committing a very indecent action. It tells them not to swallow up the property of other people unrightfully, and not to earn wealth through a wrong way. They should be aware not to occupy the belongings of others forcefully and unjustly and then the oppressors refer to the judges so that haply they might give them something as a present or bribe in order to appropriate people's properties oppressively. If so, they have done two great wrongs: devouring others' rights, and bribery.

And do not devour your property among yourselves by wrongful means, nor offer it as a bribe to judges, that you may unlawfully swallow up a portion of other people's property, while you know. (***2:188***).

The subject of bribery is so important in Islam that Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) says about it:

"...and bribery in judgment is the same as disbelief in Allah, the Exalted."[36]

The Holy Prophet (S) *is* narrated to have said in a famous tradition:

"Curse of Allah be upon the bribee, the briber and the one who makes every effort between them."[37]

Something similar to this meaning is expressed in Surah An-Nisa where it says:

...do not devour your property among yourselves falsely, except that it be trading by your mutual consent... (***4:29***).

The verse under discussion clearly says that if some one gains a case by giving bribes, the wealth under the suit which they win will be unlawful for them. Thus, the mere apparent winning in the court does not make the properties lawful. This very fact is clearly referred to in a tradition from the Holy Prophet (S) where it says: *"Verily, I am a human being* (*who is commissioned to judge between you through apparent means*). *If a conflict comes forth to me in which some of you may have stronger evidence than that of the other party, then I will judge in favour of him according to it. So, if I thereby judge for him upon the right of a Muslim, it is a piece of fire. He can take it or leave it off."*[38]

Bribery, a Calamity

One of the calamities that humankind had been entangled with from the earliest times, and which is running with a more intense speed today, is bribery. It has been one of the greatest barriers of the execution of social justice. It causes that the regulations and laws, which must basically preserve the rights of the oppressed groups, to be employed, in most societies, to support the interests of the authoritative groups.

It is the rights of the weak, in fact, that law must support, for the rich and powerful people, with the possibilities they have, are always capable to defend their benefits. Evidently, if the path of bribery be opened, laws and judges may produce just a contrary result, because it is usually the powerful ones who are able to spend in bribery. Therefore, as a consequence, laws can be a new toy for them to continue their Satanic game of transgression and cruelty against the rights of the oppressed.

For this reason, when bribery influences in a society, it destroys the foundation of the social life of those people. In this situation, transgression, inequity, injustice and undue distinction penetrate in all organs and, as a result, there remains but a bare name of laws and justice.

That is why Islam, showing the foulness of bribery, has condemned it intensely so that it has been counted a great sin in the view of the religion.

It is worth noting that the ugliness of this indecent action is often covered in some other fallacious arguments and charming terms. This status causes that bribers and bribees usually make use of words such as: present, offering, dedication, lip, reward, recompense, and so on, for the bribe. But it is clear that these variations of names do not change the nature of bribery at all, and, however the money paid or taken thereby is certainly unlawful (haram).

It is cited in *Nahj al-Balagha* that al-Ash□ath ibn Qays went to ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) in a night with a closed flask full of honey paste to give it to him (‘a) as a present hoping that he would win the case in the court of Hadrat ‘Ali (‘a). But ‘Ali (‘a) surprised and violently said:

“Childless women may weep over you. Have you come to deviate me from the religion of Allah?”

“By Allah, even if I am given all the domains of the seven (stars) with all that exists under the skies in order that I may disobey Allah to the extent of snatching one grain of barley from an ant, I would not do it. For me, your world is lighter than the leaf in the mouth of a locust that is chewing it. What has ‘Ali to do with bounties that will pass away and pleasures that will not last?...”[39]

Islam has condemned bribery in any form and by any name. It is narrated in the history of the life of the Prophet of Islam (S) that once he was informed that one of his governor-generals had received a bribe in the form of a present. Then the Prophet (S) harshly told him:

“Why do you take the thing which is not your right?”

Then the man, apologizing to him (S), said that it was a present. Again, the Prophet (S) expressed:

"If you were to remain at home while you were not a governor from my side, would people present you with anything?"[40]

Then, the Prophet (S) ordered the present to be taken and be sent inside the Muslim public treasury, when he dismissed him from his rank.

Even, in order that a judge would not confront with bribery in its hidden shapes, Islam advises that judges would not go shopping in the market themselves, lest discounts unconsciously affect on them and, when judging the suit, they eventually take the side of the giver of the reduction.

How good it is that Muslims, inspired by their heavenly Book, do not sacrifice all their holy things at the foot of bribery!

It is also said that the purpose of the verse is that they do not spend the wealth and properties of each other by means of vain pleasures like gambling or other games.

It is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq ('a) who said: *"The Quraish used to play games upon their wives, children, and personal wealth, losing them. Allah prohibited them of doing that."*[41]

It is better to consider all of these commentaries for the verse, because it can bear the meanings of them all totally.

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1. Al-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 18.
2. Majma al-Bayan, Vol. 2, p. 27.
3. Tafsir al-Maraghi, Vol. 2, p. 69.
4. Tafsir al-Maraghi, Vol. 2, p. 69.
5. Al-Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 100.
6. Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 96, p. 256.
7. Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 96, p. 255; aorta is the main artery of the body carrying blood from the left ventricle of the heart to arteries in all organs and parts.
8. Nahj al-Balagha, Saying No. 252.
9. Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 96, p. 252.
10. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, Vol. 7, fasting section, p. 3.
11. Fasting, a New Method in Treating Diseases, p. 65 (first edition).
12. Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 96, p. 255.
13. Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 62, p. 290.
14. The Lexicon of the Bible, p. 427.
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21. Wasa'il al–Shi'ah, Vol. 7, section 18, tradition 16.

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23. Majma' al–Bayan, Vol. 2, p. 278.

24. Al–'Usul min al–Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 468.

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28. Bihar al–Anwar, Vol. 93, p. 276.

29. Nahj al–Balagha, Saying No. 337.

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32. Al–'Usul min al–Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 468.

33. Al–'Usul min al–Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 468.

34. Al–'Usul min al–Kafi, Vol. 2, p. 468.

35. Majma' al–Bayan, Vol. 2, p. 281.

36. Wasa'il al–Shi'ah, Vol. 12, chapter 5.

37. Bihar al–Anwar, Vol. 104, p. 274.

38. Fi–Zilal al–Qur'an, Vol. 1, p. 252 .

39. Nahj al–Balagha, Sermon, No. 224.

40. Al–Imam 'Ali ('a), Vol. 1, pp. 155–156.

41. Majma' al–Bayan, Vol. 2, p. 282.

[1] [1]
SHARES

Section 24 – Fighting in Self–Defence, Pilgrimage Under Restrictions

Religious Calendar to be according to the Lunar Year – Regard for the sanctity of the Sacred Month – Fighting in self–defence – Regard for the sanctity of the holy city – Self–defence during the sacred month – Pilgrimage under restrictions – combining 'Umrah' with 'Hajj'

Surah Al–Baqarah – Verse 189

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهِلَّةِ ۖ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ ۗ وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَٰكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنِ اتَّقَىٰ ۗ وَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

They ask you concerning the new moons. Say: 'They are times appointed for mankind and (***for***) ***the Hajj'. It is not righteousness that you should enter dwellings from their backs but righteousness is this that one should guard himself*** (***against evil***)***; and enter the dwellings by their*** (***proper***) ***doors, and fear Allah, that you may be prosperous.*** (***2:189***).

Occasion of Revelation

It has been said that Mu□adh ibn Jabal came to the Prophet (S) and said that he was frequently asked about the crescent of the moon and that why it gradually changes to a full shape and then alters to its first status.

Also, it is narrated that the Jews asked the Messenger of Allah (S) what the crescent of the moon was for and what the use of it was. At that time the above verse was sent down and announced that the different states of the moon have different material and spiritual advantages in the system of the human beings' lives.

Commentary

As mentioned in the occasion of revelation of the verse, some people asked the Prophet of Islam (S) a few questions about the reason of the different peculiar shapes that the Moon seemed to have and the concerning use of them.

In answer to these questions, Allah ordered the Prophet (S) to tell them the effects and the different usages of the crescent for all people.

They ask you concerning the new moons. Say: 'They are times appointed for mankind and (***for***) ***the Hajj'. It is not righteousness that you should enter dwellings from their backs but righteousness is this that one should guard himself*** (***against evil***)***; and enter the dwellings by their*** (***proper***) ***doors, and fear Allah, that you may be prosperous.*** (***2:189***).

The rising of the Moon at the beginning of each lunar month in the form of crescent, and then its gradual change, can be the source of many uses in the act of practicing worship and the accomplishment of religious duties by people, and in their material career as well. Everybody can easily count days of the month and enumerate the month of the year by the help of the varying shapes or forms of the Moon when dealing with trading and writing agreements due to appointing the times of promises and contracts. Besides that, fasting, the performances of the great worship of Pilgrimage and festivals, etc., prescribed by Islam, are timed according to the lunar months. The best way for people to recognize them and decide to arrange the affairs is this very form of the crescent in various shapes when they see them differently at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the months.

It is obvious that the regularity of the social life of man without a common and precise means of dating is impossible. So, the Moon, indeed, is a natural calendar for all human beings. It is a natural phenomenon

that the entire people, whether literate or illiterate, wherever in the world they are, can make use of it.

For this reason, the Creator, the Great, has made this worldly calendar available for the use of the human race in their life system.

Natural Measures

One of the advantages of Islamic laws is that their orders have usually been arranged corresponding with the natural measures, for these measures are some means that are available to all people and, besides that, the passing of time does not affect them.

But, on the contrary, unnatural scales are not within reach to all human beings for every thing. For example, the population of the world has not been able to use some international measures for timing the evening yet.

Therefore, we see that Islam has sometimes assigned the measure of a span, or a man's height and the like of it. And, for appointing a time, phenomena such as sunset, break of dawn, decline of sun from the meridian and the vision of the Moon are usually pointed out.

It is not righteousness that you should enter dwellings from their backs… (***2:189***).

In this verse the statement is partly about the Hajj Pilgrimage which can be performed at its proper time by visually noting the crescent of the Moon. It has also pointed to one of the superstitious customs of the Age of Ignorance accomplished in the rites of pilgrimage which Allah prohibited them from.

It was the practice among Arabs that after getting into the pilgrim garments (‘Ihram) they considered it unlawful to enter their house through the usual doors. Hence, they cut a new entrance under the ground from behind their premises. They did so because they thought it was a good action since it was desuetude of habit and, therefore, they would complete the act of the pilgrim garment which was desuetude of habits.[1]

But the Qur'an explicitly says that righteousness lies in piety, not in the superstitious customs. So, it immediately tells them seriously to enter the houses from the very ordinary doors.

But the object and the significance of the revelation of this verse is reasonably wider, greater, and more common. For the fulfilment of any action, whether it is a ritual action or a non-religious one, we should enter it through its proper way, not from a deviated path. Here, entering from behind is a figurative expression for turning aside from the right course, and entering by the door means sticking to the right path. This meaning is narrated from Imam al-Baqir (‘a) by Jabir, one of his companions.[2]

In the commentaries from Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) it is narrated about this verse that they have said:

“We are the doors and the ways of Allah that invite unto (His) Heaven...”.[3]

This tradition means that in your total religious affairs you should arrive by the main door and take your agenda from them (‘a) who are trained in the school of revelation and the Divine Messages were revealed in their house, (Ahl Al-Bayt).

The phrase:

It is not righteousness… (***2:189***)

may point to another narrow meaning saying that you question about the crescent, instead of inquiring about theology, is like the manner of the one who has put the main and right path of the house aside and enters it through a burrow from behind the premise. What a disgraceful manner!

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verses 190

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

And fight in the cause of Allah (***against***) ***those who fight you, but be not aggressive, for surely Allah loves not the aggressors.*** (***2:190***).

Occasion of Revelation

It is narrated by Ibn ‘Abbas that this verse was revealed about the ‘Peace of Hudaybiyyah’. The incident was in this manner that the Holy Prophet (S) started on a journey to go to Mecca for ‘Umrah accompanied by 1400 people out of his companions. When they arrived at Hudaybiyyah, (a land near Mecca), pagans hindered them from entering into Mecca and doing the sacred rites of the ‘Umrah. After a lot of debates and discussions, they agreed with the Prophet (S) that Muslims would go to Mecca the following year when the pagans would empty the City for them to circumambulate the Sacred House for three days.

The next year, when they set out towards Mecca, they were scared that the pagans might not be loyal to their promise and prohibit them, hence, consequently, a battle could come forth and the Prophet (S) was not willing to fight in the forbidden month. So, this verse was sent down and permitted them to defend and fight against the enemies if they initiated fighting.

Commentary

In this verse, the Qur’an has issued the command of fighting upon those who initiate war against Muslims. It lets Muslims use swords or any weapons and defensive means in order to stop the enemies. This condition, in fact, is for the time when the circumstances require and the course of patience in Muslims has ended, so they can openly and courageously defend their rights.

Fight: Why and Against Whom?

There are three subjects pointed out in this verse. They make manifest the logic of Islam about war.

1. The first phrase of the verse points to the ideal of the wars in Islam. It says:

And fight in the cause of Allah… **(*2:190*).**

Then, the main goal in Islamic fights (jihad) is the cause of Allah and the stretch of the Divine laws including: truth, justice, monotheism, and eradication of transgression, degeneration and deviation.

Thus, Islam condemns the wars aiming for: vengeance, ambition, conquering other countries, taking lands of others, and obtaining spoils of war. So, taking weapons and setting to war is right only when it is done in the path of Allah.

2. Now, the question is that against whom the holy struggle is right. The second phrase of the verse answers:

…*(*against*) *those who fight you… **(*2:190*).**

It clearly says that Muslims should not begin war unless the opponents initiate fighting by using weapons, except for some peculiar cases which will be pointed out when discussing the verses about Holy War.

By the way, it is understood from this verse that civil people (women and children in particular), who have not risen for fighting, must not be invaded and they are, therefore, privileged from invasion.

Based on this principle, the great leader of Islam, ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib (‘a) orders his soldiers thus:

“Do not fight them unless they initiate the fighting, because, by the grace of Allah, you are in the right and to leave them till they begin fighting will be another point (of right) from your side against them…”[4]

3. The limit of war is defined by the next clause, saying:

…but not aggressive… **(*2:190*).**

The basis of this meaning is that fighting in Islam is for the sake of Allah and in the path of Allah, where there should not be any transgression and aggression.

…for surely Allah loves not the aggressors… **(*2:190*).**

That is why Islam, in spite of the wars of our Age, advises Muslims to observe many ethical principles in war. For example, it tells them not to kill in fight those who put down their weapons and surrender, those who have lost their ability of fighting or, basically, are not able to fight, like old men and women and children. Such people should not be invaded. Gardens and trees should not be destroyed. Muslims must

not poison the water that their enemies use as their drinking water by poisonous ingredients (the chemical and microbial war).

Imam Amir Al-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a) says:

"...If, by the Will of Allah, the enemy is defeated, then do not kill the runner away. Do not strike a helpless person. Do not finish a wounded. And, do not inflict on women even though they may attack your honour with filthy words and abuse your officers..."[5]

The above-mentioned explanations prove the invalidity of the numerous accusations of the enemies of Islam against Islam about the Islamic Holy wars. With these clear statements of the Qur'an, upon the aims of fighting in Islam and the different dimensions that the Holy War has, the answer to the objections of the enemies is made manifest.

There will come forth some more explanations, of course, when commenting other verses of Jihad. Allah willing.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verses 191 - 192

وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ ۚ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ ۚ وَلَا تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّىٰ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ ۖ فَإِنْ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ

And slay them wherever you find them, and drive them away from where they drove you away. And persecution is more grievous than slaughter. And fight not with them at the Sacred Mosque unless they fight with you therein; then, if they fight with you, slay them; such is the retribution of the infidels. (***2:191***).

فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

But if they desist, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (***2:192***).

Commentary

This verse tells Muslims to fight against the idol worshippers of Mecca, who had expelled them (Muslims) from their own home and city, and to drive them (the idol worshippers) out from that city, since they had persecuted the Muslims for years. That treatment was more grievous than slaughter, because slaughter is taking the worldly life of a person instead of which the one reaches the prosperity of the next world, while in torture the one has neither the comfort of the present world nor the pleasure and ease of the coming world.

Yet, it enjoins Muslims not to fight at the Sacred Mosque in order to preserve the security and sanctity of it. But, if pagans did not observe the respect of the Mosque and fought against Muslims, they would do the same and punish them.

Explanations

1. Reciprocation and conclusiveness with harshness is certain in some respects.

2. Sacred premises of Mecca and the Sacred Mosque are holy but the esteem of the blood of Muslims is more sacred. So, here, the comparison of the state of important and more important is considered.

3. Since Muslims should not initiate in fighting, they must not initiate destroying the sacred things, either.

4. Knowing the reason of a commandment is the secret of mirth and obedience. The Qur'an expresses the reason for the command of fighting. It says that they persecuted you for years, and that torture is more grievous and dangerous than slaughter. If the Qur'an issues the command of expulsion, it is for the reason that they had expelled the Muslims from their houses for years.

And slay them wherever you find them, and drive them away from where they drove you away. And persecution is more grievous than slaughter. And fight not with them at the Sacred Mosque unless they fight with you therein; then, if they fight with you, slay them;

such is the retribution of the infidels. (***2:191***).

In the next verse it says that Allah accepts their repentance if they put aside the custom of infidelity and idolatry and, consequently, they will be brethren of Muslims. They will be even exempted from the taxes and from the punishments that offenders must tolerate.

But if they desist, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (***2:192***).

The clemency enjoined by Islam upon its adherents even against their bloodthirsty enemies in the battlefield, has no match in any religion. The Muslims have been definitely commanded to sheathe their swords if the enemy desists from fighting. The fight allowed by Islam has to be only against the wrong done, and there should be no rancour against the enemy when they correct themselves or even when they end the hostility.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 193

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ ۖ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ

And fight with them until there is no (***more***) ***persecution, and the religion is only for Allah But when they desist, there should be no hostility save against the*** (***wilful***) ***aggressors.*** (***2:193***).

Commentary

In this verse, the purpose of the Holy War in Islam (Jihad) is stated. It says that fighting is not for the sake of ordinary aims that humankind usually follow in their battles, nor for the sovereignty over the earth and conquest, nor for earning so much spoils, nor for preparing some selling markets and obtaining sufficient food stuff, nor for giving superiority to a group or a race over another group or race.

The aim of Holy Struggle is one and only one thing, and that is the attraction of Allah's pleasure which lies in the settlement of social justice, supporting the person, who have encountered with deceit and aberration, wiping out the environment of human societies from infidelity and idolatry, and, finally and particularly, getting the instruction, of Allah up in action.

Therefore, as it is realized, lighting is for eradiation or persecution among humankind and settling the creed of monotheism in them throughout the world.

***And fight with them until there is no* (*more*) *persecution, and the religion is only for Allah...* (*2:193*).**

And at the end of the verse, it adds that if they return and leave out infidelity, corruption and idolatry, Muslims should not bother them to revenge the past. They must ignore the past because opposition and reciprocal fighting is used only against an oppressor when the circumstances require

Islamic Holy War (Jihad), in fact can be divided into three categories:

1. The Preliminary Holy Wars for Freedom

Allah has designed some commands and programs for the sake of happiness, freedom, development, prosperity, and tranquillity of Man. He has commissioned His prophets ('a) to communicate these commands to people. Now, if a person or a group of people imagine that this communication is against their personal mean benefits so that they produce some barriers on the way of Prophets' invitation, the prophets are rightful to remove those barriers from their way and acquire the freedom of delivering propagation, at first, through a peaceful way and, if it is not possible, then with the use of violence.

In other words, people of all societies have the right to hearken to the heralds of truth and be free to accept their invitations. Now, if some persons decide to deprive them of their lawful right and do not let the call of the heralds of truth reach the ears of their spirits and, as a result, become free from the bounds of mental and social slavery, the adherents of these agenda are rightful to employ any means in order to obtain that freedom. Hence, the necessity of preliminary Holy Wars (Jihad) in Islam, as well as other heavenly religions, is made manifest.

Also, if some persons bear pressure upon some Muslim believers to invert them to their previous religion, they can apply any means to remove that pressure.

2. A Defensive Holy War

It sometimes happens that war is posed to a person or a group of people, viz, they are unexpectedly invaded or unwarily transgressed by an enemy. Here, all the heavenly laws and human rules consider the attacked person or group of persons rightful to rise and defend themselves. Alongside this defence, they can use all their potentialities powerfully and do their best to protect their entity. This kind of struggle is called ***defensive Holy War.*** Wars such as the Battles of Ahzab, Uhud, Mu'tah, Tabuk, Hunayn and some other battles at the advent of Islam are counted among this kind of Holy War, which have had defensive forms.

3. Holy War Against Infidelity and Idolatry

At the same time that Islam invites the people of the world unto its call, which is the last and highest godly creed, it respects 'freedom of belief'. For this reason, it gives the nations who have the heavenly Book, enough respite to study and contemplate over Islam and willingly accept it. If they do not accept it, they will be treated as 'a confederate minority', in a peaceful life under some particular conditions, of course, which are neither complicated nor difficult.

But infidelity and idolatry is neither a religion nor a creed nor is counted as respectful. It is but a kind of superstition, a deviation, and stupidity. In fact, it is a kind of mental and ethical disease which should be, with any possible means, rooted out.

The terms 'honour' and 'respecting others' opinions' are used in the cases that those opinions have a safe and sound foundation. But sickness, deviation, superstition, and aberration are not some things that can be counted respectable. That is why Islam orders that idolatry be rooted out from the human societies, however much costly it may be, even at the cost of fighting. Idol-temples and the signs of idolatry, if not possible peacefully, should be destroyed by force.

Why Was Holy War Legislated in Medina?

We know that Holy War was enjoined for Muslims in the second year A.H. while it was not compulsory before that.

The reason of this subject is clear because, on one hand, the number of Muslims in Mecca was so small that rising practically meant suicide.

On the other hand, the enemy was quite powerful in Mecca, and, indeed, Mecca was counted as the main center of anti-Islamic powers. The opponents of Islam were so strong there that it was impossible to fight them inside Mecca.

But, when the Prophet (S) entered Medina, a great deal of people believed him, so many that he was able to spread his invitation clearly inside and outside of Medina. He (S) could form a simple government and prepare the necessary means for fighting with his enemies and since Mecca was a rather far

distance from Medina, he succeeded to do it with tranquillity and peace of mind, and the revolutionary Muslim troops could prepare themselves for fight and defence against enemies.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 194

الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحُرُمَاتُ قِصَاصٌ ۚ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

The sacred month for the sacred month; and all sacred things are (***under the law of***) ***retaliation. Whoever then commits aggression*** (***by fighting***) ***against you, attack him in like manner as he attacked you; and have awe for Allah, and know that Allah is with the pious ones.*** (***2:194***).

Commentary

According to the Islamic calendar, there are four lunar months in very year which are specifically respected, and fighting is unlawful and forbidden therein. One month of these four months, i.e., Rajab is separate while the rest, i.e., Dhu al-Qa□dah, Dhu al-Hijjah, and Muharram, are consecutive. One of the reasons that the month Dhu al-Qa□dah is so called is that in this month it is necessary to have a halt of fighting.

This is the law of Islam that enjoins the adherents not to fight during four particular months of the year, but non-Muslim enemies always lie in ambush to misuse the opportunities. So, they may think that since Muslims are obliged to observe this law, they had better attack. This verse says that if your opponents rush upon you during these four months, you can stand against them, too, and fight in the same months. So, you may apply the sacred month for the sacred month, because the sanctity of the blood and protection of the system if Islam is much more than the sanctity of these months.

The sacred month for the sacred month... (***2:194***).

Then, whosoever did not regard with reverences should be treated under the law of retaliation.

...and all sacred things are (***under the law of***) ***retaliation...*** (***2:194***).

Hence, as a general rule, it says:

Whoever then commits aggression (***by fighting***) ***against you, attack him in like manner as he attacked you...*** (***2:194***).

Islam is not a religion of aggression and transgression, but it does not accept the aggression of others. Yet, the style of action should be in a manner that piety be always observed, and in retaliation, limits would not be violated when we do know and ought to be aware that Allah is with the pious ones.

…and have awe for Allah, and know that Allah is with the pious ones. (***2:194***).

Explanations

1. No path is blind in Islam. The protection of the unity of Islam and the souls of Muslims are preferred to the sanctity of places and times.

2. We must be equitable even in contact with enemies.

Whoever then commits aggression (***by fighting***) ***against you, attack him in like manner as he attacked you…*** (***2:194***).

3. The necessity of piety, even at the time of fighting, is another one of the Islamic training principles.

4. The order of legislation should not be in a manner that it becomes a means of despair for Muslims and boldness in disbelievers. The principle of similar reciprocation stands for this very sake.

5. At the time of fighting in similar reciprocation, if you do not violate the limits of justice and be of the pious ones, you will enjoy of the Divine help.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 195

وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ ۛ وَأَحْسِنُوا ۛ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And spend in the way of Allah; and cast not yourselves by your own hands into perdition; and do good (***to others***)***, for verily Allah loves the doers of good.*** (***2:195***).

Commentary

Holy War needs as much money and property as it needs the sincere, strong experienced battle men, because in Holy War, the existence of both the spiritual and physical preparation, and suitable weapons, artillery and other fighting equipment for troops are necessary. True it is that the most important effective factor of the fate of a war is that involving soldiers, but a soldier needs to be equipped. Hence, the verse emphasizes that the lack of spending wealth in this way is to bring themselves and other Muslims to destruction.

And spend in the way of Allah; and cast not yourselves by your own hands into perdition… (***2:195***).

At the time of revelation, in particular, a great deal of Muslims were full of ardour and emotions for Holy War, but they were so poor that they could not prepare the artillery. As the Qur'an states, they used to come to the Prophet (S) and ask him to supply the necessary means in order to send them to the battle-

field. But they usually came back with sorrow and grief while their eyes were shedding tears because the required means could not be supplied. The statement of the Qur'an in Surah At-Tawbah is thus;

...they went back while their eyes overflowed with tears on account of grief for not finding that which they should spend. (***9:92***).

Spending, a Prevention of Destruction

A general fact and a social rite can be taken from this holy verse in account of disbursing, although the subject is mentioned next to the verses of Holy War. The idea is that spending, in general, causes the members of a society to be delivered from perdition. And, on the contrary, when the custom of donation be neglected and the properties be compiled in one pole of the society, there will come forth a majority of the poor and deprived. So, very soon, a great burst happens in the society in which the selves and wealth of capitalists will be burnt by the fire of that revolution. Here, thereby, the relation of 'donation' and 'prevention of destruction' is made clear.

Therefore, disbursement is useful for capitalist, before it would be beneficial to the state of the deprived; that is, the justification of wealth is a protector of wealth. Imam Amir Al-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a) has pointed to this very fact where he says:

"...guard your properties by paying alms tax..."[6]

Next to the stage of Holy War and donation, it leads to benevolence and, at the end of the verse, it commands to doing good because the stage of doing good is the highest stage in the course of human development which Islam regards to fully. It says:

...and do good (***to others***)***, for verily Allah loves the doers of good.*** (***2:195***).

The occurrence of this phrase at the end of the verse on donation points to this meaning that the act of donation must be fulfilled with an absolute sincerity and affection: far from any term of reproach or what annoys or hurts the person whom the favour is done to.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 196

وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ ۚ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ ۚ وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحِلَّهُ ۚ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِ أَذًى مِنْ رَأْسِهِ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِنْ صِيَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ ۚ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَمَنْ تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ ۚ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ ۗ تِلْكَ عَشَرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلُهُ حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

And complete the Hajj (***Pilgrimage***) ***and the 'Umrah for the sake of Allah; but if you are prevented*** (***to complete it***)***, then*** (***send***) ***whatever offering*** (***sacrificial animal***) ***as may be obtained with ease;***

and do not shave your heads till the offering reaches its place (***of sacrifice***)***; but whoever among you is sick, or has an ailment in his head, then he*** (***should***) ***make redemption by fasting, or alms-giving or sacrificing. And when you are secure, then whoever enjoys from the 'Umrah to the Hajj*** (***he should offer***) ***of whatever offering is easily available*** (***for him***)***. But whoever finds none*** (***to give***)***, should fast three days during the Hajj*** (***Pilgrimage***)***, and seven days when you have returned; these*** (***make***) ***ten*** (***days***) ***complete. That is for the one whose family members do not dwell near the sacred Mosque. Have awe of Allah and know that verily Allah is severe in penalty.*** (***2:196***).

The Rites of Pilgrimage

The visitors of the holy shrine of Mecca usually perform the ceremonies of minor pilgrimage first. The rites are as follows:

They put on pilgrim's garb ('ihram) from some definite sites known as 'Trusting Place'. It means that they undertake to abandon doing a series of deeds which are unlawful for the person in a pilgrim state. They cover themselves with pilgrim's garb which consists of two pieces of unsewn cloth, and they continually say *'labbayka'* while going towards Ka'bah. When they reach Mecca, at first, they circumambulate Ka'bah in seven rounds. Then, they keep up a two-rak'at prayer in a place called Maqam al-Ibrahim (Station of Abraham). After that, they ply to and from between two mountains named Safa and Marwah for seven times. Finally, they, having cut a piece of a nail or some hair of theirs, take off the pilgrim's garb.

Then, again for the ceremonies of Pilgrimage, they put on pilgrim's garb and go unto 'Arafat, which is a land 24 kilometres far from original city of Mecca, in order to stay therein on the ninth of Dhu al-Hijjah, from noon until sunset, busy praying with invocation. After sunset, they move to Al-Mash□ar al-□aram (Sacred Monument), which is located at a distance of 15 kilometres from Mecca, where they must remain until morning. When the sun rises, they move into Mina, a land nearby there, and, on the same day, which is known as Feast of Sacrifice, they throw seven pebbles at a special Pillar called: 'Jamarah 'uqba', and then they sacrifice before shaving their heads (while women cut off a piece of hair from their heads). When they complete their hair cut (Taqsir), they take off their pilgrim's garb at last.

They return to Mecca the same day or after that and perform the ritual circumambulation of the Ka'bah, circumambulation prayer, running between Safa and Marwah, Nisa' circumambulation and Nisa' circumambulation prayer. On the eleventh and twelfth of the month, they throw pebbles at three special pillars in Mina which are called 'Jamarat', one after another seven times at each pillar each day while, during the nights before these days, they have to remain in Mina.

Thus, they accomplish the rites of the formal Pilgrimage (Hajj) each of which is the survival of one historical event and that they are some effective hints and implicit declarations to the matters of refinement of character and social philosophies. (The description of each philosophy will be delivered

when commenting on the concerning verses).

Commentary

Now it is necessary to notify that the verse indicates that all these actions should be fulfilled for the sake of Allah and according to His commandments, not for making display and pretence or for the sake of idols.

Therefore, the first clause of the verse proclaims that in the deeds of Pilgrimage, both the formal Pilgrimage (Hajj) and the lesser formal one ('Umrah), no motive should interfere but seeking to be nearer to Allah.

***And complete the Hajj** (**Pilgrimage**) **and the 'Umrah for the sake of Allah**... (**2:196**).*

Then it adds that if something like sickness and fear of enemy happens that hinders you from performing the ritual rites of Hajj and 'Umrah after you are clothed in pilgrim's garb you must sacrifice an animal as it is possible for you.

***...but if you are prevented** (**to complete it**), **then** (**send**) **whatever offering** (**sacrificial animal**) **as may be obtained with ease**... (**2:196**).*

It should be noted, of course, that if the prevention is as a result of sickness and the like and the pilgrim's garb is done for the lesser formal Pilgrimage ('Umrah Mufradah), the sacrifice should be sent to Mecca, but if it has happened from the side of an enemy, the duty of sacrifice must be done at the same place where the prevention has occurred. The Prophet (S) behaved in the same manner in Hudaybiyah, too. But, if the person is in the pilgrim's garb of Hajj and becomes sick, the one must send the sacrifice to Mina.

***...And do not shave your heads till the offering reaches its place** (**of sacrifice**) ... (**2:196**).*

One of the rites that should be done in Hajj (Pilgrimage) is shaving the head (for men and cutting some hair of the head for women). But they must be careful that they are not allowed to do this duty before sacrificing the offering in the place of sacrifice.

***...but whoever among you is sick, or has an ailment in his head, then he** (**should**) **make redemption by fasting, or alms-giving or sacrificing**... (**2:196**).*

The exception is for the person who has an ailment or a difficulty that has to shave before the appointed time. If the person did so, (i.e. shaved his head because of ailment and the like), it is necessary for the one to give ransom. This ransom can be three days of fasting, or feeding six indigents, or slaughtering a lamb.

...And when you are secure, then whoever enjoys from the 'Umrah to the Hajj** (**he should offer**) **of

whatever offering is easily available (***for him***)***. But whoever finds none*** (***to give***)***, should fast three days during the Hajj*** (***Pilgrimage***)***, and seven days when you have returned…*** (***2:196***)***.***

When you are free from sickness and enemy and you want to perform the 'greater Pilgrimage', you must sacrifice whatever you can from animals such as a camel, cow, or lamb. But if any of you cannot find the animal, or financially is not able to afford it, he must fast three days during the days of pilgrimage (the seventh, eighth, and ninth days) and seven days after returning from Hajj so that it makes ten days.

…these (***make***) ***ten*** (***days***) ***complete…*** (***2:196***)***.***

It is evident that three days and seven days make ten days, yet the Qur'an says that they are totally ten days complete. This meaning may point to the idea that the ten days can be substituted for the sacrifice completely.

This greater Pilgrimage with these orders is for those who are not dwelling nearby the Sacred Mosque. (The known state among Muslim jurisprudents is that everyone who is sixteen kilometres far from Mecca his duty is to follow the rites of the 'greater Pilgrimage', but those who are not far from Mecca by this distance, their duty is the 'separation Pilgrimage' (Hajj al-Qir'an). This subject is detailed in books of jurisprudence furnished with its concerning evidences).

…That is for the one whose family members do not dwell near the sacred Mosque… (***2:196***)***.***

Finally, at the end of the verse, the command is due to piety and that believers be aware not to have any shortcoming about the divine instructions in order to protect themselves from the severe punishment of Allah.

…Have awe of Allah, and know that verily Allah is severe in penalty. (***2:196***)***.***

This emphasis may be for this that Pilgrimage (Hajj) is a great Islamic worship so that if the rites of it be not carefully observed and its spirit be neglected, there will be a large loss for Muslims.

This worship (Hajj) is the very one that Imam Amir Al-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a) has considered it the 'flag' and 'magnificent motto' of Islam. At the last moments of his life, he ('a) has remarked in his will, thus:

"Fear Allah (*and*) *keep Allah in view in the matter of your Lord's House* (*Ka'bah*)*. Do not forsake it so long as you live, because if it is abandoned, you will not be spared."*[7]

Some enemies of Islam have also said that while Pilgrimage is in process they cannot gain victory.

One of the great believing men says: woe unto Muslims if they do not comprehend the meaning of Hajj, and woe unto others if they do not catch its meaning!

1. Tafsir al-Baydawi, Vol. 1, p. 40.
2. Majma' al-Bayan, Vol. 2, p. 282.
3. Majma' al-Bayan, Vol. 2, p. 282.
4. Nahj al-Balagha, Letter No. 14.
5. Nahj al-Balagha, Letter No. 14.
6. Nahj al-Balagha, Saying No. 146.
7. Nahj al-Balagha, Letter No. 4.

[1] [1]
SHARES

Section 25 – No Warfare during the Pilgrimage months – Warning against the Hypocrites

No warfare during the Pilgrimage Months – Warning against the hypocrites – Further instructions regarding Hajj – Invitation to complete submission to God (i.e. Islam)

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verse 197

الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَعْلُومَاتٌ ۚ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ ۗ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمْهُ اللَّهُ ۗ وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ ۚ وَاتَّقُونِ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

(***The performance of***) ***the Hajj*** (***Pilgrimage***) ***is in months well-known, whosoever then undertakes*** (***to perform***) ***the Hajj therein, then let there be no intercourse, nor indulge in ungodliness, nor disputing in the Hajj. And whatever good you do, Allah knows it. And make provision, but surely the best provision is piety. So, have awe of Me, O' people of understanding.*** (***2:197***).

Commentary

(***The performance of***) ***the Hajj*** (***Pilgrimage***) ***is in months well-known…*** (***2:197***).

In this verse, the Qur'an remarks that the rites of Pilgrimage (Hajj) should be fulfilled in certain months of the year not throughout it. The books of tradition, Qur'an commentary, and jurisprudence say that this great worship can be fulfilled only in Shawwal, Dhu al-Qa'dah, and during the first ten days of Dhu al-Hijjah, (a part of which relates exclusively to the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth days of the month and another part of it can be performed during this whole length of time).

…whosoever then undertakes (***to perform***) ***the Hajj therein, then let there be no intercourse, nor***

indulge in ungodliness, nor disputing in the Hajj… (***2:197***).

This part of the verse indicates that those who have made the performance of Pilgrimage (Hajj) obligatory for themselves, by putting on pilgrim's garb and engaging in the rites of Pilgrimage, should restrain themselves from enjoying even lawful sexual association and committing wickedness. They must avoid obscene and vain debates or foul speech and all that appertains thereto, because the place is the site of worship, sincerity, and abandoning the material worldly pleasures. It is an environment from where the spirit must gain strength and, separating from the world of material entirely, find way into the world of super material. This status should be in a manner that the relation of brotherhood and alliance can be tightened.

Then, it adds:

…And whatever good you do, Allah knows it… (***2:197***).

This is the first reward which is given to a good doer, because the happiness of a true believer is, in the first stage, to know that his Lord is aware of the good action that the one has done for His sake. This, by itself, is very delightful and delectable.

…And make provision, but surely the best provision is the piety… (***2:197***).

In this part of the verse the command unto the believers is due to making provision.

It is said that at the advent of Islam some people, particularly from Yemen, used to journey to Mecca on pilgrimage without sufficient provisions for their sustenance on the pretence that they trusted in Allah's help. But Allah gives sustenance through natural ways and by ordinary means. So, in this section of the verse, the Qur'an enjoins upon the pilgrims to first make the necessary provisions for the whole journey and then, taking it with them, proceed.

By the way, the term 'making provision' may point to a spiritual aspect, meaning that besides this material provision there is another necessary provision which should be made and that is the provision of 'piety' and 'righteousness'.

This phrase contains a narrow hint to this fact that in the journey of Pilgrimage there are many instances for making spiritual provision which should not be neglected. In Mecca, the illustration of Islam, the lively scenes of the self-sacrifices of Abraham, the hero of theism, and some specific manifestation of the splendour of Allah are seen, that which that can be comprehended in no other place. Those who have a vigilant spirit can gain spiritual provisions from this unique journey for their life in this world as well as the coming one.

Then, it concludes the verse by saying:

…So, have awe of Me, O' people of understanding. (***2:197***).

This final phrase addresses the possessors of mind and intellect telling them that they should be pious, because it is they who enjoy the utmost merits of this excellent educational process, while others only share a small portion of it.

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verses 198 – 199

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۚ فَإِذَا أَفَضْتُمْ مِنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ ۖ وَاذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَاكُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الضَّالِّينَ

There shall be no sin for you to seek bounty from your Lord. Then when you hasten on (***in multitude***) ***from 'Arafat, remember Allah by the sacred Monument*** (***Muzdalifah***)***, remember Him He has guided you, although before that you were surely of those who went astray.*** (***2:198***).

ثُمَّ أَفِيضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ النَّاسُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Then hasten on from where the people hasten on and seek forgiveness of Allah; verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (***2:199***).

Commentary

Economic Activities in Hajj Season

At the Age of Ignorance, people considered trading and taking passengers or baggage to different destinations during the Hajj season unlawful (haram) and a sin. They counted the Hajj performances of those who did such activities invalid. At the season of Hajj, Muslims were naturally expecting to know whether the ordinances of that Age were still valid, or they were worthless from the view of Islam. Then, the above verse was revealed telling them:

There shall be no sin for you to seek bounty from your Lord… (***2:198***).

The verse under discussion announces the aforementioned ordinance of the time of ignorance, which counted bargain at the time of Hajj a sin, is incorrect. It proclaims that trade and the like activities are no problem during the season of Hajj, and it does not matter that people enjoy of the blessings of Allah and gain profit from their work and activities.

As Islamic literature indicates about the philosophies of Hajj, in addition to the ethical, political and cultural philosophies, this verse points to the philosophy of economics, too. This idea says that the transportation of Muslims from different points of the world toward the Ka'bah and the formation of that great Islamic congress can be a good basis for a common movement due to economics in Islamic societies. In this great meeting, before or after the rites of Hajj, the thoughtful Muslim minds in

economics can assemble, and, with cooperation and association of each other, establish a firm foundation for the economics of the Islamic societies. They can produce, by the help of correct commercial exchanges, for example, such a strong and fixed economy that they become independent and free from want from enemies and non–Muslims.

Therefore, these trades and commercial exchanges, themselves, are among the means of strengthening the Islamic nations against the enemies of Islam. The reason is that no nation will have complete independence without having a powerful economy. Yet, it is evident, of course that the commercial activities should be set in a position after the ethical and worshipping aspects of Hajj, not prior and dominative to it. Fortunately, pilgrims have enough time for this job both before and after the rites of Hajj.

Husham ibn al–Hakam said that he asked Imam al–Sadiq (‘a) about the reason that Allah enjoined people to circumambulate the House (Ka‘bah) and perform Hajj.

Imam al–Sadiq (‘a) replied: “Verily Allah has created human beings... and has enjoined them to do an action (Hajj) which contains the obedience of religion and is good for the affairs of their world. He assigned that (at the time of Hajj), Muslims assemble from the east and west of the world in order to be acquainted with each other, and in order that every nation makes use (of the productions and) trades of other nations, and that the muleteers and cameleers make profit (in this journey by hiring out their vehicles to others), and that they become familiar with the effects (traditions) of the Prophet (S) (so that those traditions continue to survive by) remembering and not to be forgotten. If it were so that every nation spoke about only their own environment, and whatever there was therein, they would be destroyed and the cities would turn to ruin, and commercial profits would be wasted, and the traditions and signs of the Prophet (S) would be vanished. This is the philosophy of Hajj.”[1]

...Then when you hasten on* (*in multitude*) *from ‘Arafat, remember Allah by the Sacred Monument* (*Muzdalifah*)*... (2:198).

In this section of the verse, the Qur’an’s command is due to this subject that after performing the rites that should be fulfilled in ‘Arafat, they must move to Al–Mash□ar al–□aram (the Sacred Monument), which is located between Mina and ‘Arafat, and remember Him therein.

...remember Him as He has guided you... (2:198).

Here, the speech of the verse remarks that for thanksgiving and being grateful for the guidance of Allah, remember Him (SWT) in Al–Mash□ar al–□aram, a remembrance appropriate to the guidance that He has given you.

At that time, Muslims could realize well the value of this great blessing, viz. guidance, because they were not so far from the time that the inhabitants of Arabian Peninsula had gone astray totally, and could see how Allah had saved them from all those aberrations and misfortunes by leading them to the blessing of this pure divine religion, Islam.

…although before that you were surely of those who went astray. (***2:198***).

Why ‘Arafat?

It is said that ‘Arafat is a land about 24 kilometres away from the center of Mecca where pilgrims halt from noon until evening on the ninth of Dhu al-Hijjah. The origin of this appellation has been differently described.

One of them is that when the harbinger of revelation, Gabriel, showed Abraham (‘a) the rites of Hajj therein, he (‘a) responded: *“I recognized,”*, *“I recognized”* (‘Araftu). But it is probable that this appellation points to another fact, too.

That land, from which the first steps of the performance of Hajj begins, is a very fitting place for the recognition of the Pure Essence of Allah. Verily, that spiritual attraction that man finds in him at the arrival of that indescribable land, is not comparable with that of any desert.

In ‘Arafat, originally everywhere is the same, everything contains a harmony, all pilgrims behave alike in that desert. They have relieved themselves from the noise of the cities and from the tumult and dazzling glare of the material world, busy contemplating therein, under the blue sky, in the clean fresh air clear from sin, where the harbinger of revelation has stretched wings, where accompanied with its breeze the murmur of Gabriel and the manly sound of Abraham (‘a) strengthened with the delightful voice of the Prophet of Islam (S) and the true believers of early Islam, are spiritually heard. In this remindful land where, as if a window had been opened to the supernatural world, not only man can be drowned in the emanation of gnosis of Allah and may follow the common praising murmur of the whole creation but also he might find himself inside his own ego, the which he has lost for a lifetime and has been looking for. If so, he will also become gnostic to his own rank and will comprehend that he is not the one who works hard day and night and greedily pokes about here and there to earn a living and whatever more he obtains, the less his thirst of greed is quenched. He finds out that there is another diamond-like nobility in his soul that he is, in fact, the same worthy existence.

Yes, this very land is called ‘Arafat, the site of recognition. What an interesting and appropriate appellation!

Al-Mash□ar al-□aram

The statements cited about the appellation used for Sacred Monument as ‘Al-Mash□ar al-□aram’ denote that the place is a center for the ‘mottoes of Hajj’, and it is a sign for its great glorious divine concerning rites.

However, it must not be neglected that the Arabic term /mash‘ar/ is derived from /shu‘ur/ which means: ‘sense, consciousness or awareness’.

In that exciting unique night, i.e., the night before the tenth of Dhu al-Hijjah, when the pilgrims, after

passing their training course in Arafat, have moved into Muzdalifah to spend a night long until after sunrise there, lying over the smooth sands under the starry sky, find themselves among a crowd which seems as a small pattern of the Great Resurrection in the Hereafter. This shakening scene, with that pure serenity that the surroundings has, makes the pilgrims, being covered in those innocently plain clothes of 'Ihram, feel a special new spring of thought, understanding and awareness inside their own entity, so that, if they contemplate, they can clearly hear the fall of that consciousness in the depth of their hearts. That is why that venerable place is called 'Mash'ar'.

Then hasten on from where the people hasten on… **(*2:199*).**

By this verse, the Providence has notified the privileges that the Quraish had considered for themselves. The Quraish used to call themselves 'Hums' (those who are firm in religion) and, counting themselves the off springs of Abraham and custodians of Ka'bah, imagined themselves superior to the people of other Arab tribes. Hence, they stayed to avoid joining the other pilgrims in proceeding to the plain of Arafat under the pretext that it was out of the limits of Mecca, though they knew that it was among the rites of Hajj and a part of the creed of Abraham.

In the above verse, the Qur'an tells Muslims that they all must halt in one place ('Arafat) and from there all should go towards Mash'ar from which they totally move to Mina. Thus, that wrong privilege of the Quraish passed off.

…and seek forgiveness of Allah; verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful… **(*2:199*).**

It adds that they ought to avoid those wrong ideas of the age of ignorance and seek forgiveness of Allah because Hajj, or Islam, does not recognize any such distinctions and had already levelled every such difference and distinction. Then, it remarks that Allah is forgiving and merciful.

Explanations

In addition to the aforementioned descriptions about the Pilgrimage, cited in the commentary upon verse No. 196 under the title of 'The Rites of Pilgrimage', there are some detailed explanations given at the beginning of an English translation of the Qur'an, by S. V. Mir Ahmed 'Ali, which are exactly adopted here, as follows:

"It is incumbent on every Muslim who has the necessary means to do it, to visit, on Pilgrimage, the Holy Mosque, the Ka'bah, in Mecca once in his life. The carrying out of this ordinance is subject to the condition that the individual has the means to do it. The main conditions are:

1. The individual must be a major and not a minor.

2. He must have the means to meet the expense of the journey, without detriment to his

ability to continue his business or the means of his living.

3. The health of the individual should permit the journey.

4. There should be no risk of life in the journey. (For exact details refer to 'Fiqh')

The essential formality of Hajj is the Ihram, i.e., the male should remove his stitched clothes and get himself wrapped with two pieces of unstitched, clean cloth, one covering his body from his neck to his loins and another from his waist to his feet. A female should wrap these two pieces over and above her usual clothes.

The Ihram cloth should have been lawfully acquired and it should not be silken or transparent.

The moment the individual puts on the Ihram, i.e., the garb of a Pilgrim, (i.e., a Hajj), he becomes responding exclusively to the call of the Lord which was issued to mankind through the great Prophet Abraham:

***And** (**remember O' Our Apostle Muhammad!**) **when We fixed for Abraham the place for the House, (saying): 'Associate thou not with Me aught, and cleanse My House for those who make the circuits and stand in prayer, and bow and prostrate themselves** (**unto Me**). (**22:26**)*

***And proclaim thou unto the people the Pilgrimage** (**Hajj**)**! They will come unto thee on foot and on lean camel, coming from every remote** (**high**) **way!** (**22:27**)*

Putting on the Ihram, the pilgrim in response to the call of the Lord issued through Abraham, calls:

Labbayka, Allahumma Labbayk! La Sharika Laka Labbayk!

Yes, here I am O' Lord, here I am. There is no partner for thee. Yes, here I am.

Inna al-Hamda Laka, wa an-Na'mata Laka, wa al-Mulka Laka Labbayk'

Verily, the Praise and the bounties are Thine. And the Dominion is Thine. Yes, I am here, O Lord!

Note

The above-mentioned response of Hajj is cited in the aforementioned book. But the exact words that they actually recite now are as follows: Labbayka, Allahumma Labbayk! Labbayka la Sharika Laka Labbayk! Inna al-Hamda wa an-Na'mata Laka wa al-Mulk, la Sharika Laka Labbayk!

It is worth noting that the call of the Lord to mankind, issued through Abraham thousands of years ago

has been made to ring and resound into the ears of men through Islam and today the Holy House of the Lord, the Ka'bah, is visited regularly and punctually every year on the fixed dates in the month of Dhu al-Hijjah, the last month of the Islamic Calendar year.

After putting on the Ihram, the Haji or the pilgrim has to do the following:

1. *'Tawaf',* i.e., circumambulation), i.e., going seven times round the Ka'bah.

2. After the *'Tawaf'* is completed, a prayer (salat) of two Rak'ats, like that of the Morning Prayers, must be performed.

3. After the prayer, the pilgrim has to cut the nails (or the hair). These formalities are performed immediately as the pilgrim arrives in the city of Mecca for the pilgrimage and this is called *'Umrah* and the cutting of the nails (or the hair) is called *'Taqsir'.* This could be performed from the first of the lunar month Shawwal to the 8th of Dhu al-Hijjah.

On the 8th Dhu al-Hijjah the pilgrim should put on the Ihram.

On the 9th Dhu al-Hijjah the pilgrim should go to the plain of *Arafat* and stay there until sunset.

After (the sunset the pilgrim should proceed to the place called *al-Mashar* and stay there at night.

On the morning of l0th Dhu al-Hijjah the pilgrim should go to the plain of *Mina,* offer sacrifice and effect the *Taqsir'* (shaving his head clean).

After this, the pilgrim should put off the Ihram but must remain in *Mina* for two or three nights.

During the day the pilgrim goes to Mecca to perform *'Tawaf* and offer two Rak'at prayer.

After completing the *'Tawaf* the pilgrim should perform the Sa'i between the two hillocks, *Safa* and *Marwa.*

After completing the Sa'i, the pilgrim should conclude the performance by repeating the *'Tawaf* called the *'Tawaf al-Nisa'.*

(Caution: Be it known – the above note about the performance of Hajj, is only a bare skeleton just to give an idea of pilgrimage in Shi'ism – For the exact details one should refer to 'Fiqh').

This completes the pilgrimage and the Haji now returns to Mecca. After the Hajj, the pilgrim proceeds to

Medina to visit the shrine of the Holy Prophet (S) and the graves of the Four Holy Imams ('a) in the Cemetery *'Jannat al-Baqi'* viz.

1. The Second Holy Imam Hasan Ibn 'Ali al-Mujtaba.

2. The Fourth Holy Imam 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn Zayn al-'Abidin.

3. The Fifth Holy Imam Muhammad Ibn 'Ali al-Baqir.

4. The Sixth Holy Imam Ja'far Ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq.

The Mausoleums over graves of the above Holy ones have been demolished and the pilgrims are not allowed by the Saudi Rule to offer any prayers like Fatiha or the recitation of any salutation to the Holy Souls. Every sincere Muslim loyal to the Holy family of the Holy Prophet (S); the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), particularly the Shi'as, feel for the ruined condition of the holy graves and the unwarranted and unreasonable ban on the recitation of either the Holy Qur'an or offering any salutation to the Holy Souls, and earnestly prays to God for the restoration of the freedom to offer the Salutation etc., on the Holy Shrines as it was before, and for the removal of the Un-Islamic ban.

A Few of the Qur'anic Verses on Hajj

Verily, the First House made for mankind is the one at Mecca, Blessed and Guidance for the worlds. (***3:96***)

In it are clear signs; the standing place of Abraham; and whoever entereth it is secure; and (***purely***) ***for God, is incumbent upon mankind, the pilgrimage to the House, for those who can afford to journey thither; And whosoever denieth then Verily, God is Self-sufficiently independent of the Worlds.*** (***3:97***)

The Time for the Pilgrimage and the Discipline Therein

'The pilgrimage' is performed in the known months; so whosoever determines the performance of the pilgrimage therein, there shall be then no foul speech nor abusing nor disputing in the pilgrimage, and whatever good you do, God knoweth it and maketh provision.

'Verily the best of provision is the piety of oneself and fear Me, O' men of understanding'. (***2:197***)

There is no blame on you in seeking bounty from your Lord, so when ye hasten on from *Arafat* then remember God near the Holy *Mash'ar,* Monument, and remember Him as He hath guided you, though before that ye were certainly of those gone astray.

Then hasten on from where the people hasten on, and seek forgiveness of Allah; Verily, God is Forgiving, Merciful. (***2:199***).

So when ye have performed your devotions, then laud God as ye lauded your fathers, rather a greater lauding. But there are some people who say,

...'Our Lord give us in this world, and they shall have no portion in the Hereafter'. (*2:200*).

Hajj is in the months well-known, whosoever then undertaketh the pilgrimage therein, then let there be no intercourse, nor bad language, nor quarrelling during the pilgrimage; and whatever of good ye do, God knoweth it; so make provision (*for your journey*) *and verily the best provision is piety; and fear Me, O' ye people of understanding.* (*2:197*).

It shall be no guilt on your part if ye seek bounty from your Lord (*in trade during pilgrimage*)*; then when ye march from Arafat remember God near the Holy Monument, and remember Him as He hath guided you, although ye were surely before this, of those who had gone astray.* (*2:198*).

Then march ye on from whence the other people march on and seek pardon of God; verily God is Forgiving, Merciful. (*2:199*).

And among them there are some who say, 'Our Lord! give us good in this world and good in the hereafter and save us from the torment of the (*Hell*) *Fire'.* (*2:201*).

These shall have a portion of what they have earned; verily, God is quick in reckoning. (*2:202*).

And remember ye God on the numbered days; and whosoever hasteneth off in two days it will be no sin on him, and whoso tarrieth (*there*)*, on him* (*also*) *there will be no sin and this is for him who guardeth* (*against evil*) *so take ye shelter in God and know ye* (*that*) *unto Him ye shall* (*all*) *be gathered.* (*2:203*).

Disciplinary Restrictions of Amnesty During the Hajj Period

O' ye who believe! kill ye not (*any*) *game while ye are in the pilgrim garb; and whoever among you killeth it intentionally, the compensation* (*of it*) *is the like of what he killed from the cattle, as adjudged by two just men from among you, as an offering to be brought to the Ka 'bah or the expiation* (*of it*) *is the feeding of the poor or the equivalent of it in fasting, that he may taste the heinousness of his deed; God hath pardoned what is gone by; and whoever returneth* (*to it*)*; then will God exact penalty from him, and God is Mighty, Lord of Retribution.* (*5:95*).

The Lawful Game During the Pilgrimage

Allowed unto you is the game of the sea and eating thereof a provision for you and for the travellers; and forbidden unto you is the game of the land so long as ye are in the pilgrim garb; and fear ye God unto Whom ye shall be gathered. (*5:96*).

The Sanctity of the Holy Ka'bah and the Month and the Offerings

God hath made the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, a Sanctuary (***Place of stay in peace***) ***for mankind and the Sacred Month and the Offerings and the*** (***animals with the***) ***garlands; this is that ye may know that God knoweth whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and that God is the Knower of all things.*** (***5:97***). (*For details refer to 'Fiqh'.*)

The Disciplinary Conduct to be followed during the Pilgrimage

In the case of Ihram for Hajj, the repetition of the *Talbiyah* should stop at noon on the day of 'Arafat. The Hajj during Ihram should abstain from the following:

1. *Hunting or helping in any form and utilizing a hunted animal*

2. *All sexual enjoyments, even witnessing a marriage contract.*

3. *Any deliberate action causing discharge of sperm.*

4. *Use of any incense or perfume.*

5. *Any kind of mischief or uttering a lie, or falsehood.*

6. *Any kind of dispute or quarrel particularly it is associated with any kind of swearing by God.*

7. *Killing even any insect on the body.*

8. *Removal of hair on the body, by any means.*

9. *Covering the head and the top of the foot. The head should not be even submerged in the water.*

10. *Sheltering under moving shelters, like umbrellas, hooded cars or carts or aeroplanes. No harm in remaining inside stationary shelters like rooms etc.*

11. *Cutting of nails, trees, plants and herbs.*

12. *Use of cosmetics decorations and ornaments.*

13. *Wearing of weapons unless necessary.*

14. *Rubbing or scratching the body.* (*RF*)

After entering Mecca, one should not leave it before Hajj is over

Wear the Ihram after one of the daily compulsory prayers.

Recite Talbiyah when wearing the Ihram.

Take off the Ihram when the 'Umrah is over, but no shaving to be done.

Remove hair before wearing the Ihram.

Take the Gusle Ihram and Wudu for prayers.

After completing the Sa'y of 'Umrah cut hair or nails.

There are two Tawafs:

(*a*) *For 'Umrah*

(*b*) *In Dhu al–Hijjah.*

At Mina on the 10th.

Stone the three Satans.

Shave head and offer the sacrifice.

After giving the sacrifice come out of Ihram.

On the 11th and 12th also perform the other rites and stoning at Mina.

For the exact details do consult 'Fiqh' books.

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verses 200 – 202

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمْ مَنَاسِكَكُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ آبَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا ۗ فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ

When you have performed your (holy) rites, then remember Allah, as you remember your forefathers or even with more intense remembrance. And there are some men who say: 'Our Lord! give us in this world,' they shall have no portion in the world to come. **(*2:200*)**

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

But there are some who say: 'Our Lord! grant us good in this world and good in the world to come, and save us from the torment of the Fire'. **(*2:201*)**

أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

These shall have a portion of what they have earned; and Allah is quick in reckoning. **(*2:202*)**

Commentary

It is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq ('a) that in the Age of Ignorance when the performance of Hajj ended there usually formed a meeting of people where they used to boast about the fanciful honours that they had owned from their ancestors. They used to explain their stories in detail.

The Qur'an says that after finishing the rites of Hajj remember Allah and speak about Him and His endless blessings in that large gathering. This remembrance of the Lord might be, at least, with the same enthusiasm and affection that you had in your boastings and glory towards your ancestors in the Age of Ignorance, though this one should be even more intense than the former one.

When you have performed your (holy) rites, then remember Allah, as you remember your forefathers or even with more intense remembrance... **(*2:200*)**

This verse also teaches us that greatness and honour is true under the shadow of relation with Allah, not boasting for the vain honours of forefathers,

...And there are some men who say:... (***2:200***)

After that, the Qur'an makes the situation of people clear and points out the standard of thought and understanding of people. There are some groups of people who do not look for anything but the material interest for themselves, and do not seek from Allah but for the same. They say:

...'Our Lord! give us in this world,'... (***2:200***)

These people do not seek for any share of spiritualities, here in this life. They will not have any share of them in Hereafter, either. In the coming eternal world, where all need everything of that kind, they will have nought, and no portion of the good things of the next world will be given them.

...They shall have no portion in the world to come (***2:200***)

The second group is those whose thoughts are not limited to the material life alone. They seek for both the good things of the life of this world, as the primary stage of the spiritual development towards perfection, and the felicity of the next world. So, this verse defines, in fact, the logic of Islam due to the material subjects and spiritual subjects. It condemns those who are drowned only in material ties as well as those who have no regard and attention to the worldly life.

But there are some who say: 'Our Lord! grant us good in this world and good in the world to come...' (***2:201***)

They also ask Him to save them from the painful chastisement of the coming world, saying thus:

'...and save us from the torment of the Fire.' (***2:201***)

It is obvious that the term /hasanah/, which means 'goodness', has a vast meaning in the verse so that it includes all the material and spiritual merits. But, in some traditions, it is narrated that the Prophet (S), in answer to the question that what the goodness of this world and the world to come was, said:

"He who has been bestowed a thankful heart, a busy praising tongue, and a pious wife who helps him in his affairs of this world and the next, then, surely, he has been given the good of this world and the good of the coming world and will be kept off from the torment of Fire."[2]

Evidently, this meaning is among the kind of commenting on a general concept upon a specific one and pointing to the clear examples rather than to be exclusive to these particular ones.

These shall have a portion of what they have earned; and Allah is quick in reckoning. (***2:202***)

Following the foregoing ideas, in this verse it says that these two groups of people will enjoy of what they have obtained, both those who seek Allah for only the things of this life and those who demand Him the good of this life and the next. Neither of them are deprived from what they seek for, but each group will be confined to their own demands.

Allah will reckon the account of all people in the Hereafter in a short time without interfering one person's account with that of another person.

It has been narrated from Imam Amir Al-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a) who said:

"Verily Allah will reckon the human beings in a single whole time similar to (the way) that He provides them sustenance wholly in a time."[3]

So, the Qur'an says:

...and Allah is quick in reckoning. **(*2:202*)**

In his verse, the question of speediness of reckoning from the side of Allah has been pointed out.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 203

وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَعْدُودَاتٍ ۚ فَمَنْ تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَنْ تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ لِمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

Celebrate the praise of Allah during the appointed days* (*Dhal-Hijjah 11, 12, 13*)*, but whoever hastens off within two days, it will be no sin on him, and whoso tarries* (*there*)*, on him* (*also*) *there will be no sin,* (*this is*) *for him who guards* (*against evil*)*. Then be in awe of Allah and know that unto Him you shall be* (*all*) *gathered.* (*2:203*)*.

Commentary

This verse, following to the explanation of the remembrance of Allah at the conclusion of the performance of the rites of Pilgrimage, defines the process of it and that they, instead of vain boastings of the Age of Ignorance, must specifically remember Allah in a few days the minimum of which is two days. These days, based on the frame of reference of the former verses, are the days after the Feast of Sacrifice which naturally are the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth of the month. In the terminology of traditions, these days are called 'the days of Tashriq'. As this appellation denotes, these days are the time when the mind and spirit of a person can be delighted under the light of the performance of those splendid religious rites.

Celebrate the praise of Allah during the appointed days* (*Dhu al-Hijjah 11, 12, 13*)*, but whoever hastens off within two days, it will be no sin on him, and whoso tarries* (*there*)*, on him* (*also*) *there will be no sin...* (*2:203*)*.

In the Islamic literature, it is recommended that after the fifteen daily prayers, (the first of which is the noon prayer on the Feast of Sacrifice and its final one is the morning prayer on the thirteenth day of the

month), the following inspiring phrases be recited; the Arabic transliteration of which are pronounced thus:

Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, la ilaha illa Allahu wallahu akbar. Allahu akbar, wa lillahi al-hamd. Allahu akbaru ʿala ma hadana, Allahu akbaru ʿala ma razaqana min bahimatil-anʿam, wal-hamdu lillahi ʿala ma ablana.

"Allah is great, Allah is great. There is no God save Allah. Allah is great. Allah is great and all praise is due to Allah. Allah is great in that He has guided us. Allah is great in that He has granted us animals for sustenance, and all praise is due to Allah for what He has destined for us."

This part of the verse which says:

...it will be no sin on him... (***2:203***).

may point to the choice of either two or three days in remembrance of Allah. Then, this clause means that there is no sin upon the one who chooses either of them. (And the primary apparent meaning of the phrase is this very one.)

Also, these words may be rendered to the negation of sin absolutely for the pilgrims of the Sacred House. According to this interpretation, after the performance of the rites of Hajj, having been done faithfully and with full attention and sincerity, which ends with the above-mentioned holy phrases, all the signs of former sins and their evil remaining consequences upon the heart and soul of pilgrims will be wiped out. It is at this time that the pilgrims, with clean souls and free from the burden of sins, leave that great site, i.e., that moral training land. The commentators have taken the term /li-man-it-taqa/,

(***this is***) ***for him who guards*** (***against evil***) (***2:203***),

as an attestation to this recent mentioned meaning.

At the end of the verse, it advises us that we mortals should be in awe of Allah and be aware that our path is unto Him and we all will be mustered when our deeds, whether good or evil, will be reckoned and we will be rewarded for them.

...Then be in awe of Allah, and know that unto Him you shall be (***all***) ***gathered.*** (***2:203***).

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verses 204 - 206

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهِدُ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ

And among people is he whose speech in the life of this world causes you to wonder, and he calls on Allah to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the most violent of adversaries.

(***2:204***).

وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَسَادَ

And when he turns back, he strives to cause mischief on the earth, and to destroy the tilth and the stock. But Allah does not love mischief. (***2:205***).

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ ۚ فَحَسْبُهُ جَهَنَّمُ ۚ وَلَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ

And when it is said to him, 'Fear Allah', pride drives him towards sin. So Hell shall be sufficient for him and it is an evil abode indeed. (***2:206***).

Occasion of Revelation

These verses were revealed about a man by the name of al-Akhnas ibn Shurayq. He was a handsome man and of attractive speech. He pretended to the friendship of the Prophet (S) and showed himself a Muslim. Whenever he went to the Prophet (S), he expressed his Faith to him and, though he was a hypocrite, he took an oath that he loved the Prophet (S) and had believed in God. The Messenger of Allah spoke with him warmly and treated him with his kindness and affection.

When there came a conflict between the Prophet (S) and the members of the Thaqif Tribe, that man took Muslims by surprise and killed their beasts. He burnt their farming crops.

Some other commentators have said that he passed by a farm belonging to Muslims and set its agricultural crops on fire. He hamstringed their beasts, too, and, thereby, made his hidden hypocrisy manifest. Then, the above verses were revealed.

Commentary

As mentioned in the occasion of revelation, the verse points to the hypocrisy of some mischief makers and warns the Messenger of Allah (S) against them. It says:

And among people is he whose speech in the life of this world causes you to wonder, and he calls on Allah to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the most violent of adversaries. (***2:204***).

There are some people who, with their smooth tongue, express Faith and indulge in plausible talk with many oaths. But the same persons are the most harmful enemies and hostile ones against Islam; and, hiddenly they stir up quarrels and cause all sorts of mischief: they spoil the crops of the farms, strive to waste and defame the believing men and the religion of the Truth.

Allah uncovers their tricks and makes their interiors manifest for His Messenger that they try in the path of making mischief. If they were true in their statements, they would not cast mischief and destruction, because everybody knows that Allah does not love mischief.

And when he turns back, he strives to cause mischief on the earth, and to destroy the tilth and the stock. But Allah does not love mischief. (***2:205***).

There may come forth this question that why the Prophet (S) treated such people kindly. The reason was for that he was commissioned to accept the statements of all people as long as they did not show the contrary status. And such should be that, of course.

Some commentators have said that the purpose of the phrase /wa'ida tawalla/ *'And when he turns back',* at the beginning of the second verse may have been in the sense of 'government', since the term /tawalla/ derived from the root /wilayat/ means government. Taking this consideration, the commentary of this verse is such: when the hypocrites take the government in their control, they begin making mischief and destruction and stretching oppression and transgression amongst people. Then as the result of the spread of oppression and cruelty, the cities and societies turn to ruin and the lives and properties of people will be in danger. These wicked people are so that when they are prohibited from doing disgrace, their fanaticism and obstinacy will be excited, then, they not only do not hearken to the advices of the benevolent advisers but, with their own specific pride, increase their wickedness and evil actions. Such people cannot be controlled save with the Fire of Hell.

And when it is said to him, 'Fear Allah' pride drives him towards sin. So Hell shall be sufficient for him and it is an evil abode indeed. (***2:206***).

In fact, this verse is a hint to one of other characteristics of hypocrites which is a stable zeal and a harsh pride and obstinacy that drive them to the limits of the greatest evil:

...pride drives him towards sin... (***2:206***).

In contrast to this group, there are the believing people who, under the government of Faith, are apart from this hideous and dangerous quality.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 207

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

And among people is he who sells his self to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is affectionate unto His (***faithful***) ***servants.*** (***2:207***).

Ibn Abi al-Hadid, one of the scholars of the Sunni schools who lived in the seventh century A.H., has

cited in his famous book, *Sharh al-Nahj al-Balagha* (the Explanation of the statements of Imam ‘Ali (‘a), that the commentators totally had said that the above verse was revealed about and in the praise of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib after that he readily slept in the bed of the Prophet (S) on the night known as Laylat al-Mabit.[4] This idea is in wide scale famous so that none can deny it but a pagan or a crazy one.

The explanation of the event precisely is such that the pagans of Mecca decided to elect one person from each tribe to kill the Prophet Muhammad (S) all together in order to prevent the rise of Bani-Hashim tribe in vengeance for his bloodshed. They thought, in that way, they could be free from the Prophet’s Call. But the Prophet (S) became aware of their hostile plot before it was too late. Then, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) accepted readily to sleep in the Prophet’s bed so that he (S) could get out of Mecca safely.

As soon as ‘Ali (‘a) slept in that bed instead of the holy Prophet (S), the Providence questioned His two dear angels, Gabriel and Michael, which of them was ready to be devoted to the other, but neither of them was ready to do that. So, the Lord told them to watch then how ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) was ready to devote his soul for the Messenger of Allah (S).

Many of the Muslim scholars have confessed to the above fact. The Late ‘Allamah Amini has mentioned the names of such scholars in his famous hook: *Al-Qadir*, Vol. 2, p. 48, including *Musnad* al-Imam Ahmad Hanbal, Vol. 1, p. 348.

It is cited in *Atyab al-Bayan Fi Tafsir-il Qur’an* that the book called *Qayat al-Maram* has narrated twenty traditions, nine of which are through the Sunnite scholars and eleven of them are narrated through Shi’ah scholars, denoting that the verse under discussion was revealed on the virtue of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) on Laylat al-Mabit i.e. the night when he (‘a) slept in the Prophet’s bed and the Messenger of Allah (S) migrated to Medina.[5]

One of the books written in the third century A.H. entitled: *Tarikh al-Tabari*, Vol. 2, p. 373 has explained the description of the event of Laylat al-Mabit, the night in which ‘Ali (‘a) slept in the bed of the Messenger of Allah (S). This event is also explained in *Tarikh al-Ya’qubi*, Vol. 2, p. 39.

Ibn Abi al-Hadid expresses in *Sharh al-Nahj al-Balagha*, Vol. 4, p. 73 that Mu’awiyah paid four thousand Dirhams in order that it would be said by people that the above holy verse was revealed upon the virtue of Ibn al-Muljim.

Some of the books from both Sunni and Shi’ah schools, which have vividly considered the revelation of this verse upon the virtue of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a), are as follows:

Iya Ulum al-Din, Vol. 3, p. 238 by Qazali; *Tadhkirat al-Khawass*, by Sibt ibn al-Jawzi Hanafi; *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, Vol. 2, p. 291, by Ibn al-Husham; *al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah*, Vol. 2, p. 29, printed in Maktabat at-Tijariyat al-Kubra, Egypt, by Halabi; *al-Fusul al-Muhimmah*, by Ibn al-Sabbaq Maliki.

Explanations

1. Sometimes it happens that an evil person says something which seems wonderful:

And among people is he whose speech… causes you to wonder… (***2:204***);

but, in comparison with that, a true believer does something that causes the world to wonder:

And among people is he who sells his self… (***2:207***).

2. The most profitable bargain is the one that a person sells his best property, his soul, to Allah, his Creator. Such a bargain is done neither for Paradise nor for being safe from the Fire of Hell, but it is merely performed for gaining His pleasure:

…to seek the pleasure of Allah… (***2:207***).

3. This is important that a person ventures his self and puts his soul in danger on the way of Allah by going forward towards the danger with no fear of it, whether the one confronts that danger or not. Regarding to the occasion of revelation, the praise is for the one who exposes his soul in the process of sale although there happens no adventure.

4. The love and affection of Allah is the best reward. Allah has ordinarily assigned a definite reward for every action in the Qur'an, but in this verse, instead of expressing any sorts of reward, it simply says Allah is affectionate:

…and Allah is affectionate unto His (***faithful***) ***servants.*** (***2:207***).

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verses 208 – 209

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَافَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۚ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

O' you who have Faith! Enter you all into submission (***to Allah in being in peace***), ***and follow not the footsteps of Satan, for he is a manifest foe for you.*** (***2:208***).

فَإِنْ زَلَلْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْكُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

But if you slip after clear arguments have come to you, then know that Allah is the Mighty, the Wise. (***2:209***).

Occasion of Revelation

It is narrated from 'Akramah that this verse was revealed about the Jews who had converted to Islam,

such as: ʾAbd Allah ibn Salam, Thabit ibn Salam, Ibn al-Yamin, Asad and Usayd (the sons of Ka'b), Shu'bah ibn ʾAmr, Bahira al-Rahib, Saʿid ibn ʾAmr, and Ghayth ibn Zayd. They went to the Messenger of Allah (S) and asked him to allow them to glorify Saturday and recite the Torah; and, similar to the custom in the Age of Ignorance, to avoid consuming the milk and meat of camel.[6]

Commentary

The worldly peace is possible only under the Shadow of Faith. The Qur'anic words /silm/ and /salam/ in lexicon mean 'peace' and 'quietness'. So, this verse invites all the believes to peace, and in view of the fact that it addresses the believers, the verse means that peace can come into existence only with the existence of Faith. Thus, war and anxiety cannot be removed only by relying on mere human made rules and laws based on material affairs. Then, it is only by the use of the spiritual power of Faith that human beings, in spite of all their differences, can live peacefully and in fellowship together when they, consequently, may form a worldly government.

O' you who have Faith! enter you all into submission (***to Allah in being in peace***) *...* (***2:208***).

It is evident that material affair such as language, race, wealth, geographical region, and social classes are totally the origin of separation and dispersion. They cannot provide the real worldly peace which needs a firm circle of connection between the hearts of human beings in the world. This linking circle is only Faith in Allah which is beyond those differences. Therefore, a certain worldly peace without Faith is impossible; the same manner that the inner peace and tranquillity in the unity of a person and in his spiritual environment, without having a true Faith, is impossible.

...and follow not the footsteps of Satan... (***2:208***).

As it was formerly mentioned, the Satanic temptations and deviations usually come forth gradually and, according to the meanings of the Qur'an, each of them is counted as the following of a step of Satan.[7] Here, this fact is stated again that deviation from the right and following the stimuli of enmity, hypocrisy, fighting and blood-shedding usually begin from slight and simple stages. Believing people should be aware of their advent in order to stop them. There is a proverb common among Arab people which say: Verily, a destructive fight begins with a slap.

... for he is a manifest foe for you... (***2:208***).

The enmity of Satan against humankind is not something hidden or unknown. Satan has decided and sworn to behave inimically towards man since the beginning of the creation of Adam, and does his best to settle this enmity among the human race. Yet, as it has been described before, this opposition and hostility cannot harm the true believers, but it is a secret alongside the path of spiritual development.

But if You slip after clear arguments have come to you... (***2:209***).

The path is clear; the program is clear; and the destination is also clear; so, there is no room for falling for the temptations of Satan. Yet, if you deviate from the straight path and go astray while you have all of these clear reasons in hand, it will be your own fault. Thus, do know that Allah is both 'Mighty', so that no one can flee from His justice and 'Wise' so that He judges nothing unjustly.

…then know that Allah is the Mighty, the Wise… **(*2:209*).**

Explanations

Another interpretation of the verse says: this verse indicates that the Holy Prophet (S) through this revelation was informed of what will happen to those who joined the ranks of Islam for some interest of their own or other. It is clearly stated in this verse that those who backslide after adopting the faith, may not foolishly imagine that their going astray is going to affect in the least, the cause of God or would cause any inconvenience to the cause of those who believe in God. Those who go astray need not be arrogant as to imagine that they will defeat God's Power or Wisdom. The loss will be of those who go astray and not in the least of anybody else.

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verse 210

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظُلَلٍ مِنَ الْغَمَامِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ ۚ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ

Are they waiting for aught but Allah should come to them in the shadows of clouds, with the angels? The matter has* (*already*) *been decided; and to Allah is the reversion of all affairs. **(*2:210*).**

Commentary

In this verse Prophet Muhammad (S) is addressed, where the Lord, following the previous subject, remarks whether all these available signs and clear evidences and ordinances are not enough to protect people from deviation and being safe from the grips of their obvious foe, (Satan).

Do the followers of Satan's command, besides having all those clear signs, expect that Allah accompanied with the angels, should come unto them in canopies[8] of cloud and yield them some evidences more clear than the present ones? This is impossible, because Allah is not substance. Suppose this impossible happening becomes possible, what is the use of it when it is not needed?

Are they waiting for aught but Allah should come to them in the shadows of clouds, with the angels?… **(*2:210*).**

It is in the case that the whole matter is decreed and determined, and nothing has remained undone.

…The matter has* (*already*) *been decided… **(*2:210*).**

And the destination of everything is to Allah, thus the end of all affairs is unto Him.

…and to Allah is the reversion of all affairs… (***2:210***).

Therefore, the apparently interrogative sentence at the beginning of the verse, in meaning, is a negative question which means such a thing cannot happen. (This is besides that, as we said, the occurrence of this impossible action is not necessary, because all the means of guidance have sufficiently been provided for the human race). So, according to this interpretation, there is nothing hidden in the meaning of the verse; and, therefore, the words of it have exactly and totally been commented on.

But, some of commentators have not taken the initial sentence of the verse as a positive interrogation with a negative sense. They have considered it a kind of warning against the sinners and those who follow the temptations of Satan, (a threat causing worldly punishment or the punishment of the world to come). In this case, the meaning of the verse will be as follows:

Are such people, with those unbecoming deeds and behaviour of theirs, awaiting for the command of Allah and His angels (of wrath) to come upon them for their punishment and put them in the chastisement of this world or the coming world, and put an end to their affairs? Of course, their deeds have no fruit for them but this very mentioned one indeed.

It is also worthy to note the explanation by al-'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at- Tabataba'i in *Al-Mizan Commentary* Vol. 3, pp. 152-153 (English version), about the verse under discussion where it says:

It is self-evident truth, which is also proved by the Qur'an and the sunnah, that attributes of the body cannot be used for Allah, nor can He be described with adjectives of transient things. No such word, phrase of sentence can be used for Him which implies transience, need, deficiency or want. Allah says:

Nothing whatsoever (***is there***) ***like the like of Him.*** (***42:11***).

…And Allah is He Who is Self-sufficient. (***35:15***).

Allah is the Creator of everything. (***39:62***).

There are numerous such verses; and all of them are confirmed and decisive ones to which the ambiguous verses should be referred. It is these confirmed verses which guide us towards the correct interpretation of the ambiguous ones. If any verse apparently attributes to Allah and action or a characteristic of transient things, then it must be referred to the confirmed verses and interpreted in a way which is not below His dignity nor opposed to His beautiful names.

Now here is a verse which attributes the action of 'coming' to Allah. A few other verses also have used this word for Him.

And comes your Lord with the angels arrayed in ranks (***89:22***).

Then came upon them Allah from whence they did not expect (***59:2***).

So Allah came upon their structure from the foundations (***16:26***).

In all such verses, it is necessary to interpret them with such meaning which are worthy of Divine sublimity. We may give them the meaning of, let us say, sending His chastisement upon them or surrounding them with His power of wrath. Accordingly, the meaning of 'Allah should come to them' in this verse shall be: 'Allah should surround them with His power for enforcing His decree on them'.

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1. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, Vol. 11, p. 14.
2. Majma' al-Bayan, Vol. 2, p. 298.
3. Majma' al-Bayan, Vol. 2, p. 298.
4. Sharh al-Nahj al-Balagha, Vol. 13, p. 262, Egypt Edition, 1961.
5. Atyab al-Bayan, Vol. 2, p. 386.
6. Qur'an al-Hakim, Persian translation, by Muhammad Khajawi, p. 263.
7. Refer to the following Verses of the Qur'an, 2:168; 6:142; 24:21.
8. The term /zulal/ is the plural form of /zullah/ meaning: 'awning, sun-shade, canopy, tent... or whatever that produces shade'. Thus, the phrase /zulalin min al-qamam/ means: 'canopies or clouds'.

[1] [1]
SHARES

Section 26 - Rejection of the Signs and the Apostles from Allah

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 211

سَلْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَمْ آتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ بَيِّنَةٍ ۗ وَمَنْ يُبَدِّلْ نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

Ask the Children of Israel how many clear signs We gave them; and whosoever changes Allah's blessing after it has come unto him, then, verily Allah is severe in retribution. (***2:211***).

Commentary

This verse points to the manner of the Children of Israel that how they were entangled with the

punishment of Allah when they changed the blessings of Allah and showed ingratitude after having those clear signs and divine favours.

Ask the Children of Israel how many clear signs We gave them; and whosoever changes Allah's blessing after it has come unto him… (***2:211***).

The purpose of 'change of blessing' is that one misuses the blessings, favours, and material and spiritual sources of authority, potentialities and talents that the one naturally has in his possession on the path of destruction, deviation, transgression, and vicious actions. Allah gave the Children of Israel both spiritual trainees and powerful leaders. He (SWT) bestowed upon them all sorts of material and spiritual facilities and possibilities, but they changed those bounties. That behaviour they had, not only ruined their lives in this world, but also causes that there will be waiting a painful chastisement for them in the world to come.

… then, verily Allah is severe in retribution. (***2:211***).

The problem of 'change of blessing' and its painful resulting fate is not conclusive to the Israelites. At this very present Age, the industrial world is also entangled with this great adversity. The human race of today has so much abundant and different bounties and facilities that no period in the history has recorded the like of them for humankind. Yet, as a result of being distant from the heavenly instructions of prophets and because of 'change of blessing', human beings of this Age have applied those bounties terribly alongside the way of their own destruction. They have produced the most dangerous destructive weapons out of them (those bounties) to ruin the world. Or, they have gained profits by misusing their own material natural potentialities for the spread of transgression, oppression, exploitation, and have changed the world into an insecure and unpeaceful site in all respects.

The initial phrase of the verse:

Ask the Children of Israel… (***2:211***)

is in fact, for the reason that the blessing of Allah be confessed by them, and then, it be remarked why they were faced with that adversity: that they scattered wandering in the world.

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verse 212

زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۘ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

The life of this world has been made to seem fair to those who disbelieve, and they mock those who believe, but those who guard (***against evil***) ***shall be above them on the Day of Judgement and Allah provides with sustenance for whomever He wills without measure.*** (***2:212***).

Occasion of Revelation

Ibn Abbas, the famous commentator, says that this holy verse was revealed about the chief leaders of Quraysh, a minority of wealthy people in their disbelieving tribe, who were living in easy circumstances. They used to mock a group of steadfast Muslim believers, who were poor from the point of finances. These disbelievers said; if the Prophet Muhammad (S) had really been appointed from the side of God and was a noble prophet, the rich and authoritative ones would have followed him. Then, this verse was revealed and answered their vain statements.

Commentary

The occasion of revelation of the verse does not hinder us from taking the verse as a general and common rule or consider it as the perfecter of the previous verse about the Jews. The verse says:

The life of this world has been made to seem fair to those who disbelieve… (***2:212***).

Thus, they were so proud that they ridiculed those believers who were rather poor:

…and they mock those who believe… (***2:212***).

Yet, in the meantime, the attention should also be paid to this condition that:

…but those who guard (***against evil***) ***shall be above them on the Day of Judgement…*** (***2:212***).

The reason for that condition lies in the coming world where the spiritual ranks will be illustrated in their objective forms and believers will be positioned in such elevated high ranks that these miserable people, comparing them to as if the believers are in high sky of honour, feel themselves in the lowest and deepest earthly abode of disgrace. This is not surprising, of course, because the foregoing detailed condition is the fruit of their own deeds:

…and Allah provides with sustenance for whomever He wills without measure. (***2:212***).

These facts are, indeed, some glad tidings for the poor believers and also a severe warning to the rich who are proud and faithless unto the Truth.

And the phrase stating that

'Allah provides with sustenance for whomever (here, the believers) ***He wills without measure'*** (***2:212***)

may point to this idea that Divine rewards, from the view of quantity and quality, are never equivalent to our good deeds. They are bestowed according to His Grace and Generosity, and, also, we know that there is no limit to the Grace and Generosity of Allah.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 213

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنْذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِيمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ ۚ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

(***All***) ***Mankind was but a single nation, then Allah raised Prophets as bearers of good tidings and warners, and He sent down with them the Book with the Truth that it might judge between people on that wherein they differed. And none were at odds over it, except those very*** (***people***) ***whom it was given unto, after clear arguments had come to them, revolting among themselves. So Allah guided by His Will, those who believed regarding that which people had differed about the truth. And Allah guides whomever He wills to the Straight Path.*** (***2:213***).

Commentary

It is understood from this verse that the human race had a simple and plain life at the beginning. Then, later, after the increase of population and the appearance of a variety of tastes among them, little by little, diversities and oppositions arose.

(***All***) ***Mankind was but a single nation...*** (***2:213***).

As some Islamic traditions indicate, this period has been adapted to an Age before the time of Noah (‘a) when people, with little information, used to live a simple limited life.

But, sometime later there appeared some conflicts between individuals when they wanted to gain more and more interests especially by employing others for reaching the foregoing purposes via them. This caused that the classes of people and social levels came into existence.

...then Allah raised Prophets as bearers of good tidings and warners... (***2:213***).

The necessity of a social life is the existence of a firm and just law in that society. This law should be able to solve the problems of people. Allah appointed the prophets for solving the problems and removing the opposition created thereby. He (SWT) sent some heavenly Books down to them, but some arrogant groups consciously stood against the invitation of the prophets and produced a new conflict, added to their former ones.

...and He sent down with them the Book with the Truth... (***2:213***).

In this way, of course, Allah led some receptive people to His guidance with His grace and favour, and left those who, as a result of envy, jealousy, force, or oppression, resisted against the truth alone to themselves until they receive their retribution.

…that it might judge between people on that wherein they differed… **(*2:213*).**

Explanations

1. The larger the number of contemporary people in one region is, the more variety of demands will arise; and, when the life is simpler and the number of people is smaller, the less the contradictions will be.

2. Wherever there lies a dispute, there needs a judge. Human made laws and civilizations are not able to solve the discords of mankind, because all human groups or individuals usually look for their own personal needs or demands. The solution of the human problems should be made up via the path of Divine prophets and through the revealed laws which are free from any fault and falsification because they are sent down from the side of Allah (SWT) and by an infallible figure, i.e. a godly prophet.

…And none were at odds over it, except those very* (*people*) *whom it was given unto… **(*2:213*).**

3. The best way of solution to contradictions is Faith in the Resurrection. This doctrine utilizes the subject of glad tidings to prevent the appearance of contradictions and uses the subject of warning as its remedy.

4. The worst kind of contradiction is the intentional one which comes forth with the aim of jealousy and oppression while there are clear evidences available.

…after clear arguments had come to them, revolting among themselves… **(*2:213*).**

5. The path to the solution of contradiction, therefore, is belief in Truth and obeying the law of prophets:

…So Allah guided by His Will, those who believed… **(*2:213*).**

6. The critical statement of the Qur'an is targeted to that pertinacious contradiction in which a person does not accept the judgement of prophets appointed by Allah based on the Divine Law, else the contradictions and disputes that finally surrender to justice are not objected. This kind of diversity is similar to the two pans or scales of a balance which move up and down until one finally parallels with the other.

…regarding that which people had differed about the truth… **(*2:213*).**

7. There sometimes appear disputes between the believers, too, but they will be led under the guardianship of Allah; while disbelievers will be wandering in darkness forever.

…And Allah guides whomever He wills to the Straight Path. **(*2:213*).**

8. Rescue from contradiction is, surely, counted 'the Straight Path.'

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verse 214

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ ۖ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَىٰ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ

Or did you suppose you would enter Paradise untouched by the suffering which was endured by those before you? They were afflicted by distress and adversity and were so shaken that the Messenger and those who believed with him said, 'When will Allah's help (come)?' Surely Allah's help is (always) nigh! (2:214).

Occasion of Revelation

Some of the commentators say that this verse was revealed on the occasion of the battle of Ahzab, or the Confederate, when the Muslims got impatient and terribly terrified in the battle. So, they, being surrounded by the enemy, began asking about the help of Allah, the Almighty. Therefore, the revelation of this verse invited them to patience and perseverance and made them hopeful of triumph through the help of Allah.

It is also reported that when Muslims were defeated in the battle of 'Uhud, Abd Allah ibn Ubayy, reproaching them, inquired that until when those Muslims were going to give themselves in death and he added that if Muhammad (S) was really the Messenger of Allah, then He (SWT) would not let his companions be captured or killed. At that moment the above verse was revealed.

Commentary

Intense Adversities as a Divine Practice

The above verse indicates that some of the believers thought that the main factor of arriving in Heaven was only the expression of Faith to Allah and, thereafter, no trouble or pain they might tolerate. Hence, Allah would arrange their affairs, they imagined, and destroy their enemies without any effort and endeavour that they themselves might suffer.

Against this kind of wrong thinking, the Qur'an points to the true and usual method of Allah. It says that the believers must be ready to devote themselves and to face with troubles and difficulties along the path of Faith and its influence. These difficulties are, in fact, some trials which make the real Faith from the unreal one manifest. The Qur'an also explains that these trials and difficulties exist as a general law, and that is why they had afflicted the former nations and all previous sects, too

Or did you suppose you would enter Paradise untouched by the suffering which was endured by those before you?… (2:214).

The Israelites, for example entangled with many sufferings in order to be rescued from the oppressive grips of the Pharaoh. When they were amazed and did not know what to do, the grace and favour of Allah came and helped them to win their enemy. This situation was not exclusive to the Children of Israel alone, but, as the above verse points out in the phrase:

…by those before you, (***2:214***)

all earlier nations had a common status from this point of view, too. It seems that this is a Divine practice which is the secret of training and spiritual development in humankind.

…They were afflicted by distress and adversity… (***2:214***).

All dynasties should be involved in the current of adversities and calamities so that they be prepared for some more important and graver adventures, and also, by this way, the efficient and experienced ones be recognized and with repelling the unworthy persons, the society be filtered.

…and were so shaken that the Messenger and those who believed with him said… (***2:214***).

Another point that we must be aware of in commenting on this verse is that, at the end, it proclaims that afflictions and adversities had so intensely encompassed the former nations that even the believing people and prophets, all together, said:

…When will Allah's help (***come***)***?…*** (***2:214***).

It is evident that the purpose, here, is not a protest against the Providence, but this manner of statement is itself a kind of invocation and a plea for help. So, the Qur'an says:

…Surely Allah's help is (***always***) ***nigh!*** (***2:214***).

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 215

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ ۖ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۗ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

They ask you (***O' Muhammad***) ***what they should spend; say: 'Whatever you spend that is good,*** (***from your material and spiritual wealth to avail***) ***for parents, relatives, the orphans, the needy, and the traveller; and whatever you do that is good, verily Allah is All-Knowing of it'*** (***2:215***).

Occasion of Revelation

'Amr Ibn al-Jamuh was an old man who was rich, too. Once he asked the Prophet Muhammad (S) what he would spend as charity and to whom he could give the charity. Concerning this matter, the above

verse was revealed.

Commentary

There are many verses in the Qur'an which speak about charity in the way of Allah. The Lord of the world has variously encouraged Muslims to spend in charity and help the indigent, but the status of the verse under discussion is different. At the time of revelation, some people wanted to know what kind of property they should spend from. So, it says:

***They ask you* (*O' Muhammad*) *what they should spend…* (*2:215*).**

The verse, in answer to this question, besides explaining what should be spent, points to another problem, too. It adds the situations and persons that charity might be spent on. And, as it was mentioned in the above, the occasion of revelation also shows that both problems (the material which should be spent, and the persons whom charity should be given to) had been questioned about.

In reply to the first subject, i.e. the matter that should be dispensed with by the way of charity in the way of Allah, applying the term 'khayr' (good), there has been given a complete, expressive and inclusive answer to the question. The answer simply is whatsoever good that may benefit the others. Thus, it concludes all beneficial capital, irrespective of material or spiritual.

***…Say: 'Whatever you spend that is good,* (*from your material and spiritual wealth to avail*)*…'* (*2:215*).**

In reply to the second subject, i.e. the person and the order in which charity should proceed, a logical series is given. The claim of the parents and of the nearest relatives is made the first concern of the charitable. Then, it refers to the orphans and the indigents before paying to the needy travellers.

***…for parents, relatives, the orphans, the needy, and the traveller.'…* (*2:215*).**

It is self-evident that making provision for relatives, besides the ordinary effects that any charity has, contains a profound result in firmness of their relationship.

***…and whatever you do that is good, verily Allah is All-Knowing of it.* (*2:215*).**

The dispensers of charity should not persist on the matter so that others understand their benevolence, and their good actions should be done for obtaining more sincerity. It seems that the secret of that fact lies in this sense that the One Who gives reward knows everything including whatever deed we do. So, the Exalted One in Whose possession is the recompense of all deeds, with Him are the accounts of all human beings, too.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 216

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهٌ لَكُمْ ۖ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ ۖ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Fighting** (**in the cause of Allah**) **is prescribed for you, although you dislike it. Yet it may happen that you dislike a thing while it is good for you; and it may happen that you love a thing while it is evil for you; surely Allah knows, and you know not.* (2:216***).

Commentary

The previous verse was about charity while this verse is about donating soul and blood, both of which run in the field of devotion, both together in one rank.

This verse states that, it is necessary for you to fight against the enemy. This command has surely been legislated and is incumbent upon Muslims, while humankind naturally is inconvenient with suffering toils and pains.

Fighting** (**in the cause of Allah**) **is prescribed for you, although you dislike it...* (2:216***).

The next part of the verse points to the fact that fighting and struggling with the enemy is basically hard and disagreeable, because it causes the death of some people, together with pain and loss of limbs and properties in an environment of terror and insecurity for some others. Yet, there are always some devoted persons who never withhold of any self-sacrifice in the way of their own sacred aims.

But, the majority of ordinary people are those who, as was reasoned in the above, tend not to take part in the holy struggle and self-sacrificing practically.

The Lord of the world, with a sharp tone, condemns this kind of thinking of theirs, but He opens a new doorway to them. The Qur'an, addressing Muslims, says that you are not aware of the expediencies of affairs. How do you know? There may be something good behind what you suppose is inconvenient, and there may be something evil at the back of what you like. It is only Allah Who knows the whole secret of affairs. Yet, it is certain that those who are studious and clever (not the inattentive people) can find a way to the solution of a part of the secrets of some qualifications.

...Yet it may happen that you dislike a thing while it is good for you; and it may happen that you love a thing while it is evil for you...* (2:216***).**

This verse points to a fundamental principle in the Divine laws of creation and legislation. It develops the spirit of regulation and resignation in man unto these laws. It is so that human members, concerning the Divine laws, should not take their own distinction and concept as a criterion of judgment, because surely

their knowledge is limited in all aspects and, comparing with their unknown quantities, it is naught, or as if it were a drop of water in the face of a sea.

…surely Allah knows, and you know not. **(*2:216*).**

Therefore, they must never frown at such laws which originate from the knowledge of Allah, the knowledge that is infinite from any points of view. But, they ought to know that all of these laws are totally alongside the benefit of the human race whether they are the laws of legislation such as: Holy War, alms tax, and the like of them, or the laws of creation and the incidents that occasionally occur in life and are never avoidable. They are like death and grievous inflictions unto our friends and relatives which come forth unexpectedly and unavoidably; or like the future secrets which are concealed from Man, and the similar subjects.

However, Holy War is one of the important applications of Islam. There are many verses of the Qur'an as well as Islamic traditions from Prophet Muhammad (S) and Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) found upon the importance and virtue of Holy War.

It is narrated in a tradition from the Prophet (S) who said: *"Good deeds comparing with Holy War in the way of* Allah *are not but a corpse in an unfathomable sea."*[1]

It is also narrated from Imam al-Sadiq ('a) who said: *"Holy War* (*in Islam*) *is the best* (*of all*) *things next to the obligatory duties* (*such as prayers, fasting, Hajj and alms tax*)*."*[2]

Again, the Messenger of Allah (S) is narrated who has said: *"Heaven has a door which is called the Door of Strivers."*[3]

Holy War has not been allocated only to Islam. Other Divine religions before Islam had also had it, as the current Torah has narrated the injunctions of Moses ('a) about fighting with several tribes other than the Israelites. Some definite references among them are; Deuteronomy, Chapters 7, 13, and Chapter 20; Exodus, Chapter 32; and Numbers, Chapter 31.

The prophet Jesus ('a) also has been commissioned to Holy War as it is recognized from Matthew, Chapter 10, No. 34 and Luke, Chapter 19, No. 27 and Chapter 22, No. 36.

Some stories of a few other former prophets who fought against disbelievers are referred to in the Qur'an, too. A few examples are:

Surah Aali-Imran, 3:47; Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:246; Surah Al-Maidah, 5:27.[4]

A. Referential text from the Book of the *Old Testament,* referred to in the above, are as follows:

The fifth book of Moses called Deuteronomy; Chapter 7, p. 219 No. 2 to 5 says:

2. And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy

them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them:

3. Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.

4. For they will turn away thy son from following me that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.

5. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.

And, Deuteronomy, Chapter 13, pp. 227 and 228, No. 9 and 15 say:

9. But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

10. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

11. And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you.

12. If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities, which the Lord thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying,

13. Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known;

14. Then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you;

15. Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword.

Again, Deuteronomy, Chapter 20, p. 234, No. 1–4 says:

1. When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

2. And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people,

3. And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them;

4. For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

Also, in the second book of Moses, called: Exodus; Chapter 32, pp. 106–107, No. 27–29, it says:

27. And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.

28. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.

29. For Moses had said, consecrate yourselves to day to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

However, in the fourth book of Moses called: Numbers, Chapter 31, p. 201, No. 1–12 says thus:

1. And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying,

2. Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people.

3. And Moses spoke unto the people, saying, Arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the Lord of Midian.

4. Of every tribe a thousand, throughout all the tribes of Israel, shall ye send to the war.

5. So there were delivered out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand of every tribe, twelve thousand armed for war.

6. And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand of every tribe, them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war, with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand.

7. And they warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses; and they slew all the males.

8. And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.

9. And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods.

10. And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles, with fire.

11. And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, both of men and of beasts.

12. And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil, unto Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which are by Jordan

near Jericho.

B. The referential texts from the Book of *New Testament* are as follows:

a. The Gospel according to St. Matthew, Chapter 10, P.902, and No. 34; such is recorded:

34. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

b. The Gospel according to St. Luke, Chapter 19, p. 1076, No. 27 reports:

27. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

c. And, St. Luke, Chapter 22, p. 1080, No. 36 explains thus:

36. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

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1. Jami'al-Sa'adat and Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 100, p. 89.
2. Al-Kafi, Vol. 5, p. 3.
3. Al-Tahdhib, Vol. 6, p. 123.
4. Atyab al-Bayan, Vol. 2, p. 414.

[1] [1]
SHARES

Section 27 – Questions about various important topics

Persecution during the sacred month – Mischief graver than carnage – Pardon and Mercy for the emigrants and those who strive and struggle in the way of the Lord – Question about intoxicants and gambling, Alms – Orphans – Matrimony with believer men and women.

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verses 217 – 218

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ ۖ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ ۖ وَصَدٌّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۚ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ ۗ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَاعُوا ۚ وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

They ask you (O' Muhammad) concerning the sacred month about fighting in it. Say: 'Fighting in it is a grave (sin); but to bar (people) from Allah's way and to deny Him (to prevent access) to the Sacred Mosque, and to drive its people there from is, a graver (crime) with Allah. Sedition is more grievous than slaughter. They will not cease fighting against you until they turn you back from your religion, if they can. But whoever of you turns back from his religion, and dies disbelieving – such are they whose deeds shall be of no avail in this world and Hereafter; those are the inhabitants of the Fire, wherein they shall dwell forever. (2:217).

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Those who believed and those who migrated (suffered exile) and struggled in the way of Allah – these are they who hope for Allah's Mercy; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (2:218).

Occasion of Revelation

It is said that this verse was revealed about the struggle of 'Abdillah ibn Jahsh. The event was as follows:

Before the occurrence of the battle of Badr, the Messenger of Islam (S) sent for 'Abdillah ibn Jahsh. When he came, the Prophet (S), accompanying him eight men from among the Emigrants, gave him a letter and told him to start on a journey immediately, and after two days of paving the way, then he would open the letter to read and follow what it said. So, after two days of traveling, 'Abdillah opened the letter and found thus: *"When you opened the letter, you go forward to 'Nakhlah' (a land between Mecca and Ta'if), and from there watch the situation of Quraysh. Then report to us the circumstances."*

'Abdillah told his companions the matter and added that the Prophet (S) had commanded him not to force them on that way. So, those who would be ready to be killed might follow him, and the rest could return. All the members decidedly started to go forward with him. When they reached Nakhlah, they encountered a caravan from Quraysh wherein was 'Amr ibn al-Hadrami. That day was the last day of Rajab (one of the Sacred Months), so, they began consulting whether they could attack that group or not.

A few of them said if they left the caravan to continue their way, they would enter the limits of the sacred town, Mecca, where it was forbidden to attack them. Hence, finally, the Prophet's agents invaded them bravely. They succeeded to kill 'Amr ibn al–Hadrami and brought the caravan with two captives to the Prophet (S). The Messenger of Allah (S) said he had not ordered them to fight in a sacred month. Therefore, he did not mix himself with the booties and the captives. The victorious warriors felt annoyed and Muslims thereby began scolding them. Infidels also sarcastically stated that the Prophet Muhammad (S) made fighting, blood shedding, and capturing in the Sacred Months lawful. At that time the first verse of the above verses was revealed.

After the revelation of this verse, 'Abdillah–ibn al–Jahsh and his companions stated that they had strived on that way to obtain the reward concerning the Holy War. They also asked the Prophet (S) whether they had got the reward of the strivers. Then, the second verse in the above was sent down.[1]

Commentary

As the occasion of revelation denotes, the verse intends to answer the questions about fighting in Sacred Months. It clearly proclaims the prohibition of fighting in Sacred Months and counts such a fighting a great sin.

***They ask you** (**O' Muhammad**) **concerning the sacred month about fighting in it. Say: 'Fighting in it is a grave** (**sin**)**…** (**2:217**).*

Yet, it emphasizes that the infidels who have committed great sins such as infidelity to Allah, banning people from being lead to the straight path, expelling the inhabitants of Mecca from their home, trampling on the divine sanctuary and security of the sacred premises of Mecca, where the birds, beasts and plants should be secured, are not rightful to object to a group of Muslims who took action in fighting by mistake during a Sacred Month.

***…but to bar** (**people**) **from Allah's way, and to deny Him** (**to prevent access**) **to the Sacred Mosque, and to drive its people there from is, a graver** (**crime**) **with Allah…** (**2:217**).*

In addition to that, pagans have made mischief, because any subversive move against truthful people and barring them from embracing the theistic creed is a movement to creating a mischievous environment full of infidelity and idolatry. This crime is graver than fighting in a Sacred Month.

***…Sedition is more grievous than slaughter…** (**2:217**).*

Thus, these Qur'anic words address Muslims and warn them to be careful not to be affected by the evil propagations of infidels. It informs them to have insight and be conscious for pagans who always try to convert them from Islam. It says:

…They will not cease fighting against you until they turn you back from your religion, if they

can… **(*2:217*).**

To prevent this situation, the Qur'an warns that whoever of Muslims turns back from the Truth and dies in that status while the one is an infidel, this infidelity nullifies all his good deeds of this world and the next world totally.

…But whoever of you turns back from his religion, and dies disbelieving – such are they whose deeds shall be of no avail in this world and Hereafter'… **(*2:217*).**

When a person, with such a condition of disbelief, has no valid good deeds in Hereafter, reasonably the one will be permanently involved in the torment of Allah.

…those are the inhabitants of the Fire, wherein they shall dwell forever… **(*2:217*).**

There is a description about the Arabic term /habt/ (forfeiture) in *Al–Mizan*, a part of which is as follows:

In short, ***'habt of deeds'*** means their coming to nothing and their being of no effect. It has been said that it is derived from /habata/ which is used when an animal over–eats and its stomach distends, often resulting in its death.

The gist of the verse under discussion, like other verses of forfeiture, is that disbelief and apostasy make the deeds ineffective, i.e., such deeds lose their power to make life blissful. On the other hand, true faith and belief give life to the deeds and they create felicity, bliss and happiness in life. If someone acquires true faith after disbelief, his deeds are given a new life and they become effective in making life blessed and happy (although they were forfeited and ineffective before). Likewise, if he apostatizes after having been a believer, all his deeds become dead, null and void; they cannot make life in this world or in the Hereafter happy. Thereafter, if he leaves his apostasy and comes back to the fold of Islam, it is hoped that his deeds will be revived; but if he dies in the apostasy, the forfeiture will have been confirmed and misery unhappiness will be written down for him.[2]

The Arabic term /jihad/ literally means striving that can be with wealth i.e. spending money in the way of Allah, or with life which means giving away life or getting killed in Allah's way i.e. for Allah's cause.

Those who believed and those who migrated **(*suffered exile*)** ***and struggled in the way of Allah – these are they who hope for Allah's Mercy…*** **(*2:218*).**

This point is also remarked in the second verse that some warriors in the cause of Allah (SWT), as a result of being unaware or being insufficiently cautious, may make some errors, (the foregoing story of Abdallah ibn Jahsh was an example of this meaning), but Allah will forgive them for their greater services that they usually do faithfully and sincerely.

…and Allah is Forgiving Merciful. **(*2:218*).**

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 219

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ ۖ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا ۗ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ

They ask you concerning wine and gambling. Say: 'There is a great sin in both of them and (some) profits for people; but their sin are greater than their profit'. They ask you as to what they should spend. Say: 'Whatsoever can be spared'. Thus does Allah make the Signs clear to you, in order that you may ponder. **(*2:219*).**

Commentary

The statement in this verse is about two questions and their divine answers. The first question is about 'wine' and 'gambling', thus:

They ask you concerning wine and gambling... **(*2:219*).**

The term 'Khamr' in Arabic lexicon means 'a cover', hence the veil that women wear to cover their heads to observe 'Hijab', it is called 'khimar'. Since the alcoholic beverages often delude the ability of the distinction of the person who drinks and, in fact, it covers the wisdom, in Arabic language that kind of liquor is called 'khamr'.

The term 'Maysir' is derived from the Arabic word /yusr/ which means: 'ease, easiness, and facility', as if, in gambling, each of the two parties wants to take the wealth of the other easily.

In answer to the question of some believers about wine and gambling, the verse, addressing the Prophet (S), says:

...Say: 'There is a great sin in both of them and (some) profits for people... **(*2:219*).**

This profit maybe refers to those interests that the producers of wine obtain through planting vineyards or preparing raisins for wine or selling wine; or the money taken as taxes, charges, and custom-duties; or the profit some gain by establishing game-houses. But the sin and interior loss of these two is graver than their exterior profits.

Here are a few disadvantages resulting in drinking wine and gambling listed in some commentary books:

1. Shortening the lifetime.

2. The negative effects on the procreation of babies especially if the intercourse of the

couple happens when the person is intoxicated.

3. The spread of immorality and the increase in the number of crimes such as theft, combat, murder, sexual offences, and dangerous driving accidents.

One of the scholars, expert in natural science has said: "If governments in the drunkard nations close half of the wineries, we will be able to close half of the hospitals and psychiatric asylums."

Gambling is also known among the causes of disturbance, neurasthenic diseases, apoplexies –cerebral and haemocardiorrhagia, the increase of heartbeats, inappetence, paleness, and so on. Those who deal with the factors of crimes (in some societies) have formally issued that about thirty percent of the number of crimes are related to gambling.

By the way, gambling surely has a destructive function in the development of economics, because it wastes the mirth of the useful work.

Gambling has been announced forbidden and illegal in some of non–Islamic countries during the recent years. In England, for instance, that law passed to be executed in 1853, in America in 1855 (where it is again now practiced in some states), in Russia in 1854, and in Germany it passed in 1873.

The second question is regarding the quality of /'afw/ 'charity', when the Prophet (S) is asked about:

…They ask you as to what they should spend. Say: 'Whatsoever can be spared.' Thus does Allah make the Signs clear to you, in order that you may ponder… (***2:219***).

In the Arabic dictionary, the term /'afw/, in addition to the sense of 'pardon' and 'forgiveness', means 'moderation, superfluous goods, and the best thing of the wealth'. Each of these meanings is fitting in the verse; and the purpose of the term /'afw/, here, may conclude all of these senses. That is, if you desire to spend, you should observe both moderation, and do not disburse all your property as charity so that thereafter you yourself become needy, and when you give something to someone, give that of your most beloved things; for the Qur'an says:

By no means shall you attain to righteousness until you spend (***benevolently***) ***out of what you love;…*** (***3:92***).

Explanations

1. When dealing a thing, we must be just. The verse does not connive the profits of wine and gambling, but it propounds the subject so that it animates the power and faculty of contemplation and meditation in us.

2. Both wine and gambling are the means of destruction of body and soul. They are both causes of failure, so, they have come together in the Qur'an.

3. Protect both wisdom and peace. With the prohibition of wine, wisdom and contemplation has been protected; and by the prohibition of gambling, the safety of peace and spiritual and economical security have been guarded.

4. As the commentary books indicate, at the advent of Islam, the prohibition of wine had been introduced step by step until when it was fully performed throughout the Islamic society.

At the call of Islam, people habitually used to drink wine although it had been forbidden in the former religions. The Divine Messages gradually made them ready to accept its prohibition. In Surah An–Nahl, the revelation says:

And of the fruits of the palms and the grapes – you obtain from them intoxication and goodly provision... (***16:67***),

which means you may obtain both spirituous liquor and good provision from grapes, i.e., spirituous liquor is not a good provision.

After that, concerning wine and gambling, the verse under discussion was sent down, saying that their harm, in comparison, is more than their profits:

...There is a great sin in both of them and (***some***) ***profits for people; but their sin is greater...*** (***2:219***).

Then, in another occurrence, a different verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed, and commanded Muslim believers:

...do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated. (***4:43***).

And, finally, the prohibition of wine was completely made manifest and perpetual when the word of Allah announced in Surah Al–Maidah, thus:

...intoxications and gambling...are only an uncleanness, the Satan's work... (***5:90***).

There are so many traditions and narrations from the Prophet (S) and also from the holy Imams ('a) condemning the use of wine and as to what a miserable fate awaits the individual on the Day of Judgment.

The holy Prophet (S), for example, is narrated to have said: *"All intoxicants are prohibited; and, curse of Allah is on liquor, on him who manufactures it, on him who helps its manufacture, on its seller, its purchaser, its distributor, the user of its money, its loader, its bearer, and its consumer."*[3]

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 220

فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْيَتَامَىٰ ۖ قُلْ إِصْلَاحٌ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ ۖ وَإِنْ تُخَالِطُوهُمْ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِ ۚ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَأَعْنَتَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

(***Ponder***) ***over this world and the Hereafter. And they ask you concerning orphans. Say: 'To set right for them*** (***their affairs***) ***is best; and if you become co-partner with them, they are your brethren. Allah knows well the mischief-maker from the peace-maker; and had He willed, He would have surely made, it hard for you. Verily Allah is the Mighty, the Wise.*** (***2:220***).

Commentary

The initial phrase of the verse, ***'over this world and the Hereafter'*** refers either to the subject of charity, which was mentioned at the end of the previous verse, meaning that your charity is for your happiness in this world and the next. This act of spending should, of course, be neither in a manner that you donate your whole wealth so that you fall into trouble in your life, nor in a form of stinginess that causes your deprivation of the divine rewards in Hereafter.4

Or it refers to pondering over that which was mentioned in the former verse. If so, it means that everybody should think about the affairs of this world and the next, because we have to obtain the spiritual rewards of the next world only in this very world. This pondering can simply be contemplating over the problems such as Unity of Allah, Resurrection, the secrets of creation, and the dominating laws of nature in order to understand them and to accept them, although the acceptance of the creed is not conditioned to the recognition of all secrets perfectly. So, the verse says:

(***Ponder***) ***over this world and the Hereafter...*** (***2:220***).

Concerning the question about orphans, the commentary books denote that, when the tenth verse of Surah An-Nisa No. 4 was revealed announcing that those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, swallow fire into their bellies, the families who had orphans in their houses felt anxious so that some of them even exiled the orphans from their houses and some others separated the dishes of the orphans' food from those of theirs. In that situation both the orphans and the householders encountered several annexing difficulties.

Therefore, they went to the Prophet (S) and asked him about the quality of their manner towards the orphans. The Prophet (S) replied to them that if they tried to improve the affairs of orphans it would be better for them. They should not dismiss the orphans and shirk the responsibility of managing them for that their wealth could be mixed with that of theirs while the orphans are religiously their brethren. So, it did not matter that they might mix their properties with each other in the case that their intention in living with orphans was not to swallow their wealth.

...And they ask you concerning orphans. Say: 'To set right for them (***their affairs***) ***is best; and if you become co-partner with them, they are your brethren...*** (***2:220***).

They should also be aware that Allah recognizes good doers from evil doers; and His Will is not to ordain hardship for the believers; and He is, of course, Almighty and All- Wise.

...Allah knows well the mischief-maker from the peace-maker; and had He willed, He would have surely made, it hard for you. Verily Allah is the Mighty, the Wise. (***2:220***).

Explanations

1. Orphans are neither our sons nor our servants, but they are our younger brothers and are counted with us in number:

...they are your brethren (***2:220***)

so, they must live with us and be inside our lives.

2. To shirk the affairs of orphans is not right, but public interest is that we, as a custom, endeavour justly for them with a good intention and brotherliness.

3. It is not important that some individuals claim for improvement, because Allah knows who is a peace-maker and who is a mischief-maker. So, beware not to swallow the wealth of orphans under the pretext of improvement, nor to evade it for the fear of mischief.

4. There is no unbearable duty in Islam, (considering the occasion of revelation of the verse cited in the above).

5. Any improvement given in the life of orphans is valuable. The term 'improvement', mentioned in the verse, has come in an absolute form to encompass all sorts of improvement including, scientific, financial, practical, educational and theological aspects.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 221

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَاتِ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنَّ ۚ وَلَأَمَةٌ مُؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ مُشْرِكَةٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ ۗ وَلَا تُنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنُوا ۚ وَلَعَبْدٌ مُؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ مُشْرِكٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكُمْ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِ ۖ وَيُبَيِّنُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

And do not marry idolater women until they believe, and a believing maid is definitely preferable to an idolater (***free***) ***woman even though she may please you. Nor give*** (***your women***) ***in marriage to idolater men until they believe; and certainly a believing servant is preferable to an idolater*** (***free man***)***, though he may please you. Those invite to the Fire while Allah invites to paradise and***

forgiveness by His Will, and He makes clear His Signs to people, so that they may take heed. (***2:221***).

Occasion of Revelation

Once there came a man into Mecca by the name of Marthad. He was a brave man who had converted to Islam. He occasionally met "'Anagh", the beautiful woman whom he was acquainted with formerly, at the time of Ignorance. She invited him to sinful actions as before, but Marthad, who had become a Muslim, did not accept her wish. Hence, the woman asked him to marry her. Marthad replied that it was contingent on the permission of the Prophet (S). Then, after performing his affairs, he returned to Medina and told the Prophet (S) about the matter. So, this verse was revealed and stated that the idol–worshippers and pagan women are not eligible to be married by Muslim men.

Commentary

The term /nikah/ in Arabic philology means, 'matrimony, wedlock, and marriage'.

Islam has considered a number of conditions for the wife that a man wants to select. These conditions are identified in Islam because this religion takes the matrimonial life important for the sake of the assured heritable effects upon offspring, and, also, for the sake of the training issues of the family environment over the fate of the children. It says, for example, that a pagan woman is not suitable to be married by a Muslim. Supposing that such a woman be chosen for marriage, the resulting children will naturally obtain her spiritualities and qualities under the principle of heritage, and after birth, if they trained by that mother, (whereas it is often thus), these children may have an abominable end. That is why the Holy Qur'an, in this verse, has explicitly prohibited marriage with the women who are infidel or idol–worshippers.

And do not marry idolater women until they believe, and a believing, maid is definitely preferable to an idolater (***free***) ***woman even though she may please you…*** (***2:221***).

In addition to that, if pagans, who are counted foreigners in an Islamic society, penetrate into the houses of Muslims by means of marriage, that society will be inflicted with disorder and interior enemies. In such a situation the different rows and categories therein are not recognized from each other. Hence, the Qur'an, hereby, tells them not to marry with that group of women.

However, Islam has not closed all the doors absolutely to them. Therefore, in order to use their sexual tendency towards their felicity, the Qur'an says:

…Nor give (***your women***) ***in marriage to idolater men until they believe; and certainly a believing servant is preferable to an idolater*** (***free man***), ***though he may please you…*** (***2:221***).

Similar to the statement at the threshold of the verse that prohibits men from marrying idolatress or

infidel women, in this part of the verse, giving girls and women in marriage to infidels and idolater men is prohibited, too. And, similar to the idea that the believing maids are more eligible to marry with than the free idolater women even with admirable beauty or wealth, the believing servants and slaves are more eligible to marry with than the handsome men who are apparently of dignity but disbelieving. In fact, the wedlock of believing women with disbelieving men is forbidden while they are infidels; but there is no sin in marrying them when they accept the truth and believe. This is the very way of return which was also pointed out at the beginning of the verse.

In the subsequent sentence, the reason of the prohibition for the wedlock of believing ones with idolaters and infidels, men and women, is expressed:

…Those invite to the Fire while Allah invites to Paradise and forgiveness by His Will… (***2:221***).

The prohibition of marriage with an idolater is for the reason that they call their companions towards idolatry and some disgraceful manners. Their behaviour, of course, originates from idolism especially when this companionship is via matrimony whose intensity of mutual effect is deeper and more impressive. The fruit of this conduct is the blazing Fire of Hell.

Briefly speaking, acquaintance with them, particularly through the way of marriage, is in acquaintance with Allah and approaching them is, indeed, keeping aloof from the Lord.

The believers, unlike that group, because of belief and high human qualities resulting from their true Faith, call their companions to the Truth and excellence. The fate of this manner is Paradise and the forgiveness of Allah.

In this occasion, regarding the close and sincere relation that the true believers have with Allah, He has applied His own appellation instead of using 'believers' and has said:

…Allah invites to Paradise and forgiveness by His Will… (***2:221***).

Commenting on the last part of this holy verse, the author of *Atyab al-Bayan* says;

Allah (SWT) makes His Signs clear to people to be guided and consequently, they haply take heed. When they recognize the difference between obedience and disobedience, they may avoid sin and follow worship. These Signs are irrespective of revealed prescripts, applicable duties, and ethical instructions; or the verses of macrocosm and microcosm which lead the servants towards the path of felicity and salvation so that they are rescued from the calamities of this world and those of the next world."[5]

…and He makes clear His signs to people, so that they may take heed. (***2:221***).

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1. Sirah Ibn al-Husham, Vol. 2, p. 252.

2. Al-Mizan, Commentary, Vol. 3, pp. 245-247, (English version).
3. Al-Kafi, Vol. 6, p. 398.
4. 'Ilahi-Qumshih-'ie, translation of the Qur'an, Persian version.
5. Atyab al-Bayan, Vol. 2, p. 441.

[1] [1]
SHARES

Section 28 - Regulation about Divorce

Men not to go near women during the monthly course - Glad-tidings to the believers about their meeting Allah - period of waiting for divorced women - Reconciliation after the divorce and re-establishment of conjugal relations.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 222

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ ۖ قُلْ هُوَ أَذًى فَاعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ ۖ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَطْهُرْنَ ۖ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

***They ask you** (**O' Muhammad**) **concerning menstruation. Say: 'It is a hurt'. So avoid** (**intercourse with**) **women during menstruation and do not approach them till they be cleaned. When they are thus purified, then you may go unto them as Allah has commanded you. Verily, Allah loves those who repent constantly, and** (**He**) **loves those who purify themselves.** (**2:222**).*

Occasion of Revelation

Women have a state of menstruation every month the course of which is at least three days and at most ten days. It is discharging of blood from the woman's womb, with some special qualities which the concerning jurisprudent books detail. The woman in this condition is called /ha'id/ 'menstruous woman' and that blood is called 'menstrual blood'.

The existing religious regulations among the Jews and the Christians due to sexual intercourse of men with such women are opposite to each other, so different that it creates questions for a person not from amongst them.

Some of the Jews say that the association of men with such women is absolutely unlawful, even in the form of eating food with them at the same table or living in one room. They say, for example, a man should not sit where a menstruous woman had sat before. So, if the man sat thereon, he would have to

wash his clothing, else it is unclean, /najis/. Or, if he sleeps in her bed, he must wash both his clothing and body. In short, according to the current Torah, a woman, during this period, is considered an unclean one necessary to avoid.[1]

Christians are just opposite with this group. They actually make no difference between the menstrual period of woman and other than that. There is no bar for them to have any association with their wives including sexual intercourse during that period, even.

Pagan Arabs, the ones who were living in Medina in particular, had become, more or less, sociable with the habits of the Jews, and treated menstruous women like the Jews did. They used to keep aloof from their wives when they were in their monthly courses. That very notable difference in those religious notions and the existing custom among their adherents caused that some Muslims posed that question to the Prophet (S). In answer to their question, this verse was revealed.

Commentary

Hygienic Concerns During Menstruation

***They ask you* (*O' Muhammad*) *concerning menstruation. Say: 'It is a hurt'...* (*2:222*).**

The Arabic term /mahid/ is an infinitive form which, here, philologically means 'menstruation'. Thus, the meaning of the verse is; O' Muhammad they ask you about menstruation and its injunctions. In answer to that, say 'It is a hurt'.

In fact, this phrase states the philosophy of the ordinance of the prohibition of sexually approaching women during their monthly course. This matter is referred to in the subsequent sentence. Sexual intercourse with women in this state, besides being repugnant, brings forth much harm. This fact has been approved by modern medicine, too. Some of these harms are; probability of becoming barren and unproductive in woman and man, preparing a good environment for the increase of venereal microbes such as syphilis, gonorrhea, inflammation in the woman's genital organ, arriving of the menstrual material, which is full of microbes, into the man's organ, and so on are explained in the concerning medical books. That is why physicians have also prohibited sexual intercourse with such women.

Discharging the blood of menstruation is due to the congestion of the blood vessels of the womb and the gall of its mucus. The ovary also associates with the action of the congestion of the blood vessels in the womb.

Approximately about the time of menses, the woman's seed passes through a tube called the fallopian tube and enters the womb in order that if the sperm of man comes in, they jointly produce a foetus.

At the first onset, the blood of menstruation is irregular and colourless, but soon it becomes regular and turns red; but at the end, it becomes weak in colour and irregular.

Basically, the discharging blood at the time of monthly menstruation, is the same blood gathered in the interior blood vessels of the womb every month for the nourishment of the probable foetus. We know that the womb of a woman produces an ovule a month. Nearly at the same time the interior blood vessels of the womb, by way of hormonal activity, in order to be ready to feed the foetus, become full of blood. If when the ovule passes through the fallopian tube and enters the womb the spermatozoon be present therein, they form a foetus and the existing blood in the blood vessels will be used as its nutrition, otherwise the existing blood , as a result of appearing some breaks in the walls of the blood vessels in the womb and mucus of the womb, pour out from the womb in the form of menstruation blood.

This statement makes it clear why sexual intercourse during that period is a pollution or a hurt and is forbidden. It also indicates that at the time of discharging, the woman's womb has not any natural preparation to embrace foetus, therefore it will be hurt thereby.

…so avoid (***intercourse with***) ***women during menstruation and do not approach them till they be cleaned…*** (***2:222***)***.***

The beginning phrase of this verse, which enjoins avoidance and prohibits approaching and having intercourse with menstruous women, initially seems similar to the present regulations in the creed of the Jews. But regarding the sentence,

'then you may go unto them as Allah has commanded you' (***2:222***)***,***

which is upon the permission of sexual intercourse with women after being cleaned from the menstruation, it is recognized that the purpose of avoidance and barring the approaching is only abstention from sexual intercourse during that period.

Thus, Islam has paved a moderate path due to the monthly course of women. And, the method of Islam everywhere is always the middle way; so, it is always aloof from excess and defect. Here, it also condemns the excess of the Jews by saying that, any companionship and association with women in their course, except for sexual intercourse, does not matter. It also rejects the method of the Christians who consider no limitation for the association with menstruous women. In this way, Islam, observing the honour and personality of woman and abandoning her humiliation, has prevented the deeds which cause hygienical harms and hurts for both man and woman.

Permitted Sexual Intercourse

…When they are thus purified, then you may go unto them as Allah has commanded you…. (***2:222***)***.***

This part of the verse is, in fact, an explanation of the permitted intercourse with women. It is understood from the terms

When they are thus purified … (***2:222***)

that as soon as women are free from monthly course, sexual intercourse with them is allowed for their husbands; because this phrase has occurred after the qualification of the uncleanliness of menstruation. That is, when women are cleaned from this uncleanliness, the prohibition will be removed. The interpretation of /tatahharna/ ***'are thus purified'*** into ritual ablution /ghusl/ for women is not fitting with the apparency of the verse, because there has not been any statement of obligatory 'ritual ablution' /ghusl/ at the beginning of the verse.

In other words, the apparent meaning of the earlier phrase that says:

'till they be cleaned' (***2:222***)

is that the prohibition is during the time of uncleanliness of a woman; and the phrase;

'when they are thus purified' (***2:222***)***,***

which has begun, in Arabic, with a sign of subdivision, refers to the meaning of the earlier phrase, i.e. when they become cleaned, this prohibition will be removed. And this is the same judgment that our great religious jurisprudents have also chosen in jurisprudence and have decreed that sexual intercourse with women, after being cleansed from blood, and even before performing their ritual ablution /ghusl/, is permissible.

By the foregoing explanation, it became defined that the phrase,

'are thus purified' (***2:222***),

in spite of what some have supposed, does not have any indication to performing ritual ablution, and the obligation of it has been proved through another reason.

In the next sentence, it commands that you may approach your wives in the same way that Allah has ordered you:

…then you may go unto them as Allah has commanded you… (***2:222***)***.***

This phrase can be an emphasis on the previous statement, i.e. you may have sexual intercourse only in the case of cleanliness of your wives, not in other than that.

It may also convey a wider and more general concept, viz. after being cleaned, the sexual approachment should also be performed in the limits of the commandments of Allah.

The commandment can evidently encompass both the genetic commandment of Allah and the divine legislation, because, for the purpose of the maintenance of the humankind, Allah has settled a kind of interest and attraction between the two sexes toward each other that, for the same reason, each party enjoys a special pleasure from the other one. But it is certain that the aim of that status has been for the maintenance of the generations of humankind, and this struggle and pleasure is a preparation for that

aim. Therefore, sexual pleasure should be settled alongside the path of the maintenance of the human race. For this very reason, masturbation, sodomy and the like of them, which are a deviation from this genetic commandment, are totally forbidden. By no means can these disagreeable acts provide the main aim of sexual intercourse and are not even towards it (besides other grave harms that they have).

…Verily, Allah loves those who repent constantly, and (***He***) ***loves those who purify themselves.*** (***2:222***).

The term 'repentance' means return from sin and regret from disobedience to the command of Allah.

The main pillars of repentance are three:

1. The acknowledgment that the one has ignorantly disobeyed the commandment of Allah formerly.

2. To feel sorry about that action.

3. A firm decision upon its abandonment in the future and making an effort to make up for the past.

When such a situation appears in a person, the one is called /ta'ib/ 'repentant', and that action is termed /taubah/ 'repentance'. (More explanation about repentance and its conditions have been detailed and will be cited upon the verses of consequence.)

The objective meaning of the Qur'anic term /tathir/ 'purification' in this verse is 'not to be polluted by sin' and 'refrain from disobeying Allah'.

The occurrence of this phrase at the end of the verse is for that, after the command of the Lord enjoining the avoidance of the believers from sexual intercourse during the monthly period of women, some might not restrain themselves from that because of the intense pressure of their natural instinct and inspite of the order of Allah would commit sin. So, in order that this group of people be hopeful and could return to rightfulness, the Qur'an remarks that if (such) people repent, Allah loves them, while those who keep purified themselves from the beginning and do not pollute themselves with this sin, have a larger portion of the love and grace of Allah.

Old Testament, Leviticus, Chapter 15, p. 138, No. 19–29, concerning women at the period of menstruation, says thus;

19. And if a woman has an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even.

20. And every thing that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean: every thing also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean.

21. And whosoever toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.

22. And whosoever toucheth any thing that she sat upon shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.

23. And if it be on her bed or on any thing whereon she sitteth, when he toucheth it, he shall be unclean until the even.

24. And if any man lie with her at all, and her flowers be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days; and all the bed whereon he lieth shall be unclean.

25. And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation; all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: she shall be unclean.

26. Every bed whereon she lieth all the days of her issue shall be unto her as the bed of her separation: and whatsoever she sitteth upon shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her separation.

27. And whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.

28. But if she be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean.

29. And on the eighth day she shall take unto her two turtles, or two young pigeons, and bring them unto the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 223

نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَكُمْ فَأْتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّىٰ شِئْتُمْ ۖ وَقَدِّمُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ مُلَاقُوهُ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

Your women are a tilth for you, so come into your tilth as you will, and forward (***good deeds***) ***beforehand for yourselves, and be careful*** (***of your duty***) ***to Allah, and know that you shall meet Him. And give glad tidings to the believers*** (***O' Muhammad***). (***2:223***).

Commentary

A Means of Protection for the Human Race

In this verse wives are likened to tillage. This metaphor about women may seem heavy in the eyes of some people because Islam has stated such a speech upon half of the population of the world. But there is a thin and delicate meaning in this comparison. By this statement, in fact, the Qur'an intends to illustrate the necessity of the existence of women in the human crowd as an essential means of protection and maintenance of humankind, not as a means of quenching the lust and venereal desire.

Your women are a tilth for you, so come into your tilth as you will… (***2:223***).

Similar to the need of man for nourishment for the continuance of his life, that without farming and producing food stuff this aim cannot be obtained, the same is for the maintenance of human race wherefore, and as one of the reasons that, the existence of women is needed.

This meaning is counted as warning to those who consider women as a toy and a means of sensuality.

…and forward (***good deeds***) ***beforehand for yourselves…*** (***2:223***).

This phrase again is, indeed, a hint to this matter that the ideal of sexual intercourse is not a mere pleasure and seeking of enjoyment. Believing persons should utilize the gift of conjugal relations for producing and training good and eligible children which is itself a sacred service as a spiritual supply forwarded beforehand for their own coming life in the Hereafter.

Hence, the Qur'an attracts the attentions to this important fact that, in choosing a wife, observe some principles that lead to developing righteous offspring and supplying this great social and manly treasure.

It is narrated in a tradition from the Prophet (S) who has said: *"When a person dies,* (*the continuity of his deeds ceases except for three* (*things*)*; the current charity, the knowledge that be benefited from, and the righteous child who prays for him."*

This means that after death there is no deed for a person, so the one can provide no more supply for himself except by means of three things that if the person possesses them, they be helpful for the mortal after death. These three things are;

The first is 'the current charity', that is the benevolent effects which are always used along the path of social benefits, such as, mosque, hospital, library and the like of them. The second is providing some scientific work, like compiling a useful book, educating some righteous pupils, and so on. And the third is training some righteous children who, by their tongues and good actions, seek forgiveness for their parents who have passed away.

…and be careful (***of your duty***) ***to Allah, and know that you shall meet Him. And give glad tidings***

to the believers (***O' Muhammad***). (***2:223***).

Since the subject under discussion (sexual intercourse) is very important and connects with the most attractive instincts of mankind, that is the very sexual instinct, the Lord has invited them to being careful of the problem of venereal association and being attentive to His commandments; so, He says:

...and be careful (***of your duty***) ***to Allah...*** (***2:223***).

Then, it attracts their attention to the Resurrection that they will meet their Lord and they will see the fruit of their deeds:

...and know that you will meet Him... (***2:223***).

Finally, it gives glad tidings to those believing ones who obey these orders, which are useful for both the material and spiritual lives; saying thus:

...And give glad tidings to the believers (***O' Muhammad***). (***2:223***).

Another commentator has rendered the phrase, /qaddimu li anfusikum/

and forward (***good deeds***) ***beforehand for yourselves*** (***2:223***)

into a rather different dimension of its meaning. This commentary says the phrase mentioned here clearly indicates in every manner or behaviour man should be mindful to see that this move advances something good for him for his future (or the life after death) and that it does not displease God, and a mortal should always remember that his ultimate object is meeting Allah, and this idea contains a good tidings to the believers and a warning to the unbelievers.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 224

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ عُرْضَةً لِأَيْمَانِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَتُصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

And do not make Allah, because of your swearing (***by Him***)***, an obstacle to your doing good and guarding*** (***against evil***) ***and making peace among people; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.*** (***2:224***).

Occasion of Revelation

In many commentary books of the Qur'an including *Majma' al-Bayan* and *Ruh al-Bayan*, the occasion of revelation of this verse shortly is narrated thus:

There appeared a dispute between, the bridegroom and the daughter of one of the companions of the Prophet (S) by the name of Abdallah ibn Rawahah. He had sworn not to interfere in their affairs and not

to make peace between them. The revelation was sent down and prohibited such oaths.

Commentary

The Arabic term /‘ayman/ is the plural form of /yamin/ in the sense of ‘oath’; and the word:

/‘urqah/ means: ‘liable to, object, or impediment’, according to different renderings.

The following messages and points can be taken from the above verse;

1. Do not appeal to swearing as a barrier for doing good:

And do not make Allah, because of your swearing (by Him), an obstacle to your doing good… (2:224).

2. Use no oath as a means for adjusting your escape from your own responsibility; and do not miss good and benevolent actions and, consequently, their rewards thereby.

…and guarding (against evil) and making peace among people… (2:224).

3. Do not misuse Allah and His Holy Name in any occasion. This manner is a kind of boldness and impoliteness.

It is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) who has said;

“Take no oath by Allah whether you are right or wrong...”[2]

4. High values and benevolence should not be abandoned.

5. Beware that Allah hears all statements and He also knows even what have not been uttered, (but they have been thought of). Then take into account every word and thought of yours.

…and Allah is All-Hearing, All-knowing. (2:224).

6. Distributing goodness and benevolence amongst people under the light of piety and virtue are valuable. Hence, these actions should not be abandoned with the pretext of swearing by His Holy Name. And, basically, being mindful of the value of these good things, such oaths ought not to be taken.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 225

لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَٰكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

Allah will not hold you liable for thoughtlessness in your oaths, but He will hold you liable for

what your hearts have incurred; and Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing. (***2:225***).

Commentary

The oaths which have been taken thoughtlessly, carelessly, or at the time of anger and with no intention or will; or the oaths taken because of loquaciousness and in hurry–scurry speaking, are not legally valuable.

Allah will not hold you liable for thoughtlessness in your oaths… (***2:225***).

The liability to an oath is payable only when it is taken deliberately, in a normal situation, and by the Holy Name of Allah for a useful affair. This sort of oath is religiously obligatory to be executed. Therefore, breaking it is unlawful and the atonement of which is detailed in Surah Al–Ma'idah. So, the expiation of it is the feeding of ten indigents or suitable clothing given to them, or the freeing of a slave; but if the one finds the possibility of none of them then, he/she should observe the fast for three days[3]

…but He will hold you liable for what your hearts have incurred; and Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing. (***2:225***).

Messages

The responsibility of man depends on his will and decisions for what he elects. Allah forgives the faults of His servants which have been issued from them in some abnormal conditions.

Surah Al–Baqarah – Verses 226 – 227

لِلَّذِينَ يُؤْلُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ تَرَبُّصُ أَرْبَعَةِ أَشْهُرٍ ۖ فَإِنْ فَاءُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

For those who swear to abstain from their wives, there shall be a waiting of four months; so if then they revert, surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (***2:226***).

وَإِنْ عَزَمُوا الطَّلَاقَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

And if they have resolved on divorce, then surely Allah is All–Hearing, All–Knowing. (***2:227***).

Commentary

One of the methods that was customary in the Age of Ignorance for the separation of a husband from his wife was /'ila'/ 'forswear'. This method was also followed by those Muslims who had newly embraced Islam. The word means 'oath of sexual abstention'.

At the Age of Ignorance, when a man displeased his wife, he sometimes took oath to abstain from associating with her, and by this unmanly way, he created a straitened circumstance for her. He neither divorced her legally to make her free to marry with her desired husband and obtain her own wishes, nor he himself was ready to make peace with her and continue to live with her as a spouse.

For those who swear to abstain from their wives… (***2:226***).

So, the verse under discussion speaks about the design that Islam has planned for that problem to put an end to it. It says that husband has a respite of four months to make the woman free from this captivity and entanglement. He may either renounce his oath, and continue to live with his wife, or legally divorces her and lets her be free.

…there shall be a waiting of four months… (***2:226***).

Choosing the first way, and not to disturb the assembly of the family, is undoubtedly reasonable and also pleases Allah.

Therefore, at the end of the verse, it says:

…so if then they revert, surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (***2:226***).

The concluding sentence:

…surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (***2:226***)

denotes that renouncing this oath will not be counted a sin, (though it is understood from the statement that the essence of taking oath is not an agreeable action).

If the man decides to become separate from her and divorces her, forgiveness and mercy is not assured for his action, and Allah, Who is aware of all secrets, knows whether his sensuality has forced the husband to misuse the law of divorce, or his situation and conditions have really required that. The Lord is All-Hearing unto the apparent execution of divorce and is All-Knowing about the motive of it, as well. So, the Qur'an says:

And if they have resolved on divorce, then surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (***2:227***).

But it should be noted that, although Islam has not absolutely nullified the proposition of forswear, but it has, indeed, wiped out its effects, because, it does not allow any man to separate from his wife and abandon sexual intercourse by forswearing and taking oath. If we see that the verse has given this kind of man a respite of four months' time to decide, it is not for showing that it is really possible to reject any right of the matrimonial rights by forswearing, but it is for the sake that sexual intercourse, as a religious obligation, is necessary at least once every four months. (It is, of course, so that the woman might not commit sin because of this length of time, otherwise, especially for the young ladies that may commit sin

as a result of that long time, the length of time between the sexual intercourses should be shortened as much as that her sexual need be provided for.)

Messages

1. To wipe out the social customs and old traditions treated superstitiously and ignorantly has been a principle among the duties of prophets.

2. Being attentive to the rights and spiritual and instinctive needs of one's wife is a principle for the husband.

3. Sometimes, Man uses the most sacred appellations for the worst aims.

4. For the return of some individuals to the right path and that they make a wise decision, giving a respite is necessary.

5. Islam is the advocator of the oppressed. Women have always been oppressed and their rights have been transgressed all along the length of the history. Therefore, the Qur'an has frequently supported them.

6. People should be encouraged to lead safe and sound lives. The statement;

...so if then they revert, surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (***2:226***).

has occurred in the verse to make man aware of the fact that reverting to the course of life is the secret of receiving the forgiveness and mercy of Allah.

7. Islam accepts divorce, with all its bitterness and ugliness, but it does not bear that a wife be suspended and her situation unclear.

8. Be careful of sensuality and be in awe of a decision that destroys the livelihood of a woman, because:

Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (***2:227***).

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 228

وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ ۚ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنَّ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۚ وَبُعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا ۚ وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

And the divorced women should wait (***not wedding anyone else***) ***concerning themselves for three*** (***monthly***) ***courses; and it is not lawful for them to conceal what Allah has created in their wombs, if they believe in Allah and*** (***in***) ***the Last Day. And their husbands have a greater right*** (***than***

***others*) *to take them back in the meanwhile, if they wish for reconciliation* (*indeed*). *And they* (*women*) *have rights similar to those against them in a fair manner, but men have precedence above them; and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise.* (*2:228*).**

Commentary

In the previous verse the words were about divorce, and then, in this verse, a part of the ordinances of divorce and some of its concerning details are stated. There are five ordinances mentioned in it. At first, it speaks about the 'waiting period' saying:

***And the divorced women should wait* (*not wedding anyone else*) *concerning themselves for three* (*monthly*) *courses...* (*2:228*).**

The Qur'anic term /quru'/, mentioned in the above verse, is applied in the sense of the period of cleanliness of a woman. And, since the accomplishment of divorce should be performed at the time that the woman is clean and has not had sexual intercourse with her husband, this cleanliness is counted once, and when, afterward, she passes two menstruations and becomes clean, one after another, as soon as the third cleanliness finishes and at the moment that menstruation is seen, the waiting period has passed and, at that very status, her marriage is permissible.

The second ordinance is:

***...and it is not lawful for them to conceal what Allah has created in their wombs, if they believe in Allah and in the Last Day...* (*2:228*).**

It is noteworthy that the problem of the beginning and ending of the waiting period, that usually a woman understands herself rather than anyone else has been trusted to the statement of the woman and it is accepted as a document.

The third ordinance understood from the verse is that the husband can revoke during the waiting period of a revocable divorce. It says:

***...And their husbands have a greater right* (*than others*) *to take them back in the meanwhile, if they wish for reconciliation* (*indeed*)...** (*2:228*).

In fact, when the woman is passing the waiting period of the revocable divorce, the husband can begin the conjugal relation again without any ceremonies. This meaning may happen with any word or action which is with the intention of revocation.

Then the verse pays to the fourth ordinance, stating;

***...And they* (*women*) *have rights similar to those against them in a fair manner, but men have precedence above them...* (*2:228*).**

Thus, as there are some rights for men upon the wives, there are also some rights for women upon husbands who are charged to observe them.

Regarding to the clear difference between the physical and spiritual powers of woman and man, the administration of the family is up to the man, and its assistance has been given to the woman. This difference cannot be an obstacle that some women, from the point of spiritual offices, knowledge, and piety be in a higher degree than many of men.

The Arabic term /ma'ruf/ which means a benevolent, logical and reasonable action, has been repeated 12 times in these verses to be counted as a warning against men and women in order that they do not abuse their rights, but by respecting the mutual rights of each other, they should try to fix their conjugal relations and obtain the pleasure of Allah.

Finally, at the conclusion of the verse, it says;

...and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise. (***2:228***).

This concluding phrase of the verse points to the fact that the Wisdom and Prudence of Allah requires that in the society every person undertakes the very duties that the law of creation has assigned for the one and they are adapted to the structure of his body and spirit. The Wisdom of Allah also requires that similar to the duties that have been given over to women, there would be settled some certain rights for them, too, in order that there appears an equality and justice between duty and right.

The significance of this meaning, and the difference between the sexes and their responsibilities, will be explained later when the occasion applies.

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1. The Torah, Leviticus, Chapter 15, p. 138, No.19-29 which is exactly narrated at the end of the current discussion.
2. Majma' al-Bayan, Vol. 2, p. 322.
3. Refer to the Verse of the Holy Qur'an 5:89.

[1] [1]
SHARES

Section 29 - Divorce and the Respect for the Law

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 229

الطَّلَاقُ مَرَّتَانِ ۖ فَإِمْسَاكٌ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٌ بِإِحْسَانٍ ۗ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا مِمَّا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَخَافَا أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ ۖ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ بِهِ ۗ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

Divorce (***is permissible***) ***only twice, then either maintain*** (***them***) ***in honour or let*** (***them***) ***go in kindness. And it is not lawful for you to take anything of what you have given them, unless both fear that they cannot keep*** (***themselves***) ***within Allah's bounds; and if you fear that they cannot keep*** (***themselves***) ***within Allah's bounds, it is no sin on either of them about what she gives up to get herself freed*** (***from the wedlock***). ***Those are Allah's limits; so do not transgress them. And, whoever transgresses Allah's limits - then these are they that are the*** (***wilful***) ***wrongdoers.*** (***2:229***).

Occasion of Revelation

Once there came a woman to one of the Prophet's wives and complained about her husband that he repeatedly divorced her and then revoked again to create damages for her thereby. And it was customary among pagan Arabs that a man could divorce his wife thousands of times and revoke it, while there was no limit in this regard. When this grievance was reported to the Prophet (S), the above verse was revealed and limited the divorce to three times.

Commentary

It was pointed out in the commentary of the former verse that the regulations of 'waiting period' and 'revocation' are for the improvement of the conditions of family status and preventing from separation and dispersion.

But, some of the new converted believers acted according to the old paganism and abused this regulation. To hurt their wives, they divorced them and revoked it again and again. So, this verse was sent down and prevented that ugly and unmanly action. It says;

Divorce (***is permissible***) ***only twice...*** (***2:229***).

This kind of divorce (revocable divorce), of course, should be accomplished in different meetings, not in one session alone.

Then, the Qur'an adds that in each of these two meetings the husband should either keep his wife honourably with him and make peace with her or kindly let her go and separate with her for ever.

...then either maintain (***them***) ***in honour or let*** (***them***) ***go in kindness...*** (***2:229***).

Therefore, the third divorce has not any revocation, because when they had two occasions of dispute and divorce and then peace and revocation were fulfilled, they must put an end to it.

The purpose of the phrase;

…let (***them***) ***go in kindness…*** (***2:229***)

is that the husband ought to pay that woman her rights fully and does not let himself say unsuitable words behind her back after he separates from her. He must not make the attitude of other people bad against her and lets her retain the possibility of marriage. Hence, separation should also be accompanied with kindness and benevolence. That is why the verse continues saying;

…It is not lawful for you to take anything of what you have given them… (***2:229***).

It is not lawful for the husband to take or withhold anything out of what he has given or promised to give i.e. 'Mahr' or dower to the wife. The dower amount is usually large and much of it usually remains unpaid by the husband, the payment of the dower amount, particularly when the divorce is pronounced, is another check upon the husband resorting to an indiscriminate and unnecessary divorce of his wife.

So, at the time of separation and divorce, the husband is not allowed to take back from the woman forcefully what he has given her as a marriage-portion.

In the next part of the verse, it points to the divorce of khul, and says that it is only in one phase that taking the dower is possible. It is in the case that the woman does not want to continue the conjugal life and they both fear that they are not able to observe the limits of Allah in that kind of life.

…unless both fear that they cannot keep (***themselves***) ***within Allah's bounds…*** (***2:229***).

Under this law the wife may seek to get freed of the wedlock by returning the dower to husband, if she has already received it, or to forgo it, if it be still due to her and take the divorce of khul' from Hakim al-Shar', viz. the Islamic judge. Then it says:

…and if you fear that they cannot keep (***themselves***) ***within Allah's bounds, it is no sin on either of them about what she gives up to get herself freed*** (***from the wedlock***). (***2:229***).

In this phase, the origin of separation is, in fact, the wife. So, she must pay the indemnity of this action and let the man, who is willing to live with her, marry another lady with the same marriage-portion.

At the end of the verse, it points to the whole of the ordinances that are stated in this verse, and says:

…Those are Allah's limits; so do not transgress them. And, whoever transgresses Allah's limits – then these are they that are the (***wilful***) ***wrongdoers.*** (***2:229***).

Messages

1. Plurality of divorce is based on plurality of marriage, i.e. there should be a marriage before a divorce. When a man, in one session, tells his wife: 'I divorced you thrice', there has occurred, indeed one divorce, because he has not ceased more than one marriage.

For this reason, in the jurisprudence of Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) it is cited that a number of divorces should be fulfilled in a number of stages; and before every divorce there should also be wedlock. This plurality, besides the apparent indication of the verse, is for a closer common good, too.

It is not convenient that the relation of a family be disturbed in one gathering and by one decision for ever.

2. Earning the life by the husband and obedience of the wife unto her husband are the limits of Allah.

3. The breaker of the law is unjust.

...And, Whoever transgresses Allah's limits - then these are they that are the (wilful) wrongdoers. (2:229).

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 230

فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدُ حَتَّىٰ تَنْكِحَ زَوْجًا غَيْرَهُ ۗ فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يَتَرَاجَعَا إِنْ ظَنَّا أَنْ يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

If he divorces her (for the third time), she shall not be lawful to him thereafter, until she marries another husband; and if he (the latter) divorces her, then it is no sin on (either of) them to return to each other (by marriage), if they think that they can keep Allah's bounds. Those are Allah's limits; He makes them clear to a people who know. (2:230).

Occasion of Revelation

Once, at the time of Prophet of Islam (S), a woman came to him and said she had been the spouse of her cousin by the name of Rifa'ah, who divorced her thrice. After that, she married a man named, Abd ar-Rahman, but he, before any sexual relations with her, divorced her, too. Then, she asked the Prophet (S) whether she could return to her first husband.

The Messenger of Allah (S) did not agree and said that her marriage with that first husband was right if she had sexual intercourse with her new husband. The above verse was revealed.

Commentary

In the commentary of the previous verse this fact was briefly referred to that: after the second divorce, the couple should either follow the path of peace and kindness or separate from each other for ever.

The verse under discussion is counted as a note, indeed, added to that ordinance. It says;

If he divorces her (***for the third time***)***, she shall not be lawful to him thereafter, until she marries another husband; and if he*** (***the latter***) ***divorces her, then it is no sin on*** (***either of***) ***them to return to each other*** (***by marriage***)***, if they think that they can keep Allah's bounds.*** (***2:230***).

Messages

1. Men should not misuse their conjugal rights. They ought to know that they are not free and authoritative upon their wives forever in this regard.

It is narrated from Imam Ridha (‘a) who said: "*Do not take divorce light, and do not cause your wives to incur a loss.*"[1]

2. Not every one knows the secrets and the Wisdom of the Divine laws, therefore some people, maybe, look at these instructions surprisingly, while the secrets of them are clear for those who have insight. Common people often see the apparent of these instructions, but the cognizant recognize the spirit and the depth of them.

3. Muslims should know that the limits of Allah are not liable only to prayers, alms, Hajj, and Holy War. Observing the family affairs are the limits of Allah, too.

…Those are Allah's limits; He makes them clear to a people who know. (***2:230***).

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 231

وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ ۚ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِتَعْتَدُوا ۚ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ ۚ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوًا ۚ وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

When you divorce women, and they have reached their waiting-period, then either retain them in a fair manner or set them free in a fair manner; and do not retain them for injury, so that you transgress (***the limits***)***; and whoever does that he indeed is unjust to his*** (***own***) ***self: And do not take Allah's Signs in mockery, and remember Allah's blessing upon you and what He has sent down unto you of the Book and Wisdom to admonish you thereby, and be in awe of Allah and know that Allah is All-Knowing of all things.*** (***2:231***).

Commentary

This verse, following the subject of the previous verse, states some limits that Islam has legislated upon divorce in order to prevent some disregards unto the rights and honour of women.

The verse indicates that during the waiting-period, even if there is only one day remaining from that term, man is allowed to return to his wife and retain her with the purpose of living together sincerely. But, if the circumstances are not favourable, he can set her free. At any rate, whatever his decision is, either revocation or separation, it should be fulfilled in a fair manner and with goodness and, consequently, far from any revengefulness.

When you divorce women, and they have reached their waiting-period, then either retain them in a fair manner or set them free in a fair manner... (***2:231***).

Then the verse interprets the Qur'anic term /ma'ruf/ (a fair manner) saying that the revocation should be based on serenity and sincerity.

...do not retain them for injury, so that you transgress (***the limits***)***; and whoever does that he indeed is unjust to his*** (***own***) ***self...*** (***2:231***).

Since, at the Age of Ignorance, divorce and revocation had often been used as a means of injury and vengefulness, the verse, with a severe tone, says that retaining a woman as one's wife should not be performed with the aim of hurting her or transgressing her, because this manner is not only unjust against her but also unjust to his own self. This meaning may be for the sake that:

1. The revocation which is based on the purpose of transgression contains no tranquillity and peace with it.

2. From the viewpoint of the Qur'an, in the system of creation, man and woman are complementary parts of one unit. So, for a husband treading the rights of his wife is a transgression and injustice to his own self.

3. The one who acts unjustly against another person, he, indeed, goes forward unto the punishment of Allah and, thus, he has done cruelty to himself, in fact.

Mock not Allah's Laws

Some people usually commit thousands of offences, but to fly from the pressure of their inner sense or, as they imagine, to fly from the chastisement of Allah, they seek protection of some legal devices and cling to the apparent meaning of verses or ordinances.

The Qur'an considers this style a kind of mockery to the revealed verses and the Divine laws. This swerve, unfortunately, is seen applied upon many of the ordinances, one of which is this very one of

divorce. As it was said before, the right of revocation is up to husband for the sake that the wedlock remains steadily all the longer. But some people move exactly opposite to this direction, i.e., abusing the right of revocation, they try to take revenge and hurt the woman. They cover their real cruel feature under the veil of acting upon Law.

This is the same as mockery unto the Qur'an and the Law. The verse under discussion remarks that we beware not to mock the Messages of Allah (SWT) and remember the Divine great blessing of the religion of truth and the heavenly Book, too, which has come for our happiness.

...And do not take Allah's Signs in mockery, and remember Allah's blessing upon you and what He has sent down unto you of the Book and Wisdom to admonish you thereby... **(*2:231*).**

Religion and its collection of regulations has originated from the firm system of this very world and has been legislated based upon the real interests of men. Therefore, it is not right that, by neglecting the requirements, we clasp to the apparent of some ordinances and make up some spiritless frames which put our interests in danger. They are also counted as heedlessness to Allah's Signs.

At the end of the verse, in order to defend from the rights of women and to prevent from the divine ordinances probably being abused, it reminds of this fact that to be careful of your duties to Allah and know that He is aware of all your activities and all the secrets of this world;

...and be in awe of Allah and know that Allah is All-Knowing of all things. **(*2:231*).**

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1. Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih, Vol. 3, p. 502.

[1] [1]
SHARES

Section 30 - Discipline During the Term, Re-marriage Negotiation

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 232

وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ أَنْ يَنْكِحْنَ أَزْوَاجَهُنَّ إِذَا تَرَاضَوْا بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَزْكَىٰ لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

And when you divorce women, and they have reached their waiting-period, do not prevent them from marrying their (former) husbands, when they agree between themselves in a fair manner. With this is admonished whoever of you believes in Allah and the Last Day; that is more virtuous and purer for you; surely Allah knows and you know not. **(*2:232*).**

Occasion of Revelation

One of the companions of the Prophet (S) by the name of Ma□qil ibn Yasar opposed the marriage of his sister with her former husband named ‘Asim ibn ‘Adi. This man, ‘Asim, had divorced her but, after concluding the prescribed waiting-period, both of them were willing to fasten their wedlock again by a new wedding.

For this reason, the revelation was sent down and prevented him (Ma□qil) from opposing such a marriage.

It is also cited in another narration that the verse was revealed when Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah opposed the marriage of his cousin with her former husband. Perhaps, in the Age of Ignorance, this right had been given to many close relatives.

(No doubt, in our jurisprudence, brothers and cousins have no guardianship (wilayat) over their sisters or cousins, but, as we will explain in this discussion later, the meaning of the above verse is a general ordinance about guardians and other than them that neither of these people may rightfully oppose such a marriage; neither father nor mother, nor cousin, nor non-relative persons.)

Commentary

Another Chain Was Broken!

As was stated in the former explanations, in old times women were living bound in the chains of ignorance and were terribly captured by the will, desire, and lust of lewd men without having any regard for women’s affection, thought and decision.

One of the examples of that status was the subject of choosing husband where the like or dislike and willingness of women had no place. Concerning to this style, even when the woman was formally married and then separated from her husband thereafter, her second marriage with him again depended on the decision of her guardian or guardians, although those two (the man and the woman) wished to continue their former conjugal life.

Their guardians, then, used to prevent that wedlock because of their (guardians) own interests or for some vain imaginations and superstitions.

The Qur’an has clearly condemned this style. It says that the guardians and other individuals have not such a right, because when both the man and woman, who are the main elements of marriage, have

unanimity with each other and after that separation they are willing to marry again, opposition of others is meaningless.

And when you divorce women, and they have reached their waiting-period, do not prevent them from marrying their husbands, when they agree between themselves in a fair manner… (***2:232***).

Thus, it is understood from this verse that divorcees need not to obtain permission or agreement of their guardians to marry again, and even the opposition of their guardians, if any, is invalid. Now, the question is about the marriage of the virgin girls that: is it necessary to obtain her guardian's permission? The above verse is silent in this regard and we must refer to the jurisprudent books for its explanation. It only continues saying:

…With this is admonished whoever of you believes in Allah and the Last Day… (***2:232***).

This part of the verse means that these ordinances, that are stated for individuals' benefits, affect on those who believe both in Allah, the Creator of the world, and in the Day of Judgment. It is in this case that a person, under the light of theology, can detach from egoism and, controlling his low desire, rescues himself from deviation.

…that is more virtuous and purer for you; surely Allah knows and you know not… (***2:232***).

This concluding statement points to the fact that the fruit of one's action upon these ordinances is perfectly his, but as a result of insufficient information some individuals may not be aware of the philosophy of divine ordinances; while the Lord, Who knows all the secrets, has assigned these instructions for the sake of protecting their interests and purification and cleanliness of family members.

It is noteworthy that in this sentence, acting upon these instructions are introduced as the causes of both virtue and purity,

more virtuous and purer… (***2:232***)

which means that acting upon these instructions removes both the different impurities, resulted from doing some wrong deeds, from families so that it purifies them, and attains development, improvement, favour and blessing for them.

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verse 233

وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ ۖ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُتِمَّ الرَّضَاعَةَ ۚ وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ لَا تُكَلَّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ لَا تُضَارَّ وَالِدَةٌ بِوَلَدِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ بِوَلَدِهِ ۚ وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَٰلِكَ ۗ فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا ۗ وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ تَسْتَرْضِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَا آتَيْتُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

And the (***divorced***) ***mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years for him*** (***father***) ***who desires to complete the period of suckling. It is*** (***incumbent***) ***upon the father to provide*** (***sustenance***) ***and their clothing*** (***nursing mothers***) ***in a fair manner. No soul shall have imposed upon it a duty but to the extent of its capacity; neither shall a mother be made to suffer harm on account of her child, nor a father on account of his child, and the same devolves upon the heir. But if they desire to wean by mutual consent and consultation, then it is no sin on them. And if you desire to seek a wet nurse for your children, it is no sin on you as long as you pay what you promised for in a fair manner; and be in awe of Allah, and know that Allah sees what you do.*** (***2:233***).

Commentary

In Arabic philology the term /walidah/ is used for 'mother' while the term /umm/ has a wider meaning and, besides applying the term for 'mother', its concept sometimes refers to the 'root' or 'source' of everything.

In this verse, the Qur'an points to several instructions about the problem of suckling and the different rights that mother, child, and father have in this regard. These instructions, on the whole, are seven various ordinances.

Seven Instructions Upon Suckling

1. The right of nursing the child for two whole years is specialized to mother, because it is she who can suckle and look after her child during this time. In view of the fact that the nutrition of the baby, bodily and spiritually, has a close and firm relation with mother's milk and affections, although the guardianship of little children has been given to father, the right of protection and maintenance of a child is given to mother. On the other hand, maternal affections should be observed, too, because the mother cannot bear to see that her bosom is empty from her child and remain silent in such sensitive moments. Therefore, specializing the right of suckling and maintenance of a child to mother is a kind of mutual right which is helpful for both the circumstances of the mother and the conditions of her child.

And the (***divorced***) ***mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years…*** (***2:233***).

2. It is not necessary that the duration of suckling to be positively two years. This two-year-suckling period is for the one who wants to accomplish it perfectly.

…for him (***father***) ***who desires to complete the period of suckling…*** (***2:233***).

But, regarding to the position of the child's body and observing its health, the mother has also the right to diminish this course when she thinks it is favourable.

A tradition from Ahl Al-Bayt (ʿa) says that the whole course of suckling is two years while its incomplete

course is twenty–one months. This idea may be abstracted from gathering the concepts of this verse and this verse from Surah Al–Ahqaf, which says;

…and the bearing of him and the weaning of him was thirty months… **(*46:15*).**

And we know that the course of pregnancy is usually nine months. Therefore, the remaining time, which is twenty–one months, is the ordinary time of suckling.

And, also in view of the fact that, in Surah Al–Ahqaf, the matter has not been cited in a compulsory form, hence, considering the health of the child, mothers may rightfully diminish the suckling months to less than 21 months, too.

3. Mother's expenses for food and clothing during the suckling course, even when she is divorced, is upon the baby's father in order that mother be able to nurse the child conveniently and with a peace of mind.

***…It is* (*incumbent*) *upon the father to provide* (*sustenance*) *and their clothing* (*nursing mothers*) *in a fair manner…* (*2:233*).**

Here, the Qur'anic phrase /almaulud al–lahu/ (i.e. the one for whom the child is born) which is used instead of applying the term, father attracts the attention. It seems the revelation intends to move the affections of the father all the more towards the path of doing his aforementioned duty. That is, if the expenses of the mother and child during the suckling course have been trusted with father to pay, it is for the reason that the baby is his own beloved child and is the fruit of his heart, not a foreigner.

The occurrence of

***…in a fair manner…* (*2:233*),**

here, shows that mother's clothing and food should be given in a scale about the usage and also appropriate to her position. Neither stinginess nor immoderation is right in this regard.

Then, to remove any ambiguity, it explains more about this subject that the duty of a father is due to his capacity, as Allah has assigned no duty beyond the ability of any individual.

***…No soul shall have imposed upon it a duty but to the extent of its capacity…* (*2:233*).**

4. Neither father nor mother should disregard the fate of their child because of their own oppositions. This may cause harm for the mind and spirit of the child which cannot be compensated later.

***…neither shall a mother be made to suffer harm on account of her child, nor a father on account of his child…* (*2:233*).**

Men ought to be attentive to the mothers' right of suckling and protection. They should not tread it by

taking the child from them. By the way, mothers should not abuse the right which is given to them, either, by restraining suckling through some various vain pretexts, or deprive the man from visiting his child.

5. After the death of the father, his heir should undertake this duty and provide the necessities of the mother during the time she nurses the child.

…and the same devolves upon the heir… (***2:233***).

6. The allowance of weaning is given to parents though the previous verses have defined some limits for suckling the child. Parents, with the agreement of each other, can wean whenever they think it is suitable for the physical state of the child.

…But if they desire to wean by mutual consent and consultation, then it is no sin on them… (***2:233***).

That is, if parents counsel and agree to decide to wean, there will be no problem for them.

In the meanwhile, the mother is not obliged to nurse the baby. So, whenever she wishes she can stop it, while it is better for her to forsake some of her own desires for the sake of development of her child and not let herself lose the cooperation and the due consultation of her husband alongside this way, so that the mutual consent, pointed in the verse, actually happens.

7. It is impossible to prevent the mother from nursing her child, unless mother herself refrains from suckling, or there really comes forth a barrier for her. Hence, it says:

…And if you desire to seek a wet nurse for your children, it is no sin on you as long as you pay what you promised for in a fair manner… (***2:233***).

The last part of the above sentence means that engaging another woman to suckle the child instead of mother after consultation and obtaining mutual consent, does not matter. It is of course, upon condition that this manner does not cause the mother's right due to the length of her former suckling to be trodden. This right should be paid to her in a fair manner.

Since disputes and oppositions between man and woman sometimes awaken the spirit of revengefulness in them, and their fate or that of their helpless child may be exposed to danger, and each of them may think of evil planning for the other, at the end of these ordinances, the Qur'an says:

…and be in awe of Allah, and know that Allah sees what you do. (***2:233***).

Note

A thin and delicate explanation is also cited upon this verse which we narrate exactly here: The root, 'darara' meaning harm; in its original form to do harm (transitive) and in its secondary form 'Tadarrar'

meaning to suffer or to receive harm (intransitive). Here the secondary form 'Mudarra' has been used which usually means mutual give and take, meaning neither to harm nor to get harmed. As such this passage means that on account of the child or the disagreement between the parents none of the three (viz. the father, mother or the child) should be harmful to the other or should be harmed by the other. This interpretation covers the various commentaries given by the different commentators.

The implication of the passage regarding the mutual rights of the wife and the husband during the period of suckling of their issues, and the right and the duty of the heir of the husband and the condition for the permissibility of employment of a wet-nurse for the suckling of the issue, there are very subtle points for which you may please refer to 'Fiqh', jurisprudence books.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 234

وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا ۖ فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

***And those of you who die, and leave widows behind, they should keep themselves in waiting for four months and ten (days); when they have completed their waiting period, then it is no sin on you for what they do for themselves in a fair manner. And Allah is fully aware of what you do.* (*2:234*).**

Commentary

Superstition Against Women in Old Times

One of the main problems and basic difficulties for women is their marriage after the death of husband. Since the immediate marriage of the widow with another spouse after the death of her husband often contradicts with affections and keeping the regards of the ex-husband, it is not fitting, with the spirit and sensations of the relatives of the Late, besides that the lack of a child in woman's womb must become certain. So, the above verse has conditioned the remarriage of the widows to keeping themselves in waiting for four months and ten days.

Observing the honour of matrimonial life even after the death of the spouse is a natural innate proposition. That is why there have always been some special customs common on this purpose among different tribes. Sometimes in these social traditions, the behaviour has been so excessive that women would become helplessly captured in a manner that sometimes the worst crimes could be committed upon them. For example, in some tribes it was customary to burn the widow; and in some others they would bury her alive with the man.

Some groups of people used to deprive the widows from their remarriage forever and, thus, those kinds

of widows were isolated thereby.

In some tribes, widows had to stay for a length of time beside their husband's grave inside a black tent and in some dirty shabby clothing, plain and without any ornamentation. They could not even wash themselves during days and nights.

The above verse put an end to all of these superstitions, and, in the meanwhile, it worthily and respectfully supported the principle of observing the honour of matrimonial life by keeping the waiting–period after the death of husband.

And those of you who die, and leave widows behind, they should keep themselves in waiting for four months and ten (***days***)***…*** (***2:234***)***.***

The Arabic term /tawaffa/, which is used in many occurrences in the Qur'an, means 'to take'; and the term /baththa/, which has no past tense form in Arabic, means 'strewing'. So, the verse says the women who lose their husbands have to wait for four months and ten days as waiting–period and abstain from remarriage.

…when they have completed their waiting period, then it is no sin on you for what they do for themselves in a fair manner… (***2:234***)***.***

The sense of /Bulugh al–Ajal/ refers to the conclusion of the period. This part of the verse indicates that after finishing this length of time, women can remarry whoever they want.

The prescribed waiting period of four months and ten days is compulsorily to be observed by a widow whether she had intercourse with the deceased husband or not. In the case of her being pregnant the maximum prescribed waiting period or the period or the delivery, whichever be the later, should be observed.

Dealing with the divorce and the waiting period, it was appropriate to deal with the question of an outsider overtly or covertly proposing to marry the divorced one. Qur'an says there would be no harm provided the talk does not exceed the limit of modesty and no contract is finalized before the conclusion of the waiting period.

In view of the fact that sometimes, concerning guardians hinder the marriage of the widows because of some superstitions and vain imaginations, the verse addresses them and tells them that they have no responsibility in this regard and widows can have their re–wedlock on a proper base with whoever they desire.

…And Allah is fully aware of what you do. (***2:234***)***.***

The guardians should stand away from interfering in their children's affairs, and know that the Lord is aware of everything, and He recompenses all for their good actions and evil actions.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 235

وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا عَرَّضْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ خِطْبَةِ النِّسَاءِ أَوْ أَكْنَنْتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ ۚ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ سَتَذْكُرُونَهُنَّ وَلَٰكِنْ لَا تُوَاعِدُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا ۚ وَلَا تَعْزِمُوا عُقْدَةَ النِّكَاحِ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابُ أَجَلَهُ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

There is no sin on you if you make an indirect proposal of marriage to (such) women, or keep concealed (the intention) to yourselves; Allah knows that you will think of them; but make no promise to them in secret, unless you speak in fairness. And do not resolve on a wedlock until the prescribed period is completed, and know that Allah knows what is in your hearts, so beware of Him; and know that Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing. **(*2:235*).**

Commentary

Can Widows Be Engaged during Waiting Period?

As to the foregoing Qur'anic discussion about the waiting-period of women after their husband's death, in this verse, one of the important ordinances in relation to the widows in their waiting-period is pointed out. It says;

There is no sin on you if you make an indirect proposal of marriage to (such) women, or keep concealed (the intention) to yourselves; Allah knows that you will think of them; but make no promise to them in secret, unless you speak in fairness... **(*2:235*).**

It is, in fact, a natural phenomenon that a woman may think of her future fate after the death of her husband. And, on the other hand, some men may also be in thought of marriage with them because of easier conditions that widows usually have.

Then, continuing the subject, the verse says:

...And do not resolve on a wedlock until the prescribed period is completed... **(*2:235*).**

It is certain that if a person confirms a wedlock which is during the waiting-period, it is totally invalid /batil/. Moreover, if he does it intentionally, that action causes the woman to be unlawful /haram/ to him forever.

Then, it follows saying;

...and know that Allah knows what is in your hearts, so beware of Him; and know that Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing... **(*2:235*).**

That is, Allah does not hasten to punish His servants, because He is 'Forbearing' about what they do.

[1] [1]
SHARES

Section 31 – Extra Provision for Divorced Women and Widows

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verse 236

لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمَسُّوهُنَّ أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً ۚ وَمَتِّعُوهُنَّ عَلَى الْمُوسِعِ قَدَرُهُ وَعَلَى الْمُقْتِرِ قَدَرُهُ مَتَاعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ

There is no sin on you if you divorce women while you have not yet touched them nor settled any dowry on them; yet make provision for them, the rich according to his 'means, and the straitened according to his means; a provision in a fair manner. (***This is***) ***a duty on the doers of good.*** (***2:236***).

Commentary

Continuing about the theme of divorce, there are also some other ordinances in the above verse and the verse after that. It says;

There is no sin on you if you divorce women while you have not yet touched them nor settled any dowry on them… (***2:236***).

This circumstance is, of course, when either the man or the woman, after confirming the marriage tie and before having any sexual relations, understands that they can not live together as a married couple because of some problems. In this case, it is so much the better that at this time they separate from each other by means of divorce and do not let it be postponed to later stages when it surely will become more difficult.

After that, the verse pays to another ordinance concerning the subject, where it says;

… yet make provision for them… (***2:236***).

For the payment of this gift, in fact, the ability of man should also be considered. That is why the verse continues saying:

…the rich according to his means, and the straitened according to his means; a provision in a

fair manner… **(*2:236*).**

Both the wealthy men and the poor men should pay this gift, but due to their ability. And, in view of the fact that this gift has a considerable effect on the woman in preventing her from taking vengeance and freeing her from the pressure or the weight which may fall on her heart as a result of breaking their tie of marriage, the above verse concerns the gift to the benevolent nature of man, and says:

…(This is) a duty on the doers of good. **(*2:236*).**

This idea points to the fact that the payment should be accompanied with benevolence and also performed in a peaceful manner by the husband.

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verse 237

وَإِنْ طَلَّقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَمَسُّوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً فَنِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يَعْفُونَ أَوْ يَعْفُوَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ
عُقْدَةُ النِّكَاحِ ۚ وَأَنْ تَعْفُوا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۚ وَلَا تَنْسَوُا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

And if you divorce them before you have touched them, and you have already settled a dowry on them, then (pay them) one-half of what you have settled, unless they (women) remit it, or he remits it in whose hand is the marriage tie; and that you (yourselves voluntarily) remit (the whole) is nearer to piety. And, do not forget generosity among yourselves. Surely Allah sees what you do. **(*2:237*).**

Commentary

In this verse, those women are spoken about who separate from their husbands before any relations while there have been appointed a dowry for them. It says;

And if you divorce them before you have touched them, and you have already settled a dowry on them, then (pay them) one-half of what you have settled. **(*2:237*).**

This lawful legislation is an ordinance which gives the right to the woman to take half of the whole marriage-portion completely although there has been no sexual intercourse.

After fixing this matter, it pays to some moral and affectional aspects, and says:

…unless they (women) remit it, or he remits it in whose hand is the marriage tie… **(*2:237*).**

The tone of the verse, on the whole, is based upon the principle of **'*fair manner*'** and **'*benevolence*'.** It emphasizes that even divorce and separation should not be mingled with any dispute, conflict and opposition originated from the sense of revengefulness. On the contrary, it should be based on nobility, generosity and forgiveness. It says;

...and that you (***yourselves voluntarily***) ***remit*** (***the whole***) ***is nearer to piety. And, do not forget generosity among yourselves, Surely Allah sees what you do.*** (***2:237***).

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 238

حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ

Guard your prayers, and (***especially***) ***the middle prayer and stand devoutly before Allah.*** (***2:238***).

Occasion of Revelation

At the time of revelation of the Divine Messages, a group of hypocrites did not participate in congregational prayer under the pretext of the hot weather in order to disturb the order of the rows of Muslims. Tracing and following them, some of the true Muslims did not take part in the congregational prayer, either. The Messenger of Allah (S) was annoyed about it so that he threatened them with a probable intense heavenly punishment.

So, as it is narrated in a tradition, in the extraordinary hot middays of summer, the Prophet (S) performed the prayer (midday prayer), in congregation. That prayer was the most grievous canonical prayers for the companions of the Prophet (S) so that it happened that usually there stood no more than one or two lines of them behind the Prophet (S) for midday prayer. In that circumstance, he (S) said he had decided to burn the houses of those who did not participate in their prayer there. Then the verse was revealed and the importance of the noon prayer (in congregation) was emphasized thereby.

The importance of the prescribed daily prayers, especially the midday prayer, is emphasized repeatedly in the verses of the Qur'an, for prayer is the most effective factor in the connection of man with Allah. As an instance, in the above verse it says;

Guard your prayers and (***especially***) ***the middle prayer...*** (***2:238***).

The verse recommends to stand humbly, and truly obedient, before the Lord.

...and stand devoutly before Allah. (***2:238***).

Beware that the heat and the cold of weather, or the engagements of the world, such as wealth or wife and children, do not hinder you from this great duty.

The purpose of /salat al-wusta/ (the midmost prayer) is the very 'midday prayer'.

Note

The Arabic term /wusta/, used in the above verse, means: 'middle, or the best, or the most excellent'.

Commentators differ as to the exact meaning of this phrase. The weight of the authorities seems to favour interpreting it as the *'asr* or the *midday prayer,* since it is mostly neglected and yet it is most necessary to remember Allah in the midst of the worldly engagements.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 239

فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا ۖ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَمَا عَلَّمَكُمْ مَا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ

And if you fear **(*an enemy or danger*), *then* (*pray*) *on foot or riding; but when you are safe, then remember Allah as He has taught you that which you did not know.*** **(*2:239*).**

Commentary

In this verse it emphasizes that you cannot abandon establishing prayers even in the most grievous conditions such as in the battlefield. But in circumstances like that many of the obligations of prayer are diminished, for example, being to the direction of Qiblah, the performances of bowing and prostration in ordinary manner, and so on. Hence, it says;

And if you fear **(*an enemy or danger*), *then* (*pray*) *on foot or riding...*** **(*2:239*).**

Therefore, constant attending to prayers is not only for the time of security and safety, but canonical prayers should be kept always and in any condition.

...but when you are safe, then remember Allah as He has taught you that which you did not know. **(*2:239*).**

And, when you are in security, then prayers in this status have to be kept in the ordinary form and with all their ritual manners and conditions.

It is clear that the thankfulness of servants due to this divine teaching, in which He has taught them the way of establishing prayers both in the secured time and in fear, is by way of the very performance of them, as they should be kept.

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 240

وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا وَصِيَّةً لِأَزْوَاجِهِمْ مَتَاعًا إِلَى الْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ إِخْرَاجٍ ۚ فَإِنْ خَرَجْنَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ مِنْ مَعْرُوفٍ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

And those of you who are about to die and leave wives behind, make a bequest in favour of their wives, a year's maintenance without turning them out; but if they leave **(*of their own accord*),**

there is no sin on you in what they do themselves in a fair manner; and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise. (***2:240***).

Commentary

The Qur'an returns to the problem of marriage and divorce again and deals with its concerning affairs. At first, it speaks about the husbands who are approaching death while they are leaving wives behind them. It advises that they ought to bequeath for their widows a year's maintenance and residence in their homes. Thus it says;

And those of you who are about to die and leave wives behind, make a bequest in favour of their wives, a year's maintenance without turning them out… (***2:240***).

This ordinance is, of course, in the case that they (widows) do not leave their homes, and if they leave the husband's house, they have not any right of maintenance and residence.

…but if they leave (***of their own accord***)***, there is no sin on you in what they do with themselves in a fair manner…*** (***2:240***).

As if for the sake that such women be not anxious about their future, it consoles them at the end of the verse and says that the Providence is able to open a new way to them after the lack of their former husband; and, therefore, there is certainly wisdom in that calamity.

…and Allah is the Mighty, the Wise. (***2:240***).

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verse 241

وَلِلْمُطَلَّقَاتِ مَتَاعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۖ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ

And for the divorced women make a provision according to a fair manner; (***this is***) ***a duty on the pious ones.*** (***2:241***).

In this verse, the Qur'an has paid to another ordinance of the ordinances of divorce. It says;

And for the divorced women make a provision according to a fair manner… (***2:241***).

The ordinance in this verse, similar to what was said in Verse 236, is about the women whom are not appointed a dowry for at the time of wedlock, and they are divorced before any sexual intercourse.

This provision is a gift which is paid from the side of husband, and it is appreciated.

… (***this is***) ***a duty on the pious ones.*** (***2:241***).

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 242

كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

Thus Allah makes clear to you His Signs, so that you might understand. (***2:242***).

Commentary

In this verse, which is the last verse from the group of verses about divorce, the Qur'an says:

Thus Allah makes clear to you His Signs, so that you might understand. (***2:242***).

It is evident that the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase / la'allakum ta'qilun / ***'so that you might understand'*** is that the intention of movement from the beginning should be towards the destination of 'action'; else, mere contemplation upon ordinances and understanding them, with no deed, will be fruitless.

[1] [1]
SHARES

Section 32 - Fight in the Cause of Allah. References to the Conduct of the Ancient People

Death caused by Allah against those who refused to fight when they were ordained - Muslims enjoined to sacrifice their lives and their wealth in the cause of Allah - Saul's kingdom over Israel and their demur against Saul being chosen as their king

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 243

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ مُوتُوا ثُمَّ أَحْيَاهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ

Have you not considered those (***of old***) ***who fled their homes, though they were thousands*** (***in number***)***, for fear of death? Then Allah said to them: 'Die!'*** (***and they died***)***; then He restored them***

to life. Truly Allah is gracious to people, but most people are not thankful. (***2:243***).

Occasion of Revelation

Once, one of the cities or Syria became smitten with a plague and people passed away one after another. At that time, some people, hoping that they might flee from the grips of death, abandoned their homeland.

After leaving their environment and escaping from death, they felt powerful and independent in them. They, neglecting the Will of Allah and expecting the natural phenomena to help them, became proud and haughty. Therefore, the Lord destroyed them in that desert by the same sickness.

Commentary

This verse indirectly and also instructively points to the awesome fate of one of the old nations. They encountered with a terrible infectious disease in their environment where thousands of them fled from.

Have you not considered those (***of old***) ***who fled their homes, though they were thousands*** (***in number***)***, for fear of death?…*** (***2:243***).

Then it refers to their fate, saying;

…Then Allah said to them: 'Die!' (***and they died***)***;…*** (***2:243***).

They died by the same sickness that they had used as the pretext of their flight. Then Allah brought them back to life, maybe, in order that the story of their lives might serve as a warning for others who can take an example from it.

…then He restored them to life… (***2:243***).

This creative command is similar to the command cited in Surah Yasin, where it says;

His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it: 'Be', so it is. (***36:82***)

The phrase; /thumma ahyahum/ (then He restored them to life), mentioned in the verse, hints to the story of those people who, after death, were quickened by the invocation of Ezekiel, the Prophet, ('a). Since their coming back to life was one of the clear blessings of Allah both from their points of view and from the point of warning other people, the verse finally says;

…Truly Allah is gracious to people… (***2:243***).

Not only this group of people received, but also all humankind always receives the grace, kindness, and blessings of Allah, while they are usually not grateful.

…but most people are not thankful. (***2:243***).

The late Saduq, a great famous scholar from Shi'ah school of thought, reasoning on this verse for the possibility of resurrection, says: *'One of our convictions is belief in resurrection* (*that some former people return to life again in this very world*)*.'*[1]

This holy verse can also be a document for the problem of the Resurrection and raising the dead in the Hereafter.

The explanation of Ezekiel's invocation, as has been cited upon the description of the concept of the Qur'anic phrase;

Then He restored them to life (***2:243***)

is as follows:

Owing to the repeated visits of the plague, the children of Israel numbering several thousands left their homes for fear of death. It happened so that the disease once again pested the town and the people in a huge number of thousands got out of the town being confident of their escape from death which evidently indicated lack of faith in God.

Allah commanded all of them to die and they were all dead and reduced to dust; only their bones were lying on the earth. One of the Israelite prophets, Ezekiel, passed that way and prayed to the Lord to raise the people to life. Ezekiel, was inspired by Allah to pray to Him reciting a particular name and to sprinkle water on the rotten bones of the dead, which' Ezekiel' did and the people were once again quickened. Thus, it was manifested for the knowledge of the faithless people that Allah does whatsoever He pleases and they could never go their own way against the Will of the Lord.

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verses 244 – 245

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

And fight in the way of Allah, and know that Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (***2:244***).

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً ۚ وَاللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْسُطُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

Who is he that will lend to Allah a goodly loan, so He will multiply it for him manifold? And Allah straitens and extends and unto Him you will be returned. (***2:245***).

Commentary

From here on the verses of Holy War come forth. It begins with the command of fighting in the path of

Allah and warns us to beware that He hears what we say and knows what we have in our hearts, from our motives and intentions, regarding the Holy War in the way of Allah. It says;

And fight in the way of Allah, and know that Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (***2:244***).

In spite of all that has been said that Islam prefers peaceful methods of preaching the truth, and that it never took any initiative in waging war against its opponents, the fact is that Islam recognizes the right of taking even the initiative in using force against those who persist in ungodly activities causing human degradation or social or moral deterioration. But this measure cannot be adopted save by the Prophet of Allah or his Vicegerent authorized by him and none else. As the fifth Holy Imam Muhammad Ibn 'Ali Al-Baqir ('a) says *'A war may be termed as holy or godly* (*jihad*)*'* if the object be to make people give up submission to anyone besides Allah, and to submit only to God's authority and the Divine Will. But if the object be to make them give up submission to one creature in order to submit to any other, it is the usual war waged for selfish and some worldly gain. Hence it is unholy and thus condemned by Islam.

However, Islam enjoins on Muslims to be always ready, well prepared and well equipped to meet all exigencies or an eventuality which may unexpectedly develop against them, and then they should gather strength as much as they can so that their opponents, the opponents of the divine cause may refrain from any unprovoked aggression.

Occasion of Revelation

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (S) once said that whoever gives any alms will receive it twice in Heaven. Abud-Dahdah Ansari, addressing the Messenger of Allah (S), said that he had two gardens and questioned if he donated one of them as alms, would he have it twice in Heaven? Then the Prophet (S) replied to him positively. After that he donated his more privileged garden to the Prophet (S) before when the revelation was sent down making his alms two thousand thousand-fold for him. This is the interpretation of /ad'afan kathirah/ 'manifold'.

Commentary

This verse inquires who is it that offers to Allah a goodly gift and donates from the wealth He has given to him on the path of Holy War and alongside the way of helping the needy, so that Allah would multiply it to him manifold. It says;

Who is he that will lend to Allah a goodly loan, so He will multiply it for him manifold?... (***2:245***).

Thus, according to this verse, lending Allah is also rendered into the donations which are performed in the way of Holy War.

So, at the end of the verse, it says that it is Allah (SWT) Who both withholds and amplifies the sustenance of the servants. This statement points to the idea that do not think that donation and giving

alms causes your wealth to be diminished. The increase and decrease of your sustenance depend on Allah.

...And Allah straitens and extends and unto Him you will be returned. (***2:245***).

Why is Donation Rendered to Loan?

In several verses of the Qur'an donating in the path of Allah has been rendered into giving a loan to Allah. It shows the ultimate grace of Allah unto His servants, on one hand, and the utmost importance of the subject of donation, on the other hand.

In *Nahj al-Balagha*, Imam Amir Al-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a) says;

"Allah asks you for a loan while the treasures of heavens and the earth belong to Him and He is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy. (*It is not because of His want*), *but that He may try you for which of you is the best in action."*[2]

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verses 246 - 252

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الْمَلَإِ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَىٰ إِذْ قَالُوا لِنَبِيٍّ لَهُمُ ابْعَثْ لَنَا مَلِكًا نُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۖ قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ أَلَّا تُقَاتِلُوا ۖ قَالُوا وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ أُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ دِيَارِنَا وَأَبْنَائِنَا ۖ فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ

Have you not seen the chiefs of the Children of Israel, after Moses, when they said to a Prophet of theirs: 'Raise up for us a king that we will fight in Allah's way'. He said: 'Might it be that, if fighting is written for you, then you will not fight?' They said: 'Why should we not fight in the way of Allah, while we have been expelled from our dwellings and our children?' But when fighting was written for them, they turned back save a few of them, and Allah is All-Knowing of the unjust. (***2:246***).

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا ۚ قَالُوا أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِنَ الْمَالِ ۚ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مُلْكَهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

And their Prophet said to them: 'Verily Allah has raised up Saul for you as a king.' They said: 'How can he hold kingship over us, while we are more rightful to kingship than he, and he has not been given abundance of wealth?' He said: 'Verily Allah has chosen him over you, and He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature. Allah gives His kingdom unto whom so He wills; and Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing' (***2:247***)

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

And their Prophet said to them: 'Verily the sign of his kingship is that the Ark of the Covenant will come to you, wherein shall be a tranquillity from your Lord, and the Relics of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron have left behind, the angels bearing it. Surely in that shall be a sign for you, if you are (truly) faithful.' (2:248).

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَنْ لَمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنِ اغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ ۚ فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ ۚ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ ۚ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُو اللَّهِ كَمْ مِنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

So when Saul marched out with the troops he said: 'Verily Allah will try you by a river, whoever drinks from it he is not of me, and whoever tastes it not, he is surely of me, including the one who tastes but a single handful.' But they all drank of it, except a few of them. And when he (Saul) crossed it (the river), those who believed with him said: 'We have no power today against Goliath and his troops.' Those who knew that they would meet Allah said: 'How often a small party has overcome a numerous host by Allah's leave! And Allah is with the (steadfast) patient ones' (2:249).

وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

So when they encountered Goliath and his troops, they said: 'Our Lord! Pour down upon us patience, and make our steps firm, and help us against the disbelieving people' (2:250).

فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُودُ جَالُوتَ وَآتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

Thus they routed them by Allah's leave, and David slew Goliath; and Allah gave him the kingship and wisdom and taught him of what He willed. And were Allah not to repel some people by means of other people, the earth would certainly be full of mischief; but Allah is Gracious to all (His) creatures (2:251).

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

These are the Signs of Allah; We recite them to you (Muhammad) in truth, and verily, you are

(***one***) ***of the Messengers.*** (***2:252***).

Explanation

An Introduction to the above Group of Verses

In these verses Providence, the Great, points to one of the wonderful adventures of a group of the Israelites that happened after the time of Moses (‘a). The statement of this happening, of course, is following the statement of Holy War and the defence from the limits of the religion of Allah, which is, in fact, the same as the limits of humanity. It is stated, indeed, for the Muslims to take lesson from that marvellous incident.

A Marvelous Incident!

The Israelites who had become weak and poor under the domination of Pharaoh, gained great power and splendour under the wise leadership of Moses (‘a).

Allah showered many blessings upon them with the sanctity of this Great Prophet, including the Ark of the Covenant. The Jews, by carrying the Ark before the troops, got a kind of confidence and spiritual capability. This power and glory continued a length of time after Moses (‘a). But the same victorious capacity and blissful bounties they had, gradually made them proud and, thereby, they became disobedient.

Finally, they were defeated with a great slaughter by Philistines when they lost their power and authority accompanied with loosing the Ark. After that, they became so weak and inflicted with dispersion that they were not able to defend themselves even against the smallest enemies. It was so that their enemies expelled a great many of them from their own land and captured their children, too.

That status continued for years. At last, their prayer was heard and Allah raised a prophet for them called Samuel, to save them and guide them.

Those people, who had become tired and worn from the cruelty and transgressions of their enemies, were seeking for a shelter to take refuge in. Therefore, they gathered around him and asked him to appoint a king for them.

They all had decided to follow the command and leadership of such a king to fight unitedly against their enemy with heart and soul in order to regain their last honour and glory.

Prophet Samuel, who was well acquainted with their spirituality and knew their disloyal characteristics from before, told them he was afraid that they might disobey their commander, as to face with their enemy, when the order of Holy War in the way of Allah would be prescribed for them.

They objected that how they could disobey their commander and do not do their own duty in the case

that the torturous enemy had expelled them from their home and had occupied their land and captured their children.

When Prophet Samuel found that those people had recognized their ailment and were seeking for the remedy, as if they had realized the secret of their state of being retarded, he prayed and asked the Lord what those people wanted. It was revealed to him to introduce Saul as their king.

Samuel invoked Allah that he had not seen Saul yet and he did not know him. The revelation came down indicating that he would be sent to him. Samuel was commanded that when Saul came to him, he (Samuel) would give him (Saul) the commandership of the troops and Holy War.

Have you not seen the chiefs of the Children of Israel, after Moses, when they said to a Prophet of theirs: 'Raise up for us a king that we will fight in Allah's way'. He said: 'Might it be that, if fighting is written for you, then you will not fight?' They said: 'Why should we not fight in the way of Allah, while we have been expelled from our dwellings and our children?' But when fighting was written for them, they turned back save a few of them, and Allah is All-Knowing of the unjust. (***2:246***).

Commentary

After Prophet Moses ('a), the Israelites lost their power as a result of their self-indulgence and being desirous in welfare and laziness. So, they became involved again in the domination and oppression of the tyrants when they lost both their freedom and home. In order to be free from vagrancy and come out of the yoke of servitude of those tyrants, they decided to fight. Therefore, they went to their Prophet and asked him to appoint a king, a commander, for them so that they could struggle by Holy War against the tyrannical ruler of their time.

Have you not seen the chiefs of the Children of Israel, after Moses, when they said to a Prophet of theirs: 'Raise up for us a king that we will fight in Allah's way… (***2:246***).

The Prophet ('a), regarding their notorious background, questioning them said: was it not probable that, after prescribing the command of war to them, they would disobey and would not be ready to fight?

…He said: 'Might it be that, if fighting is written for you, then you will not fight?' (***2:246***).

They did not agree with that idea and said that they would fight, for they had been expelled from their home and had been made vagrant for a long time, because their cities had been occupied by the enemy and their children were captured:

…They said: 'Why should we not fight in the way of Allah, while we have been expelled from our dwellings and our children?'… (***2:246***).

But, with all these claims, when the command was issued, all of them, except a few, did not attend the

battle–field and disobeyed that command.

...But when fighting way written for them, they turned back save a few of them, and Allah is All–Knowing of the unjust... **(*2:246*).**

Explanations

Explanations[3]

Verse 246 (279) The event alluded to in this verse has a reference also in the Bible. (1 Samuel 8/19–20).

19. Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay! but we will have a king over us;

20. That we also may be like all the nations, and that our kind may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

After 'Moses,' prophets after prophets were appointed to succeed him and to maintain the Law ('Torah'). 'Moses' was succeeded by 'Yusha ibn Nun', 'Kalib.' 'Ezekiel' and 'Ilyas' and 'Elisha' and as time passed the people neglected and ultimately gave up the Law and became idolatrous. And in the time of the prophet 'Yasa' there appeared an enemy for the Israelites who were the people of the land of 'Shalisha,' from the tribe of Goliath ('Jalut') who had captured all the land on the shores of the Mediterranean including Palestine and Egypt. They subdued the Israelites, killed 440 Israelite princes and noblemen and had taken the Israelites as their subjects and taken away their lands. (1 Sam. 17/1).

Now the Israelites had no prophet to guide them out of the calamitous state. They prayed to God for a prophet. At last, their prayer was heard and God sent a prophet to them in Samuel. When Samuel appeared and claimed apostleship of God, the Israelites asked him to appoint a king for them to lead them in the battle for freedom from the subjection and servitude they had been suffering under the enemy. In those days battles were fought only under kings, and the Prophet was only the adviser or the administrative adviser or a director of the affairs. Prophet Samuel warned them beforehand that they might disobey after it gets prescribed for them to fight in the way of God. Here was the question of fighting for the freedom of the people against the torturous subjection and it has been termed as the fight in the way of God. It is evident that the fight for right means the fight for God.

Surah Al–Baqarah – Verse 247

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا ۚ قَالُوا أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِنَ الْمَالِ ۚ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مُلْكَهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

And their Prophet said to them: 'Verily Allah has raised up Saul for you as a king.' They said: 'How can he hold kingship over us, while we are more rightful to kingship than he, and he has not been given abundance of wealth?' He said: 'Verily Allah has chosen him over you, and He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature. Allah gives His kingdom unto whom so He wills; and Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing' (***2:247***).

Commentary

This group of oppressed Israelites, though they had asked their prophet to appoint a chief for them to guide them to be able to escape from the torturous subjection of the tyrant rulers, failed in the field of trial.

And their Prophet said to them: (***Verily Allah has raised up Saul for you as a king'...*** (***2:247***).

It is appropriate to note that their Prophet was Samuel. Talut, who is the same as Saul, was called 'Talut' (according to the Bible) on account of his height and the strength of his stature, for he was the tallest of his people (Sam. 10/23). The proper names used in Arabic are different from their Hebrew originals.

So, when their prophet, Samuel, appointed Saul (Talut), who was an unknown poor shepherd, as their chief, they being affected by their proud and vain consideration that they had from their own leader and leadership, despised Saul's kingship for the lack of wealth and reputation. Those people, who had wealth in abundance, said that they were worthier than him for the position because of the gross great wealth they had.

...They said: 'How can he hold kingship over us, while we are more rightful to kingship than he, and he has not been given abundance of wealth?'... (***2:247***).

When the prophet heard their pretexts about the poverty and lack of wealth of Saul, he told them that undoubtedly Allah had appointed him as a king for them, and, instead of wealth, he had ability in knowledge and in body. Besides that, he had the necessary authority and ability of command of an army in fight.

... He said: 'Verily Allah has chosen him over you, and He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature. (***2:247***).

So, Allah selects whosoever He wills for leadership due to his efficiency and his inner faculties.

...Allah gives His kingdom unto whom so He wills; and Allah is All-Embracing, All-knowing' (***2:247***).

Conclusion

Whatever be the details of the Israelites' history referred to here, the instructions to be inferred from it

regarding the religious authority who can wage war in the way of God is as follows;

1. Besides the presence of a divine legislator and a religious judge sometimes an executor is also needed. It should be borne in mind that all the three aspects of government (Aamiriyat)... i.e. legislation justice and execution are included in the sovereignty of God. He may delegate all the aspects to anyone man as His Vicegerent and He may distribute the various functions to different persons. In any case the appointment rests with God and none else. Here the Prophet represents the Divine Authority in law and justice. When the people asked him to appoint a king as an executor, he said that God has appointed 'Talut' as their king, indicating that he (the Prophet) had no right to do it. This refutes the tendency now developing among the people that in the establishment of the legislative and the judicial bodies the 'Kitab', i.e., the Book and the 'Sunnat', i.e., the Tradition to be the final authorities, and the people should have no voice in the matter. But in the establishment of the final executive authority people may have voice and call it the Theo-democratic form of government.

The sovereignty ('Amiriyyat') is exclusively God's. To allow the public to have any say in it, means return to the age of ignorance and not Islam.

2. 'Jihad', i.e. war in the way of God was prescribed and practiced by the previous prophets also, and the reaction favourable or unfavourable, to this precept had been the same as in Islam.

3. The unfavourable reaction of the people to the divine appointment as based on temporal considerations which are known to the limited and narrow views, as was the case with the angels regarding the vicegerency of Adam. The answer to this criticism is almost the same that it was God's selection and the selection is based on the extensity and the intensity of knowledge, strength and character and that the Kingdom is God's and He alone has the right to give to anyone whom He likes, but His liking is not arbitrary or unreasonable. It is based on the superiority and the excellence of the person, known only to Him, as He alone is the all-Pervading and the Omniscient. This discards the importance of the temporal consideration as wealth, seniority in age, racial or parochial. Therefore, whenever the question of the authority succeeding the Holy Prophet in regard to legislation, justice and execution, is dealt with, the implication of this exemplary passage should be taken into consideration, as the method of the succession to the Holy Prophet has continued to be the same as before[4].

Surah Al-Baqarah - Verse 248

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

And their Prophet said to them: 'Verily the sign of his kingship is that the Ark of the Covenant will come to you, wherein shall be a tranquillity from your Lord, and the Relics of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron have left behind, the angels bearing it. Surely in that shall be a

***sign for you, if you are* (*truly*) *faithful.* (*2:248*).**

Commentary

To make that group of Israelites sure about the kingship of Saul, their prophet told them that the Ark of the Covenant, /tabut/, the sacred Chest of the Children of Israel, will be returned to them as a sign that Saul was appointed by Allah.

***And their Prophet said to them: 'Verily the sign of his kingship is that the Ark of the Covenant will come to you...* (*2:248*).**

The purpose of /tabut/ is the wooden Chest wherein Moses's mother put her baby and, by the commandment of Allah, set it afloat in the water, of the Nile. Then, the men of Pharoah took it and brought the baby unto Pharoah.

The Chest remained safe in the Court of Pharoah. When Moses ('a) was appointed to prophethood, he ('a) put the Tablets of the Torah in it and gave it to his vicegerent, Yusha ibn Nun (Joshua), and when he died, his armour and some of his belongings were put in it, too. That Chest, which had been known among the Children of Israel as 'the Ark of the Covenant', remained in the hand of the very Children of Israel as a Sacred Chest, and they used to carry it before their forces in the battles.

But, little by little, its sacredness wretched and the Chest was taken away. But, according to the verse under discussion their prophet, Samuel, promised them that the Ark of the Covenant would be returned to them soon as a sign of truthfulness of his statement. That glad tidings naturally was considered very magnificent for the Children of Israel, because by seeing that Sacred Chest, which they knew as a token of their ancient independence and glory, they thought they could regain their lost tranquillity and splendour. There are some statements about this Chest mentioned in the Torah, a part of which will be cited at the end of this commentary under the title of explanation.

Finally, at the time of the kingship of Saul, Allah returned that Sacred Chest, which was taken away, unto them through angels. That Chest brought them tranquillity and peace.

***...wherein shall be a tranquillity from your Lord, and the Relics of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron have left behind, the angels bearing it. Surely in that shall be a sign for you, if you are* (*truly*) *faithful.* (*2:248*).**

Explanation

The term 'Tabut' in this verse stands for the Holy Ark of Chest 3 yards long and 2 yards broad with–divine signs in it decipherable only by the Apostles of God. This Ark had divine blessings that whenever it was presented by the Israelites against their enemy in the midst of a battle, the enemy forces had no other choice but to take to their heels for their lives. The Israelites used to always keep the Chest in front

of their forces whenever any occasion of their proceeding against any enemy had occurred and they used to come out victorious. This Ark passed from one apostle to another apostle of God. It is reported to contain the shoes, the rod and clothes of Moses, the turban of Aaron and some other sacred relics. This Ark had been certainly endowed with miraculous effects. It was this Ark that was brought out from Shiloh to help the Israelites in the war with Philistines....

"And when she (mother of Moses) could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink."[5]

The following verse of the Holy Qur'an clears the meaning of 'Tabut'. The address in the following verse is to Moses;

And when we revealed unto thy mother what was revealed. (***20:38***)

That; 'Put him into a chest, then cast it down into the river...' (***20:39***).

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1. Tafsir Nemunah, Vol. 2, p. 159.
2. Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 183, p. 268.
3. This detail is narrated exactly from the footnote of the translation of the Holy Qur'an, by S. V. Mir Ahmed Ali, p. 217.
4. Refer to the verse of the Qur'an 24:55.
5. OT Ex. 2/3.

[1] [1]
SHARES

Section 33 – Saul's Victory over Goliath

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verse 249

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَنْ لَمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنِ اغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ ۚ فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ ۚ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ ۚ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُو اللَّهِ كَمْ مِنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

So when Saul marched out with the troops, he said: 'Verily Allah will try you by a river, whoever drinks from it he is not of me, and whoever tastes it not, he is surely of me, including the one who tastes but a single handful.' But they all drank of it, except a few of them. And when he

(***Saul***) ***crossed it*** (***the river***)***, those who believed with him said: 'We have no power today against Goliath and his troops.' Those who knew that they would meet Allah said: 'How often a small party has overcome a numerous host by Allah's leave! And Allah is with the*** (***steadfast***) ***patient ones'*** (***2:249***)

Commentary

In this verse, the Qur'an announces the failure of a large group of Israelites in their test when they drank water from the prohibited stream. They did not tolerate the thirst therein. So, they were not successful in that trial.

So when Saul marched out with the troops he said: 'Verily Allah will try you by a river, whoever drinks from it he is not of me, and whoever tastes it not, he is surely of me, including the one who tastes but a single handful. 'But they all drank of it, except a few of them. And when he (***Saul***) ***crossed it*** (***the river***)***…'*** (***2:249***)***.***

However, the remaining group, who succeeded in the foregoing examination, had another practical examination, too. It was a spiritual examination. When they encountered the great forces of Goliath, they said that they could not fight against that armed force.

…those who believed with him said: 'We have no power today against Goliath and his troop.'… (***2:249***)***.***

But those who believed in the Resurrection and meeting Allah in the Hereafter, said that victory is in Allah's hand, and it is by His leave that a small group may win a large and numerous troop. It says:

…Those who knew that they would meet Allah said: 'How often a small party has overcome a numerous host by Allah's leave! And Allah is with the (***steadfast***) ***patient ones'*** (***2:249***)***.***

Traditions

Traditions[1]

Muhammad ibn Yahya narrated from Muhammad ibn Ahmad from Muhammad ibn Khalid and al-Husayn ibn Sa'id from al-Nu□man ibn Suwayd from Yahya al-Halabi from Harun ibn Kharijah from Abu Basir from Abu Ja'far ('a) saying in a tradition, inter alia: "And Allah reports the words of Talut: *'Surely Allah will try you with a stream; whoever then drink from it, he is not of me, and whoever does not taste of it, he is surely of me.'* But all of them drank from it, except three hundred and thirteen men; among them were those who took a handful of water as well as those who did not drink at all. When they went out against Goliath, those who had taken handful of water said, 'We have today no power against Goliath and his forces'; and those who had not taken it said, 'How often has a small party vanquished a numerous host by Allah's permission, and Allah is with the patient ones.'" (*al-Kafi*)

The author (‘Allamah Tabatabai) says: That there remained with Talut only three hundred and thirteen men (equal in number to the Muslim ‘army’ in the battle of Badr) is mentioned in numerous traditions from Shi’ah and Sunni chains. The details that those who said:

We have today no power… (***2:249***)

were those who had taken a handful of water, and those who said,

How often a small party… (***2:249***)

were those who had not tasted it at all, may be inferred from the position of the exceptional clause in the verse,…’

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verse 250

وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

So when they encountered Goliath and his troops, they said: ‘Our Lord! Pour down upon us patience, and make our steps firm, and help us against the disbelieving people’. (***2:250***).

Commentary

In this verse, the incident of those two forces facing each other is pointed out. It says;

So when they encountered Goliath and his troops, they said: ‘(Our Lord! Pour down upon us patience, and make our steps firm, and help us against the disbelieving people’. (***2:250***).

In fact, Saul and his troops asked for three things from their Lord in their prayer, and the prayer is well graded. First, patience and perseverance was prayed for. Their second beseech from Allah was steadfastness in the field. They asked Him to make their steps firm in order that they would not flee. The first invocation, indeed, had an inward aspect while the second prayer had an apparent and outward aspect; and surely the firmness of step is one of the consequences of the spirit of patience and perseverance.

Their third prayer was that Allah might help them to be victorious against those infidels. That was, of course, the result or the reward of those two qualities: i.e. patience and perseverance and being firm in the battlefield.

Bible says;

9. And it was so, that when he (Saul) had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart.

10. And the spirit or God came upon him and he prophesied.[2]

There is some similar incident mentioned in the Bible[3] of trying the people with thirst, but that is a different incident. It was when Gideon tried his forces by the 'Well of Harod'. The trial of the people under Saul was by the river.

From this verse it becomes clear that the one who leads the people should have inspired knowledge of good and evil for his followers and be able to conduct trials of the people's faith as was Saul who directed his men not to drink more than one handful of water from the river, even though they were dying of thirst. It was only a trial that a few, who were true believers, succeeded and Allah helped them to win Goliath and his troops.

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verse 251

فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُودُ جَالُوتَ وَآتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

Thus they routed them by Allah's leave, and David slew Goliath; and Allah gave him the kingship and wisdom and taught him of that He willed. And were Allah not to repel some people by means of other people, the earth would certainly be full of mischief; but Allah is Gracious to all (***His***) ***creatures.*** (***2:251***).

Commentary

It is completely certain that Allah will not leave such believers alone, although the number of them be small and the number of their enemy be large. That is why the verse expresses that they set out to fight against them and it was by the leave of Allah that they defeated he enemy. It says;

Thus they routed them by Allah's leave…" (***2:251***).

David, who was a very young lad, but was vigorous and brave, had attended the army of Saul to fight against the enemy. He succeeded to kill Goliath.

…and David slew Goliath… (***2:251***).

The young warrior threw one or two stones by means of a sling which he had with him, towards Goliath. He utilized the sling so skilfully that the stone hit just upon the head and pierced the forehead of Goliath. So, Goliath cried loudly and fell down on the ground. At that moment, fear and terror rushed into the hearts of his troops. They began to flee. It seemed, Allah had decided to show his authority, here, and by demonstrating how a king, with all that glory and abundant force could be destroyed by a lad inexperienced in fighting, and particularly with an apparently simple and worthless tool, a sling. Then it

says;

…and Allah gave him the kingship and wisdom and taught him of what He willed… **(*2:251*).**

In this verse it has not been explicitly stated that this David is the same David who was the great prophet of the Israelites and was Solomon's father, yet the above-mentioned phrase of the verse indicates that this David had attained the rank of Prophethood.

At the end of the verse, the Qur'an points to a general law, thus it says;

***…And were Allah not to repel some people by means of other people, the earth would certainly be full of mischief; but Allah is Gracious to all* (*His*) *creatures.* (*2:251*).**

This concluding part of the verse clearly indicates that the only, aim or object of warfare should be nothing but dispelling of mischief and the establishment of peace on earth and not at all any territorial expansion.

Explanation

Explanation[4]

An account of the formidable strength of the mighty forces of Goliath, is given in the Bible[5] David slew Goliath in a single combat. The Philistines seeing Goliath killed by David all of them fled and that was the end of the battle.

Quite a similar event took place in the early days of the start of Islam. The infidels of Mecca with all the strength of the strongest of their allies with the best and the choicest and the most experienced of their warrior heroes attacked the Muslim refugees in Madina who then numbered only a few hundreds including women and children and who were practically unarmed and the enemy consisted of several full equipped battalions. The battle is called the battle of *'Ahzab'* i.e. the battle of the Confederates. All the idolatrous tribes of Arabia had united in one body against the few hundreds of ill-equipped or practically unarmed Muslims. The mighty host was twelve thousand strong and there could be hardly any fight at all. It was the question of life and death for Muslims and Islam including the Holy Prophet himself. The well-known giant-like warrior hero of the enemy's strength leapt across the ditch which the Muslims had dug between themselves and the enemy's forces, and coming forward challenged the Holy Prophet to send anyone to fight him in a duel or a single combat.

The Holy Prophet turned towards the small band of his men and asked them if there was anyone who would answer *'Amr'* on behalf of Islam and the Muslims. Though there were those present in the Muslim ranks who later, after the departure of the Holy Prophet prided themselves as the greatest heroes and the defenders of Islam and who also claimed to be the closest companions of the Holy Prophet during his life, but none stirred, and some of them even tried to hide their faces lest the choice of the Holy Prophet might fall upon them and they be commanded by the apostle of God to go to fight the giant like

warrior standing fully equipped and well prepared to finish anyone that comes to face him.

Every time the call was sounded by the Holy Prophet to his men for a match to meet *'Amr'* there was no response even from those who claimed closest companionship with him save 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, who at every time readily stood up and cried; *'Ana lahu ya Rasul Allah'* (I am here for him O Prophet of God!). But the Holy Prophet asked 'Ali to sit down. Thrice did the Holy Prophet call for a match from his ranks and every time none but 'Ali stood up. Once, some of the people gave cowardly answers acknowledging the matchless strength and the dauntless courage of the challenging hero of the enemy. Third time when again none but 'Ali stood up to fight the giant-like warrior, the Holy Prophet called forth 'Ali, set right his dress and placed his own turban on his head and bade him go to fight in the way of the Lord, praying to God for the triumph of Islam against the total strength of the idolatrous Arabia and declared;

'Qad baraza al-imanu kulluhu ila al-kufri kullihi.'

i.e. 'Certainly, proceeds the Whole of the Faith against the Whole of the Infidelity.' *'Ali met Amr',* the details of which one can have from ay of the detailed Muslim history, and ultimately within a few minutes 'Ali brought the severed head of *'Amr'* the challenging idolater herd of the infidel's forces and threw it before the feet of the Holy Prophet saying; *"Here is, O Prophet of God! The head of the enemy of God and Islam,"* at which the Holy Prophet (S) thanked God for the victory and declared;

'□arbatu □Aliyyin yawma al-Khandaq Afdalu min □ibadati al-thaqalayn.'

i.e. *"The one stroke of 'Ali on the Day of the Ditch* (*The battle is called the Battle of the Ditch*)*, is superior to the service* (*prayers*) *of both the worlds."* This saying of the Holy Prophet (S) is well-known to the Muslim world and is invariably recorded by all historians and the traditionists and unanimously acknowledged and accepted by the Muslim world as a whole. As on the triumph of David against Goliath the enemy fled away, at the triumph of 'Ali against *'Amr'* the combined forces of the Confederates of the enemy gave up the battle and left the field in chaos and confusion and the battle ended completely routed and disappointed forever.

Surah Al-Baqarah – Verse 252

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ □ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

***These are the Signs of Allah; We recite them to you* (*Muhammad*) *in truth, and verily, you are* (*one*) *of the Messengers.* (*2:252*).**

Commentary

This expressive verse is the last verse of *the second part* of the Holy Qur'an, the commentary of which has been discussed in the current volume.

In this verse, the Qur'an points out that these stories and incidents which were explained about, should be heeded as a warning and instructive lesson for Muslims. In particular, where the story of the death of a thousand people in one moment and then their coming back to life again by the invocation of their prophet is stated.

All of these are the effects of the Signs of Allah: granting the rank of leadership to an unknown young shepherd who, in the meanwhile, was wise and eligible; the victory of a small group against a large group of armed enemies; the bravery of a young lad in that fight and endowing him the position of prophethood by the Lord. These events, mentioned in the Qur'an, are totally some indicative hints to the truthfulness of the speech and Messengership of the Prophet of Islam (S). It says;

These are the Signs of Allah; We recite them to you (Muhammad) in truth, and verily, you are (one) of the Messengers. **(*2:252*).**

Considering the contents of the previous verses, makes it clear that the elements of victory lie in the following factors;

1) A capable, worthy leader; 2) truthful followers; 3) trusting in Allah; 4) patience and perseverance; and 5) having a godly motive.

On the whole, the Qur'an recognizes the clash and struggle for power and authority as an important factor in the development of the terrestrial life which is supported by 22:40. The struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest is a natural factor in the development and the progress of the creation as a whole but with the advent of Adam and the birth of the intellectual faculties and the development of inspiration in man, the natural tendencies and values gave place to the conventional moral and legal values instead of fighting for food and the material necessities, man began to struggle for right and wrong, what ought to be done and what ought not to. To stop this struggle means deterioration and reversion to animal life. Islam advocates the sublimation of the natural tendencies and the native urge in the best conventional and the highly improved forms by decrying the false values and the evil use of the faculties. There should be competition and struggle for such an attainment and rank which takes one closer and nearer to Allah. Hence one should always be prepared to fight against the evil in his own self which would take him back to animal life; and to fight against the evil in the society and the state in which he lives. He should compete with the others in attaining whatever is good and godly.[6]

Explanation

Explanation[7]

So, this is history and its various defects which can never be glossed over or corrected. With this background, we should never compare the historical events mentioned in the Qur'an, with the narrations of the same events given in the books of history. The Qur'an is a divine revelation, free from mistake and falsehood. How can it be judged with the help of history, the history which nobody believes to be free

from lies and error? Many historical events, as given in the Qur'an, like this very story of Talut, differ from the reports in the Bible. But why should we worry? The Bible is no better than other history books. The alterations, suppressions, additions and omissions carried out in these books are too well-known to need any description. The story of Samuel and Saul was written in the Bible by an unknown hand. The story of Talut in the Qur'an is the true words of Allah.

This much about history in general. Now let us see what is the main object of the Qur'an in such narrations. The Qur'an is not a book of history, nor does it describe an event with all its details as a book of history purports to do. The Qur'an is divine speech, poured into the mould of revelation,

With it Allah guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of safety. (***5:16***)

That is why it does not narrate an event from the beginning to the end with all its details. It only picks out a few such points of an event as will be useful to the listener as a lesson, sermon and moral.

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1. Al-Mizan, vol. 4, p. 112 (English Version), by al-'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn al-Tabataba'i.
2. Samuel 10/9-10.
3. Judges 7/1-6.
4. Adopted from the footnote of The Translation of the Holy Qur'an, by S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali, p. 221.
5. 1. Samuel 17/4-11.
6. Refer to the verses of the Qur'an 2:148 and 5:148.
7. Al-Mizan, Commentary, Vol. 4 p. 123 (English Version) by al-'Allamah al-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn al-Tabataba'i.

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