

*An Enlightening Commentary
into*

*The Light of
The Holy Qur'an*

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*The Holy Qur'an
Part 1*

The Light of The Holy Qur'an Interpretation of (Sura An-Nur)

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Sura An-Nur, No. 24



الرَّحِيمِ الرَّحْمَنِ اللَّهُ بِسْمِ

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

The Grand View of Sura An-Nur

Presented by <http://www.alhassanain.com> & <http://www.islamicblessings.com>

This Sura contains 64 verses and it has been sent down in Medina. The reason why it has been named An-Nur (light), is its thirty fifth verse in which Allah has been introduced as "the Light of the heavens and the earth".

Since this holy Sura has recommended all believers, and specially women to be virgin and chaste, Islamic narrations do give much prominence to teaching and reciting this Sura by women. In fact, it can be considered as the Sura of virginity, chastity, and struggle against sexual defilements, because the main part of its commandments is about removing society from sexual defilements through different ways, and this aim has been set in several steps:

- 1) It is the statement of severe punishments of adulterers and adulteresses which is mentioned with full decisiveness in the second verse of this Sura.
- 2) Executing this severe prescribed punishment is not an easy issue, and from the view of Islamic judicial scales it has strict condition. If a man accuses his wife of adultery, the program 'Li'an' (Conjugal anathema) must be carried out, we will explain it later. And if a person accuses someone of fornication, that person must present 4 witnesses. Even if someone accuses other person of fornication, but he cannot prove it in the court of Islamic judgment, he will be extremely punished (one forth of prescribed punishment of fornication), so that no one can easily think of Islamic punishment of others by accusing them, otherwise that penalty will be imposed on himself.
- 3) Then, in this connection, the famous tradition known as 'Ifk' and the accusation that was pinned on one of the wives of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) are mentioned. The Holy Qur'an follows this issue, so that it becomes completely clear that how great the sin of inventing rumour about virtuous persons is.
- 4) In order to prevent this thought that Islam is only content with punishing wrongdoers, the Sura mentions one of the important ways of preventing sexual defilements. It in details explains the issue of preventing men from gloating women and preventing women from casting amorous, coquettish, or lecherous glances at men, because one of the important factors of sexual deviations is voyeur and non-veiling of women. And defilements would not be expunged unless these are eradicated.
- 5) Again, to prevent engaging in unchaste actions, the commandment of easy and simple marriage is issued, so that unlawfully satisfying sexual instinct will be struggled by its lawful way.
- 6) Some of the rules of etiquette and principles of training offspring, concerning parents, are mentioned; stating that there are some times when husband and wife may want to be alone and isolated, so that issues must not enter their rooms without permission, for offspring may deviate

intellectually thereby. For this end, it states some other rules of family life, though they may be unrelated to sexual matters.

7) Some of the discussions that are about monotheism, origin, resurrection, and resignation to the command of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) are mentioned before these discussions, because what support all practical and ethical programs are the very doctrinal issues and the belief in origin, resurrection, and rightfulness of prophecy. There will not be any branch, leaf, flower, and fruit, if such a root does not exist.

Meanwhile, in connection with discussions about faith and righteous deed, the establishment of the worldly government by the believers is stated and some of other Islam commandments are brought up. On the whole, the Sura has formed a comprehensive collection.

Virtue of Sura An-Nur

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) in a tradition has said: "Whoever reads Sura An-Nur (and applies it in his life), for each faithful woman and man who were in the past and will be in the future Allah will give him 10 good acts as reward."

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says: "Protect your property and preserve your chastity by reading Sura An-Nur and immunize your own wives against deviations through obeying its commandments, because whoever continues reading this Holy Sura in every day and night none of his family members will commit indecency as long as he lives." [1]

Paying attention to the content of the Sura which stands against immodesty through various ways of efficient struggles with factors of deviation from the path of chastity makes clear the main idea of the above-mentioned tradition as well as its practical concept.

[1] Majma' ul-Bayan under the verse, the Thawab ul-'A'mal by Saduq (As it is narrated from Nur-uth-Thaqalyn Vol. 3, p. 568)

Section 1 : Punishment for Adultery Prescribed Commentary : Verse 1

The law relating to the punishment for adultery - False charge of adultery - The dealing with the accusation of adultery by the husband against his wife

الرَّحِيمِ الرَّحْمَنِ اللَّهُ بِسْمِ

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. تَذَكَّرُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ بَيِّنَاتٍ فِيهَا وَأَنْزَلْنَا وَفَرَضْنَا أَنْزَلْنَا سُورَةً 1.

1. "(This is) a Sura which We have sent down and which We have enjoined, and in it We have sent down clear signs, so that you might remember." Commentary:

The Qur'anic word 'Sura' is an appellation taken by Allah for a collection of verses in the holy Qur'an. What we know is that the name of this Sura is Nur, and it is because of Nur verse, No. 35, which is one of the most conspicuous verses of the Sura. Furthermore, the content of the Sura is especially luminous. It grants men and women in families and societies the light of chastity and virginity. It gives tongues and speeches the light of piety and veracity. It gives hearts and souls the light of monotheism, theism, belief in the resurrection, and resignation to the godly invitation of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.).

The first verse of the Sura concisely indicates all of the discussions in the Sura. It says:

"(This is) a Sura which We have sent down and which We have enjoined, and in it We have sent down clear signs, so that you might remember."

The Arabic word /sura/ is derived from the word /sur/, meaning the height of a building. Then it was applied to the high walls that were built around cities for protecting against enemies' attacks. And since these walls separated city from the surrounding regions, this word gradually has been applied to a section or a part of something, including a section or piece of the Qur'an separated from the rest of it.

Some philologists have also said that the word /sura/ is applied to high, beautiful, erected buildings as well as various parts of a big structure. With the same proportion, it is applied to the various, parts of the Qur'an which are separated from each other.[1]

Anyway, this sentence refers to the fact that all ordinances and subjects of this Sura, including rules, rites, and doctrines, are extraordinarily important, because all of them have been sent down by Allah.

Specially the sentence /faradnaha/ ("...We have ... which We have enjoined ...") emphasizes this meaning, considering that the meaning of the word /farada/ is 'assertion'.

[1] Lisan ul-'Arab, Vol. 4, article 'sur'

Using the holy phrase /'ayatin bayyinat/ (clear signs) may point to some facts about monotheism,

origin, resurrection, and prophecy, which are presented in it. This phrase is for the clause /faradna/ (We enjoined) which points to the ordinances and commandments which are stated in this verse. In other words, one refers to 'beliefs' and the other one refers to 'religious ordinances'.

Another possibility is that the purpose of /'ayatin bayyinat/ (clear signs) is some reasons that are mentioned for the obligatory commandments that are presented in this Sura.

The sentence /la'allakum tauakkaran/ ('... so that you might remember.') again illustrates this fact in minds that all beliefs and doctrines and all practical programs of Islam are rooted in the very innate disposition of humans. Thus, their explanation is a kind of admonition and remembrance.

In this holy verse, there are three signs that indicate the magnificence of Sura An Nur:

- A) The word 'surah' that is in the beginning, is the sign of greatness.
- B) The Arabic nunnation of the word 'surah' is for greatness.
- C) The Qur'anic word /'anzalna/ (We have sent down) has been mentioned twice in due verse.

Commentary : Verse 2

وَلْيَشْهَدْ الْآخِرِ وَالْيَوْمِ بِاللَّهِ تُوْمِنُونَ كُنْتُمْ إِنْ اللَّهَ دِينِ فِي رَأْفَةٍ بِهِمَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ وَلَا جَلْدَةَ مِائَةٍ مِنْهُمَا وَاجِدِ كُلَّ فَاجِلِدُوا وَالرَّانِي الرَّانِيَّةُ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ طَائِفَةٍ عَذَابُهُمَا

2. " The fornicatress and the fornicator, scourge you each one of them (with) a hundred stripes. And let not pity for them withhold you from enforcing the sentence of Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a party of the Believers witness their punishment." Commentary:

According to the conditions of persons, there are different judgments of fornication. In this verse, only one of its cases is referred to, the case that if a celibate man or woman commits fornication, each of them will be flogged with one hundred stripes. But if a person who has spouse and commits adultery, the punishment is stoning to death. If someone who has spouse, but he or she can not reach him or her (for example the spouse is behind bars), and commits fornication, the judgment of stoning to death is changed to stripes.

The holy Qur'an counts fornication as an indecency and horrible deed and prohibits it where it says: "And do not approach fornication ..." [1], and it counts the abundance of fornication as a sign for the true servants of Allah, where it says: "The (faithful) servants of the Beneficent (Allah) are those who nor commit formation ..." [2], and again it considers

[1] Sura 'Isra No. 17, verse 32

[2] Sura Al-Furqan, No. 25, verse 63 and 68

the avoidance of committing this sin as the condition for the allegiance with the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) as, in another occurrence, the Qur'an says: "O Prophet! When believing women come unto thee, taking oath of allegiance unto thee that they ...will neither steal nor commit (or fornication) adultery ... " [1]

After this general statement of the verse, the first decisive and determining ordinance about fornicatress and fornicator is presented. It says:

"The fornicatress and the fornicator, scourge you each one of them (with) a hundred stripes..."

To emphasize more, the Qur'an adds:

"... And let not pity for them withhold you from enforcing the sentence of Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day...."

Finally, at the end of the verse to conclude this Devine punishment, another matter is added, where it says:

"... And let a party of the Believers witness their punishment."

As matter of fact, this verse contains 3 commandments:

1. The ordinance of punishing fornicatress and fornicator; (the purpose of fornication is unlawful sexual intercourse).
2. Emphasis on the matter of not being moved by compassion and sentiments at the time of executing divinely prescribed punishments. These sentiments and kindness yield as result only corruption and defilement in society. But to deactivate the motivations of such sentiments, the Sura brings up the issue of belief in Allah and the Day of Judgment, because the sign of belie in origin and Resurrection is absolute resignation to Allah's commandment. The belief in the Lord of the world, Who is All-Knowing, All-Wise, makes man know

[1] Sura Al-Mumtahanah, No. 60, verse 12

that each commandment is based on a philosophy and wisdom and is not legislated without any reason. Having faith in Resurrection causes man to feel responsibility for violations and transgressions.

Here, there is an interesting tradition that must be noted carefully:

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) says: "(On the Day of Judgment) some of the rulers who have decreased one stripe from the divinely prescribed punishment will be fetched (to the place of gathering). They will be questioned why they had done such a thing. They will answer: 'For having mercy on Your servants! 'Allah will say: "Did you show more mercy to them than I did?" The command of throwing him into Fire will be issued.

Another person who has added one stripe to the divinely prescribed punishment will be brought (to the place). He will be asked why he did such an action. He will answer: 'For preventing them from disobeying You.' Allah will say: 'Were you wiser and more knowing than Me?' Then the command will be issued of throwing him into Fire." [1]

3. The commandment of attendance of a group of believers in the place where the judgment of punishment is carried out. The aim is not only to make the wrongdoer learn lesson, the aim is that his punishment will work as an admonition for others. In another word, considering the texture of man's social life, a person's ethical defilements are not limited to one person, but it influences society. For cleaning, the punishment must be carried out in public, as wrong action has become manifest.

Thus, in this way, the answer to the question that why Islam allows a man's honour to be lost in the public becomes

[1] The commentary of Fakh-r-i-Razi, Vol. 23, p. 148

clear, because as far as the sin is not manifested and is not reported to the Islamic court, Allah, Who veils vices, does not will to unveil what is secret. But after that the wrong action is proved, and its secret is uncovered, society is defiled and the sin decreases in importance, so punishment must be executed in a way that the negative effects of the sin may be deactivated and the magnitude of the sin can be reestablished.

Essentially, in a sound society, violation of law must be counted important. Surely if that violation is repeated, that importance will be broken. Its importance will be reset only through publicly

punishing the offenders.

Moreover, we must pay attention to the fact that for many of people honour is more important than the issue of bodily punishment. This very publicizing of punishment suppresses their ungovernable low desires.

Some Narrations on Evils of Fornication

Some evils and harm of fornication are mentioned in one of the speeches of Imam Rida (a.s.), including the followings:

1. Committing murder by abortion
2. Violation of structure of family and relationship
3. Abandonment of training issues
4. Ruin of criteria of heritage[1]

In the opinion of Ali (a.s.), abandonment of fornication buttresses family (to be protected) and desertion of sodomy protects generation.[2]

The holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) says: "Fornication enjoys harms both in this world and the other world. In this world, there are ruins of man's luminosity and beauty, untimely death, and termination of the portion of sustenance. And in the other

[1] Bihar, Vol. 79, p. 24

[2] Nahj ul-Balaqah, Wisdom 252

world, there will be helplessness at the time of resurrection's reckoning, and there are Allah's rage and eternal Hell." [1]

There have been narrated in a tradition from the Prophet (p.b.u.h) who said:

- 1) "When fornication increases, sudden death increases, too." [2]
- 2) "Do not commit fornication, so that your wives do not get involve in fornication. Whoever violates another person's honour his honour will be violated. You will be treated as you treat others." [3]

3) "There are four things that if each of them exists in any house, that house will be desolate and void of blessing: A) Treachery B) Stealth C) Wine-Drinking D)Fornication." [4] And "Fornication is one of the major sins." [5]

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says: "Whenever people commit four sins, they will be involved in four disasters:

1. Whenever fornication prevails, earthquakes will occur.
2. Whenever people do not pay alms-tax, quadrupeds will be demolished and blessing will be taken from grains.
3. Whenever the judgment of judicial authorities is oppressive, there will be no rain.
4. Whenever breach of promise occurs, polytheists will get victory over Muslims." [6]

Some messages:

1. Sexual freedom and unlawful relations are forbidden.
2. The function of women in creating unlawful relations and preparing preliminaries of fornication is more considerable

[1] Bihar, Vol. 77, p. 58

[2] Bihar, Vol. 73, p. 372

[3] Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 27

[4] Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 19

[5] Ibid

[6] Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 21

than that of men. On the contrary, in stealth, men have more function. Thus, in the verse, the Arabic word /zaniyah/ (fornicatress) precedes the word /zani/ (fornicator).

3. For correcting wrongdoer and protecting public chastity, bodily punishment is necessary. ("... scourge ... stripes")

4. In a liaison and intimacy, both parties must be punished equally. ("... each one of them...")
5. The amount of punishment must be measured by Allah.
("... a hundred stripes...")
6. In punishing wrongdoers, it is forbidden to be influenced by compassions and sentiments.
7. Compassion and kindness must be inside the range of religion. ("...And let not pity for them withhold you from enforcing the sentence ...")
8. Religion is not only fasting and performing ritual prayer, but Divinely imposed limits are of the essential elements of religion, too. ("... the sentence of Allah...")
9. By believing in origin and resurrection, rules can be carried out firmly and decisively.
10. Carrying out the prescribed punishments is the sign of belief in Allah. ("... if you believe in Allah...")
11. Punishment must be in a way that others take lesson. The verse says: ("...And let a party of the Believers witness their punishment.")
12. A person who commits fornication must be both bodily and psychically punished.
13. People's attendance is a lever to control both the judge and the executer.
14. Believers' attendance should be used for prohibition of committing evil.
15. Only Muslims are allowed to attend the occasion of execution of Divinely-prescribed punishment

Commentary: Verse 3

3. الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ ۖ مَوْحَرًا مُّشْرِكًا أَوْ زَانًا إِلَّا يَنْكِحَهَا لِأَنَّ الزَّانِيَةَ مُشْرِكَةٌ أَوْ زَانِيَةٌ إِلَّا يَنْكِحُهَا لِأَنَّ الزَّانِيَ

3. " The fornicator shall not marry save a fornicatress or an idolatress, and the fornicatress, none shall marry her save a fornicator or an idolater; and all that is forbidden unto the believers."

Commentary:

The Muslim believers, men and women, must marry chaste and pure spouses.

Corrupted people are unwelcome in an Islamic society. Since the above-mentioned verse speaks about the punishment of fornicator and fornicatress, a question raises that how the lawful marriage with such persons is judged.

This verse answers this question in this way:

" The fornicator shall not marry save a fornicatress or an idolatress, and the fornicatress, none shall marry her save a fornicator or an idolater; and all that is forbidden unto the believers."

Upon the subject that this holy verse is the statement of a Divine ordinance or it mentions only a natural and external phenomenon, commentators discuss differently:

Some believe that this verse mentions only an objective reality or fact that defilers go after defilers or birds of a feather flock together, but believers and pure persons do not go along with such evils and do not marry impure spouses. Believers prohibit themselves from it. What confirms this interpretation is the very apparent of the verse which has been stated in a predictive form.

But some others believe that this holy sentence declares a religious and Divine ordinance, which specially intends to prevent Muslims from marrying those persons who commit fornication, because, like physical illnesses, ethical diseases are often infectious. Moreover, this is counted a shame and disgrace for pure persons.

What is more important is that the offspring who are bred by such skeptical and impure persons have an ambiguous destiny. Regarding these facts, Islam has prevented it.

This interpretation is confirmed by this sentence which consists of the sense of prohibition: "... and all that is forbidden unto the believers."

There are many traditions stated by the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and other infallible Imams (a.s.) in this regard that establish the validity of this interpretation indicating that this verse declares an ordinance.

Even some of great commentators have said about the occasion of revelation of this verse: "A Muslim man asked the Prophet's permission for marrying a woman called 'Umm-i-Mahzul' who, in the Age of Ignorance, was notorious for immodesty and even she had hanged a flag as a sign on

the door of her house. At that time, this verse was sent down and the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) answered him." [1]

Another tradition, narrated from Imam Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Sadiq (a.s.), says: "This verse is about those men and women who committed fornication at the age of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.). Allah prohibited Muslims from marrying them. Right now this judgment covers all people. None should marry one who commits this wrong action and is punished according to

[1] Majm' ul-Bayan and QurtAbi in his commentary has narrated this tradition

Divinely-prescribed measures until his or her repentance is declared."

This is a worth-mentioning matter that many of the divine ordinances are stated in the form of predicative sentence. To state Divine ordinances in the form of imperative and prohibitive sentence is not always necessary.

By the way it must be noted that connecting 'idolater' to 'fornicator' is in fact for stating the importance of the matter. It means that the sin of fornication is equal to idolatry, because in some narrations we read that when a person commits fornication, he has no faith. The holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Fornicator is not a believer when he commits fornication. Likewise a thief does not have faith at the time of stealing, because at the time of doing this action, his faith is taken away as shirt is taken off." [1]

Some Matters to Study:

1. The cases of fornication that necessitates the death sentence:

What has been mentioned upon the fornication judgment in the above-mentioned noble verse is a common ordinance that has also some exceptional cases, including adultery whose prescribed punishment is death sentence if its conditions are confirmed.

The purpose of the Arabic word /muhsin/ concerning adultery is a man who has got wife and his wife is with him and /muhsinah/ is woman who has got husband and her husband is with her. If a person who is provided with such a lawful way commits fornication, his Islam prescribed punishment is death sentence. How this sentence is carried out is explained in the

[1] 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 2, p.26, as narrated from Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 571

books of Islamic jurisprudence. The sentence that is issued about the one who commits incest is execution too. Rape is also a felony punishable by execution.

Of course, in some cases there are also some additional punishments other than flagging, such as exile and so on. For these punishments, we must read their explanation in the jurisprudence books.

2. Why does the word 'fornicatress' precede the word 'fornicator'?

Undoubtedly this unchaste act is ugly and bad for every one, but for women it is worse and uglier, because they are more modest and decorous. If this modesty and decorousness is ruined, it will be a reason for more violent disobedience.

Moreover, although its evil consequences affect both of them, women will be affected with more evil consequences. Another possibility is that this ugly matter is more tempted by women and in many cases women are the main factor and origin of temptation.

All of these reasons have caused unchaste women to be mentioned before impure men in the above verse, but chaste women and pure men are far from all these affairs.

3. Why is punishment to be carried out in a gathering?

The above holy verse, which is in the form of imperative sentence, indicates that a group of believers must be present when the prescribed punishment of fornication is carried out. But the holy Qur'an has not stipulated that this Islamic sentence must be carried out positively in public, but depending on conditions and interests, it may be changed; for example, only the presence of 3 or more persons is enough. It is important that the judge decides how many persons must attend the occasion.

The philosophy of this judgment is also obvious,, because as we said before:

First: It will be a lesson for all people and it will make society pure.

Second: The shame of the offender prevents committing the wrong action in the future.

Third: When the prescribed punishment is carried out before some persons, the judge and the executors of the punishment will not be accused of taking bribe, collusion, discrimination, torturing and such like.

Fourth: The attendance of people prevents self-interest and excess in carrying out the punishment.

Fifth: It is possible that, after the execution of punishment, the wrongdoer accuses and rumours about judge and executer, but the attendance of people makes his status clear and prevents his destructive activities in the future. And there are many other advantages.

4. What was the prescribed punishment of a fornicator?

It is understood from the 15th and 16th verses of Sura An-Nissa' that before the time that the ordinance of Sura An-Nur about adulterer and adulteress was sent down, their punishment had been life sentence (being imprisoned forever) if they were married and if they were not married they had to be punished and persecuted. ("..punish them both...")

The measure of this punishment is not clear, but the concerning verse specifies that it must be one hundred stripes. Thus, the death sentence takes the place of life sentence (being imprisoned forever) for those who are married, and the sentence of one hundred stripes takes the place of the sentence of punishment and persecution for those who are not married.

5. Going to extremes in executing the prescribed punishment is forbidden!

Without doubt, humane and sentimental issues demand ultimate attempt to save every innocent individual from being punished. Also as far as Divine ordinances allow indulgence and pardon, wrongdoers should be pardoned. But when the crime or offence is proved and the prescribed punishment is decided, decisiveness and firmness of rule must be observed, and false sentiments, which harm the system of society, must be put away.

Specially in the concerned verse, the sentence /fi dan-illah/ ("...from enforcing the sentence of Allah...") is used. It means that when it is Allah's ordinance, no one can exceed Allah, the Beneficent, The Merciful.

Here, in this verse, the overcoming of affectionate sentiments is prohibited, because most people have such a mood. It is possible that these affectionate sentiments overcome them, but it cannot be denied that there is a minority that advocates more violation and severity. The mentioned group is also, as we mentioned before, away from the path of Allah's ordinance and these people must control their sentiments and do not exceed Allah, because that deserves to be severely punished, too.

6. How is marriage with fornicator and fornicatress illegalized?

We have already said that the above-mentioned verses apparently illegalize marriage with fornicator and fornicatress. Of course, this ordinance is limited to men and women who were notorious for this action and have not repented. Thus, if they are not notorious for this action, or

if they have withdrawn from their former deeds and have decided to be pure and chaste and have shown that they are penitent, marriage with them is lawfully permitted.

In the second status, it is for the reason that the titles 'fornicator' and 'fornicatress' are not applied to them, because they are no longer in the previous condition. But in the first status, this stipulation is understood from the Islamic narrations and the occasion of the revelation of verse confirms it, too.

In a reputable tradition we read that Zurarah, a famous jurist, asked Imam Sadiq (a.s.) about the commentary of the Qur'anic phrase: "The fornicator shall not marry save a fornicatress, ...". Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: "This verse refers to women and men who had been notorious for fornication and they were known for this evil act in the society. Today it is the same; it is not good to marry one who has been punished for fornication or is notorious for this ugly action, unless his or her repentance is declared." [1]

7. Philosophy of Banning Fornication

We do not think that nobody is aware of gloomy consequences that cover society and individual, but a little explanation in this field is necessary: Occurrence of this evil action and its prevalence unquestionably disorder the structure of family. It makes the relationship between father and son dark and gloomy.

It increases issues having no identity in the society, the issues who, according to experience, will become dangerous felons. This disgraceful action causes kinds of strife and quarrels between the sensual ones. Moreover, every one knows that psychic and venereal diseases, murdering offspring, abortion, and suchlike crimes are its gloomy results. In brief, if offspring of adultery increases in a society, the social

[1] Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 14, p. 335

relationships, which are based on family relations, will terribly become shaky and unstable.

To find out how important this matter is, we must imagine for a moment that if fornication is to be permissible in man's society thoroughly and marriage is to be extinct, in this condition no one would take care of infants who are born with no identity, neither in their infancy, nor in their adulthood. Moreover these issues will be deprived of kindness and compassion, which plays an important role in struggling with violations and crimes, and human society changes into a completely bestial society which is accompanied with violation in all aspects.

Of course, this disgraceful act causes kinds of individual and social conflicts and fights between

those who are capricious. The stories that have been narrated about the interior conditions of the notorious places and centers of corruption indicate this fact that sometimes the worst crimes take place along with sexual deviations.

In addition to that, experience has informed us and science has proved that this deed causes and spreads kinds of diseases. Although many organizations are prepared for struggling against its consequences, figures show that how many persons have lost and will lose their health because of this act.

This action often causes abortion, murdering of issues, and termination of generation, because such women are not willing to look after such issues of theirs and essentially the existence of offspring is a big barrier against continuity of their gloomy actions, so they always try to put an end to them.

And this chimerical theory that such issues can be gathered in some institutions that are controlled by government is not obviously practicable. It has been proved that how many problems exist in breeding fatherless and motherless children.

Even then these brutal issues are products of an inferior quality. They are uncivilized unscrupulous wrongdoers.

Even we must not forget that the purpose of marriage is not only satisfying sexual instinct, but participation in organizing a family, spiritual familiarity and mental tranquility, training issues, and cooperation in all affairs of life are the consequences of lawful marriage. And these are not possible unless man and woman are limited and allocated to each other and that the banning of fornication should be observed.

Some Traditions on Fornication

1. Imam Ali ibn-Abitalib (a.s.) in a tradition said: "I heard the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: 'There are six evil effects in fornication, three of them are in this world, and three of them in the other world. Those which are for this world are: A) It will take man's luminousness. B) It terminates provisions. C) It speeds up destruction of man. And those which are for the other world are: A) Allah's anger B) Severity of reckoning C) Entering into Fire or eternal abiding in Hell'." [1]

2. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: "One of the sins that withhold sustenance is fornication." [2]

3. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Allah's fury is severe and harsh toward those who commit fornication." [3]

4. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "A fervent man never commits fornication." [4]

5. It has been narrated: "Verily fornication brings blackness of face, causes poverty, shortens the lifetime, terminates the provision. It ruins beauty and glory and brings

[1] Majma' ul-Bayan, Vol. 6, p. 414

[2] Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 23

[3] Nahj ul-Fisahah, p. 57

[4] The explanation of Nahj ul-Balaqah, by Ibn Abi Al-Hadid, Vol. 19, p. 311

Allah's anger near and the doer of it is wretched and ashamed." [1]

6. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "When fornication increases after me, sudden death does increase." [2]

7. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Verily a person who enters his sperm in an unlawful womb on the Hereafter Day will have severer punishment." [3]

8. The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) said: "When a man commits fornication, the spirit of faith abandons him." [4]

9. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: "When fornication increases (in a society), many earthquakes occur." [5]

10. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "There are four things that if one of them enters a home, it will destroy it, and which will not be well set-up with blessing: stealth, treachery, wine-drinking, and fornication." [6]

11. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Do good to your fathers, so that your issues will do good to you. And abstain from people's wives, so that your wives will be chaste (and safe)."

[1] Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 28

[2] Bihar, Vol. 70, p. 369 and Furu'-i-Kafi, Vol. 5, p. 541

[3] Wasa'il, Vol. 5, p. 47

[4] Wasa'il, Vol. 6, p. 256

[5] Bihar, Vol. 76, p. 21

[6] Khisal, by Saduq, p. 182

Commentary : Verse 4.5

4. الْفَاسِقُونَ هُمْ وَأُولَئِكَ أَبَدًا شَهَادَةٌ لَهُمْ تَقْبَلُوا وَلَا جَلْدَةَ تَمَانِينَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ شُهَدَاءَ بِأَرْبَعَةٍ يَأْتُوا لَمْ تُمْ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ يَرْمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ

5. رَجِيمٌ غَفُورٌ اللَّهُ فَإِنَّ وَأَصْلَحُوا ذَلِكَ بَعْدَ مِنْ تَابُوا الَّذِينَ إِلَّا.

4. " And those who accuse chaste women (with adultery) but do not bring four witnesses, then scourge them (with) eighty stripes and do not (afterward) accept their testimony forever, and these are they that are evil-doers,"

5. " Save those who repent thereafter and make amends, for verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Commentary:

Accusation is like shooting arrow to the honor and dignity of people and not observing it. And, the punishment of accusing married and chaste women is more severe.

Since the pervious verses consist of a heavy punishment for men and women who commit fornication, and it is possible that some impious malicious individuals accuse a few pure and chaste persons, thus immediately after mentioning of severe punishment of adulterers, the punishment of those who accuse others and intend to misuse this ordinance is declared, so that the honor and respect of chaste families can be saved from the threat of such persons, and no one dare denigrate people. At first, it says:

" And those who accuse chaste women (with adultery) but do not bring four witnesses, then scourge them (with) eighty stripes ..."

After this heavy punishment, two more ordinances are added, where it says:

"... and do not (afterward) accept their testimony forever, and these are they that are evil-doers,"

Thus, in this way, not only such persons are heavily punished, but also their testimony and speech is invalid and invaluable in a long term, so that they cannot defame pure individuals. Moreover, the mark of impurity is set on them and they will be scandalized in the society.

This austereness in saving reputation of pure people is not limited to this case here, but it is also seen in many Islamic teachings. It indicates how extremely Islam values reputation of pure female and male believers.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) in a tradition said: "When a Muslim accuses his Muslim brother of a matter (that is not done by him), faith will vanish from his heart as salt melts in water." [1]

However, in view of the fact that Islam never closes the path of return to anyone, and it uses every opportunity to encourage wrongdoers to purify themselves and atone for the former errors and mistakes, in the next verse the Qur'an adds:

"Save those who repent thereafter and make amends, for verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Therefore, according to the traditions narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) and other Imams (a.s.), by repenting both their testimony is valid in the future and the judgment of being mischievous is abrogated of them in all fields, because a person who has repented and become just again, the title of being mischievous will be taken from him.

Some Traditions on Repentance:

1. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "An individual who repents his sin is like a person who is sinless." [1]
2. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Nothing is more liked before Allah than a faithful man and woman who regret about sin and then repent." [2]
3. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "Impart the pleasant odour of seeking forgiveness, so that the offensive smell of sins does not stigmatize you." [3]
4. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: "The favorite servant before Allah is a well-doer who repents a lot." [4]

Pay attention to some points:

1. What does the word 'Ramy' mean here?

The Arabic word /ramy/ basically means throwing stones or shooting arrows and like, and it is

natural that in many cases it harms. Then this Arabic word has been used sarcastically in accusation of individuals, cursing, abusing and unfair imputation, because as if these words and speeches are like arrows that hit the body of a person and wound him.

Perhaps it is for this reason that this word has been used in an absolute form in the verses under discussion and later verses. For example, it has not mentioned, "Those who accuse chaste women of adultery", because considering verbal contexts, the word 'fornication' has been omitted in the concept of the word /yarmana/. Moreover, the lack of clearly expressing it, when chaste women are mentioned, is- considered as a kind of courtesy, respect, and chastity in words.

2. Why Four Witnesses?

We know that in Islam two just witnesses are usually enough for proving crimes and asserting rights. Even in the case of homicide when there are two witnesses, the crime is proved, but in the question of accusation to adultery four witnesses are especially necessary. The reason that witness outweighs here is possibly the fact that many people accuse others very easily and they always mar reputation and honour of individuals suspiciously or not suspiciously. Islam is rather uncompromising in this respect so that people's honour can be saved. But in other issues, even homicide, individuals' tongue is not so defiled.

Moreover, in homicide there is only one party, i.e. the criminal is one, but in adultery two persons are charged with the crime, and if we require two witnesses for each of them, there will be four witnesses.

This statement is the content of a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.). Abi Hanifah, the famous Sunni jurist, says: "I asked Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that whether fornication is more condemnable than homicide. He said: 'No, homicide is.' Then I said: 'Why are two witnesses enough in proving homicide, but fornication requires 4 witnesses?' He said: 'What do you say about this matter?' Abi Hanifah could not answer explicitly. Imam said: "This is because there are two prescribed punishments in fornication, one of them is for man and the other one is for woman. So two witnesses are needed. But in homicide only one prescribed punishment is inflicted on murderer." [1]

Of course there are some cases of fornication for which prescribed punishment is inflicted on one party (e.g. rape and suchlike), but these are the exceptional instances. What is common and obvious is the one that is committed with mutual agreement, but we know that the philosophy of ordinances depends on prevailing individuals.

3. Important condition of repentance:

We have reiterated this fact that repentance is not only asking Allah's forgiveness or feeling remorse about past deeds or even deciding to relinquish an evil act in the future, but in addition to all these things the wrongdoer must put his best foot forward to amend the past.

If he has really marred reputation and honour of a pure man or woman, he must, in order to make his repentance accepted, deny what he has said in the presence of those who have heard his accusation, so to speak, he must rehabilitate the disgraced person.

The Qur'anic holy phrase /wa 'aslahu/ ("...who ... make amends ...") that has come after the phrase /tabu/ ("... who repent ...") indicates this fact that such persons must repent from their sins and then must atone what wrong they have committed. This is not right that another one accuses a person of lying in public (or by means of press or mass media) and then, in his home, when he is alone, he asks Allah's forgiveness. Allah never accepts such repentance.

Therefore, there are some traditions narrated from the leaders of Islam as an answer to the question that whether the testimony of those who accuse someone of dishonour is accepted after they repent and are prescribedly punished; their answer is "Yes". And when it was asked how his repentance is done, they said: "He will come to Imam (or Islamic judge) and will say: 'I accused so and as and I repent of what I have said'." [1]

4. The ordinances of 'Qathf': (false accusation of unlawful intercourse)

In the book entitled: "Hudud" (prescribed punishments), there is a chapter which is called: "the prescribed punishment of Qathf". The word 'Qathf' (on the rhythm of 'Hazf') means hurling something to a far away place. But in these cases, like the Arabic word /ramy/, it alludes to dishonouring accusation of an individual. In other words, it is scurrility and foul language related to these matters.

Whenever 'Qathf' is done explicitly and affirmatively in any language and in any form, its prescribed punishment is 80 stripes, as it was mentioned above. If it is not explicit and affirmative, it is subject to the ordinance of discretionary punishment (the purpose of 'discretionary punishment' is those sins that have no definite prescribed punishment in religion, but it is up to the Islamic judge to decide the measure and the way of punishment in a certain case with regard to the characteristics of the criminal and the quality of crime as well as other conditions).

Even if a person accuses a group of people of such a crime, swears at them and accuses them one by one (singly), there will prescribed punishment of Qathf for each accusation separately. But if he accuses them on the whole or altogether, and if they jointly and intemperately ask punishment for him, he will be inflicted with one prescribed punishment, but if they separately take legal action against him, for each accusation he will be imposed with one independent prescribed

punishment.

This is so important that if a person is accused of such a crime and this person dies, his heirs can sue accuser and ask prescribed punishment for the accuser. Of course, since this ordinance is among the personal rights, and if an entitled person forgives wrongdoer, his prescribed punishment will be canceled, unless this offence is repeated so many times that reputation and honour of society is threatened, in this case this crime will be treated differently.

If two persons use bad language about reputation of each other, there will be no prescribed punishment for both of them, but they will be imposed with discretionary punishment as judge decides. Thus, no Muslim has right to answer back foul language, but he can only demand his rights through the judge of religion and asks for punishment of bad language user.

Anyway, the purpose of this Islamic ordinance is, first: saving men's honour and reputation, and second is, preventing ample social and moral corruptions which bedevil the society, because if corrupted persons are to be free, they will swear at and accuse every one unjustly and then they are saved from punishment.

In this condition, people's reputation and honour are always at risk and even these unjust accusations make a spouse cynical of other half. And father will be skeptical of his issue's legitimacy. In short, the existence of family will be threatened, atmosphere of suspicion and skepticism prevails society, rumour-mongers drive a roaring line, and all chaste persons will be stained in the opinion of people.

Here, there will be the demand of decisiveness, the same decisiveness which Islam has presented to these bad language users.

Yes, they must be flogged with 80 stripes as penalty for their evil and accusing swearing, so that they will never fiddle with people's reputation and honour.

Commentary : Verse 6.7.8.9.10

الصَّادِقِينَ لَمِنْ إِنَّهُ بِاللَّهِ شَهَادَاتٍ أَرْبَعٌ أَحَدِهِمْ فَشَهَادَةُ أَنْفُسِهِمْ إِلَّا شُهَدَاءَ لَهُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ وَلَمْ أَزْوَاجَهُمْ يُرْمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ

الْكَاذِبِينَ لَمِنْ كَانَ إِنْ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ لَعْنَتٌ أَنْ وَالْخَامِسَةَ 7.

الْكَاذِبِينَ لَمِنْ إِنَّهُ بِاللَّهِ شَهَادَاتٍ أَرْبَعٌ تَشْهَدُ أَنْ الْعَذَابَ عَنْهَا وَيَدْرُؤُا 8.

9. الصَّادِقِينَ مَنْ كَانَ إِنْ عَلِيهَا اللَّهُ غَضِبَ أَنْ وَالْخَامِسَةَ.

10. حَكِيمٍ ابْتَوَى اللَّهَ وَأَنَّ وَرَحْمَتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ اللَّهُ فَضْلٌ وَلَوْلَا

6. " And (as for) those who accuse their wives (with adultery), and have (in support) no witness except themselves, then the testimony of one of them (shall be taken) four times (swearing) by Allah that verily he is of the truthful (ones);"

7. "And the fifth (oath to be) that the curse of Allah be on him if he is one of the liars."

8. "And it shall avert the punishment from her if she bears witness four times (swearing) by Allah that verily he is one of the liars,"

9. "And the fifth (oath) should be that the wrath of Allah be upon her if he is of the truthful (ones)."

10. "And had it not been Allah's grace and His mercy on you, and that Allah is Oft-Pardoning, All-Wise, (you would have been ruined and undone)."

Occasion of Revelation:

Among some of the Companions, Sa'ad Ibn 'Ibadeh (the great of The Helpers) told the Prophet (p.b.u.h.): "O' Prophet of Allah! When accusing someone of this unchaste action has such a punishment that if an accuser can not prove it, he will be flogged with 80 stripes, so what can I do when I enter my home and I do see that a miscreant man is having sexual intercourse with my wife?

If I wait for four persons to come and see and then testify, the time has passed and that evil man has done his job, and if I want to kill him, no one believes me without witnesses and I will be retaliated justly as a murderer; and if I tell what I have seen to judge, I will be flogged with 80 stripes." Some minutes later his cousin (son of his uncle) by the name of Hilal-Ibn 'Umayyah entered to report to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) that he had seen a miscreant man with his wife at night. He explicitly said: "I have seen this fact with my own eyes and I heard their voice with my own ears."

At this time the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) became so annoyed that the sign of his unhappiness appeared in his blessed face. Hilal said: "I see by your face how annoyed you have become, but, by Allah, I tell the truth and I hope Allah Himself helps me." At this time Gabriel came down and revealed this verse and its following four verses to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and presented Muslims its real exact solution.

Here, the Holy Qur'an has excluded some cases from the judgment of Qathf (false accusation); if a husband accuses his wife of unchaste action and says that he has seen her while she was doing sexual intercourse with a strange man, Qathf judgment will not be imposed on this husband, and, on the other hand, the husband's claim about his wife will not be accepted without reason and witness.

Here, the holy Qur'an suggests a proposition that the problem will be solved justly and in a most excellent way. That proposition is that the husband must first testify four times for proving that his claim is true. As the Qur'an says:

" And (as for) those who accuse their wives (with adultery), and have (in support) no witness except themselves, then the testimony of one of them (shall be taken) four times (swearing) by Allah that verily he is of the truthful (ones);"

And in the next verse the Qur'an says:

"And the fifth (oath to be) that the curse of Allah be on him if he is one of the liars."

Thus it implies that the husband repeats this sentences for four times, saying: he testifies by Allah that he is telling the truth in accusing his wife of adultery!

In the fifth time the husband says that: May he be cursed by Allah if he tells a lie.

Now the wife is facing a dilemma; if she confirms her husband's words or she does not agree to deny this accusation, according to the way that is mentioned in the next verse, she will decisively be imposed with prescribed punishment of fornication. Thus in the next verse it says:

"And it shall avert the punishment from her if she bears witness four times (swearing) by Allah that verily he is one of the liars,"

And the next verse mentions:

"And the fifth (oath) should be that the wrath of Allah be upon her if he is of the truthful (ones)."

Thus, the wife testifies five times that her husband's five-time-declared testimony that she has committed adultery is untrue. Four times she repeats this sentence:"I testify by Allah that he is telling untruth in his accusation of my adultery."

In the fifth time she declares an oath saying: "Should be that she solemnly invokes the wrath of

Allah upon herself if he (her accuser) is telling the truth."

The fulfilment of this Islamic custom in Arabic is called /li'an/ (conjugal anathema, or imprecation) because of the word /la'n/ (curse) mentioned in the above sentences. Doing /li'an/ leads to four certain judgments for these two spouses.

A) Without the formula of repudiation (divorce), they will immediately separate from each other.

B) This wife and husband will be perpetually unlawful to each other; and there will never be the chance of a new marriage between them.

C) There will be no Qathf punishment for this husband and the prescribed punishment of adultery for the wife.

D) The issue that is created through this phenomenon will not be related to husband, but the issue's affinity with wife remains.

Finally in the last one of the concerned verses, it says:

"And had it not been Allah's grace and His mercy on you, and that Allah is Oft-Pardoning, All-Wise, (you would have been ruined and undone)."

In fact this holy verse is as a compact indication that puts emphasis on the above judgments, because it shows that the custom of /li'an/ is a Divine bounteousness that solves the problem of relationship between wife and husband in a right way.

First, it does not compel husband to be silent when he saw his wife has committed a wrong action and to withdraw from instituting legal proceedings.

Second, as soon as the accusation takes place, it does not declare wife to the prescribed punishment of adultery and it grants wife the right to defend herself.

Third, it does not demand husband to go after four witnesses when he saw this scene and so lets the cat out of the bag.

Fourth, it divorces this wife and husband who are unable to continue their married life and even it does not allow them to be spouses with each other again in the future, because if this accusation is true, they can not psychically continue their married life and if it is a lie, wife's sentiment is so spoiled that returning to a new life becomes difficult, because the result of such affair is animosity and hostility not chilly detachment.

Fifth, it also settles the situation of the issue.

By using a delicate, measured, and just solution, Allah has cleared up this difficult problem. He has shown His blessing, bounteousness, forgiveness, and intellect towards His servants. If we contemplate this matter, we see that the main judgment that demands four witnesses is not totally cancelled, but in case of wife and husband each of these four 'testimonies' are substituted for one 'witness' and some of its judgments are taken into consideration.

Some matters to be mentioned:

1. Why is Qathf allocated to spouses?

The first question that is brought up here is that what characteristics do two spouses have that such an exceptional judgment has been declared about them? The answer of this question can be, on one hand, found in the occasion of revelation of the verse, and that is when a man sees his wife with a strange man he can not be silent, if he possibly wants. How does his jealousy allow him to show no reaction against infringement of his honour and reputation? If he wants to go to judge and say something, he will be imposed with Qathf punishment, because the judge does not know he is right, perhaps he tells a lie. If he wants to go after 4 witnesses, it will be against his face and reputation; moreover, it is possible that the affair ends during finding of witnesses.

On the other hand, strange persons accuse each other of this evil action very soon, but wife and husband accuse each other less. Thus, having 4 witnesses is necessary for strange persons, otherwise Qathf punishment will be carried out, but it is not the same for wife and husband. Therefore, this judgment is because of their characteristics.

2. Li'an, a Special Program:

According to explanations that were given in the commentary of the verses, to annul Qathf punishment of man who accuses his wife of adultery, man must testify four times by Allah that he is telling the truth. As a matter of fact, in this special case, each of these four testimonies takes place of a witness. And in the fifth time he most heartedly and willingly wishes Allah's curse, if he tells a lie.

Considering that these regulations are usually carried out along with religious obligations in an Islamic environment, and when one person sees that he must so decisively testify by Allah in the presence of an Islamic judge, and he must curse himself, most of times this bad action (accusation) is not committed. And this prevents man from untrue accusations.

The fact that the wife must testify four times by Allah that this accusation is untrue, is to equalize the testimony of wife and husband. And, since wife is the one who is accused of adultery, she defends herself in the fifth time with a more severe sentence than that of the men and she demands Allah's wrath if the husband tells the truth. We know that 'La'nat' (curse) means not enjoying Allah's mercy, but 'Qadab' (wrath) is something worse than being aloof of Allah's mercy, because wrath demands a punishment that is more than cursing. Thus, in the commentary of Sura Al-Hamd, we said that 'Maqdub-i- 'Alayhim' ("...not (the path) of those inflicted with Your wrath") are persons who are worse than 'Dallan' ("...(those) gone astray."), though 'Dallah' or those who go astray do not certainly acquire Allah's mercy.

Some Traditions on Calumny:

1. Imam Rida (a.s.) narrated from his fathers who said: "The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) said: 'One who calumniates a faithful man or woman, or says something about her (or him) which is not in him (or her), in the Resurrection Day Allah, the Exalted, will set that calumniator on a heap of Fire so that what he has said about him or her comes out of him, (and he will be cleaned by suffering that chastisement)."[1]
2. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "A believer does not deceive his (religious) brother, nor does he betray him, nor does he disappoint him, nor does he slander him, nor does he says: 'I hate you'."[2]
3. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "The (sin of) culminating someone (who is clean and pure) is heavier than skies."[3]
4. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "No shamelessness is like culmination."[4]
5. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Whoever calumniates a Muslim in order to bother him, on the Day of Judgment Allah will keep him in the bile sludge of Hell-dwellers till He judges between people."[5]

Section 2 : The Scandal against Ayeshah Commentary : Verse 11.12.13.14

About the accusation against Ayeshah when she had been left behind by the caravan

11. كِبْرَهُ تَوَلَّى وَالَّذِي إِنَّمَا مَنِ اتَّسَبَ مَا مِنْهُمْ أَمْرِي ۖ لِكُلِّ لَكُمْ خَيْرٌ هُوَ بَلْ لَكُمْ شَرٌّ تَحْسَبُوهُ لَا مِنْكُمْ عُصْبَةٌ بِالْإِفْكِ جَاءُوا الَّذِينَ إِنَّ

عَظِيمٌ عَذَابٌ لَهُ مِنْهُمْ

12. مُبِينٌ إِنْكَ هَذَا وَقَالُوا خَيْرًا بِنَفْسِهِمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ظَنَّ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ إِذْ لَوْلَا

13. الْكَاذِبُونَ هُمُ اللَّهُ عِنْدَ فَأَوْلَانِكَ بِالشُّهَدَاءِ يَأْتُوا لَمْ فَإِذْ شُهَدَاءَ بِأَرْبَعَةٍ عَلَيْهِ جَاءُوا لَوْلَا

14. عَظِيمٌ عَذَابٌ فِيهِ أَفْضَنْتُمْ مَا فِي لَمَسَكُمُ وَالْآخِرَةَ الدُّنْيَا فِي وَرَحْمَتُهُ يُكْفِمُ عَدَا اللَّهِ فَضْلًا وَلَوْلَا

11. "Verily those who brought forward the lie are a band of you. Do not regard it an evil to you; nay, it is good for you. Unto every man of them will be paid that which he has earned of the sin; and as for him among them who had the greater part therein, he shall have a grievous chastisement."

12. "Why did not the believers, men and women, when you heard of it, think well of themselves; and say: 'This is a manifest lie'?"

13. "Why did they not bring four witnesses about it? But since they have not brought witnesses, they are liars before Allah."

14. "And had it not been Allah's and grace His mercy on you in the world and the Hereafter, a grievous chastisement would certainly have touched you on account of the discourse which you entered into."

The Adventure of 'Ifk, (a Great Slander):

It is understood from all the verses 11-16 that an innocent person was accused of unchaste act at the descending of these verses, and this rumour was spread throughout the society.

When a group of hypocrites, who were apparently Muslim, also wanted to use this event maliciously for causing Islamic society harm and for the sake of their own interest and weakening the common reputation of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), these verses were sent down and so this incident was dealt with in an unprecedented resoluteness. And so the insulting astray-goers and sinister hypocrites were firmly suppressed.

The holy Qur'an, without mentioning the main phenomenon in this verse, says:

"Verily those who brought forward the lie are a band of you...."

Then it commiserates the believers who were very annoyed by accusing a pure person of such an evil act, by saying:

“... Do not regard it an evil to you; nay, it is good for you. ...”

By means of it, the evil intentions of some of defeated enemies and undiscerning hypocrites were uncovered and these outwardly good persons who were of a bad character, were disgraced. Possibly if this event had not occurred and they had still remained unknown, they would have attacked more severely and dangerously in the future.

This event taught the Muslims a lesson that following rumourmongers will cause them lose every thing. They must firmly resist this matter.

Then, two points are mentioned in the remaining part of the verse. At first, it says:

“... Unto every man of them will be paid that which he has earned of the sin; ...”

It indicates that the great responsibility of those who led and found a sin would never prevent the responsibility of others, but every person is as responsible for a sin as he participates and shares in a conspiracy.

For the second step, the verse continues saying:

“... and as for him among them who had the greater part therein, he shall have a grievous chastisement.”

Commentators say that this person was ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abi Maslul, who was the chief person of ‘Ifk companions. Some others have also mentioned Mastah Ibn ‘Ithamah and Hassan Ibn Thabit as the referent of this concept.

Anyway, the one who was more active than others and set off the flames of ‘Ifk and is considered as the leader of the group will be imposed with a punishment as great as his sin is great.

Then, in the next verse, the believers who were deceived in this affair and were influenced by this group are severely reprimanded through a few verses. At first, it says:

“Why did not the believers, men and women, when you heard of it, think well of themselves; and say: this is a manifest lie?”

It means those why believers did not think good of other believers, who are as their own selves, when they heard hypocrites’ words about their faithful persons, and why they did not say that it was a great and manifest slander.

They knew the evil and notorious background of these hypocrites. They were certain out of various contexts that such an accusation was impossible. They were well aware of that accused person's chastity. They knew the plots which were planned and were carried out against the Prophet (p.b.u.h.). Nevertheless, they must be reprimanded that they heard such false rumours and they remained silent, the worse was when they consciously or unconsciously spread it!

It is interesting that instead of asking believers to think good of the one who is accused of this calumny, it says they must think well of themselves. This way of speaking means that believers are of one essence, and if one of them is accused, it is as though all of them were accused. They are like the limbs of each other, if world brings harm to one of the limbs, the other limbs do not stay calm and indifferent. As one is to defend himself against accusations, one must defend his religious female and male brothers.

The use of the word /'anfus/, in such cases, also is seen in other verses of the holy Qur'an, including Sura Al-Hujurat No. 49, verse 12 which says: "... and find not fault with your own selves ...". And that its emphasis is put on ' the believers, men and women' shows that Faith is a quality that can prevent evil thinking and suspicions.

Up to now those believers were spiritually and morally reprimanded and rebuked, because on the whole it was not its time for the believers to be silent against that evil calumny or to be puppet of benighted rumourmongers.

Then, in this verse the subject is judicially paid attention, where it says:

"Why did they not bring four witnesses about it? But since they have not brought witnesses, they are liars before Allah."

This reprimand shows that the commandment of producing four witnesses as well as 'Qathf punishment', if witnesses are not produced, had been revealed before the verses of 'Ifck'.

But, why the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) did not proceed to carry out this prescribed punishment is clearly answered. If people do not cooperate, the execution of such an affair is not possible, because tribal bigoted relationships sometimes make negative resistances to be temporarily brought about against carrying out some judgments. This event, as the history indicates, happened in the same way.

Finally, all these reprimands are concluded in the next holy verse, when it says:

"And had it not been Allah's and grace His mercy on you in the world and the Hereafter, a

grievous chastisement would certainly have touched you on account of the discourse which you entered into."

With regard to the matter that the Qur'anic word /'afadtum/is derived from the word /'ifadah/, meaning pouring water out increasingly, and it is also sometimes used to mean sinking into water, it is understood from this phrase that the rumour of such a calumny spread so much that it also enveloped all believers.

Commentary : Verse 15.16.17.18

15. عَظِيمٌ اللَّهُ عِنْدَ وَهُوَ هَيْنًا وَتَحْسِبُونَهُ عِلْمٌ بِهِ لَكُمْ لَيْسَ مَا بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ وَتَقُولُونَ بِاللَّسِنَتِكُمْ تَلْفَوْنَهُ إِذْ

16. عَظِيمٌ بُهْتَانٌ هَذَا سُبْحَانَكَ بِهَذَا نَتَكَلَّمُ أَنْ لَنَا يَكُونُ مَا قُلْتُمْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ إِذْ وَلَوْلَا

17. مُؤْمِنِينَ كُنْتُمْ إِنْ أَبَدًا لِمِثْلِهِ تَعُودُوا أَنْ اللَّهُ يَعِظُكُمْ

18. حَكِيمٌ لِيْمَعِ وَاللَّهُ الْآيَاتِ لَكُمْ اللَّهُ وَيُبَيِّنُ

15. "When you received it with your tongues, and uttered with your mouths what you had no knowledge of, and you counted it a trifle; while in the sight of Allah it is very great."

16. "And why did you not, when you heard it, say: 'It is not right of us to speak of this: glory be to You (O' Lord)! This is a great calumny?'"

17. "Allah admonishes you that you should never repeat the like of it for ever, if you are (true) believers."

18. "And Allah makes clear to you the signs: and Allah is knowing, Wise."

Commentary:

As a matter of fact this holy verse explains the previous discussion that how they were carelessly involved in this great sin. It implies that you may remember the time when you welcomed this great lie and you used to receive this rumour from the tongues of each other; and you used to utter something with your mouths that you had not any knowledge about it.

268 You considered it a tiny thing while it is very great with Allah. The verse says:

"When you received it with your tongues, and uttered with your mouths what you had no knowledge of, and you counted it a trifle; while in the sight of Allah it is very great."

Actually this verse refers to their 3 great sins that were related to the affair:

First, they embraced and admitted this rumour by taking it from the tongues of each other.

Second, they spread this rumour and recited it for others, while they were not certain of it.

Third, they regarded it as an easy trifle act. It was not only about the reputation and honour of two Muslims, but also it involved the reputation of the Islamic society (thinking too little of rumour and using it as an amusing tool).

It is interesting that in one place the phrase ("...with your tongues...") is used and in another place the phrase ("...with your mouths ...") is used. Although all words are uttered through tongue and mouth, the verse refers to the matter that neither their admission nor their distribution of this rumour was based on any reason. They only fell back on words that were nonsense, baseless and resulted from the movement of the tongue and the mouth.

Since this event was a very important incident but a group of Muslims had considered it trifle, it is again in this verse emphasized, and they are once more faced with reprimand and their souls are scourged more firmly. It says:

" And why did you not, when you heard it, say: 'It is not right of us to speak of this: glory be to You (O' Lord)! This is a great calumny?'"

In fact they were rebuked, because they did not regard the accused ones with a good consideration, but here it is said that not only they must regard them good, but also they must not have expressed such a calumny, let alone they themselves proceed to spread it.

They must have got wondered at such a great calumny. They must have remembered the pureness of Allah and have sought refuge to Him for being not involved in spreading this rumour of calumny.

Nevertheless, they took it lightly by saying it is easy to do it, and they touched off it, and became the puppet of rumour-mongering and conspiring hypocrites.

We will, if Allah wills, discuss the importance of sinful rumour-mongering and its motivations and how to struggle against it. We will also mention in detail some points in the commentary of later verses.

Since in the next verse the story of 'Ifk' is mentioned and the gloomy agonizing consequences of rumour-mongering and slandering reputation of pure persons are brought up, the Qur'an says:

"Allah admonishes you that you should never repeat the like of it for ever, if you are (true) believers."

If an individual does not go after such great sins, it means this individual is faithful. As a matter of fact the above verse outlines one of the principles of repentance, because merely being regretful of the past is not enough, and decision for not repeating it in the future must be taken, too.

To give caution that these words are not some common or usual ones and it is Allah, the All-Knowing and Wise, Who has stated this to make some great facts clear. The next verse explains some crucial truths:

"And Allah makes clear to you the signs: and Allah is knowing, Wise."

Allah is aware of our needs, evil and good deeds as His knowledge demands and He modulates His commandments and ordinances to it as His Wisdom demands.

Some Points about Tongue:

Tongue is the only limb that, because of speaking, does not ache and get tired during man's lifetime. Its form and size is small, but its crime and sin is great. There are many faithless persons who become Muslim and pure by saying one sentence (testifying that Allah is One and Unique). And there are many Muslims who become faithless and impure by profaning Allah or denying religion ordinances. On one hand, tongue can bring peace and serenity by telling truth, repeating Allah's name, praying and advising others. On the other hand, it can cause annoyance and resentment by irritating and biting others. Tongue is the key of intellect, the light of knowledge, and the simplest and the cheapest means of transmission of all sciences and experiments. Masters of ethics have written many books and papers about tongue.

Some Traditions on Tongue Maladies

1. The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) said: "The salvation of the believer lies in controlling his tongue." [1]
2. Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) said: "One who does not keep his tongue does not protect his faith." [2]

3. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Do not you get satisfied and pleased that you perform ritual prayers, pay amis-tax, and keep your tongue and then enter Paradise." [1]
4. Ibn Abbas said: "The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.Ji.) once said: 'May Allah bless one who keeps his tongue, knows circumstances of his era, and his way is a straight path'." [2]
5. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "The slip of the tongue is more painful than the harm of spearhead." [3]
6. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "The slip of the tongue is the severest perdition." [4]
7. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "The worst person is the one of whose tongue people are afraid." [5]
8. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) narrated from his great father, Imam Sajjad Ali-ibn-il-Hussayn (a.s.), who said that his father, Imam Ali (a.s.), retold that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Tongue will be so chastised that no other limb will be punished (in that way). Then the tongue will say: 'Oh Allah, you have punished me in a way that none of other limbs has been chastised so.' Allah will say: 'You, tongue, have uttered words that have reached east and west and because of that many honorable bloods have been shed, people's properties are plundered, and people's reputation is marred. I swear by My Glory that I punish you in a way that I have not chastised other limbs'." [6]
9. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "Hell-dwellers are inspire because of tongue, and the dead will merit and deserve light because of tongue. Then keep your tongue and make it busy with uttering Allah's name." [1]
10. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "The tongue is a beast of prey. If you release it, it attacks and bites." [2]
11. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "There are many persons whose tongue caused them annihilation." [3]
12. 'Abi Bakr said: "I heard the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: 'Verily most of man's faults are caused by his tongue' ." [4]
13. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand people are saved, and believer is the one to whom people can entrust their blood and properties." [5]

Commentary : Verse 19.20

لَاتَعْلَمُونَ وَأَنْتُمْ يَعْلَمُ وَاللَّهُ وَالْآخِرَةَ الدُّنْيَا فِي أَلِيمٍ عَذَابٍ لَهُمْ ءَامَنُوا الَّذِينَ فِي الْفَاحِشَةِ تَشْبِيحٌ أَنْ يُحِبُّونَ الَّذِينَ إِنَّ 19.

رَجِيمٍ رَعُوفٌ اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ وَرَحْمَتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ اللَّهُ فَضْلٌ وَلَوْلَا 20.

19. "Verily those who love that indecency should be spread concerning those who believe, theirs will be a painful punishment in the world and the Hereafter; and Allah knows, while you do not know."

20. "And had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you, and Allah is Compassionate, Merciful, (you would have been chastised)."

Commentary:

Interest in spreading indecency is sometimes materialized by tongue and pen and sometimes by setting up some centers of abomination and wickedness, encouraging others to commit sin, and providing others with facilities for doing wrong action and committing sin.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: "One who hears or sees something about a believer and retells it for others is among the examples of this verse." [1]

There is a tradition that says one who gives publicity to an evil action is like the one who commits it. [2]

Therefore in this verse, for leaving no doubt, the words are changed from expressing a private phenomenon into statement of a general and comprehensive rule. It says:

"Verily those who love that indecency should be spread concerning those who believe, theirs will be a painful punishment in the world and the Hereafter;..."

It is worth-studying that the verse does not say: those who spread indecency, but it says "Verily those who love that indecency should be spread', and this is The ultimate emphasis on this field.

In other words, it says it must not be thought that such insistence and emphasis is just for the sake that the wife of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), or someone as important as her, is accused, but if such a thing happens to anyone and to every faithful person, this emphasis and insistence will be applied to that person, because other aspects will be added to it.

By the way, we must pay careful attention to the fact that spreading indecency is not allocated to

only spreading false baseless accusation of a faithful man and woman and to accuse them of an unchaste action. This is one of its examples and it is not limited to it. This phrase has got a wider concept that involves every kind of dissemination of corruption, spreading indecency and giving help to its development.

Of course, in the holy Qur'an, the Arabic word /fahisah/, or /fahsa/, is mostly applied to sexual deviations and obscenity in honour, (defilements of honour), but philologically, as Raqib says in the book Mufradat, 'Fuhsh', 'Fahsha', and 'Fahishah' refer to any behaviour and speech that the obscenity of it is very bad and great. And, in the holy Qur'an, it is sometimes used in the same vast meaning, such as the verse which says: "And those who shun the great sins and indecencies, ..." [1] Thus, the extent of the concept of the verse gets completely clear.

But, the sentence "... theirs will be a painful punishment in the world..." may refer to religiously prescribed punishments, social reactions, and individual gloomy consequences that in this very world will catch those who commit these actions. Moreover, their deprivation from the right of testimony and their condemnation to disgrace and iniquity are also its other worldly signs.

The agonizing punishment of the Hereafter is Hell Fire, Divine wrath and fury, and not enjoying Allah's bless.

At the end of the verse, it says:

"... and Allah knows, while you do not know."

Allah is well aware of the gloomy consequences and fatal results of spreading indecency both in the world and the Hereafter, but we are not aware of its different dimensions.

He does know in whose heart the interest and love of committing this sin lies. He knows those who carry out this evil action under beguiling names, but we do not know them. He knows how to reveal His ordinances to prevent this wicked and indecent action.

In the last verse in question, that is the last verse which is about 'Ifk', 'struggling with indecency', and 'Qathf, again emphasis is put on the fact that: Had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy unto you, and if Allah were not Clement, Merciful on you, He would have sent such a great and painful chastisement upon you in this world that your life could be ruined. The verse says:

"And had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you, and Allah is Compassionate, Merciful, (you would have been chastised)."

Pay attention to some matters:

1- What is Spreading Indecency?

Since man is a social creature, the great community in which he lives, from one point of view, is like his home and its enclosure are counted as that of his home. The pureness of society helps his pureness and its defilement helps his defilement. Consequently, Islam is against anything that pollutes the atmosphere of the society and severely struggles with anything that defiles it.

If we see that backbiting is severely struggled with in Islam, one of its philosophies is that backbiting divulges secret faults and dishonours society.

If we see that it is commanded to hide faults, one of its reasons is to prevent sin from being common and widespread.

We see that open and seen sin is more important than hidden and covered sin. It is so important that Imam Rida (a.s.) says: "One who disseminates sin is rejected and one who hides sin is divinely forgiven."

If we see that in the above verses spreading indecency is severely reprimanded and condemned, is also because of this.

Essentially sin is like fire. When this fire is stirred in a part of society, it must be tried to put off the fire or at least to encircle it. But if we spread fire and move it from one part to the other part, fire will increase and no one can control it.

Moreover, the importance of sin in the opinion of people and saving the superficial aspect of society are great bars against corruption. Spreading slander and sin and pretending wickedness unbar it, belittle the sin and make being involved in it easy.

The Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) in a tradition said: "One who disseminates a wickedness is like one who has first (committed and) established it." [1]

Also there is a tradition that says: "One day a man came to Imam masa Ibn Ja'far (a.s.) and said: 'May I lay down my life for you! One of brothers retold me something about a religious brother, the thing which I disliked. I asked him (that religious brother), but he denied it, while some of trustworthy persons narrated this.' Imam said: 'When something bad is told about your brother, do not believe your eye and ear.'

Even if 50 persons take oath that he has done it and he says he has not done it, accept him. Do not disseminate anything that causes him disgrace and slander in society. If you do it, you will be one of those about whom Allah says: 'Verily those who love that indecency should be spread

concerning those who believe, theirs will be a painful punishment in the world and the Hereafter...[2]'. "[3]

It is also necessary to mention that 'spreading indecency' has got different forms:

Sometimes there are centers that cause corruption and disseminate wickedness. Sometimes the case is in the form of providing people with means of sin, or encouraging people to commit wrong action. Finally the result is being no more decent and modest and then they commit sin in public. All of these are examples of 'spreading indecency', because the concept of this phrase is vast and extensive.

2- The Calamity of Rumour-mongering:

Vamping and circulating false rumours is one of the main branches of conspirators' psychological warfare. When enemy cannot bring damage to the other party face to face, it resorts to spreading rumour. In this way enemy worries public opinion and makes people self-busy, so people are diverted from their main and crucial issues.

Rumour vamping is one of the ruinous weapons to mar the reputation of pure and good persons and to scatter people who are around them.

In the concerning verses, according to the famous occasions of revelation, for weakening and marring the reputation of the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.), some hypocrites fabricated and circulated the most unfair rumour. And, using a proper opportunity, they expressed doubts about pureness of some of the wives of the great Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.).

For a relatively long period, they upset Muslims so much that the real and steadfast believers twisted like the person who is bitten by a snake. And then the divine revelation was sent down to help them and it castigated the hypocrites so much that others would take lesson.

Though in societies in which there is political repression, spreading rumour is considered a kind of campaigning, other motivations such as retaliation, settlement of personal accounts, ruining public trust, marring some great persons' notability, and deviating people from thinking about political issues are also counted as the main factors of mongering rumour.

This is not enough for us to know what motivation is the cause of fabricating rumour, but it is important to give warning to people to avoid being puppet of rumour-fabricators and the factor of its circulation, and so they do not get the means of society destruction provided. People must be aware that when they hear a rumour, they must bury it immediately; otherwise we have made the enemy happy and successful. Moreover, we will be imposed with painful punishment of the

world and the Hereafter, which has been mentioned in the above verses.

3- Sin should not be counted trifle:

One of the issues that were reprimanded in the above verses was that people commit a sin, such as spreading calumny and slander, while they consider it rather little.

Verily belittling sin is itself one of the sins. A person who commits a sin, and then magnifies it and is upset by his action, tries to repent and make amends, but a person who belittles sin and even sometimes he says: "How blessed I am, because I have only committed this sin", is in a dangerous path and still he continues his sin.

Thus, Imam Ali (a.s.) in a tradition said: "The severest sin is the sin whose committer considers it light." [1]

Section 3 : Slandering Chaste Women Commentary : Verse 21

Not to follow Satan's steps for bids filth and evil – Slandering chaste women shall be punished in this world and in the Hereafter

21. عَلَيْنِكُمُ اللَّهُ فَضْلٌ وَلَوْلَا وَالْمُنْكَرِ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ يَا مُرُ فَإِنَّهُ الشَّيْطَانِ خُطُواتٍ يَتَّبِعُ وَمَنْ الشَّيْطَانِ خُطُواتٍ تَتَّبِعُوا لَا ءَامَنُوا الَّذِينَ أَيُّهَا يَا . عَلَيْنِكُمُ اللَّهُ فَضْلٌ وَالْمُنْكَرِ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ يَا مُرُ فَإِنَّهُ الشَّيْطَانِ خُطُواتٍ يَتَّبِعُ وَمَنْ الشَّيْطَانِ خُطُواتٍ تَتَّبِعُوا لَا ءَامَنُوا الَّذِينَ أَيُّهَا يَا . عَلَيْنِكُمُ اللَّهُ فَضْلٌ وَالْمُنْكَرِ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ يَا مُرُ فَإِنَّهُ الشَّيْطَانِ خُطُواتٍ يَتَّبِعُ وَمَنْ الشَّيْطَانِ خُطُواتٍ تَتَّبِعُوا لَا ءَامَنُوا الَّذِينَ أَيُّهَا يَا .

21. "O you who believe! Do not follow the steps of the Satan. And whoever follows the steps of the Satan, then verily he commands indecency and wrong. Had it not been Allah's grace and His mercy on you, not one of you would have ever been pure. But Allah purifies whom He pleases; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

Commentary:

The Arabic word /xutuwat/ is the plural form of the word /xutwat/ that means 'step'. The holy Qur'an has used the phrase /xutuwatis saytan/ ('the footsteps of the Satan') when it is the matter of calumny and lust, in order to indicate that Satan encourages man step by step to do some sins.

Though these verses do not follow the subject of 'Ifk, they complete the content of that matter. It is a warning for all believers that evil thoughts and deeds sometimes penetrate gradually and invisibly. If they are not controlled and hindered in their first steps, man will get alerted when the die is cast. Thus when the first temptations of spreading lewdness or any sin get manifest, they

must be immediately withstood, so that defilement does not get prevalent.

In the first verse, addressing the believers, it says:

“O you who believe! Do not follow the steps of the Satan. And whoever follows the steps of the Satan, then verily he commands indecency and wrong....”

If ‘Shaytan’ is interpreted into the vast meaning of the word, as any ‘ruinous, felonious, cunning creature’, the extensiveness of this warning in all dimensions of life becomes clear.

A pure and faithful man can never be all of a sudden involved in corruption, but it is done step by step:

First step: hobnobbing and getting familiar with wicked persons

Second step: attending their parties

Third step: thought of sin

Fourth step: committing questionable examples and errors

Fifth step: committing lesser sins

Finally he will do the worst sins and he is just like a person on whom an offender’s yoke is laid and the offender leads him to precipice step by step, so that he falls down and will be ruined. Yes, these are ‘the footsteps of the Satan’.[1]

Then the verse refers to one of the most important Divine favours and blessings which are bestowed on man in the path of guidance. It says:

“... Had it not been Allah’s grace and His mercy on you, not one of you would have ever been pure. But Allah purifies whom He pleases; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.”

Undoubtedly, Divine grace and bless rescue men from defilements, sins and deviations, because He has conferred, on one hand, the gift of intellect and, on the other hand, the grace of the existence of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and ordinances that have been sent down by revelation. Moreover, His special help, and supernatural aids that cover deserving, receptive, and apt men are the most important factors of purification and cleanness.

The Qur’anic holy phrase /manyasa’/, as we have said repeatedly, does not mean unreasonable

will and desire, but Allah does not do any guidance and does not confer any grace, unless attempt and exertion is carried out by servants. One who has decided to go this path and tries, Allah will hold his hands, saves him from devils' temptations and so leads him to the destination.

In other words, Divine grace and bless has sometime religious aspect, that has come forth through mission of prophets, revelation of heavenly books, legalization of ordinances, glad tidings and warnings. And it is sometime genetic or inherent, that comes forth through Divine spiritual helps. The verses in question (out of indication of the sentence 'man yasha') mostly concern the second section.

Meanwhile, we must pay attention that the words 'Zakat' and 'Tazkiyah' originally mean 'to grow' and 'to cause to grow', but in most cases they have been applied in the sense of: 'to become clean' and 'to clean something'. They may have one root, because no growth and development occurs when evils and corruptions are not got rid of.

Commentary : Verse 22

22. أَنْ تُحِبُّونَ أَلَا وَتُبْصِفُوا اللَّهَ سَبِيلَ فِي وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ الْقُرْبَى أُولَى يُؤْتُوا أَنْ وَالسَّعَةِ مِنْكُمْ الْفَضْلِ أُولُوا يَأْتَلِ وَلَا رَحِيمٍ غَفُورٌ وَاللَّهُ لَكُمْ اللَّهُ يَغْفِرَ

22. "And let not those who possess dignity and ease among you swear against giving to the near of kin and the needy, and fugitives for the cause of Allah. And they should pardon and overlook. Do you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Commentary:

The Arabic word /Safaha/ means to ignore, which is more important than forgiveness. Some have said that /safh/ is a forgiveness that is without rebuke and reproof.

Some commentators have narrated an occasion of revelation for this holy verse, which shows how this verse is related to the pervious verses.

They say that this holy verse was revealed about some Companions of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.). After the event of 'Ifk, they took an oath to withdraw their financial helps from those who were involved in that event and spread this great calumny. They decided to give them no generous

succour, in anything. But this noble verse prevented them from this violation and harshness. It orders them to be forgiving and lenient.

This occasion of revelation has been quoted by QurtAbi in his commentary narrated from Ibn Abbas;and Dahhak, as well as the deceased Tabarsi, have narrated it from Ibn Abbas and other persons, and it is general.

But some Sunni commentators insist that this verse is revealed about Abi Bakr who terminated his financial help to Mastah Ibn 'Athathah, his maternal aunt's son or his sister's son, who helped to the circulation of 'Ifk. However all pronouns that are used in the verse are plural. This matter shows that a group of Muslims decided to put an end to their helps unto these wrongdoers, and this verse prohibited them from this decision.

Anyway, we know that the verses of Qur'an are not limited to occasion of revelation, and they involve all believers till Doomsday. The holy verse implicitly recommends Muslims not to be influenced by hot vehement feelings and they should not make rough and excessive decisions against wrongdoers' errors and faults.

With regard to this occasion of revelation, we return to the commentary of the verse. The holy Qur'an says:

"And let not those who possess dignity and ease among you swear against giving to the near of kin and the needy, and fugitives for the cause of Allah...."

This way of saying shows that a group of those who were involved in 'Ifk were from among the Emigrants in the way of Allah. They were deceived by hypocrites and because of their past records Allah did not allow them to be ostracized from Islamic society and He did not let the Muslims decide some horrible things about them that were more than the limit they deserved.

Meanwhile the Qur'anic holy phrase /la ya'til/ is whether derived from the word /'iliyyah/ (on the rhythm of /'itiyyah/), meaning to take an oath, or from the word /'alw/ (on the rhythm of 'Dalw'), meaning to abandon and to shrink. Thus, the verse, according to the first meaning, prohibits taking an oath to terminate such helps. And, according to the second meaning, the verse precludes withdrawal of such action. Then to encourage Muslims to continue such good deeds, it adds:

"... And they should pardon and overlook...."

As we expect Allah's forgiveness, we must not forget to forgive others. The verse continues saying:

"... Do you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

It is interesting that, on one hand, the companions of 'Ifk were severely reprimanded, but, on the other hand, to prevent extremists from resorting to measures beyond the norm and to control their feelings, 3 sentences, each of which is more interesting and remarkable than the others, were used: first, it is ordered to be forgiving and condoning.

Then it says: "... Do you not like that Allah should forgive you? ...", (so you must forgive). Finally, two of Allah's attributes that are 'Forgiving' and 'Merciful' are mentioned as an emphasis. It indicates that they could not be more legalistic than Allah's commandment. Allah, Who Himself has issued this judgment, is Forgiving and Merciful. He enjoined them not to terminate the helps, so what did they want to say?

Undoubtedly, all Muslims who were involved in 'Ifk affair did not have a before-hand scheme, but some pseudo-Muslim hypocrites set it and a group of deceived Muslims followed them. Certainly all of them were on the wrong side of the law and were guilty, but there were a lot of differences between these two groups. They could not be treated alike.

Anyway, the above-mentioned holy verses are today and tomorrow a great lesson for Muslims and all future generations; when some persons commit a sin or make a mistake we must not exceed in the limits of punishment. They must be excluded from Islamic society and must not be barred from helps so that they resort to enemy and become one of foes.

The above verses, in fact, portray the balance of Islamic repulsion and attraction; the verses of 'Ifk and the severe punishment of those who made false statements about people's wives compose the great power of repulsion. The verse in question, that mentions Allah's mercifulness, forgiveness, and clemency, represents the attraction!

Commentary : Verse 23

عَظِيمٌ عَذَابٌ وَلَهُمْ وَالْآخِرَةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي لُعْنُوا الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ يَرْمُونَ الَّذِينَ إِنْ 23.

23. "Verily those who accuse chaste, believing women unaware (of evil), are cursed in this world and the Hereafter, and for them shall be a grievous chastisement,"

Commentary:

Of course unbelievers, murderers, advocates of illegitimate rulers, hypocrites, mischief-makers, polytheists, the arrogant, oppressors, liars, perjurers, and those who disclaim the Truth have been cursed in the Qur'an, but the curse of the world and the Hereafter along with great punishment, covers only those who stigmatize pure persons.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) considers this verse as evidence for the fact that unjust accusation of pure and chaste women is one of the great sins.[61]

Thus, in this verse the Qur'an returns to the issue of Qathf and accusing chaste faithful women of unchaste action, and it decisively says:

" Verily those who accuse chaste, believing women unaware (of evil), are cursed in this world and the Hereafter, and for them shall be a grievous chastisement,"

In fact, three attributes are mentioned for these women. Each of these attributes is a reason for the importance of the oppression that is imposed on them through calumny. These attributes are: 'Mohsanat' ('virtuous women'), 'Qafilat' ('far from and unaware (of any pollution)'), and 'Mu'minat' ('believing women'). In this way it is indicated how oppressing and unfair is accusing these persons of inadmissible accusations and this action deserves a great punishment.[1]

By the way, the application of the Qur'anic word /qafilat/ is an interesting meaning. It specifies the ultimate of their pureness from any deviation and unchasteness. It means that they are so heedless of sexual defilements that as if they are not at all aware of it. For sometimes the attitude of a person toward sin is in a way that thought of sin goes out of his mind, as if there were not existed at all such an action. This is the supreme grade of piety.

Another possibility is that the purpose of /qafilat/ is the women who are not aware of the unjust accusations attributed to them; therefore, they do not defend themselves. So, this verse mentions a new matter about such accusations, because the pervious verses referred to the calumniators who could be recognized and then would be punished, but, here, the rumour-fabricators,

who have hidden themselves from punishment and religiously prescribed punishment, are brought up. The Qur'an implies that they should not think that by this action they can escape from the Divine punishment forever. Allah, the Almighty, curses them in the world and, in the Hereafter, they will have an awful chastisement.

With regard to the fact that the above verse is placed after the story of 'Ifk, and it seems that its revelation had some relation with this affair, but like many verses that are sent down for a special case and their content is general, this verse is also not limited to a certain case.

It is strange that some commentators such as Fakhr-i-Razi, in his book: 'Tafsir-i-KAbir' and some others insist that the

[1] Al-mazan, Vol. 15, p. 122

content of this verse is limited to calumination of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.)'s wives. They mainly equal this sin to paganism and consider the word /lu'inu/ (cursed), mentioned in the verse, as reason for it.

Of course calumination is a great sin and if it is about the wives of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), it is greater and more cardinal, yet it does not by itself bring paganism. Thus, the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) did not treat those who were involved in that affair as apostates, but, as we explained in the commentary of the holy successive verses, he recommended the Muslims to be being merciful toward them and not to be excessively violent toward them, which is not consistent with paganism.

The word /la'n/ is 'being away from Allah's bless', which is applied to pagans and those who commit cardinal sins. Therefore, in the verses that are about the punishment of Qathf (in the ordinances of /li'an/ (conjugal anathema)), the word /la'n/ has been applied two times about liars.

In Islamic narrations, the word /la'n/ (curse) is frequently applied to those who commit great sins. The tradition which says: "Allah has cursed ten groups concerning wine..."[1] is very famous.

[1] Khisal, by Saduq, Chapter 'Asharah

Commentary : Verse 24

24. يَعْْمَلُونَ كَانُوا بِمَا وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ تَشْهَدُ يَوْمَ.

24. "On the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet testify against them as to what they used to do."

Commentary:

The issue of testimony of body's limbs is many times brought up in the Qur'an. Therefore in this verse it specifies how this group of calumniators will appear in Allah's great court. It denotes that they will have an awful chastisement in Hereafter, when it says:

"On the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet testify against them as to what they used to do."

Their tongues will move, in spite of their reluctance, and they express the truth. These wrongdoers will confess their sin in spite of their willing when they see all Divine unquestionable evidences and reasons. In spite of their inner willing, they will explicitly reveal everything, because they will see they can no longer disclaim.

Their own hands and feet will also speak. According to the verses of the holy Qur'an, even their body's skin will start talking. It seems that they have been voice recorders that have recorded man's voices, and signs of sins are stored on them during lifetime. Yes, on the Day of manifestation, all of these things will appear.

If we see that some of the verses of the holy Qur'an refer to the Day of Judgment and say, "This day We seal up mouths, and hands speak out and feet bear witness as to what they used to earn"[1], there will be no inconsistency with the concerned verse, because it is possible of first that tongues get disabled

[1] Sura ya-San, No. 36, verse 65

and other limbs testify and when testimony of hand and foot discovers truths and they say what they must say, then tongue moves and confesses the sins.

Imam Baqir (a.s.) said: "This testimony of the limbs is not against the believers, but it is against someone whose punishment is inevitable." [1]

[1] Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol.2 p. 32

Commentary : Verse 25

25. الْمُبِينُ الْحَقُّ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَنْ وَيَعْلَمُونَ الْحَقَّ دِينَهُمُ اللَّهُ يُوقِفِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ

25. "On that day Allah will pay them their just due, and they will know that Allah, He is the (very) Manifest Truth."

Commentary:

It is only in the Hereafter that retributions will be given in full.

The Arabic word /dan/, mentioned in this holy verse means either retribution or religion. Therefore, the holy verse either implies that Allah fully pays people's retribution in hereafter, or that the real and true divine religion will be represented to people and all fantastic religion-founders will realize that Allah is the real deity Who is true, right, and obvious. (Al-mazan, the Commentary)

Since full retribution cannot be materialized in this world for its limitations, for example, how we can in this world punish a pilot who has bombarded a city and has killed thousands of people. But there is no limitation in the Hereafter and a criminal can be burnt many times in the Hell and each time he will be alive again. The verse says:

"On that day Allah will pay them their just due, and they will know that Allah, He is the (very) Manifest Truth."

If today, in this world, they doubt in the rightfulness of Allah, or they lead people astray, in the resurrection day the signs of Allah's magnificence, power, and rightfulness are so obvious that will make the most stubborn people confess.

Commentary : Verse 26

26. وَرَزَقٌ مَّغْفِرَةٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا مَبَرَّءُونَ أَوْلِيَّكَ لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلْخَبِيثَاتِ وَالْخَبِيثَاتُ لِلْخَبِيثِينَ الْخَبِيثَاتُ كَرِيمٌ

26. "Impure women are for impure men, and impure men for impure women. Good women are for good men, and good men are for good women; such are innocent of that which they say: For them is forgiveness and a bountiful provision."

Commentary:

This verse propounds a general principle and it does not imply that if a man or a woman is good, his or her spouse necessarily is also good, forgiven and is one of the people of the Heaven. For the Holy Qur'an counts faith, piety, and good deed as the criterion, therefore, in spite of the fact that Noah and Lut (a.s.) were pure and faithful, their spouses were evil and Helish.

The Arabic word /tayyib/ means pleasant and nice. In the Qur'an this word has been used in

description of property, offspring, discourse, city, spouse, food and sustenance, home, angle, tree, and greeting. Its contrary word is the Qur'anic term /xAbio/ with the sense of: malicious and evil. It has also been used in description of property, man, spouse, speech, deed, and tree.

This verse can be interpreted in different ways:

1. With regard to the previous verses that were about chaste women and the affair of 'Ifk and with regard to the sentence: "... such are innocent of that which they say...", the verse means that the evil words such as calumny and slander are appropriate for malicious people, and pure and nice words are suitable for pure persons.

2. It is possible that the purpose of the verse is intellectual, doctrinal, ethical conformity, so as to say that man and wife must be matching and soft-hued with each other. It means that every person naturally seeks an individual of the same wavelength. In other words, vile persons are after evil ones and on the contrary good persons are after good ones. The verse says:

"Impure women are for impure men, and impure men for impure women. Good women are for good men, and good men are for good women;..."

3. It is possible that the purpose of the verse is stating a religious ordinance, meaning that marriage of good persons with malicious ones is unlawful. It is like the third verse of this Sura, which says: "The fornicator shall not marry save a fornicatress or an idolatress ...". Imam Baqir (a.s.) in a tradition confirms this meaning, too.[1]

Therefore, the words 'KhAbithat' and 'KhAbithan' refer to women and men who are unchaste and, on the contrary, the words 'Tayyibat' and 'Tayyiban' refer to chaste women and men, and the purpose of the verse is apparently this.[2]

In the end, the verse refers to the recent group that is pure men and women. It is said:

"... such are innocent of that which they say ..."

Therefore Divine pardon and forgiveness as well as valuable sustenance awaits them. The verse concludes:

"... For them is forgiveness and a bountiful provision."

[1] Majma' ul-Bayan, and Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 14, p. 337

[2] We read in the narrations concerning Nikah (marriage) that some of the companions of Imams

sometimes asked about 'Khabithah' and they were answered negatively. This itself shows that the word 'khAbithah' refers to unchaste women, not evil 'words' or evil 'deeds'.

Section 4 : Control and regulation of morals Commentary : Verse 27

Restrictions against uncontrolled visits to other's residences - Guarded dealings between males and females -Exhortation for chastity among men as well as women – Display of personal beauty and adorning prohibited - Appearance of women before males, other than her husband, regulated - Wedlock commanded - Liberation of slaves enjoined - Compulsion to slaves to yield to unchaste ways prohibited – Allah's Pardon for the repentant promised

27. تَذَكَّرُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ لَكُمْ خَيْرٌ ذَلِكَمُ أَهْلِهَا عَلَيَّ وَتُسَلِّمُوا تَسْتَأْنِسُوا حَتَّىٰ وَتَكُفُّبِي غَيْرَ بَيْوتًا تَدْخُلُوا لَا ءَامَنُوا الَّذِينَ أَيُّهَا يَا

27. "O you who believe! Do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked permission and saluted those in them. That is better for you, so that you might be admonished."

Commentary:

The Arabic word /'istanas/ means to ask permission and to declare one's entrance or coming in. According to some Islamic narrations, entrance to a place can be stated by saying Allah's name, or by footfall, or by greeting calling hello, and the like.[1]

Some one asked the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) whether he had to ask permission for entering his mother's house. He said:

[1] Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary

"Yes." That man said: "Except her no one lives in the house, and except me no servant she has!" The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Do you like to see your mother nude?"The man said: "No." Then the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "So ask permission."

There is another narration in which the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) prohibited men from entering the houses in which women's guardians are not present.[1]

In narrations we read that we must ask permission for three times so that those people in the

house may have time enough to get ready. (Of course, permission is asked only for entering others' house. Man can enter his house without prior notice.) For saving a person who is sinking in the water, the oppressed and one who is trapped in fire no permission is needed.[2]

Whenever the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) wanted to enter a house, he did not stand in front of its door for asking permission, but he stood either on the left or right so that his blessed look might not fall inside the house.[3]

In another authentic narration we read that when the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) wanted to enter the house of his daughter, Fatimah (a.s.), he put his hand on the door and then pushed it aside a little. Then he said: "Peace be upon you!" Fatimah (a.s.) answered her father. Then the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "May I enter?" Fatimah (a.s.) said: "Yes, O' Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.)!" The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "May my companion enter the house, too?" Then she said: "I have no veil on my head." When she veiled herself in an Islamic way, the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) made salutation again and Fatimah (a.s.) answered. Again he (p.b.u.h.) asked permission for himself. And after her

[1] Nur-uth-Thaqalyn

[2] Tafsir-i-KABir by Fakhr-i-Razi

[3] Tafsir-i-KABir, and Fi Zilal

agreement, he asked permission for his companion, Jabir Ibn 'Abdullah.

This tradition shows well how exactly the noble Prophet (p.b.u.h.), who was a paragon for common Muslims, observed these matters.

Even in some narrations we read that 3 times we must ask permission. The first time for hearing the voice of the person who asks permission. The second one is for getting ready. The third one lets the household to issue permission or not.

Even some say that some time must be passed between each time of getting permission so that if landlord has not worn a proper clothing, or he is in a state that he does not like anyone to see, or sometimes room is messed up, or there are some secrets in the house that must not be discovered, he may have time to get ready. And if he does not give permission, we must leave him without getting upset.

Anyway, we must always withdraw anything that may violate modesty or reverence.

Thus in this noble verse, some of proprieties and social orders of Islam that have a very close

relation with the issues of saving common chastity are stated, and that is how to enter people's homes and how to ask permission for entrance.

The verse says:

"O you who believe! Do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked permission and saluted those in them. ..."

So, in this way the announcement of your decision to enter the house is expressed beforehand and the household's agreement is always achieved.

It is interesting that, here, the Arabic phrase /tasta'nisu/ has been used, not the word 'Tasta'oinu', because the second word only refers to asking permission, but the first word which is derived from the Arabic word /'uns/, implies a permission that is along with kindness, familiarity, and truthfulness. It shows that even begging permission must be done politely, friendly and without any violation.

Thus if we split the sentence, many of customs that are related to this matter are summarized in it. It means not to cry, not to knock at the door hard, not to use harsh obscene words for begging permission, and also that when permission is given we must not enter the house without greeting, a salutation that is the sign of peace, tranquility, and messenger of kindness and friendship.

It is worth-studying that this ordinance, whose humane and sentimental aspect is clear, is accompanied with two sentences: /oalikum xayrun lakum/ ("That is better for you"), and /la'allakum taoakkaran/ ("... so that you might be admonished"). This way of statement indicates that such ordinances are rooted in humane sentiments, ration, and intellect. If man contemplates them, he will get aware that they are good for him. The verse continues saying:

"... That is better for you, so that you might be admonished."

Anyway, purification and self-edification are achieved through observing people's rights and applying Islamic customs. When we want to enter common centers, we must remember Allah and we must know that Allah watches our thoughts and behaviour. The Qur'an says: "... and Allah knows what you proclaim reveal what you conceal." [1]

[1] Sura Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 99

Commentary : Verse 28

28. عَلِيمٌ تَعْمَلُونَ بِمَا وَاللَّهُ لَكُمْ أَرْكَبِي هُوَ فَارْجِعُوا ارْجِعُوا لَكُمْ قَبِيلَ وَإِنْ لَكُمْ يُؤَدِّنَ حَتَّى تَدْخُلُوهَا فَلَا أَحَدًا فِيهَا تَجِدُوا لَمْ فَإِنْ

28. "And if you find no one therein, still do not enter them until permission is given to you. And if it is said to you: 'Go back', then go back, for it is purer for you; and Allah is cognizant of what you do."

Commentary:

Entering people's house needs permission, whether the giver of permission is its owner or he is some legal person. Thus, in this holy verse, it says:

"And if you find no one therein, still do not enter them until permission is given to you...."

Maybe it implies that sometimes there are some persons at home, but someone who is in charge or someone who is the head of household is not present, in this case we are not allowed to enter the house.

Or there is not any person in the house. Or it is possible that the landlord is in neighbour's home or is near to his house, so when he hears our voice or our knocking at the door, he comes and allows us to enter. In this case we can enter the house. Anyway, what is important is that we can not enter a house without permission.

Then the verse continues saying:

"... And if it is said to you: Go back, then go back, for it is purer for you;..."

It refers to the matter that we must not get upset because of a negative answer. Maybe the landlord is in a condition that he does get displeased if we see him in that way. Or his home or his room is not ready for receiving any guest.

Since when we hear a negative answer, we become curious to know its reason and so we start thinking of looking from some hole or eavesdropping in order to find out some secrets from the inside of the house; at the end of the verse, it says:

"... and Allah is cognizant of what you do."

Commentary : Verse 29

29. تَكْتُمُونَ وَمَا تُبْدُونَ مَا يَعْلَمُ وَاللَّهُ لَكُمْ مَتَاعٌ فِيهَا مَسْكُونَةٌ غَيْرَ يُبَيِّنُ تَدْخُلُوا أَنْ جُنَاحٌ عَلَيْكُمْ لَيْسَ .

29. "(It is) no sin for you that you enter uninhabited houses wherein you have some goods, and Allah knows what you reveal and what you conceal."

Commentary:

Public places that have no special inhabitants, such as: hotels, caravanserais, shops, and baths which are open to all and people can enter and enjoy their advantages, are treated differently than personal homes and require no permission for entrance. Therefore, in view of the fact that each ordinance has some exceptions through which problems and difficulties are solved rationally, in this verse it says:

"(It is) no sin for you that you enter uninhabited houses wherein you have some goods,..."

In the end of the verse, the Qur'an adds:

"... and Allah knows what you reveal and what you conceal."

The above phrase perhaps refers to this matter that some individuals may sometimes misuse this exception and enter uninhabited homes on the pretext of this ordinance to find out some secrets. Or they sometimes enter some inhabited houses on the excuse that they did not know they are inhabited. But Allah (s.w.t.) is aware of all of these affairs and knows well about those who misuse. Thus, going to public centers while having no beneficial aim and only for wandering or meandering is often forbidden.

Commentary : Verse 30

30. يَصْنَعُونَ بِمَا خَبِيرٌ اللَّهُ إِنَّ لَهُمْ أَرْكَى ذَلِكَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا أَبْصَارَهُمْ مِنْ يُغْضُوا لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ قُل .

30. "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their modesty. That is purer for them, verily Allah is All-Aware of what they do."

Occasion of Revelation:

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In Kafi book there is a narration by Imam Baqir (a.s.) about the occasion of revelation of this noble verse. A young man of The Helpers met a woman on his way while her veil was put behind her ears (naturally some part of her neck and breast was visible). The woman's face attracted the young man and he gazed at her and when the woman passed by him he was still looking at her while she was going her own way. Then he entered a narrow alley, and still he was looking behind himself, when suddenly his face hit against the wall and the sharp point of a bone, or a piece of glass, that existed in the wall cut his face! Then the woman went away when the young man came to his senses and saw that blood was pouring forth from his face and his clothes and chest were stained with blood.

He became very displeased. He said to himself: "I take oath by Allah that I will go to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and retell him this event." When the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) saw him, he asked the young man what the matter was. The man told him the event. At this time Gabriel, the harbinger of Allah's revelation, came down and brought the above verse.[1]

[1] Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 14, p. 139, Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Al-mazan, and Ruh ul-Ma'ani

Commentary:

Sin must be prevented from its origin and piety must be set out from eyes. Immodesty and ogling prevent man's spiritual development to grow up.

We said before that this Sura is in fact the Sura of chastity and purification from sexual deviations. So its discussions, from this point of view, have a clear coherency. The verses in question state the ordinances of looking, ogling, and veil are also related to this matter. Moreover, the relation of this discussion to the discussions that are about accusations of immodesty is known to everyone.

At first, the verse implies that the believing men should be told to lower their gaze from a woman who is related within forbidden degrees and from what is illegal to look at, and be modest. The verse says:

"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their modesty...."

The Arabic word /yaquddu/ is derived from the word 'Qazz', which originally means to decrease or to lessen. In many cases it is used in the sense of: to lower voice or to lessen looking. Thus the verse does not say that the believers must close their eyes, but it says that they must lessen or shorten their looking. This is a delicate way of speaking, because if a man really wants to close his

eyes when he sees a woman who is related within forbidden degrees, he can no -longer walk, but if he casts down his gaze and does not look at her face and her body, it is as though he has shortened his gaze and has totally deleted the scene, that is forbidden, from the scope of his eyes.

It is worth-studying that the holy Qur'an does not specify the thing that a person must cast down gaze from (so as to say complement of the verb is omitted), in order that it will be a general rule; that is, one must cast down gaze from whatsoever is unlawful to look at.

But, with regard to the context of these verses, specially the following verse that mentions veil, it will be clear that it means not looking at women who are related within forbidden degrees (or are marriageable). The occasion of revelation, mentioned at the beginning, confirms this matter, too.

From what was said this matter is understood that the verse does not signify that men must not gaze or stare at women's face so that some people misuse it and say that not staring look is permitted. However, its purpose is that when a man looks or sees, the scope of his vision is vast, and at the time of entering a woman who is related within forbidden degrees in the scope of his vision, he must cast down his look in a way that the woman exits the scope. It means he does not look at her, but he must see his way and path; and that it is said that the word /qaclid/ has been applied with the sense of 'to decrease' means the same. (Take care)

The second command that is mentioned in the verse is to guard ones modesty and to be modest.

The Arabic word /farj/ in fact means a split or opening between two things, but in such cases it connotes pudendum. In Persian language, is used instead of it, for keeping its-connotative meaning.

The purpose of 'being modest', according to Islamic narrations, is covering the pudendum for not to be seen by others. In a tradition by Imam Sadiq (a.s.) we read: "Every verse of the holy Qur'an that mentions 'guarding modesty' indicates warding of fornication, except this verse that means keeping it from others' look." [1]

Since sometimes it comes to mind that why Islam has prohibited this action that is in line with one's lust and wish, at the end of the verse it is added:

"... That is purer for them,..."

Then those who look at women flirtatiously, amorously and consciously, and sometimes they consider it unintentional, are warned:

"... verily Allah is All-Aware of what they do."

In other words, Allah is aware of whatever kind of manner they have; whether they look openly or secretly, or other forms. A few Traditions upon Gaze:

1. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Whoever supplies his eyes with what is unlawful, in Hereafter his eyes will be filled with fire, unless he repents." [2]
2. We read in a tradition that all the eyes will shed tear in Hereafter, except 3 groups of eyes: the eyes that have shed tears out of Allah's fear, the eyes that are closed to sins, and the eyes that are open for the sake of Allah. [3]
3. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "If your look is cast on a woman (who is related within forbidden degrees) for the first time, there will be no problem, but if your looking is continued, (there will be problem, because) it causes disorder and temptation." [4]
4. We read in a tradition (recorded in Sahih Bokhari) that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Do not sit on the way of people!"

[1] 'Usul Kafi and the commentary by Ali ibn IbRuhim, Nur-uth-Thaqalyn Vol.3, p. 587

[2] Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 76, p. 336 and Man layahdaroh ul-Faqih

[3] Kanz ud-Daqa'iq, the Commentary

[4] Ibid

The audience said: "We have no choice." The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Then honour what is true and right!" They asked: "What is the right?" The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Withdrawal from ogling and bothering people, answering others' salutation, enjoying what is right and forbidding what is wrong." [1]

5. Hadrat 'Isa (a.s.) said: "Withdraw from looking at women who are related within forbidden degrees, because it plants the seed of lust in the heart and only this is enough to get man involved in seduction or temptation." [2]

6. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "The eye drags the heart." "The eye is Satan's trap or snare." (Guarding eyes is the best way for being away from lusts.) [3]

7. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Evil look is one of Satan's fatal arrows. Whoever closes his eyes for the awe of Allah, Allah will bestow him a faith that he feels its sweetness and taste in his

inward."[4]

8. Concerning permissible looking at a woman, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Looking at her face, palms, and front part of the feet is lawful (but purely and chastely)."[5]

9. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Allah's wrath is very severe against a married woman whose eyes are filled with individuals other than her husband (and persons related in forbidden degrees) (looking deliberately and lustfully at a man who is not related within forbidden degrees). When she does so, Allah, Almighty and Glorious, rejects and nullifies all good deeds and worships she has done. When she lies with a person

[1] Ruh ul-Bayan, the Commentary

[2] Ibid

[3] Urar ul-Hikam

[4] Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 104, p. 38

[5] Kanz ud-Daqa'iq

other than her husband, Allah has right to burn her after He chastises her in the purgatory world."[1]

10. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "A man who fums a woman who is not related to h

im in any form of marriage contract, Allah will confine him in chastisement for a thousand years for every word that he has jested her."[2] 11. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "One who dominates neighbor's house and looks at a man's pudendum or a woman's hair or part of their body will be rightly and definitely gathered by Allah with hypocrites who intended to look at women's covered limbs. And until Allah Almighty defaces him in the world he will not leave this world. Allah also will divulge all his sins and faults in the Hereafter and disgrace him before other men (therein)."[3]

[1] Man Layahduruh ul-Faqih

[2] Ibid

[3] E'aaqab Al-A'amal

Commentary : Verse 31

31. جُبُوبًا عَلَيَّ بِخُمْرِهِنَّ وَلَيَضْرِبْنَ مِنْهَا ظَهَرَ مَا إِلَّا زِينَتَهُنَّ يُبْدِينَ وَلَا فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ أَبْصَارَهُنَّ مَنْ بَعْضُ مَنْ لَلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَقُلْ
أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ نَبِيٍّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ نَبِيٍّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أُنْبَاءً أَوْ أَبْنَاءً أَوْ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَبَاءً أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُنَّ أَوْ
وَلَا النِّسَاءَ عَوْرَاتٍ عَلَيَّ يَطَّهَّرُوا لَمْ الَّذِينَ الطِّفْلِ أَوْ جَالِ الرَّ مِنْ الإِرْبَةِ وَلِيَّ غَيْرِ التَّابِعِينَ أَوْ أَيْمَانَهُنَّ مَلَكَتْ مَا أَوْ نِسَائَهُنَّ أَوْ
وَنُفْلِحْ لَعَلَّكُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ أَيُّهَا جَمِيعًا اللَّهُ إِلَيَّ وَتُوبُوا زِينَتَهُنَّ مَنْ يُخْفِينَ مَا لِيَعْلَمَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ يَضْرِبْنَ

31. "And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their modesty, and do not display their adornment except that which is (ordinarily) apparent of it, and to draw their veils over their bosoms, and not to reveal their adornment save to their own husbands or their fathers or their husbands' fathers, or their sons or their husbands' sons, or their brothers or their brothers' sons or their sisters' sons, or their women, or those whom their right hands possess (their slaves), or the male attendants void of sexual stimulant, or the children who know naught of women's nakedness. And let them not stamp their feet (in walking) so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And turn unto Allah all together, O' believers, in order that you may succeed."

Commentary:

Allah has not mentioned the number of units (Rak'at) in ritual prayers and that of ritual circumambulation of the Ka'bah and has charged the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) with the task of stating the amount and measure of alms-tax and many other issues, but Allah has paid attention to minimum issues of family, upbringing, and moral corruptions. By using female pronoun 25 times in this verse, Allah has paid attention to women.[1]

Thus, in this verse, the women's duties and responsibilities are mentioned; first, it refers to the ones that are like the men's responsibilities and duties when it says:

"And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their modesty,..."

Therefore ogling is forbidden to women as it is to men. As all men are obliged to veil their pudendum, all women are also obliged to veil their pudendum from the eye of other women and men.

Then in three sentences the issue of veil, which is the women's characteristics, is referred to:

1) "... and do not display their adornment except that which is (ordinarily) apparent of it,..."

Upon the purpose of the adornment which women must not display, as well as the visible adornment which women are allowed to display, mentioned in the verse, commentators have

stated different ideas.

[1] QurtAbi, Commentary

Some of them say that hidden adornment is the very natural adornment (women's beautiful body), whereas the Arabic word /zanat/ has rarely been applied in this sense.

Most of commentators have considered it as the place of adornment, because the display of adornment itself such as ear-rings, bracelet, and armlet is not forbidden. But displaying where they are used such as ears, neck, arms and hands is forbidden.

Therefore, women totally are not allowed to display their adornments that are usually hidden, although their limbs are not shown. Consequently showing special ornate clothes that women wear under their usual clothes or veil (chador) is not permitted, because the holy Qur'an prohibits the display of such adornments either.

In many traditions narrated from Imams of Ahl-ul-Bayt (a.s.) we see the same matter that the interior adornment, in Arabic, is interpreted as 'Qalladah' (necklace), 'Dumlaj' (armlet), 'Khalkhal' (anklet).[1]

Moreover, since in many numerous Islamic narrations, the apparent adornment has been interpreted as ring, eyeliner, and so on, we see that the purpose of interior adornment is also the adornments that are hidden.

2) The second ordinance that is brought up in this verse is:

"... and to draw their veils over their bosoms..."

The Arabic word /xumur/ is the plural form of /ximar/, which originally means veil, but it is usually applied to the thing with which women veil their head (scarf).

The Arabic word /juyub/ is the plural form of the word /jayb/, that means the collar of a shirt which is rendered to the

[1] Ali-ibn-IbRuhim, the Commentary

throat and it is sometimes applied to the upper part of the breast, because it is located near it.

It is understood from this verse that before the revelation of this verse, women wore their scarf in a way that they put their scarf behind their head so that their neck and a part of their breast were

visible. The Holy Qur'an enjoined them to wear their scarf in a way that that part of their neck and breast that are visible to be veiled.

3) In the third ordinance both the cases in which women are allowed to unveil themselves and display their inward adornment are specified. The verse says:

"... and not to reveal their adornment save to ..."

They must not display their adornment except in twelve instances:

1. To their own husbands ("... their own husbands ...")
2. To their fathers ("... or their fathers ...")
3. To their husbands' fathers ("... or their husbands fathers ...")
4. To their sons ("... or their sons ...")
5. To their husbands' sons ("... or their husbands' sons ...")
6. To their brothers ("... or their brothers ...")
7. To their brothers' sons ("... or their brothers' sons...")
8. To their sisters' sons ("... or their sisters' sons ...")
9. To their women ("... or their women ...")
10. To their slaves ("... or those whom their right hands possess (their slaves)...")
11. To those who do not have desire for women ("... or the male attendants void of sexual stimulant... ")
12. To kids who know nothing of pudendum ("... or the children who know naught of women's nakedness ...")

4) Finally the fourth ordinance is stated in this way, saying:

"... And let them not stamp their feet (in walking) so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment..."

Women must be so exact and strict in observing chastity and avoiding affairs which kindle lust in men's heart and may cause deviation from the path of chastity that they must withdraw from letting strange men hear their anklet sound. This indicates how exact and precise Islam is in these affairs.

In the end of the verse, all the believers, irrespective of men and women, are invited to repent and return to Allah, where the Qur'an says:

"... And turn unto Allah all together, O' believers, in order that you may succeed."

If they have committed such sins, now that the facts of the ordinances of Islam are explained, they must repent their wrong actions and go to Allah for salvation and deliverance, because successfulness is found only with Him. On our way there are slippery slopes from which no one can be saved, and we must trust to Allah!

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said about the commentary of the Qur'anic sentence: /'ilia libu'ulatihinna/ (save to their own husbands): "Allah has cursed those women who do not apply cosmetics to their hair and face for the sake of (their) husband or do not fulfil what the husband demands." [1]

The Philosophy of Veil

1. Undoubtedly in our age, which some persons have called the age of sexual liberty and nudism and Western exponents who regard women's promiscuity as part of women's liberty, speaking about veil is not welcomed by them and sometimes it is considered as legends of the past times!

[1] Nur-uth-Thaqallyn, the commentary

But umpteen corruptions and increasing problems and difficulties that are caused by these unrestrained freedoms cause gradually some people to pay attention to such words.

The issue is that whether women (I ask your pardon) must be at the mercy of all men for abuses through various aural, visual, and physical means (save sexual intercourse), or they must be limited to their own husbands.

The question is that whether women must be engaged in a contest for showing their body and stirring men's lust and defiled low desires or whether these issues must be removed from the society and be confined to family environment and the life of man and wife.

Islam is in support of the second plan and veil is part of this plan, while western-fascinated

persons are in favour of the first plan.

Islam says that sexual gratifications, including sexual intercourse and physical, visual, aural relishing, are only limited to spouses. Anything other than that will defile and corrupt the society. The sentence /aoka lahum/ "... That is purer for them ...", mentioned in the previous verse, refers to this matter.

The philosophy of veil is not something hidden and invisible, because:

A) Women's nakedness that naturally has the consequences such as: applying cosmetics, coquettishness and the like, sets men, specially young ones, in a state of continual temptation (always tempts them), and that subjects them to tension and stress. It causes nervous diseased excitements and sometimes it is the source of psychological abnormalities. How much can human bear such excitements? Do not all psychotherapists say that continual excitement is the cause of illness?

We must specially pay attention to this fact that sexual instinct is man's most powerful and deepest instinct and in the course of history it has sowed the seeds of fatal events and gruesome crimes and so it is said: "No important event there is save a woman plays a role in it!"

Is not it playing with dynamite to stir this instinct through showing naked women? Is it a rational job?

Islam wants Muslim men and women to have a calm psyche, a sound nerve, and pure eye and ear. This is one of the philosophies of veil.

B) The documented figures show that divorce and separation in spousal relationships has constantly increased with the increase of nakedness in the world, because whatever eye sees heart often desires it. And whatever heart, that is unrestrained low desires, wants man pursues it at any price it may be, and so every day he is after one woman and says goodbye to the other one.

In a community that vile exists (and other Islamic conditions are observed) two spouses belong to each other and their sentiments, love and feelings are limited to each other.

However, in 'the open market of nakedness' in which women have been practically turned into common products (at least at the level of non-sexual intercourse), sacredness of marriage contract is no longer meaningful, and families will be quickly and easily destroyed, like spider web, and children will be without guardian.

C) Spreading indecency and the increase of illegitimate children are the sorest consequences of

unveiling, which do not need any statistics and figures, we think. Its reasons are especially so fully visible in western countries that they need no explanation. We do not say that the main factor of indecency and illegitimate children is only unveiling. We do not say that shameful colonialism and destructive political issues are not playing a role in it, but we say that one of its most influential factors is nakedness and unveiling.

With regard to the fact that 'indecency' and worse than that 'illegitimate children' have been and are the source of kinds of crimes in human societies, the perilous dimensions of this issue will be made clearer.

D) The issue of 'woman's meanness' and her degradation is very important after all, which does not need statistics and figures, too. When society desires nakedness of woman, it is natural that every day it demands her more make-up and more ostentation and display. When woman is used as a means for attracting tourists and sight-seers in waiting rooms and shops, because she is physically beautiful and attracting, woman's personality is degraded to a doll or a valueless product and her high humane values are totally forgotten. And her only pride is her youth, beauty and display. Thus, she turns into a means for satisfying unrestrained desires of some wicked, deceiving, beastly men.

How can a woman with her moral characteristics achieve high status and show her knowledge in such a society?

It is really sorrowful that, in western countries and western-influenced countries, lewd and promiscuous women are most famous and acquire the highest earning and every thing is in favour of them, who are known as artist and actress. Wherever they go, they are welcomed by organizers of defiled places, in which people fall over themselves for them. We had, of course, such a situation in Iran before Islamic Revolution.

We thank Allah that it is wound up in Iran and woman is changed from being just a doll, worthless product and wickedness into a personality who has found her status again. She veils herself, but she is not isolated from society. She has participated in all good and edifying activities and even in the holy defense she has appeared with veil.

This was a part of clear philosophies of veil in Islam, the philosophies that are appropriate to our discussion.

2. The commentary of the Qur'anic sentence: /'ulil 'irbat-i-min-ar-rijal/ (the male attendants void of sexual stimulant).

The Arabic word /'irbah/ is derived from the word /'arab/. As Raqib says in Mufradat: It means

desperate need that man finds ways to gratify it. And it is sometime used as absolute need. The purpose of the phrase /'ulil 'irbat-i-min-ar-rijal/ here is those persons who have sexual desire and need spouse. Therefore the Qur'anic phrase /qayr-i-'ulil 'irbah/ includes the ones who do not have such desire. That to whom this sentence refers, is a matter of discussion between commentators:

Some of them say that it refers to the old men who have sexual desire no longer, such as /'al-qawa'idu min-an-nisa'/ (the women who are unsexed or the women who are beyond the conventional age for marrying).

Some other commentators say it refers to men who are castrated.

And some commentators say that its purpose is those who are neuter, that is: they have no sex organ at all.

However, what must be emphasized and it is mentioned in some valid traditions by Imam Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Sadiq (a.s.) is that the purpose of this sentence is those insane men who have no sexual desire at all. These men are usually hired to do simple jobs and work as servants. The application of the Arabic word /'at-tabi'an/ also strengthens this meaning.[1]

[1] Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, chapter 124, Tradition 8

Since this quality, that is the quality of the lack of sexual desire, is correct about a group of old men, it is possible that this verse can include such old men. Imam Kadhemi (a.s.) emphasized such group of old men in a tradition. However, the verse does not imply that such men are like those who are unmarriageable. It is certain that veiling some part of head or some part of hand, and the like, before such men is not compulsory.

3. Which children are the exceptions of this ordinance?

We said that the 12th group before whom veil is not compulsory is children who have not yet enjoyed desire.

The Qur'anic sentence /lam yazharu/ has sometimes been interpreted as /lam yatta li'u/ (are not aware), and sometimes as /lam yaqdiru/ (are not able), because this word has been used in both meanings and in the Holy Qur'an it is sometimes used to mean this and sometimes to mean that.

For example, in Sura Al-Kahf, No. 18, verse 20 we read: "... if they prevail against you, they, will stone you, ..."

And in verse 8 from Sura At-Taubah we recite: "How (can be?) For if they prevail against you, they

will observe towards you neither ties of relationship nor treaty. ..."

However this differentiation in the concerned holy verse has no significant influence on the conclusion of discussion. Its purpose is children who are neither perceptive nor potent because of lack of sexual desire.

Therefore ladies must veil themselves before those children who have reached an age in which such a desire and ability is dully developed.

4. Every kind of tempting factor is forbidden!

The last matter is that at the end of this verse the Qur'an implies that women should not walk in a manner that the sound of their anklet can be heard. This shows that Islam is so exact and fastidious in the issues concerning common chastity that even such a thing is not allowed. Of course a fortiori, things that set youths' lust on fire, such as circulation of tempting pictures, blue movies, sexy novels and stories, are not permitted. Undoubtedly Islamic society must be free from such matters that lead people, girls and boys, to centers of corruption and wickedness.

Commentary : Verse 32

32. عَلِيمٌ وَاسِعٌ وَاللَّهُ فَضْلِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ يُغْنِيهِمْ فُقَرَاءَ يَكُونُوا إِنْ مَا نَكْتُمْ عِبَادِكُمْ مِنْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْكُمْ الْإِيَامِي وَأَنْكِحُوا

32. "And marry those among you who are single and the righteous among your servants, male or female. If they are poor, Allah will enrich them out of His grace, and surely Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing."

Commentary:

Marriage is venerated and emphasized in Islam. Islamic society is responsible for marrying off those who are celibate. Parents who do not marry their offspring are partner in sin that their issues commit.

Thus, from the beginning of the Sura up to here various calculated ways have been brought up for preventing sexual defilements, the ways each of which are playing an influential role in preventing or struggling against these defilements.

In this verse, one of the most important ways of struggling against wickedness that is simple, easy, sincere, friendly marriage, is mentioned. Because it is obvious that in order to wind up the issue of sin the approach of satisfying and gratifying the instincts is applied. In other words, no 'negative struggling' is successful without 'positive struggling'.

Therefore, in this verse the Qur'an says:

"And marry those among you who are single and the righteous among your servants, male or female...."

The Arabic word /'ayama/ is the plural form of /'ayyim/, which originally means a woman who has no husband. Then it has also been applied to man who has no wife. Thus, the totality of all unmarried men and women, whether they are virgin or widower or widow, are included in this verse.

Although marriage is an optional affair and depends on the will of two parties, the general idea that is derived from the word /'ankihu/ (marry) is to prepare preliminaries of marriage by giving financial aids if necessary, finding a proper spouse, encouraging others to get married, and finally mediating for solving problems that will not be settled without intercession of others. Summarily the concept of the verse is so extensive that it includes every word or action which is for this sake.

Without doubt, the principle of Islamic cooperation necessitates Muslims to help each other in all cases and fields, but emphasizing on this matter which is specified in marriage is for the reason that marriage is specially important.

This is so important that Imam Ali (a.s.) in a tradition said: "The best intercession is to mediate between two persons for the sake of marriage so that they get married." [1]

In a tradition by Imam Kazem masa Ibn Ja'far (a.s.) we read: "There are three groups who are under protection of Allah's Throne in the Day of Resurrection, the day in which no protection exists save Allah's: the man who prepares the preliminaries of his Muslim bother's marriage; those who help another Muslim who needs help; those who hide other Muslim brother's secrets." [2]

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "For each step one takes and each word one says in this way the reward of one year worshipping that in its nights the one establishes prayers and in its days he fasts, will be recorded in one's book of deeds." [3]

[1] Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 14, p. 27

[2] Ibid

[3] Ibid

Since an almost public pretext for escaping marriage is poverty and not being financially supported, the holy Qur'an answers them and implies that you should not be afraid of their poverty; because, as the verse says:

"... If they are poor, Allah will enrich them out of His grace, and surely Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing."

And Allah is powerful to do such a thing, because He is so omnipotent that His power covers the entire universe and He is so omniscient that He is aware of every one's intentions; especially He is aware of the intention of those who decide to get married in order to save chastity and virginity. He blesses and favours all such ones.

Therefore, Imam Sadiq(a.s.) said: "Life will be prosperous by getting married."

Again Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: "One who does not get married for fear of poverty is suspicious of Allah."

And the same Imam (a.s.) said: "Two unit (rak'at) prayers performed by a person who is married is better than 70 unit (rak'at) prayers which is performed by a person who is not married." [1]

There is a famous tradition by the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) who said: "Get married so that generations will be increased, because in the Day of Resurrection I will be glorified before other nations with increase of your population even with aborted children." [2]

In another tradition by the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) we read: "One who gets married has saved one half of his religion and must protect the other half." [3]

[1] Nur-uth-Thaqalyn

[2] Safanah-tul-Bihar, Vol. 1, p. 561

[3] Ibid

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "The worst of you is the one who is unmarried." [1]

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "After Islam no favour and blessing is better than having a Muslim

wife and spouse, because when he looks at her he will be happy and when he enjoins her she obeys and when he is absent she protects his property and reputation."[2]

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) in a tradition said: "Marry virgin girls because their mouth is sweet and charming and their uterus is more proper and they learn soon and their kindness is more stable."[3]

[1] Majam'ul-Bayan, under the verse

[2] Man la Yahduruh ul-Faqih, Vol. 3, p 255

[3] Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 103, p. 237

Commentary : Verse 33

33. فِيهِمْ عَلِمْتُمْ إِنْ فَكَابْتُمْهُمْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مَلَكَتْ مِمَّا الْكِتَابَ يَبْتَغُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فَضَّلَهُ مِنْ اللَّهِ يُغْنِيهِمْ حَتَّىٰ نِكَاحًا يَجِدُونَ لَا الَّذِينَ وَلَيْسَتْغَفِيفِ 33. فَإِنَّ يُكْرَهُنَّ وَمَنْ الدُّنْيَا الْحَيَاةِ عَرَضَ لِيَتَّبِعُوا تَحَصُّنًا أَرَدْنَ إِنْ الْبِعَاءِ عَلَيَّ فَنِّيَاتِكُمْ تُكْرَهُوا وَلَا آتَاكُمْ اللَّهُ مَالٍ مِّنْ وَأَثَوْهُمْ خَيْرًا رَّحِيمٌ غَفُورٌ إِكْرَاهِيْنَ بَعْدَ مِنَ اللَّهِ

33. "And let those who do not find the means to marry keep (themselves) chaste until Allah enriches them out of His grace. And those of your slaves who seek a writing (of emancipation), write it for them if you know any good in them, and give them of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed upon you; and do not compel your slave girls to prostitution when they desire chastity, in order that you may make a gain in the life of the world; and whoever compels them, then (unto them), verily after their compulsion, Allah will be Forgiving, Merciful."

Commentary:

Not having spouse will not give someone permission to commit sin,so one must be patient and chaste. In order to save public chastity and purity, both the youth must try to save themselves and government must get down at it and the rich must embark on it."... and give them of the wealth of Allah..."

Of course, authorities of the society and the rich must be first recommended to do something, and then unmarried individuals must be advised to be chaste and pure. But since in spite of all attempts and endeavours carried out by individuals and others, marriage does not take place and one has to, willingly or unwillingly, remain single for a length of time, so this person must not think that he is permitted to be sexually defiled. Therefore in this holy verse the command of purity is issued though observing it may be difficult for them. It says:

"And let those who do not find the means to marry keep (themselves) chaste until Allah enriches them out of His grace...."

In this crucial and trial phase the unmarried ones should not get involved in this defilement and exempt ones' selves, because no excuse is accepted, but the power of faith, personality, and piety must be tested in this phase.

Today the issue of marriage gets so complicated that it is turned into an arduous or impassable path because of wrong customs and even superstitions, yet marriage is, regardless of all these manly-added things, an innate matter and in line with the rule of creation. Man needs a sound and healthy marriage for continuation of human generation, for tranquility of psyche and body, and for solving problems of life. And man must protect himself from any kind of pollution.

Then, in view of the fact that in any occasion that slaves are mentioned, Islam pays a special attention to their freedom, the verse turns from the discussion of marriage to the discussion of manumitting and freeing slaves, which is done through 'Mukatibah' (entering a written contract in which slaves work and pay their employer some money by installment and then they will be free). It says:

"... And those of your slaves who seek a writing (of emancipation), write it for them if you know any good in them, ..."

The purpose of the Qur'anic sentence /'alimtum fihim xayran/ (if you know any good in them) is that they (slaves) must have grown enough and be competent enough to carry out such a contract. They must be able to live independently when the amount of money they promised to pay is shelled out completely. But if they cannot do it and on the whole this matter causes them losses and consequently they will be a burden to society, this matter should be delayed until the time that they are competent and able.

Then, in order to make no trouble for slaves when they pay this money by installment, it is said:

"... and give them of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed upon you; ..."

Commentators have different opinions upon the purpose of this 'wealth' that must be given to slaves:

Many commentators say: its purpose is to pay them a part of alms-tax, as it is said in verse 60 of Sura At-Taubah, so that they can pay their debt and then be free.

Some others say: its purpose is that the owner of the slave spares some of the debt and if he has received it he returns it to them so that they can afford more to get freed from slavery.

Another possibility is that at the beginning when slaves begin working and they do not have financial means, the owner must give them subsidy or some capital so that they can start a business and can manage their life and carry out their installments both.

Of course the above three comments are not inconsistent and it is possible that all of them to be included in the concept of the verse. The real purpose is to get Muslims help this poor and oppressed group so that they get freed sooner. It is clear, of course, that the matter of slavery is a social phenomenon, which was prevalent before Islam and Islam did not develop it.

Therefore Islam not only does not approve it, but also it sets various ways and methods to limit this phenomenon and wipe out this evil tree. Islam first struggled against the interests of slavery. In the old times if a debtor could not afford his debts, he would become the slave of the lender. Islam barred this approach. In old times defeated soldiers became the slaves of victorious army. Islam freed those who were defeated in the Battle of Badr on the condition of teaching those who were illiterates and also Islam freed some through paying compensation. Then Islam paved grounds in Islamic society to make the path of getting free for slaves.

One of the uses of alms-tax is buying and freeing slaves. In Islam, if an owner wounds his slave, that slave is free. Breaking fast, accidental homicide and failing in performing an oath must be atoned and it is possible that a person frees some slaves as atonement.

One of the ways is 'Mukatibah' that is recommended in the above verse and it is advised that if there is some good in slave you may free him. Possibly this is its purpose that if there is benefit for the slave to be free you must answer his request positively. There happen many times that this freedom is not good for him, and maybe it is because of this that Islam has struggled with slavery gradually.

The Arabic word 'Mukatibah' is derived from the word 'Kitabat' and the word 'Kitabat' is derived from the Arabic word 'Kataba', which means to gather. The act of writing in Arabic called 'Kitabat' because alphabets and words are gathered in a phrase. And since in 'Mukatibah' a contract is usually written between the owner and a slave, it is called 'Mukatibah'.

Contractual enfranchisement is a contract that is between these two persons; wherein the slave is obliged to obtain some money through free business and pay to his owner by installment and so regains his freedom. The payment must be in a way that the slave can afford. And it has been commanded that the sum of these successive payments must not be more than the value of the slave.

And if the slave cannot pay his debts for some reasons, his debts must be paid by allocating a part of ahns-tax (Zakat) as well as through Muslim public treasury. Even some Islamic jurists specify that if the owner is to pay alms-tax, he himself must substitute his slave's debts for his ahns-tax that is to be paid.

Moreover, if Muslims are the victorious party of a war and take war prisoners, there are some different choices to treat these prisoners:

- 1 . To free all prisoners at once and in this case war begins again.
- 2 . To kill all of them and that is the sign of Muslims' cruelty.
- 3 . To set up a camp for them and sustain them by using Muslim public treasury. In this way innocent people must pay the expense of the wrongdoers.
4. To sent them among Muslims so that they view Islam and Muslims morals. In this way they may gradually be influenced and become Muslim, and then we free them through various ways. This plan is the best and Islam's plan is the same.

Let us pass this matter, for the system of war was in this way at that time, that a prisoner was used as a slave and Islam reciprocated it. As today prisoners are kept in camps and we also must observe international rules of war to the extent that these rules are consistent with our religion.

Then one of the evil acts of some worldly persons toward slaves is mentioned in the verse, where it says:

"... and do not compel your slave girls to prostitution when they desire chastity, in order that you may make a gain in the life of the world;..."

Some of commentators have said about the occasion of revelation of this phrase: Abdullah Ibn 'Ubayy had six slave girls. He compelled them to sell their honour for earning money for him. When the ordinance of Islam about struggling against unchaste acts (in this Sura) was issued, the slave girls came to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and complained about this matter. Then, at this time, the above verse was revealed and prohibited this action.[1]

This verse shows that people were so much involved in immoral corruption and deviation in the Age of Ignorance that even after the advent of Islam some people used to continue their previous acts. This status existed until the time when this verse was sent down and put an end to this condition. But unfortunately in our age, in some countries (that they advocate civilization and

human rights,) this action is seen very easily.

Even in our country, when the previous regime was ruling, this matter was carried out terribly, where the innocent girls and ignorant women were deceived and led to the centers of wickedness, and they were forced to be unchaste by means of devilish schemes. They could not escape at all. In this way a lot of money was earned and explanation of this poignant matter cannot be done here.

Slavery does not apparently exist as before but, in this so-called civilized world, some crimes are committed which are worse than the age of slavery. May Allah save the people of the world from these pseudo-civilized men! We thank Allah

[1] Majma' ul-Bayan and QurtAbi Commentary

that such shameful crimes have considerably been wound up in Iran after Islamic Revolution.

It is necessary to mention that the purpose of the Qur'anic sentence: /'in aradna tahassunan/ "... when they desire chastity ..." is not that if women themselves would like to do this evil act, there is no problem to force them. When there is compulsion to do something, willingness to do it is not meaningful. Reluctance is true when there is lack of willing or tendency, otherwise, being unchaste and encouraging others to be unchaste is a great sin, anyway.

This sentence is for the fact that if the owners of these slave girls had a little jealousy, their jealousy would be hurt. The concept of this verse is that these slave girls who were apparently at a lower social level would not like to be unchaste, why did they go along with this wickedness?

At the end of the verse, as it is the approach of the Holy Qur'an, the path of return is not closed to wrongdoers and they are encouraged to go back, repent and atone. It continues saying:

"... and whoever compels them, then (unto them), verily after their compulsion, Allah will be Forgiving, Merciful."

As we said before, this sentence may refer to the condition of the slave girls' owners who were penitent for their gloomy and evil past and they were ready to do repentance and edify themselves. Or it refers to the women who were compelled and forced to this unchaste action.

Commentary : Verse 34

34. لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ وَمَوْعِظَةً قَبْلِكُمْ مِّنْ خَلَوِا الَّذِينَ مِّنْ وَمَثَلًا مُّبِينًا ءَايَاتٍ إِلَيْكُمْ أَنْزَلْنَا وَلَقَدْ

34. "And certainly We have sent down unto you clear revelations, and an example of those who passed away before you, and an admonition unto the pious ones."

Commentary:

This noble verse, as it is the method of the Qur'an, refers to the pervious discussions as a summery or conclusion, and says:

"And certainly We have sent down unto you clear revelations, and an example of those who passed away before you, and an admonition unto the pious ones."

In other words, the addressee of this noble verse is all those who are fully capable from the time of descending of the Qur'an to the time of the universe destruction. What the holy Qur'an says is divided here into 3 parts:

First part: (clear verses). They are about the reasons of monotheism, stating the mission of prophets, the characteristics of Resurrection, stating the religious ordinances, whether they are obligatory or religiously prohibited or conventional, and fair virtues and other religious duties that are all clear and in line with wisdom and common good.

Second Part: It is about the life of past prophets and nations who gained their consequences as the result of Faith. It is also about those nations who were each chastised in a way because of corruption, polytheism, paganism, oppression, and denial of prophets.

Third part: It consists of some advise, admonition, and exhortation, but only the pious uses and get profit from them because they accept them. And wrongdoers will be chastised because of their deeds.

It is often of no avail to give advice to the dark hearted persons. Their likeness is the iron nail which naturally does not go into a stone.

Section 5 : Allah Is Light Commentary : Verse 35

Allah, He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth - Similitude of the Radiance of the Divine Light - Allah guides unto His Light whomsoever He pleases - In which Holy House the Divine Light Burns - The Divine qualities the holy members of the Sacred House posses - Allah provides sustenance to whomsoever He pleases without a measure - The similitude of the disbelievers gone astray

35. مِّنْ مَّيْمَنِهِ لُجُجٌ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لِكَافِرِينَ شَرِّهِمْ كَيْفَ يُكَذِّبُونَ ۗ
اللَّهُ يَهْدِي لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ اللَّهُ يَهْدِي نُورَهُ ۗ عَلِيٌّ نُورٌ نَّارٌ تَمْسَسُهُ لَمْ وَلَوْ بُضِيَءٌ رَّيْتُهَا يَكَادُ غَرَبِيَّةٌ وَلَا شَرْقِيَّةٌ لِأَرْبَتُونَةٍ مُّبَارَكَةٍ شَجَرَةٍ
عَلِيمٌ شَيْءٌ ۖ بِكُلِّ وَ اللَّهِ لِلنَّاسِ الْأَمْثَالِ

35. "Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a glittering star, lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it. Light upon light, Allah guides unto His Light whom He pleases, and Allah sets forth similitudes for mankind, and Allah is All-Aware of all things."

Commentary:

'Light' is something that is itself bright and causes the brightness of other things. In Islamic culture, several things have been mentioned as 'light', including: The Holy Qur'an, tradition, knowledge, wisdom, faith, guidance, Islam, the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), and the Infallible Imams (a.s.).

Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "Nothing I saw unless I saw Allah before it, after it, and along with it." [1]

Concerning the Pure Essence of Allah a famous Persian poet says:

When I look at desert,

I see You.

When I look at sea,

I see You.

Whatever I look at, mountain and plain,

I see a sign of Your elegant stature.

For commenting on the above verse, there have been said many words, and commentators,

philosophers, and Islamic mystics have discussed a lot.

The relation of this verse with the previous verses is in this way that in the former holy verses the discussion focused on chastity, struggling against indecency by means of various ways, and since what guarantees the execution of all Divine ordinances, especially controlling unrestrained instincts, more importantly sexual instinct, which is the most powerful one, can not be done without having 'faith' as support, finally the

[1] The Commentary book: 'Nur', following of the verse, and for more information, you may refer to Kitab ul-Wafi, Vol. 1, p. 382, and TauHud-i-Saduq, chapter Ar-ru'yah, p. 107

discussion is led to 'faith' and its powerful influence, when the verse begins saying:

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth..."

What a nice, interesting, and valuable sentence! Yes Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. He is the brightness and illuminator of all of them.

Some commentators have interpreted the word 'Light' here as guider and leader[1]; and some of them have interpreted it as 'lighter' and some as 'beautifying'.

All these meanings are true, but the concept of the verse is still more inclusive. In the Qur'an and Islamic Narrations some entities are called as 'light':

1. The Glorious Qur'an: As Sura Al-ma'idah, No. 5, verse 15 is recited: "... indeed there has come to you light, from Allah, a Light and a clear Book." Also recite in Sura Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 157: "... Then those who... and follow the light which has been sent down with him: these are they that are the prosperous ones."

2. Faith: We read in Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 257: "Allah is the Guardian of those who have faith; He brings them out of darkness into the light..."

3. Divine Guidance and clear-sightedness: As it is mentioned in Sura Al-An'am, No. 6, verse 122: "Is he who was dead (with ignorance and polytheism) and We gave him life (by Our guidance), and provided him with a light by which he walks among the people, as one whose likeness is in the utter darkness (of ignorance and polytheism) whence he cannot come forth from them ..."

[1] Burhan and Safi commentary, because of this noble tradition by Imam Rida (a.s): "Allah guides all dwellers of the skies and the earth to what is their best"

4. Islam Religion: It is said in Sura At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 32: "... and Allah refuses but to perfect His Light, though the infidels detest it."

5. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.): In Sura Al-Ahzab, No. 33, verse 46 we read about the Prophet (p.b.u.h.): "And as a summoner unto Allah by His permission, and as a light-giving torch."

6. Imams and the Infallible Leaders: As we read in Ziyarat-i-Jami'ah: "Allah created you (as) lights, then He set you encircled (His Throne)." In the same Ziyarat we read: "You are the light for the good ones and guiders of those who do good deeds."

7. Science and Knowledge: This is also mentioned as light, as we read in a famous tradition: "Knowledge is a light that Allah casts in any heart that He wills." [1]

The above mentioned matters are on one side and, on the other side, we must study carefully the special characteristics of light some of its properties and qualities are as follows:

a. Light is the most beautiful and delicate entity in the world of material. It is the source of all beauties and delicacies.

b. As scientists say, light has got the highest velocity in the world; 300,000 kilometers per second. Light can circulate the earth 7 times in less than a second (in a wink), therefore, extraordinarily great astronomical distances are only measured by the speed of light per year. It means the extent that light, with its extraordinary speed, can go in a year.

c. Light is a means for making things comprehensible and for viewing different creatures of the world. Without it we cannot see anything, therefore, it is both visible and making visible.

[1] Bihar, Vol. 1, p. 325; and mazan ul-Hikmah, p. 6016

d. The light of the sun, which is the most important light of our world, grows flowers and plants. It is in fact the secret of all living creatures' survival, and it is impossible for any one or any creature to continue to live without light (directly or indirectly).

e. Today, it has been proven that all the colours that we see are the result of sunlight or other similar lights, otherwise, creatures have no colour in absolute darkness.

f. All existing energies in our environment, except atomic energy, are resulted from sunlight. The movement of Winds, falling of rain, movement of rivers, floods, and waterfalls and, finally, the movement of all living creatures are derived from sunlight.

The source of warmness, heat and what warms creatures is the very sunlight. Even the heat of fire that is gained from wood of trees or coal or petroleum and its derivatives are from the heat of sun, because all of them go back, according to scientific researches, to plants and animals that have acquired heat from sun and have stored it in themselves. Therefore, the movement of engines is because of it, too.

g. The light of sun kills kinds of microbes and harmful insects. And if there were not the shining of this blissful light, the earth would turn into a great hospital whose inhabitants would be coming to grips with death.

Shortly, as we look more and closely at this strange phenomenon of the world (light), its valuable benefits and blesses will be more obvious.

Now, with these two introductions, if we want to choose a parallel or comparison from among sensible creatures of this world for Allah's Pure Essence (although He, the Almighty, is higher than any comparison), can we select any word other than 'light'? He is the same Lord Who is the Creator of all universe. He is the Lighter of the world of creation, all living creatures are alive because of His command, and all creatures are sustained by Him, so that if for a second He stops His blissful looking at creatures, all will be inexistent.

It is interesting that as much as any being is related to Him, it acquires luminousness with respect to it:

The Holy Qur'an is light, because it is His words.

Islam is light, because it is His religion.

The prophets are light, because they are His messengers.

Infallible Imams (a.s.) are Divine lights, because they are guardians of His religion after the prophets.

Faith is light, because it is the secret of relationship with Him.

Knowledge is light, because it brings familiarity with Him. Therefore, "Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth..."

If we consider a wider meaning for light, that is: 'anything whose essence is obvious and apparent and clears other things', in this case applying the word 'light' to His Pure Essence is not likening, because nothing in the world of creation is more apparent and obvious than Him, and all other

things than Him are apparent because of Him.

In the book named: TauHud we read a tradition by Imam Ali Ibn mas-ar-Rida (a.s.). That Imam was questioned about the interpretation of the verse, "Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth...", and he said: "He guides both the inhabitants of the earth and the inhabitants of the heavens."

In fact, this is one of the qualities of the Divine Light, but it is certainly not limited to it. Thus, all the mentioned commentaries of this verse can be included in what was said. Each of them refers to one of the dimensions of this unique Light.

It is interesting that in the 47th part of Jushan KAbir supplication, which is a collection of Allah's attributes, we read: "...Oh Light of lights! Oh Lighter of lights! Oh Creator of lights! Oh Administrator of light! Oh Measurer of light! Oh Light of all lights! Oh Light before any light! Oh Light after any light! Oh Light that is superior to any light! Oh Light that has no parallel!"

Therefore, all lights of universe come from His Light and return to the Light of His Pure Essence.

Mentioning the above fact, the holy Qur'an specifies the manner and the way of Divine Light by means of an exact and nice similitude. It says:

"... The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a glittering star, lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it. Light upon light, Allah guides unto His Light whom He pleases, and Allah sets forth similitudes for mankind, and Allah is All-Aware of all things."

To explain this example, paying attention to some matters is necessary:

The Arabic word/miskat/ is, in fact, a hole and a tiny place which was used to be created in a wall and old common lanterns were kept in it in order to be protected from wind and storm. And sometimes a ledge was made in the room and the side of that part of the wall, toward the yard, was covered with glass.

Thus, both inside of the room and the yard were lighted, meanwhile the lantern was saved from any wind and storm. Again 'Mishkat' was also applied to the glass cases that were made in the form of cubic rectangle, which had a lid and on the top of it there was an opening for letting air out and it was used for putting light in it. In short, 'Mishkat' is a case for protecting light against wind and storm and, since it was often made in wall, the light was focused and reflected.

The Arabic word /Zujajah/ means glass. In fact, it is applied to transparent stones and since glass is made of stone materials and it is transparent, it is also called /zujajah/. Here it means a bulb that is put on the lamp to protect its flame and to lead the movement of air from bottom to the top and to increase the lightness of the torch.

The Arabic word /misbah/ means a lamp that usually has a wick and a flammable oil material and the wick is burned.

The Qur'anic sentence "... lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither of the East nor of the West, ..." refers to an energetic material which is particularly suitable for this lamp, because olive oil is pressed from a blissful and fruitful tree. It is one of the best oils for burning. It comes from a tree that all its branches and stems must be equally exposed to sunlight and it must be neither located in the eastern part of the garden near wall nor in the western part of it, where one side of it is in expose of sunlight, otherwise, its fruits will be half ripe and half unripe nor its oil will be pure.

Now we realize that for having a full light of this lamp, we must have 4 factors: a lantern which protects the lamp completely, and focuses light without decreasing its light. A bulb that regulates the movement of air and it must be so transparent that does never prevent lighting. A lamp that produces light by using wick. And, finally, an energetic material that is pure and clean and must be so flammable that as though it is going to be burnt without touch of fire.

All of these, on one side, show the reality of material and its appearance. On the other side, great Islamic commentators have different opinions about the concept of this likening; or, in other words, to what Divine Light it is likened:

Some say that its purpose is that guiding light that Allah casts in the heart of the believers; in other words, its purpose is 'faith' that is placed in the hearts of the believers.

Some say that it is the holy Qur'an that casts light in the heart of man.

Some say that the similitude refers to the noble Prophet (p.b.u.h.).

Some say that it refers to the reasons of monotheism and Allah's justice.

Some commentators have interpreted it as the spirit of piety and obedience, which is the cause of goodness and prosperity.

In fact, all the extensions that are for the spiritual light in the holy Qur'an and Islamic narrations are mentioned here as commentary. The spirit and concept of all of them is, in fact, one thing and that is the light of 'guidance', which comes from the holy Qur'an, revelation, and prophets, and it

develops by reasons of monotheism and its result is submitting to Allah's command and piety.

Note: The light of faith that is in the heart of the believers has all these 4 factors which exist in a lighting lamp.

"Misbah" is those very flames of faith that appear in the heart of the believer wherefrom the light of guidance comes.

"Zujajah" and bulb is the heart of the believer that controls faith in his entity. And "ieshkat" is the chest of the believer or, in another word, it is the collection of his personality, knowledge, sciences, and thoughts that saves his faith from mishaps.

The meaning of the Qur'anic phrase which says: "... a blessed olive-tree, ..." is the very Divine revelation whose essence is fully pure and sincere and the believers' faith is fruitful and flaming by it.

In fact, this is the Light of Allah, the light which illuminates the heavens and the earth, and it comes from the center of the believers' heart and lights all their entity and being.

The reasons that are gained through wisdom and intellect are mixed with the light of revelation and will be the extension of 'light upon light'.

And it is by this that the receptive hearts are guided to the Divine light, and the concept of "... Allah guides unto His Light whom He pleases ..." is applied to them.

Therefore, for saving this Divine Light (the light of faith and guidance), a collection of Islamic teachings, knowledge, self-edification, and ethic is necessary to protect this "Misbah" as a "Mishkat" does.

It also needs an apt and receptive heart to regulate this program like 'zujajah'. And help through revelation is needed to give energy to it, like the blessed olive tree.

And this light of revelation must be free from deviating money-oriented tendencies that are western and eastern and cause decay, evilness and darkness.

It must be so pure, and clear, free from deviation that it mobilizes all man's powers without help of anything and becomes the extension of "... whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it..."

Any kind of interpretation by personal opinion, incorrect prejudice, personal tastes, imposed

ideas, inclination to west and east, and any superstitions that defile the fruit of this blessed tree will decrease the luminosity of this lamp and sometimes put out the light.

This is the example that Allah has stated for His Light in this verse and He is All-Aware of all things.

We understand from the above matters that if we see in narrations by the infallible Imams that 'Mishkat' is interpreted as the heart of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), 'Misbah' as the light of knowledge, 'Zujajah' as Imam Ali (a.s.), his successors, and 'Shajaratun Muburakah' (the blessed tree) as 'IbRuhim Khalil who is the root of this family, and the Qur'anic sentence: "neither of the East nor of the West" as negation of inclination to Judaism and Christianity, these are in fact the other face of that light of guidance and faith and are the statement of a clear extension of them, but it is not limited to them only.

And also if some commentators have interpreted this Divine Light as the holy Qur'an or intellectual reasons, or the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), it has a root in common with the commentary of the above verse, too.

Commentary : Verse 36

36. وَالْأَصْنَافُ بِالْعُدْوَةِ فِيهَا لَهُ يُسَبِّحُ اسْمُهُ فِيهَا وَيُذَكَّرُ تَرْفَعُ أَنْ اللَّهُ أَذِنَ بُيُوتٍ فِي.

36. "(This lamp of guidance is found) in houses which Allah has allowed to be exalted and that His name be mentioned therein. There glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings,"

Commentary:

Up to now we behold the characteristics of this Divine Light, the light of guidance and faith, through likening it to a very luminous lamp, now we must see that where this lamp is located and how its place is. By specifying its place, all the things that are necessary for this will be clear.

Therefore, this verse implies that this lamp is found in the houses which Allah hath allowed its walls to be exalted so that enemies, devils, and the promiscuous ones can not reach it. They are houses that His name shall be remembered therein and the verses of the Qur'an and the facts of revelation are read in them. The verse says:

"(This lamp of guidance is found) in houses which Allah has allowed to be exalted and that His name be mentioned therein...."

Many commentators consider the above verse to be related to the previous verse, as we have commented on it; but some say that it is related to the next sentence, the relation which does not seem very correct.

But that some say what effect the existence of such lamp in the houses whose characteristics are stated has, we must say that a house, whose walls are exalted and decisive alert men guard it, guarantees the protection of this luminous lamp. Moreover those who seek such source of light will be aware of its place and hasten to enjoy it.

But what is the purpose of the Qur'anic word /buyut/ (Houses)? Its answer will be clear in the characteristics mentioned in the rest of the verse, where it says:

"... There glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings,"

Some points:

1. We read in Ziyarat Jami'ah, when we address the Imams (a.s.) of Sh'iite: "...and Allah has placed you in houses that Allah (s.w.t.) has permitted to be exalted ..." Therefore, the sanctuaries of the infallible Imams (a.s.) are counted as one of the extensions of the Qur'anic phrase /fi buyutin/ (in houses) mentioned in this holy verse.

2. The Arabic word /turfa'/in the verse means the height of a place, too, such as the verse which says: 'And (remember) when Abraham and Ishmael raised up the foundations of the House...' [1]

3. Imam Baqir (a.s.) said: "Those houses are the houses of prophets, sages and the infallible Imams." [2] Tha'labi says in his commentary that one day the Prophet (p.b.u.h.)

was reciting this verse when then Abibakr said: "Is the house of Ali (a.s.) and Fatimah (a.s.) the extension of this verse?" The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Yes, it is the best extension of this verse." [3]

[1] Sura Al- Baqarah, No. 2, verse 127

[2] Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary

[3] Ruh ul-Ma'ani, the Commentary

4. Imam Kazim (a.s.) said: "The purpose of the phrase '... in the mornings and the evenings',

mentioned in the verse, is the punctual ritual prayers." [1]

5. In the Holy Qur'an, there are many cases in which 'glorification' is used instead of 'ritual prayer'. Sura 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 41: "... and glorify (Him) in the evening and early morning." Sura Ta-Ha, No. 20, verse 130: "... and glorify your Lord by praising Him before the rising of the sun and before its setting, ..."

[1] Bihar, Vol. 23, p. 326

Commentary : Verse 37

37. وَالْأَبْصَارُ الْقُلُوبُ فِيهِ تَنْقَلَبُ يَوْمًا يَخَافُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَإِيتَاءَ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِقَامِ اللَّهِ ذِكْرٍ عَنْ بَيْعٍ وَلَا تِجَارَةٍ تُلهِيهِمْ لِأَرْجَالٍ.

37. "Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and paying the poor-rate; they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes will be overturned;"

Commentary:

Men of Allah try their best for their worldly life while they are not ignorant of the Hereafter, because abandoning business is not a value, but if business is done along with remembrance of Allah, praying and giving alms-tax, then it will be respected high. Therefore in this noble verse it is implied that those men who are not prevented from remembering of Allah, performing ritual prayer and paying alms-tax by neither business nor selling and buying, fear the day in which hearts and eyes will be capsized. The verse says:

"Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and paying the poor-rate; they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes will be overturned;"

These characteristics show that the aforementioned houses are the very centers that are fortified by Allah's commandment and Allah is remembered in them. In these centers Islam facts and Allah's ordinances are circulated. In this extensive and comprehensive meaning, mosques are the houses of prophets and saints; especially the house of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and the house of AM (a.s.) are included.

There is no reason for the matter that some commentators in their commentaries have limited it only to the mosque or houses of prophets and such like. And there are some narrations in which

its clear extensions are mentioned:

Imam Baqir (a.s.) said: "This verse refers to the houses of prophets and the house of Imam Ali (a.s.) is included in it, too." [1]

Another tradition indicates that when The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was reciting this verse he was asked: "What is the purpose of/buyut/ (houses)?" The Prophet said: "The houses of prophets" Again Abibakr asked: "Is this house (pointing to the house of Fatimah (a.s.) and Ali (a.s.)) included in it, too? The Prophet said: "Yes, it is the best of them." [2] All of these denote the clear examples.

In another tradition upon the commentary of this verse by Imam Sadiq (a.s.), recorded in the book Raudah Kafi, he has said: "Verily Mishkat is the heart of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), and Misbah is the very light of knowledge (and guidance), and Zujajah is the heart of Ali (a.s.) or his self, (in which Misbah was placed after departure of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.))." [3]

Also in the book TauHud, by Saduq, we read a tradition by Imam Baqir (a.s.) who said: "Verily Mishkat is the light of knowledge in the heart of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and Zujajah is the heart of Ali (a.s.).... And /Nurun 'ala Nur/ is Imams who are from the family of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and they come one after the other. These Imams are assisted by the light of knowledge and wisdom. And this trend has been since the creation of Adam and will continue to the end of the world.

[1] Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 607

[2] Majma' ul-Bayan, following the verse

[3] Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 602 & 603

These are the very testamentary guardians who are appointed as caliphs by Allah in the earth. There is not and there will be not any age or time that the earth can be empty of one of them. They are Allah's Authorities over His servants." [1]

In another tradition by Imam Sadiq (a.s.), 'Mishkat' has been interpreted as Fatimah (a.s.), 'Misbah' as Hassan (a.s.), and 'Zujajah' as Hussayn (a.s.). [2]

There is another authentic tradition by Imam Baqir (a.s.), in which Ghattadah, a famous Islamic jurist from Basrah, had a conversation with Imam (a.s.) and he expressed his heartily amazement concerning Imam's peculiar grandeur. Imam said to him whether he knew that where he was sitting; in front of those about whom Allah has said: '(This lamp of guidance is found) in houses which Allah has. allowed to be exalted and that His name be mentioned therein.

There glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings,' 'Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of in prayer and paying the poor-rate,...'. Then Imam said: "You are what you said (a jurist from Basrah), and we are what the holy Qur'an says."

In answer, Ghattadah said: "You are true, may Allah make me your sacrifice! By Allah that the purpose is not stone and clay houses (but its purpose is the houses of revelation, faith, and guidance)."[3]

In another tradition it has been narrated about this group of Divine men who guard revelation and guidance: "They are businessmen who are not ignorant of Allah's remembrance

[1] Ibid

[2] Ibid

[3]Ibid, p. 602

because of trading or doing business. When it is the time of prayer, they pay its due unto Allah therein (perform prayer)."[1]

This refers to the matter that while they are carrying out economic good activities, all of their actions are overshadowed by Allah's name and they consider nothing preceding it.

Yes, any place or center which is set by Allah's command and Allah's name is mentioned in it and every morning and evening some believing men, who do not forget Allah's remembrance because of worldly life, praise Allah and perform prayer, is the center of Divine lights (Mishkat), faith and guidance.

In fact, this kind of house has some characteristics:

First, it is set by Allah's command.

Second, its bases and walls are so exalted and fortified that they protect it from the penetration of Satan.

Third, it is the center for remembering Allah.

Fourth, some men guard it who praise Allah every morning and every evening, and the worldly beguiling attractions do not make them ignore the Truth.

These houses with such characteristics are the sources of guidance and faith.

It is also important to mention the matter that in this verse both the Arabic word /tijarat/ (merchandise) and the word /bay'/ (sale) have been used. Although it seems that both of them mean one thing, the difference between them may be that /tijarat/ refers to a continuous job and /bay'/ refers to an impermanent action which is done for one time.

It is also necessary to pay attention to the matter that it does not say that 'they are men who do not do business or sale', but it says: "Men whom neither merchandise nor any

[1] Ibid, p. 609

sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and paying the poor-rate ..."

They always fear the day of Hereafter and Allah's justice court, in which hearts and eyes will be capsized because of its awe. (The Arabic verb /yaxafan/ is a form of verb which in the Arabic language indicates the continuity of their fear of the resurrection day. It is a sort of fear that compels them to their duties and missions.)

Moreover, great commentators have different opinions about the Qur'anic phrase /Nurun 'ala Nur/ ('Light upon light'):

In Majma'-ul-Bayan, the deceased Tabarsi says: it refers to prophets who come one after another from one root and continue the path of guidance.

Fakhr-i-Razi says: it refers to gathering of light rays and their concentration, as it is said about believers: 'A believer has 4 positions. If he receives a favour or bless, he thanks Allah. If he receives a disaster, he is patient and withstands it. If he says a word, he tells the truth. If he judges, he seeks justice. He is like a living man among the dead when he is among ignorant people. He moves among 5 lights: his saying is light. His deed is light. His place of arrival is light. His place of exit is light. His aim is the light of Allah in the Day of Hereafter."

It is also probable that the first light in the verse refers to the light of Divine guidance through revelation, and the second light refers to His guidance by means of intellect. Or the first light is the light of religious guidance, and the second light is Divine guidance, therefore, it is 'light upon light'.

Thus, this holy phrase is sometimes interpreted as different sources of light (prophets), and sometimes as various kinds of light, and sometimes as its various phases, while all of them are

possible and can be included in the meaning of the verse and, therefore, its concept is vast. (Take care)

Some notes to be studied:

1. Some traditions indicate that the objective of the persons mentioned in this noble verse is those businessmen who stop working and get prepared to perform ritual prayer when they hear the call to prayer.[1]
2. Business is not the only factor that entertains man and prevents him from remembering Allah, but there are also other factors mentioned in the Qur'an, such as: multiplication of wealth, desires, bad friend and offspring.
3. Olive tree has been described as 'blessed tree' in the above verses. And if in that age the importance of this phrase was not clear when the Qur'an was descended, now we know it fully, for great scientists have spent many years to study the different properties of plants and they tell us that this tree produces a blessed fruit which contains one of the most useful and valuable oils and it plays an important role in the health of body.

Ibn 'Abbas says that all parts of this tree is valuable and good, even its ash has also got property and benefit. It is the first tree that after the Flood of Noah (a.s.) grew, and prophets have uttered invocation prayed for it to be a blessed tree.

[1] Nur-uth-Thaqalyn

Commentary : Verse 38

38. جَسَابٍ بِغَيْرِ يَشَاءَ مَنْ يَرْزُقُ وَاللَّهُ فَضْلِهِ مِنْ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ عَمَلُوا مَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ لِنَجْرِيهِمْ

38. "That Allah may reward them with the best of what they have done, and increase for them out of His grace. And Allah gives sustenance to whom He pleases without stint."

Commentary:

Allah compensates all shortages of Allah's men's deeds and gives them full reward. This noble

verse points to the great reward of these guardians of the light of guidance who are the lovers of truth and reality. It says:

"That Allah may reward them with the best of what they have done, and increase for them out of His grace. ..."

There is nothing to get surprised at, because Allah's grace is not limited for those who deserve His Grace;

"... And Allah gives sustenance to whom He pleases without stint."

Upon the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase: /ahsana ma 'amilu/ ('the best of what they did'), mentioned in the verse, some say it refers to all good deeds, including recommended duties and compulsory ones, great or small.

Some others say it refers to the fact that Allah rewards a person who does a good deed tenfold, or sometimes 700 times or even more, as we read in Sura Al-'An'am, No.6, verse 160: " Whosoever brings a good (deed), he shall have ten times its like ..." And in Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 261, we read: "The likeness of those who spend their wealth in Allah's way is as the likeness of a grain (of corn) that grows seven ears, (with) a hundred grains in every ear. And Allah multiplies (in abundance) for whom He wills ..."

Upon the commentary of the above-mentioned phrase, there is also this probability that the purpose of it is that Allah will reward them all of their deeds according to the measure of their best deeds. Even their insignificant and middle deeds will be rewarded in the row of their best deeds.

This manner is not beyond the grace of Allah, because when justice and punishment are in contemplation, equality is necessary, but when grace and generosity come in, bounties and remittal are without stint, since His Pure Essence is infinite and His bless is unlimited and His generosity is endless.

Commentary : Verse 39

سَرِيعٌ وَاللَّهُ حِسَابُهُ فَوْقَاهُ عِنْدَهُ اللَّهُ وَوَجَدَ شَيْئاً يَجِدُهُ لَمْ يَجَأْهُ إِذَا حَتَّى مَاءَ الظَّمْآنُ يَحْسَبُهُ بِقَيْعَةٍ كَسْرَابٍ أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَفَرُوا وَالَّذِينَ
الجسَاب

39. "And (for) those who disbelieve, their deeds are as a mirage in a desert, which the thirsty one

supposes to be water until when he comes unto it he finds it naught, and finds Allah with him Who pays him his reckoning in full; and Allah is swift in taking account." Commentary:

Since the previous verses spoke about Allah's light, the light of faith and guidance, the above verse speaks about obscurity of disbelief, ignorance,, faithlessness, dark-hearted pagans and hypocrites in order to complete the discussion and to make their position clear, and compare their status with others'. The verse speaks about those whose entity is 'layer upon layer of darkness'; in contrary to the believers whose life and thoughts are 'light upon light'.

Here the word is about individuals who are after mirage instead of water in the dry and hot desert of life and then lose their life because of thirst, while the believers have found the clear spring of guidance under the auspices of faith and have settled beside it.

At first, the verse says:

"And (for) those who disbelieve, their deeds are as a mirage in a desert,,..."

Then it continues saying:

"... which the thirsty one supposes to be water until when he comes unto it he finds it naught, and finds Allah with him Who pays him his reckoning in full; and Allah is swift in taking account." [1]

The Arabic word /sarab/ is derived from the word 'Saraba', which means: 'walking in a slope', and the word 'Sarab' means: 'an inclined way'. Therefore, 'Sarab' is applied to a shine that appears from a distance in deserts and slopes and it seems that there is water over there, while it is nothing but a reflection of sunlight.

The Arabic word /qi'ah/ means 'a vast area and ground that has no water and plant', and, in other words, it is applied to arid deserts in which mirage is often seen.

Commentators of the Qur'an and lexicologists consider this word singular and its plural form is /qi'an/ or /qi'at/. [2]

Physicists say that when the air gets warm, the layer of air, that is directly above the earth, gets less dense and becomes different than the adjacent layer, then the waves of light are broken and mirage is because of this. An English dictionary defines a mirage as: 'It is caused by the refraction of light rays from the object through layers of air having different densities as the result of unequal temperature distribution.'

[1] Imam Ali (a.s.) was asked about how Allah reckons all people together. He said: "As He

provides all sustenance in one time." (Majma' ul- Bayan)

[2] Majma' ul-Bayan, Ruh ul-Ma'ani, the Commentary by QurtAbi, and Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi

Commentary : Verse 40

40. وَمَنْ يَرَاهَا يَكْذُ لَمْ يَدَهُ أَخْرَجَ إِذَا بَعْضٌ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ ظُلُمَاتٌ سَحَابٌ فَوْقَهُ مِنْ مَوْجٍ فَوْقَهُ مِنْ مَوْجٍ يَعْتَسَاهُ لَجِيًّا بَحْرٍ فِي كُظُمَاتٍ أَوْ نُورٍ مِنْ لَهُ فَمَا نُورًا لَهُ اللَّهُ يَجْعَلُ لَمْ

40. "Or (the Unbelievers' deeds) is like utter darkness in a vast, abysmal sea. There covers him a wave, above which is another wave, above which is a cloud; (with layers of) darkness one over the other. When he holds out his hand, he can hardly see it. And for whomever Allah does not appoint light, for him there is no light."

Commentary:

Each deed that a believer does is light and each deed that a disbeliever does is darkness. Instead of opening way for them, disbelievers' deeds mislead them more and it will be veil upon veil. Therefore, in this noble verse the Qur'an says:

"Or (the Unbelievers' deeds) is like utter darkness in a vast, abysmal sea. There covers him a wave, above which is another wave, above which is a cloud; (with layers of) darkness one over the other. When he holds out his hand, he can hardly see it. ..."

Yes, the true light in men's life is only the light of faith, and life will be dark and obscure without it, but this light of faith comes only from Allah. The verse continues saying:

"... And for whomever Allah does not appoint light, for him there is no light."

To understand this example fully, it is first necessary to pay attention to the meaning of the Arabic word /lujjiy/. It means: 'a vast and very deep sea', and, in fact, it is derived from the Arabic word /lijaj/ which means: 'to go after or insist on a job, (usually bad ones)'. Then it has been applied to the succession of waves of the sea and to their standing behind each other.

Since if a sea is deeper and vaster, its waves are more, this word is applied to the deep and vast seas.

Now, consider a wavy and rolling sea which is very deep, and we know that sunlight, the strongest

light, penetrates into the sea to a certain level and its last ray will disappear in almost a depth of 700 meter, so that in deeper parts continual darkness and eternal night rule, for no light penetrates there.

We know also this fact that if water is clear and calm, light will be reflected better, but wavy water breaks light ray, and a little amount of it can go deep into water.

And if, above a wavy sea, a dark cloud stands, the resulting darkness from it will be very dense.

First the darkness of the depth of sea, second the darkness of wavy sea, and third the darkness of dark cloud are the layers of darkness that are placed on each other. It is obvious that in such a darkness the closest objects can not be seen, and even if man holds his hand close to his eye, he can not see it.

A disbeliever who has not the light of faith is like someone who is involved in such triple darkness. On the contrary, fair-minded believers are the extension of 'light upon light'.

Some of commentators have said that this triple darkness in which faithless people are involved, is as follows: the darkness of incorrect belief, the darkness of wrong speech, and the darkness of bad behaviour. In other words, the deeds of faithless people are dark both from the point of fundamental and from the view point of their reflection in their speech, and also because of their full harmony with their other evil deeds.

Some other commentators have said that this triple darkness is the phases of their ignorance: 1) They do not know. 2) They do not know that they do not know. 3) Nevertheless, they think that they do know. And this phase is that compound and multiplied ignorance.

Some other have said since the main factors of cognizance, according to the text of the Qur'an, are 3, that is: heart (in the sense of intellect), eye, and ear, as Sura An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 78 says: "And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers (while) you knew nothing, and He appointed for you hearing and sight and hearts ...". But disbelievers have lost both the light of heart, and the light of eye, and the light of ear and they are plunging in darkness.[1]

It is obvious that these 3 comments are in harmony and it is possible that the verse refers to all of them.

Anyway, we conclude from these couple of verses that the deeds of disbelievers are likened a false light that appears like mirage in a dry and hot desert, and not only does not it quench their thirst, but also their thirst increases because of running.

Then, after this false light, which is the faithless hypocrites' specious deeds, there is the inward of these deeds, which is full of darkness and dense horrible obscurity. This awful inward deranges all man's senses and the closest objects will be invisible to him, even he cannot see himself, let alone others.

It is obvious that in such a terrible darkness, man is totally lonely and ignorant. He can neither find the way, nor does he have any fellow traveler, nor does not know his status, and he does not have any means, because he has not enjoyed the

[1] Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi, following the verse

source of light, that is Allah, and he has covered with the veil of ignorance and conceit.

If you do not forget, we have said that light is the source of beauties, luminosities, life, and movement, but darkness is the source of the ugliness, death, mortality, immobility and silence. Darkness is the center of fear and hate. It is accompanied with coolness and depression. This is the status of those who lose the light of faith and plunge in the darkness of disbelief.

Some tradition about 'Light' and 'Darkness':

1. Once Imam Sajjad (a.s.) was asked: "Why are those who stay awake during the night and make supplication to Allah facially the best?" He said: "Because they have private communion with Allah and Allah covers them with His light." [1]

2. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "Since I heard the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: 'Night prayer is light.', I have not lost one night to perform night prayer." [2]

3. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Prayer is light." [3]

4. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Anyone who testifies rightly in order to restore a Muslim's right by it, his face will be luminous on the day of dooms and his face emit light as far as the eye can see and people know him by his name and family." [4]

5. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "There is truth with any right matter and there is light with any right thing." [5]

[1] 'Ilal-ush-Sharayi', Vol. 1, p. 366

[2] Bihar, Vol. 41, p. 71, and 'Allhar us-Sadiqin, Vol. 11, p. 91

[3] At-Ta'iqib wat-tarhib, Vol. 1, p. 156

[4] Bihar, 104/311/9

[5] Kafi, 2/54/04

6. A man said to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) that I would like to be mustered on the Day of Hereafter luminously. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Do not commit oppression upon anyone (so that) you will be mustered in light on the Day." [1]

7. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Be in awe of injustice, because it causes darkness in the Day of Hereafter." [2]

8. Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 257: "Allah is the Guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light; and those who disbelieve, their guardians are false-deities (taqut). They bring them out of the light into the darkness; they are the inhabitants of the Fire, wherein shall they abide forever."

[1] Kanz ul-Abraham'mal

[2] 'Usul Kafi, Vol. 4, p. 17

Section 6 : Everything in the heavens and the Earth Glorifies Allah Commentary : Verse 41.42

Everything in the heavens and in the earth knows its mode of prayers to Allah, and glorifying Him - Every living creature has been created by Allah - Allah guides towards the Right Path whomever He pleases - Allah or His Apostle deal not with any one unjustly but people themselves are unjust to themselves

41. يَفْعَلُونَ بِمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُمْ وَاللَّهُ وَسَّيِّحَهُ صَلَاتَهُ عَلِيمٌ قَدْ كُلُّ صَافَاتٍ وَالطَّيْرِ وَالْأَرْضِ السَّمَاوَاتِ فِي مَنْ لَهُ يُسَبِّحُ اللَّهَ أَنْ تَرَ أَلَمْ

42. الْمَصِيرُ اللَّهُ وَإِلَى وَالْأَرْضِ سَمَاوَاتِ إِنْ مَلِكٌ وَبِاللَّهِ

41. "Have you not seen that unto Allah glorifies whosoever is in the heavens and the earth, and the birds with wings outspread (in their flight)? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and

praise. And Allah is Aware of what they do."

42. "And unto Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and unto Allah is the ultimate return (of all)."

Commentary:

In the previous verses, Allah's light, the light of guidance and faith, the dense darkness of disbelief and ignorance were mentioned, while the concerned verses mention the reasons of monotheism, which are the signs of Divine lights and means of guidance.

First the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) is addressed when it says:

"Have you not seen that unto Allah glorifies whosoever is in the heavens and the earth, and the birds with wings outspread (in their flight)? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise. And Allah is Aware of what they do."

Since this general praise of creatures is a reason for the creative power of Allah, and His creative power is the reason of His ownership of the whole world of existence, and it is also the reason of the fact that all creatures return to Him, in the next verse the Qur'an adds:

"And unto Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and unto Allah is the ultimate return (of all)."

Another possibility in the relation of this verse with the pervious verse is that in the last sentence of the pervious verse, Allah's awareness of deeds of all men and the glorification of creatures is mentioned, and this holy verse refers to His justice court in the next world, Allah's ownership of the heavens and the earth and His right to judge.

Notes:

First: The meaning of the Qur'anic sentence /'alam tara/ means as it is translated, but it is probable that the subject of the Arabic verb /'alima/ (to be aware) is Allah, not creatures. In this case the translation of the verse will be in this way: "... Of each He knows verily the worship and the praise; ..."

Second: Many times the Qur'an has explicitly stated the praise, prayer, and prostration of creatures, and sometimes has said: "...but you do not understand their glorification;..."[1] It is understood from these verses that knowledge and intelligence is not limited to men. Though

some consider the glorification of the creatures of existence as genetic glorification and nonverbal language of creation, the apparent of the verses does not say this.

Third: in this noble verse, man is indirectly warned by Allah: 1) creatures of heavens and earth and birds are praising Allah, why is man neglectful of it? 2) Creatures' praise is done consciously, why does not man have presence of heart? 3) Birds glorify Allah and are praying when they are flying, but some men bombard others when they are in airplane and are in negligence and unawareness.

Forth: A tradition indicates that when Imam Sadiq (a.s.) heard the sound of a sparrow, he said: "This bird is busy praising and praying." [2]

Fifth: Why does the above verse put emphasis on only the praise of birds, while their wings are extended at the time of flying, and does not mention other creatures? The answer is that in addition to a lot of variety that birds have, they enjoy characteristics that attract every wise man. These heavy things fly fast in the air and break the force of gravity, especially when their wings are extended fully and they do not move them and they ride waves of air. They go everywhere and turn every side without causing themselves any difficulty.

Their knowledge of anemometry issues, their profound knowing of geographical position of the earth at the time of traveling and migrating from a continent to another continent and even from the north polar areas to the south polar parts,

[1] Sura Isra', No. 17, verse 44

[2] The Commentary Fakhr-i-Razi and Ruh ul-Bayan

and a strange system that guides them in this long journey, even when the sky is cloudy, are of surprising issues and of the obvious reasons of monotheism.

The special radar that, some birds have, helps them to find their way in the darkness of night, and even the fact that a kind of them targets a prey in the depth of water and can catch it very swiftly is the very surprising characteristic of these birds.

Anyway, there are secrets in birds that because of them Qur'an has specially put emphasis on them.

Sixth: What is the purpose of/salat/ (prayer)?

Some commentators of the Qur'an, such as the Late Tabarsi in "Majma'-ul-Bayan" and 'Alusi in "Ruh-ul-Bayan", have interpreted the word 'Salat', mentioned here, as supplication, which is its

main concept in dictionary. Thus, the creatures of heaven and earth pray Allah with gestures or with their own verbal language and ask Him grace and He, Who is absolutely gracious, bestows it on them, according to their potentialities, as they deserve.

But they primitively know what they need and what they must ask for and what kind of supplication they ought to pray.

Moreover, according to aforementioned verses, they are humble before His magnificent court and yield to the rules of creation. On the other hand they declare Allah's attributes of perfection with their whole entity and negate any shortcoming about Him. Thus, their four worships are completed by: praising, glorification, prayer, and prostration.

Commentary : Verse 43

43. بِرَدِّ مِنْ فِيهَا جِبَالٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَنْ لَوُيُتَزَّرَ جَلَالِهِ مِنْ يَخْرُجُ الْوَدْقَ فَتَرَى رُكَامًا يَجْعَلُهُ ثُمَّ بَيْنَهُ يُؤَلِّفُ ثُمَّ سَحَابًا يُرْجِي اللَّهُ أَنْ تَرَ أَلَمَ. بِالْأَبْصَارِ يَذْهَبُ سَنَابِرُ فِيهِ يَكَادُ يَشَاءُ مَنْ عَنِ رِفْءٍ وَيَصْدُ يَشَاءُ مَنْ بِهِ فَيُصِيبُ

43. "Have you not seen that Allah drives gently the clouds, then joins them together, then converts them into a mass, and you see the rain coming forth from the midst of them. And He sends down from the heaven from the (clouds like) mountains wherein is hail, afflicting therewith whom He pleases, and turning it away from whom He pleases. The flash of its lightning well-nigh blinds the sight."

Commentary:

To study creation is the best way for knowing Allah which causes to have His love. All movements in the universe are done with Divine will and power and also for a wise aim. Therefore, in this verse, we face a little part of the wonders of creation, and the science, wisdom and magnificence that are behind them. All of them are reasons of His Pure Essence and monotheism. So the Qur'an, addressing the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), says:

"Have you not seen that Allah drives gently the clouds, then joins them together, then converts them into a mass, and you see the rain coming forth from the midst of them..."

The Arabic word /yuzji/ is derived from the word /'izja/ which means 'to drive softly'. It is the driving that is used for arranging the scattered creatures, and this word is exactly true about clouds. Every piece of clouds come from a place of the seas and then Allah drives them towards each other, links and condenses them.

The Arabic word /rukam/ means objects and things that are piled up.

The Qur'anic word /wadq/, as many commentators believe, means: 'drops of rain that come from clouds.' But, in Mufradat, Raqib says that it has another meaning and that is the tiny bits of water that are scattered in the air at the time of raining. But, the first meaning is more proper here, for what shows Allah's magnificence more is those enlivening drops of rain, not those dust-like bits of rain. Moreover, wherever the holy Qur'an mentions clouds and descending of favours, it refers to the issue of rain.

Yes, it is the rain that enlivens dead grounds and the earth, basically and covers trees with life dress and waters both men and animals.

Then another wonderful phenomenon of sky and clouds is referred to. It says:

"... And He sends down from the heaven from the (clouds like) mountains wherein is hail, afflicting therewith whom He pleases, and turning it away from whom He pleases...."

When hail falls, the blossoms of trees, fruits, the products of farms, even some animals and men are usually not safe from its harm.

Yes, it is Allah Who sometimes sends down enlivening rain from cloud and sometimes with a little change in it, He converts it into harmful and even deadly hail. This shows the ultimate of His power and grandeur, where He sets harm and benefit, as well as death and life of men beside each other and even He has interwoven them.

In the end of the verse, another heavenly phenomenon, that is the sign of monotheism, is mentioned:

"... The flash of its lightning well, nigh blinds the sight."

These clouds which are, in fact, made of water bits which emit such a fire when they become full of electricity that their lightning rivets eyes and their thunder sometimes shakes everything. Such great power that is among this delicate vapor is verily wonderful.

The only question that remains here is that: From which mountain of heaven do these hails fall and come down? Here, commentators have different opinions:

1. Some say that the Arabic word /jibal/ (mountains) here has got ironical aspect, as we say 'mountain of trouble' or 'mountain of food'. Therefore, a huge amount or mountain of hail is

created by clouds in the sky and part of it descends on cities, some on deserts, and even some of it may hit some individuals.

2. Some have said that the purpose of 'mountains' is huge masses of cloud that are dimensionally like mountains.

3. The writer of the commentary of Fi Zilal, (Vol. 6, P. 109), says something else which seems more proper. He says that masses of cloud in the sky are truly like mountains. Though when we look at them from the earth, we see them even, while those who fly with aircraft above them see that clouds seem like mountains and valleys that are on the earth. In other words, looking from the above, the surface of clouds is never even and like the surface of the earth has got a lot of unevenness. So, from this point of view, calling 'clouds like mountain' is proper.

Besides the above clear statement, the explanation of some scientists can be added here:

Hail is precipitation of balls or pieces of ice with a diameter of 5 mm to 10 cm (about 0.2 to 4 inches). Small hail (also called sleet, or ice pellets) has a diameter of less than 5 mm. Because the formation of hail usually requires cumulonimbus or other convective clouds with strong updrafts, it often accompanies thunderstorms. Large hailstones are often characterized by alternating layers of clear and opaque ice, caused by irregular rates of freezing. In areas where the temperature is not far below 0° C (32° F), freezing occurs slowly,

allowing trapped air to escape and producing clear ice. When the hailstone then moves into a much colder area, freezing occurs quickly, trapping air and producing a layer of white ice. Hail is extremely destructive to buildings and crops; if large enough, it may be dangerous to animals exposed to it. Hailstones about 15 cm (6 inches) in diameter have fallen during thunderstorms in the Middle Western United States. Hailstorms are most common in the middle latitudes and usually last around 15 minutes. They ordinarily occur in middle to late afternoon.[1]

Regarding this matter, the scientific point that exists will be clearer, for huge hails are formed only when masses of cloud get very dense so that when storm throws frozen balls of hail into them, they absorb more water. And this is when masses of cloud are upwardly located like mountain and they will be a considerable source for forming hail.

There is another analysis by other writers, the summary of which is as follows: "In the concerning verses, lofty clouds explicitly refer to mountains of ice, or, in other words, mountains in which there is a kind of ice, and this is very interesting. For after invention of aircraft and the possibility of

[1] From Encyclopedia Britannica

high flight, man's knowledge was developed and scientists found clouds that consist of icy pillars and so the appellation 'mountains of ice' is truly applied to them. And it is again surprising that one of Russian scientists has used the phrase 'mountains of cloud' or 'mountains of snow' in describing stormy raining clouds. Thus, it is now obvious that there are really mountains of ice in the heaven. This is the miracle of the holy Qur'an that, 14 centuries before, it said: "... And He sends down from the heaven from the (clouds like) mountains wherein is hail..."

Commentary : Verse 44

44. الْأَبْصَارِ لِأُولِي لَعِينَةٍ ذَلِكَ فِي إِنْ وَالنَّهَارِ اللَّيْلِ اللَّهُ يُغَلِّبُ.

44. "Allah alternates the night and the day; verily there is a lesson in this for those with sight."

Commentary:

The shift and change of night and day is not accidental, but it is based on an exact system.

A person of insight can learn lesson from all times and all places.

The phenomena of the universe provide us lessons, that we do ponder them.

In this noble verse, one of the signs of creation and Allah's grandeur, which is the creation of day and night, is mentioned. It says:

"Allah alternates the night and the day; verily there is a lesson in this for those with sight."

Commenting this holy verse, there are stated different opinions about how this revolution is:

Some consider it as the coming and going of day and night; day comes and makes the night invisible and vice versa.

Some say that it means shortening of one of them and prolonging of the other one, which happens gradually, and the formation of seasons depends on it.

Finally, some say that it refers to the changes such as warmness, coldness, and other events that happen during the day and night.[1]

[1] The Commentary of: Fakhr-i-Razi, Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Ruh-ul-Ma'ani

It must be mentioned that the above commentaries are not in conflict with each other, and it is possible that all of them are included in the Qur'anic phrase /yuqallibu/ ('alternates').

Undoubtedly, as it is scientifically proven, both coming and going of the day and night, and gradual changes of them, are vitally important for man and it is a lesson for 'those with sight'.

Constant shining of sun increases temperature of the air, burns living creatures, and mentally wearies men, but when the darkness of night comes after this shining, it modifies it totally.

The gradual changes of day and night, which is the factor of formation of four seasons, play an important role in the growth of plants, the life of all living creatures, the descending of rain, and storing water in the ground.

Commentary : Verse 45

45. يَسَاءَ مَا اللَّهُ يَخْلُقُ أَرْبَعٌ عَلَى يَمْسِي مَنْ وَمِنْهُمْ رَجُلَيْنِ عَلَى يَمْسِي مَنْ وَمِنْهُمْ بَطْنِي عَلَى يَمْسِي مَنْ فَمِنْهُمْ مَاءٌ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ كُلَّ خَلْقٍ وَاللَّهُ
قَدِيرٌ شَيْءٍ ۝ كُلٌّ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ

45. "And Allah has created every animal from water; so of them is (a kind) that walks upon its belly and (a kind) that walks upon two legs and (a kind) that walks upon four. Allah creates what He pleases. Verily Allah is All-Powerful over every thing."

Commentary:

All of creatures are created by His will. In this noble verse, one of the main aspects of creation system, which is one of the most obvious reasons of monotheism, that is the issue of life with its various forms, reference has been made to. It says:

"And Allah has created every animal from water; ..."

All of them are made of water, but they have different and wonderful forms;

"... so of them is (a kind) that walks upon its belly and (a kind) that walks upon two legs and (a

kind) that walks upon four. ..."

Yet this is not limited to these things and life has got extraordinarily various forms, including creatures that live in the sea, or insects that have thousands species and thousands faces. Therefore in the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"... Allah creates what He pleases. Verily Allah is All-Powerful over every thing."

Some Points:

First: There are different opinions about the matter that the verse under discussion refers to what kind of 'water'. There are three commentaries on it:

A) The purpose of water is the drop of seed. Many of commentators have chosen this commentary and in some narrations it has been referred to, too.

The problem that this commentary faces with is that not all creatures are created from the drop of seed. For there are unicellular organisms and some other animals that are the extensions of animal and are created through cell division, an asexual reproduction, and it must be said that the above subject has got a typical aspect, not a common and general aspect.

B) The purpose of it is the creation of the first creature, for according to some Islamic narrations, the first creature that Allah created was water and men were created after water. Moreover, according to the new scientific theories, the first sign of life appeared in the seas and this phenomenon ruled in the depth of seas or in the shallows of seas before it appeared anywhere else. (Of course, the power that created the living creature with all of its complexity in the first phase and then guided it in other phases was Allah's will, a supernatural force.)

C) The last commentary is that the purpose of the creation of living creatures from water is that now the main material that makes up them is water and the main part of their body is made of water and that without water no living creature can continue to live.

Of course, these commentaries are in line with each other, but the first and the second ones seem more correct.

Second: The question that raises here is that animals are not limited to these three groups (reptiles, bipeds, quadrupeds), but there are many creatures that have more than four legs?

The answer to this question lies in the verse itself, for it is said in the next sentence: "... Allah creates what He pleases ...". Moreover, the most important animals that man is to deal with are

these three groups. Besides, some believe that even some animals that have more than four feet rely mainly on four feet and the rest of feet functions as helping means.[1]

Third: Undoubtedly the strangest phenomenon of this world is life, the issue that is still an unsolved riddle for scientists. All of them say that living creatures are created from lifeless materials of this world, but no one knows how and under what circumstances this mutation has happened, for in no laboratory the changing of lifeless materials to living creatures is observed, although thousands of scientists have thought about this and experimented a lot during very many years.

What is certain is that the secrets of life are so complex that the entire manly knowledge and sciences, with their whole development, are not able to discover and understand them yet.

In current condition of the world, living creatures are created from only living creatures and no living creature is created from a lifeless creature. Certainly it was not so in a long time ago and; in other words, life in the earth has got a history of creation that no one knows how its condition was and it is a riddle to man.

More strange than that is the species of life. There are completely various aspects of life; unicellular organisms that are seen only by means of microscope unto huge whales that

[1] The Commentary by QurtAbi, and Fakhr-i-Razi, following the verse

are more than 30 meters long and they are mountain of floating meet. From insects of which hundreds of thousand species are discovered to birds that are thousand and thousands species, each of which have a world full of secrets.

Zoology books that today constitute a great part of great libraries of the world show only a little of these secrets. Sea, that has always been full of secrets, specially its animals, is still unknown to us with all knowledge that we have about it.

Verily how magnificent is Allah Who has created these various animals and has bestowed them what they have needed. How great is His power and knowledge that He has bestowed them what is needed proportionate to their conditions. And it is strange that all of them at first were created from water, and some little of the simple materials of the earth.

Commentary : Verse 46.47

46. مُسْتَقِيمٍ صِرَاطٍ إِلَىٰ يَشَاءُ مَنْ يَهْدِي ۗ وَاللَّهُ مُبِينَاتٍ ۚ آيَاتٍ أَنْزَلْنَا لَقَدْ

نَبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أُولَٰئِكَ وَمَا ذَلِكُمْ بَعْدَ مِنْ مِّنْهُمْ فَرِيقٌ يَّتَوَلَّىٰ نُمْ وَأَطَعْنَا ۚ وَالرَّسُولِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۚ آمَنَّا وَيَقُولُونَ

46. "Verily We have sent down revelations explanatory, and Allah guides whom He pleases unto a straight way."

47. "And they say: 'We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey'. Then, after that, some of them turn away, these are not (really) believers."

Occasion of Revelation:

Commentators have mentioned 2 occasions of revelation for a part of these verses:

First: One of the hypocrites had some quarrel with one Jewish man. That Jewish man asked that apparently-Muslim hypocrite to go together to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) to have their quarrel settled down, but the hypocrite did not accept it and asked the Jewish man for going to Ka'b Ibn Ashraf YaHudi (a Jewish man) for issuing judgment. (Even according to some narrations, the hypocrite said it was possible that Mohammad (p.b.u.h.) might not judge between them justly.) The above verses were sent down and reprimanded such persons very severely.

Second: An argument happened between Imam Ali (a.s.) and Othman, (or according to a narration, between that Imam and Muqayrat-Ibn Wa'il). And it was for a land that he had bought from Imam Ali (a.s.) and then some stones were found in it and the buyer wanted to cancel the bargain because of it.

Imam Ali (a.s.) asked for the judgment of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) between them, but Hakam Ibn Abee Abil-'As, one of the hypocrites, said to the buyer not to do that for if he went to Ali's cousin, the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), he would certainly judge between them in favour of him. The above verse was descended and rebuked him.[1]

Commentary:

Since the words in previous verses were about belief in Allah, the reasons of monotheism, and His signs in the world of creation, the concerned verses talk about the signs of faith, reflections of monotheism in man's life and his yielding to the Truth. First it says:

"Verily We have sent down revelations explanatory,..."

These are some verses that lighten the hearts by the light of faith and Unity. Of course, the

existence of these 'explanatory revelations' paves the ground for faith, but the main role is played by Divine guidance, because:

"... and Allah guides whom He pleases unto a straight way."

We know that Allah's will and providence is not undue, and the light of guidance is cast on those hearts that are receptive for accepting it; that is, they have started spiritual struggle and taken steps towards Him.

[1] Majma'-ul-Bayan, Ruh-ul-Bayan, Tibyan, QurtAbi, Fakhr-i-Razi, Safi, Nur-uth-Thaqalyn

Then hypocrites, who have no faith and only speak about faith and faith cannot be cast on their hearts, are reprimanded. The verse proclaims:

"And they say: 'We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey'. Then, after that, some of them turn away, these are not (really) believers."

What kind of faith is it that it is only uttered by their tongue and it is not manifested in other fields of their deeds?

It is understood from this verse that if a person's faith remains only at the level of tongue and he does not really believe in Allah, he is not a believer, for if he were a believer his faith would not be rejected in this verse.

Commentary : Verse 48

48. مُعْرِضُونَ مِنْهُمْ فَرِيقٌ إِذَا بَيْنَهُمْ لِيُحْكَمْ وَّرَسُولِهِ اللَّهُ إِلَيْ دُعُوا وَإِذَا

48. "And when they are summoned unto Allah and His Messenger in order that he may judge between them, behold, some of them are averse;"

Commentary:

The sign of real faith is the acceptance of the Prophet's judgment (p.b.u.h.), and the sign of hypocrisy is rejecting his judgment. So, in this noble verse, as one obvious reason for their

disbelief, the Qur'an implies that when they are invited to the Book of Allah and His ordinance and religion as well as to the judgment of His Messenger (p.b.u.h.) so that he judges between them, a part of them turn away. The holy verse in this regard says:

"And when they are summoned unto Allah and His Messenger in order that he may judge between them, behold, some of them are averse;"

That the Holy Qur'an mentions the name of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) after the name of Allah is because of the fact that the Prophet's judgment is ordered by Allah and Allah's judgment and that of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) are the same.

Commentary : Verse 53

53. تَعْمَلُونَ بِمَا خَبِيرُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ مَعْرُوفَهُ طَاعَةٌ تُقْسِمُوا لَأَقُلَّ لِيَخْرُجَنَّ أَمْرَتُهُمْ لِنِ أَيْمَانِهِمْ جَهْدَ بِاللَّهِ وَأَقْسَمُوا

53. "They have sworn by Allah the most earnest oaths (that), if you order them, they will certainly go forth. Say: 'Do not swear; (better than this is) honourable obedience. Verily Allah is aware of what you do!'"

Commentary:

Do not trust any swear and oath, because hypocrites often abuse the sacred things, and prevent hypocrites' abuse by not accepting their oath and swear.

The occasion of revelation that is mentioned about this verse and the next one in some commentaries denotes that some hypocrites became very upset after the descending of the previous verses and their severe reprimand. They went to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and swore their oath of obedience to his command, and then the holy Qur'an answered them decisively by saying:

"They have sworn by Allah the most earnest oaths (that), if you order them, they will certainly go forth. Say: 'Do not swear; (better than this is) honourable obedience. Verily Allah is aware of what you do!'"

Many commentators think that the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase /layaxrujunna/ ("... they will certainly go forth ...") is going out for Holy Struggle, while some others think that it means: leaving one's house and family, or going with the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) everywhere and to be at his service'.

Of course, the Arabic word /xuruj/ or its derivatives are used in the holy Qur'an in the sense of: both going out for Holy Struggle and leaving home, affairs, and family. However, consistency with the previous holy verses, that mentioned the judgment of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) about the conflicting issues, necessitates that we accept the second commentary;

meaning that: they came to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and declared their yielding to his judgments and they swore that they not only would give a part of their property, but also they would leave all their property and family entirely, if command was issued. Nevertheless, it causes no problem if both of the meanings are included in the verse, that is, they are ready both for leaving family and property with the command of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and for going to Holy Struggle.

But, in view of the fact that those who are hypocritical sometimes change their appearance when they encounter unfavourable atmosphere of society and resort to very strong oaths and sometimes their oath itself indicates their falsehood, the holy Qur'an answers them explicitly, indicating that they need not swear, it is better they do sincere and frank obedience in action. By the way, Allah is informed of what they have in their mind and He knows that whether they are swearing false oath or they have really changed their way.

Commentary : Verse 54

54. الْبَلَاغُ إِلَّا الرَّسُولَ عَلَيَّ وَمَا تَهْتَدُوا تُطِيعُوهُ وَإِنْ حُمِلْتُمْ مَا وَعَلَيْكُمْ حُمِلَ مَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّمَا تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ الرَّسُولَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ أَطِيعُوا قُلُوبَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

54. "Say: 'Obey Allah and obey the Messenger. But if you turn away, then on him is only what is imposed (on him), and on you is what is imposed on you; and if you obey him, you shall be on right guidance; and nothing is on the Messenger but the clear conveyance (of the Message)."

Commentary:

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) is commissioned to call hypocrites for obedience; "Say: Obey Allah...", because obeying the commands and orders of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) is obligatory like obeying Allah's orders and commandment. Therefore, in this noble verse, this concept is emphasized where it says:

"Say: 'Obey Allah and obey the Messenger. ..."

Then the Holy Qur'an implies that there are two positions against this command, when it

continues saying:

"... But if you turn away, then on him is only what is imposed (on him), and on you is what is imposed on you; and if you obey him, you shall be on right guidance; and nothing is on the Messenger but the clear conveyance (of the Message)."

He was commissioned to convey Allah's commandment to all people, whether they accept it or not. Detriment and benefit of accepting or rejecting it would influence them. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was not obligated to force and compel people to go on the right path and accept the call.

It is interesting that in the above verse, the duties are referred to as being 'heavy loads'; it is in fact so. Both the commission of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and frankly obeying his call were a burden on the shoulder that had to be carried out and except sincere people no one could carry out this duty.

Therefore, we read in a narration by Imam Baqir (a.s.), about the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), who said: "Oh those who recite the Holy Qur'an! Be in awe of Allah, Almighty. Be pious toward His Book that is a burden on your shoulder, because both you and I are responsible. I am responsible for conveying His message to you and you are responsible before Allah's Book and my practice (Sunnah) that are on your shoulder." Some Points:

1. The repetition of the Qur'anic phrase /'ati'u/ (Obey) indicates that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) has got two missions: one is declaration of revelation (Obey Allah) and the other one is declaring governmental rules (obey the Messenger).

2. In the holy Qur'an, we encounter some instances that contain two commandments from the side of Allah mentioned with together, and both of them must be carried out and doing one of them is not enough and is not acceptable, including:

A) Faith and deeds; "... those who believe and do righteous deeds ..."[1]

B) Ritual prayer and alms-tax; "... And keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates (Zakat).. ."[2]

C) Expressing gratitude to Allah and parents; "...Be grateful to Me and to both your parents ... "[3]

[1] Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 25

[2] Ibid, verse 43

[3] Sura LuqmAn, No. 31, verse 14

D) Obeying Allah and His Messenger;"... Obey Allah and obey the Messenger ... "[1]

3. In the holy Qur'an, the sentence/wa 'in tawallau/ (But if you turn away) is used many times. In all cases it is used for sympathizing with the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) so that he would not get discouraged about his mission concerning people's inattention and heedlessness.

[1] The verse under discussion

Commentary : Verse 55

55. الَّذِي دِينُهُمْ لَهُمْ وَالْيَمَكِينُ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَخْلَفَ كَمَا الْأَرْضِ فِي لَيْسَتْخْلَفَتْهُمْ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَعَمِلُوا مِنْكُمْ ءَامَنُوا الَّذِينَ اللَّهُ وَعَدَ ۚ
الْفَاسِقُونَ هُمْ فَأُولَئِكَ ذَلِكَ بَعْدَ كَفَرٍ وَمَنْ شَيْئاً بِي يُسْرِكُونَ لَا يَعْبُدُونَنِي مُنْأَىٰ خَوْفِهِمْ بَعْدَ مَن ۚ لَنَّهُمْ وَلِيِّدٌ لَهُمْ ارْتَضَىٰ

55. "Allah has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds, that He will certainly appoint them successors in the earth as He appointed successors those before them; and that He will certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that certainly He will, after their fear, give them security in exchange. They will do worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me; and whoever disbelieves after this, then these are they that are evil-doers."

Occasion of Revelation:

Many commentators, including Suyuti in Asbab-ul-nuzul, Tabarsi in Majma'-ul-Bayan, Sayyid Qutb in Fi-Zilal, and QurtAbi in his commentary, upon the occasion of revelation of this verse have said: When the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and Muslims migrated to Medina and were warmly welcomed by Ansar (Helpers), all Arabs became their enemy and it was such that they were to carry a weapon when they went to bed and to be on the alert all the time.

The continuation of this state became difficult for the Muslims. Some of them declared their feeling explicitly: "To what day would this state continue? Would a time come that we could rest calmly in the night and peace and tranquility rule over us and we fear no one but Allahu" The above verse was sent down and gave them this good tiding that of course such a day would come.[1]

Commentary:

Islam is a universal religion. In future victory belongs to the believers and pagans are doomed to be defeated. The key of achieving the Truth and authority of the world is 'Faith' and 'good deeds'. Those who believe and do good deeds glad tidings of victory are given to, not to those who are barely believers.

Religion is not separated from politics, but politics and government are for saving religion.

Since the previous holy verses talked about obeying the commandments of Allah (s.w.t.) and the Prophet (p.b.u.h), the concerned verse continues this matter and mentions the result of this obedience which is the worldly government, and the Qur'an emphatically announces:

"Allah has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds, that He will certainly appoint them successors in the earth as He appointed successors those before them; and that He will certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that certainly He will, after their fear, give them security in exchange. They will do worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me;..."

It is certain that after the dominion of the government of Monotheism and settlement of the Divine religion when any kind of anxiety, insecurity and infidelity disappear, those who resist to be disbelievers are wrong-doers. The verse continues saying:

"... and whoever disbelieves after this, then these are they that are evil-doers."

However, the totality of the verse denotes that three things are promised by Allah to be bestowed on those Muslims who have faith and do good deeds:

1. Succession and authority over the earth.
2. Establishing the factual religion of Truth everywhere fundamentally, firmly, and deeply, (which is understood from the Qur'anic word 'Tamkin').
3. Abolishing all the factors that cause fear and insecurity.

The result of these abovementioned affairs will be worshipping Allah absolutely with utmost freedom, and obeying His commandments. There will be no partner for Him among people and pure monotheism will rule everywhere. Of course, we will explain that at what time this Divine promise has been fulfilled, or when it will be fulfilled.

Some Points:

1. The commentary of the Qur'anic sentence: "... as He appointed successors those before them ...":

Commentators have different opinions about the matter that to whom this sentence refers that they had got authority on the earth before Muslims.

Some say that it refers to Adam, David and Solomon, because in verse 30 of Sura Al-Baqarah we read about Adam: "... 'Verily I am appointing on the earth a deputy' ...". And it is said about David in Sura Sad, No. 38, verse 26: "(And it was said unto him): O' David! Verily We have set you a viceroy in the earth ..."

And since Solomon was the heir of David's authority, he became caliphate on the earth; "And Solomon was David's heir..." (Sura An-Naml, No. 27, verse 16)

But some others, such as the great commentator 'Allamah TABitba'i said in Al-Mizan that this concept is improbable, because he does not consider the sentence /'allaoina min qablihim/ (to those before them') to be proper for prophets. For this sentence has not been used for prophets in the Qur'an, therefore it refers to nations that were faithful and did good deeds and became the rulers on the earth.

However, some others believe that this verse refers to the Children of Israel who achieved authority on the earth when Moses (a.s.) appeared and Pharaoh was defeated, as it is mentioned in Sura Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 137: "And We made the people, who were abased, the inheritors to the east (parts) of the land and the west (parts) of it which We had blessed therein, ..."

It is also said about them (the believers of the Children of Israel): "And to grant them power in the earth ..." (Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 6)

It is true that there were some wicked and insincere persons among the Children of Israel and even they might be pagan, but government was in the hand of the righteous believers, (therefore the fault that some commentators find with this commentary is rejected,) and, thus, the third commentary seems more correct.

2. To Whom Does Allah Promise?

In this verse we read that Allah has promised the authority of the earth, establishment of the chosen religion and complete security to those who are believers and do righteous deeds, but

commentators are of different opinions about the extension of these persons:

Some of them say that it refers to the Companions of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), who ruled the earth after Islam and defeated pagans at the time of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.). (Of course, the purpose of the word 'Ard' (the earth) is not all of the earth or all countries, but it is a concept that is true about a part and the whole both.) Some say it refers to the first four caliphates' authority. And some consider its meaning so wide-ranging that it includes all Muslims who have such an attribute.

Some say that it refers to government of Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance!), which includes western and eastern parts of the world and the religion of Truth will widespread. Fear and war will be abolished on the earth, and sincere worship will be materialized for all people of the world.

Undoubtedly this holy verse includes the first Muslims and certainly the full extension of this verse is the government of Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance!), which according to the opinion of all Muslims, whether Shi'ite or Sunni, will make the earth peaceful and full of justice after oppression and tyranny rule the world. However, it is not against the generality and extensiveness of the concept of the verse.

So, whenever Muslims are verily faithful and do righteous deeds whole-heartedly, they will consequently achieve a strong and influential authority.

Some say that the word /'ard/ is absolute and general which includes all of the earth, but this is only limited to the government of Mahdi (may we get sacrificed for him!) and it is not consistent with the Qur'anic sentence /kamastaxlafa/ (as He granted it), because the predecessors' government and authority did not certainly include all of the earth.

Moreover, the occasion of revelation of the verse indicates that at least an example of such government was achieved for Muslims at the time of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), although it was at the end of his life.

But we repeat again that the product of all prophets' struggles and attempts, their continual propagation and pursuit and complete example of monotheism sovereignty, complete security, and sincere worship with no polytheism will be materialized when Mahda (may Allah hasten his appearance!), the offspring of the prophets and the progeny of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), will reappear.

The same person about whom all Muslims have narrated this tradition from the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) who said: "If only one day of the world's lifetime is remained, Allah will make that day so long that

a man from my progeny, whose name is like my name, will rule the earth and fill the earth with justice as it has been filled with oppression and tyranny." [1]

It is interesting that the Lale Tabarsi says about this verse that it is narrated from the household of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) (Ahl-ul-Bayt (a.s.)) that: "This verse is about Mahdi, who is from the family of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.)." [2]

In Ruh-ul-Ma'ani and many other Shi'ite commentaries, upon the commentary of this verse, there has been narrated from Imam Sajjad (a.s.) who said: "By Allah, they are our Shi'ites (followers) (Ahl-ul-Bayt). Allah does this for them by the hand of a man who is from us and he is Mahdi (the guide) of the Ummah. He will fill the earth with justice and fairness as it has been filled with oppression and tyranny. He is the

[1] In the book Muntakhab-ul-'Athar, 123 hadiths are mentioned about this matter and they are narrated from different Islamic references, especially from Sunni ones. Refer to this books from page 247 on.

[2] Majma'-ul-Bayan, following the verse

man about whom the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: 'If one day of the world's lifetime has remained ..."

As we said, these commentaries do not mean to limit the meaning of the verse, however, they are for stating its full extension, but because some commentators, such as 'alusi who has not pay attention to this matter in Ruh-ul-Ma'ani, have negated these traditions.

QurtAbi, the famous Sunni commentator, narrated from Miqdad-Ibn-'Aswad who heard from the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), who said: "No clay or stone house will remain unless Allah causes Islam enters that house (and faith and monotheism get widespread on the earth.)" [1]

For more explanation about the government of Mahdi (a.s.) and its vast and proven documents in Sunni and Shi'ite books, you may refer to the book Muntakhab-ul-'athar, PP. 247 on where they are taken especially from Sunni sources.

3. The final aim is sincere worship:

The Qur'anic sentence /ya'budunani la yusrikuna bi say'a/ (They will do worship Me(alone) and not associate aught with Me) from the point of literature, whether its tense is present, or it is ultimate, its concept is that the final aim is establishing the government of Truth, embedding the religion of Truth, and spreading security and peace, which is the very fortifying the foundations of worshipping and monotheism, hi another verse of the Qur'an it is mentioned as the aim of

creation, where it says: "And I have not created the jinn and the humankind except that they should worship Me." [2]

[1] The Commentary by QurtAbi, following the verse

[2] Sura Ath-Thariyat, No. 51, verse 56

A kind of worship which is the high education center of men that edifies their spirit and soul. The worship that Allah does not need but servants need it desperately for paving the path of perfection and development.

Therefore, Islamic insight, contrary to worldly approaches whose final aim is the extreme welfare of worldly life, does not follow such a thing as an aim, even the worldly life is valuable when it is used as a means for achieving that spiritual aim.

But we must pay attention to this matter that worshipping that lacks polytheism, and negates both none-divine laws and authority of low desires, is possible only by establishing a government of justice.

It is possible that you invite some persons to Truth by teaching, edification, and propagation, but for generalizing this matter in the society we must establish government of the righteous who are faithful. That was why the great prophets attempted to do this, especially the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), at the first possible opportunity, established such a government after migrating to Medina.

So it can also be concluded that all the attempts and struggles carried out for war and peace, and even educational, cultural, economic, military programs are planned in such a government are for the sake of worshipping Allah which is free from any polytheism.

It is also necessary to mention that the meaning of the righteous' government, obedience from the True religion and sincere worship is not a society that has no wrongdoer and sinner in it, but it means that the government is in the hand of the righteous believers and no public polytheism is seen in the society, otherwise, when man is free to choose his way and has got the freedom of will, it is possible to have deviated individuals in the man's best divine societies.

Commentary : Verse 56

56. تُرْحَمُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ الرَّسُولَ وَأَطِيعُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَعَاثُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَقِيمُوا

56. "And establish prayer and pay the poor-rate and obey the Messenger, so that mercy may be shown to you."

Commentary:

Ritual prayer, alms-tax, and obeying divine leader is an obvious example of faith and righteous deed of the believers to whom sovereignty of the earth was promised in the former verse: ("Allah hath promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds ...")

In Islam worshipping issues (ritual prayer), financial issues (alms-tax), and political and governmental issues (obeying Allah's prophet) are not separated from each other. So, in this verse, people are mobilized for preparing the ground for such a government. At first, it says:

"And establish prayer..."

The same ritual prayer that is the key of relation between the Creator and creatures, and it guarantees their continuous connection with Allah, and it is an obstacle between them and corruption and wrong action. Then, after that, the verse continues saying:

"... and pay the poor-rate ..."

It is the same alms-rate that is the sign of relationship with Allah's creatures and it is an effective means for decreasing the distance between them and causes their affectionate relations to be strengthened. So, the verse continues:

"...and obey the Messenger,..."

This obedience, which is general and indicates that we should be obedient unto the Messenger of Allah in all things, causes us to be among the righteous believers who deserve to have the authority of the earth. It is in this case and under the shade of fulfilling these commandments that haply we may find mercy, and be among those righteous believers who are worthy of leading the government of justice. The verse concludes:

"... so that mercy may be shown to you."

Some traditions on ritual prayer and alms-tax:

1. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "The first thing that Allah obligated upon my people to do was the five ritual prayers and the first deed of them that will ascend is the five ritual prayers, and the first

thing that will be asked about is the very ritual prayers." [1]

2. Imam Baqir (a.s.) said: "Islam is founded on five things: ritual prayer, alms-tax, ritual pilgrimage, fasting, and the guardianship (of Ahl-ul-Bayt)" [2]

3. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: "The first thing that a servant will be reckoned of is ritual prayer, so if ritual prayer is accepted, other deeds will be accepted. If his ritual prayer is not accepted, the rest of his deeds will be rejected, too."

4. Imam Baqir (a.s.) said: "When our offspring become five years old, we enjoin them to perform ritual prayer, so when your issues get seven years old, tell them to keep up prayer." [3]

5. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Never the time of ritual prayer comes unless an angel cries: O' people stand up and put off the fires that you have kindled." [4]

[1] Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol, 7, Tradition No. 18859

[2] Bihar, Vol. 82, p. 234

[3] Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 3, p. 12

[4] Bihar, Vol. 82, p. 209

6. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "When a person stands up to perform ritual prayer, Satan looks at him jealously, for he sees that Allah's mercy has covered him." [1]

7. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "The five ritual prayers are like a pleasant stream that is before the door of your house. If someone washes oneself in it five times a day, no dirt will remain." (A person who performs five ritual prayers per day will be cleaned from any spiritual deviations.) [2]

8. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Allah said: '(Oh Prophet!) I enjoined your people five ritual prayers and I promised with Me to send to Paradise everyone who protects them in their proper times, and there will not be promised with Me for the one who does not protect (perform) them'." [3]

9. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "I advise you to pay alms-tax. I heard the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) saying: "Alms-tax is the bridge of Islam. So whoever pays it will cross the bridge and whoever does not pay it will fall down of it, and (payment of) alms-tax soothes Allah's wrath." [4]

10. The narrator of the tradition says that he heard Imam Ali (a.s.) saying: "The pillars of Islam are three, and none of them is useful without the other ones: ritual prayer, alms-tax and

guardianship."[5]

11. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Heal your patients with charity, and save (and insure) your property with alms-tax."[6]

[1] Bihar, Vol. 82, p. 207

[2] Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol, 7, Tradition No. 18931

[3] Kanz-ul-'Ummal, Vol, 7, Tradition No. 18872

[4] Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 77, p. 407

[5] Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 68, p. 386

[6] Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, p. 66

12. Imam Musa-Ibn-Ja'far (a.s.) said: "Verily Alms-tax is set for being the food of the poor, and for increasing their wealth."[1]

13. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "When alms-tax is not paid the earth holds back its (favours and) blessings."[2]

14. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: "The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) has set alms-tax for 9 things, (which are) wheat, barley, date, raisin, gold, silver, camel, cow, and sheep, and let off other ones."[3]

15. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Every Muslim is enjoined to pay alms (given on the festival of the end of Ramadan). One who does not pay it may expire." Then Imam was asked: "What does expire mean?" He said: "Death"[4]

[1] Ibid, p. 46

[2] Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, 146

[3] Ibid, 34

[4] Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 96, p. 109

Commentary : Verse 57

57. الْمَصِيرُ وَلِبَيْسَ النَّارُ وَمَاؤَاهُمْ الْأَرْضِ فِي مُعْجِزِينَ كَفَرُوا الَّذِينَ تَحْسَبَنَّ لَا.

57. "Think not that the disbelievers can frustrate (Allah's plan) in the earth, their abode is the Fire and an evil destination it is!" Commentary:

Even if pagans are super powerful, they will be defeated against Allah's religion.

In other words, if you think that powerful stubborn foes may throw a spanner in the works and may prevent the fulfilment of Allah's promise, this is impossible, because their power is nothing comparing with Allah's power. Therefore, the verse says:

"Think not that the disbelievers can frustrate (Allah's plan) in the earth,..."

Not only they will not be in security from the punishment of Allah in this world but also, in the Hereafter, Fire is their abode. The verse continues saying:

"... their abode is the Fire and an evil destination it is!"

The Arabic word /mu'jizin/ is the plural form the word /mu'jiz/, meaning to make unable. Since sometime one is after someone and he escapes him and he goes out of pursuer's territory and this matter makes him (the pursuer) unable, this word /mu'jiz/ is sometimes used in the same meaning. The above verse refers to this very meaning and it implies that no one can go out of Allah's territory.

Section 8 : Respect for Domestic and Personal Privacy Commentary : Verse 58

Domestic and personal privacy - The controlled and regulated liberty for young and aged women - Control of Social and Domestic relationship

58. تَصْنَعُونَ وَجِبْنَ الْفَجْرِ صَلَاةٍ قَبْلَ مِنْ مَرَاتٍ ثَلَاثَ مِنْكُمْ الْحُلْمَ أَيُّلَعُونَ لَمْ وَالَّذِينَ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مَلَكْتُ الَّذِينَ لَيْسَتْ أَيْنَكُمْ ءَامَنُوا الَّذِينَ أَيُّهَا يَا.

بَعْضٍ عَلَيَّ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ طَوَّافُونَ بَعْدَهُنَّ جُنَاحٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا عَلَيْكُمْ لَيْسَ لَكُمْ عَوْرَاتٍ ثَلَاثَ الْعِشَاءِ صَلَاةٍ بَعْدَ وَمِنَ الظَّهِيرَةِ مِنْ ثِيَابِكُمْ
حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ وَاللَّهُ الْآيَاتِ لَكُمْ اللَّهُ يُبَيِّنُ كَذَلِكَ

58. "O you who believe! Do let those whom your right hands possess, and those of you who have not reached to puberty, ask permission of you at three times (for coming into your room): before the morning prayer, and at midday when you put off your clothes, and after the night prayer. (These are) three times of privacy for you. It is no sin for you or for them (if) after those (three times), some of you go round attendant upon the others. Thus does Allah make clear the revelations for you; and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise." Commentary:

Faithful parents are responsible for teaching Divine religious ordinances to their children. The place where parents habitually sleep must be separate and far from the sight of the children, otherwise, there was no need for taking permission, as man must allocate some hours for his wife during 24 hours and issues must not disturb them.

Islam is a religion for life and it is completely comprehensive. It has programs and plans for both common trivial issues such as entrance of children in parent's room (mentioned in this verse) and important matters such as the establishment of universal government.

Anyway, as we said before, the most important issue that is comprehensively discussed in this Sura is the matter of public chastity and righting against any sexual deviation. This verse also is about one of these affairs that relate this issue and it explains its characteristics; the matter is concerned to the mature and immature issues' taking permission when they want to enter the room which belongs to their parents. At first, it says:

"O you who believe! Do let those whom your right hands possess, and those of you who have not reached to puberty, ask permission of you at three times (for coming into your room): before the morning prayer, and at midday when you put off your clothes, and after the night prayer. ..."

As Raqib says in his book, Mufradat, and Firuz'abadi in Qamus, the Arabic word /zahirat/ means midday and about noontime when people take off their outer clothes and man and wife may be together privately.

"... (These are) three times of privacy for you...."

The Arabic word /'aurat/ originally is derived from the word /'ar/ meaning shame and fault. Since showing genital organs is the cause of fault and shame, in Arabic language it is called /'aurat/. Sometimes the word /'aurat/ is also used to mean an opening and cut in wall and dress and the like.

Sometimes it means absolutely fault. Anyway, using this word for these three times is for the matter that people do not compel themselves to be veiled fully as in other times they do and they consider these times their privacy.

It is obvious that this command only involves parents who must force their issues to do this, for children have not come of age yet so that they are not obligated to carry out divine duties, therefore parents are addressed here.

Moreover, the verse is applied to both girls and boys, and the word /'allaoina/ (those) that is a masculine pronoun is not against generality of the concept of the verse, because in many cases this word is used for all people, as we read in the verse that obligates all Muslims to fast, in which the word /'allaoina/ is used to address all Muslims. (Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 83)

It is necessary to mention that the verse is about children who can discern and comprehend sexual issues and genital organs, etc, because the matter of taking permission itself indicates that they at least understand what taking permission means. Using the phrase 'Thalatha 'aurat' (Three times of privacy) is another evidence for this meaning, too.

Whether this verse covers male slaves only or it covers female slaves, too, there are various narrations. The verse apparently involves all, that is, it refers to both groups, so the narrations that are in harmony with the appearance of the verse can be preferred.

In the end of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"... It is no sin for you or for them (if) after those (three times), some of you go round attendant upon the others. Thus does Allah make clear the revelations for you; and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

The Qur'anic word /tawwafun/ is originally derived from the word /tawaf/, meaning walking about or around something, and since it is used in the form of exaggeration, it means frequency of this matter. With regard to the Qur'anic phrase /ba'dukum 'ala ba'din/ (some of you ... upon others) that has come after it, the concept of the sentence is that you are allowed to do each other favour and to go and to come in other than these three times.

As Fazil Mighdad says in *Kanz-ul-'Irfan*, this sentence indicates that there is no need for taking permission in other times, because if they want to come and go frequently and they have to take permission, every time it will become a difficult job (*Kanz-ul-'Irfan*, Vol. 2, P. 225).[1]

[1] If we look one more time to this Sura from the beginning, we find that the policy of prevention from indecency is behind its verses. For example, adulterer and adulteress should be punished

before others' eye (verse 1), their marriage is limited (verse 3), if without four witnesses false accusation is made, 80 stripes should be beaten (verse 4), those who falsely accuse the Prophet's wife will be severely chastised (verse 11), if you heard a false accusation, you must deal with it (verse 12), if one likes spreading indecency, he will be severely chastised in couple (verse 19),

do not follow the steps of satan (verse 21) those who accuse pure women falsely will be roughly punished (verse 23), the foul language is uttered by the wicked persons not you (verse 26), do not enter others' house without taking permission and if they say you must return, you must accept and go back (verses 27-28), men and women must not gaze at the one who is within forbidden degrees (verses 30-31), women must not show their ornaments and must not dance everywhere and you must try for the marriage of those who are celibate and you must not fear from poverty (verse 32), and in this verse, your children and slaves must not enter your private room at times when you are at your ease and alone with your wife. Yes, all these commands are for preventing immodesty and immature puberty and saving face and decency.

Commentary: Verse 59

59. حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ وَاللَّهُ ءَايَاتِهِ لَكُمْ اللَّهُ يُبَيِّنُ كَذَلِكَ قَبْلَهُمْ مِنَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَأْذَنَ كَمَا فَلَيْسْتَ تَأْذِنُوا الْخُلَمَ مِنْكُمْ الْأَطْفَالُ بَلَغَ وَإِذَا.

59. "And when the children among you reach puberty then let them ask permission even as those before them used to ask it. Thus does Allah make clear His revelations for you. Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise."

Commentary:

Wet dream is a boundary of reaching the religious puberty.

The Arabic word /hulum/ and the word /'ihtilam/ means to see a wet dream when one is sleeping, and it is one of the signs of puberty. Of course, the signs of puberty for girls and boys are various and they are mentioned in detail in the treatises of authorities of imitation.

In this holy verse the ordinance of those who have reached puberty is mentioned. It says:

"And when the children among you reach puberty then let them ask permission even as those before them used to ask it. ..."

The Arabic word /hulum/ means 'intellect' and implies puberty which is usually accompanied with an intellectual and mental mutation. It is sometimes said that the word /hulum/ means 'dream'

and 'dreaming', and since, after puberty, the youth see some scenes in dream that cause them ejecting semen, this word has been used to mean puberty ironically.

Anyway, it is understood from this verse that the ordinance for those who have reached puberty is different from those who have not reached this status, because immature children are obligated to take permission only in three times, according to the previous verse, since their life is so mixed with their own parent's that if they want to take permission every time, it will cause them difficulty. Moreover, their sexual feelings are still undeveloped, but according to this verse, which has obliged them to take permission absolutely, matured youth in any condition must take permission every time they go to their parents.

This ordinance is for the place where parents are taking rest, otherwise, entering public room (if there is such a room), especially when others are there and there is nothing to cause problem, needs no permission.

It is also important to mention that the Qur'anic sentence "... even as those before them used to ask it ..." refers to the adults who were obligated to take permission whenever they wanted to enter their parents' room and, in this verse, those who have just reached puberty are like the adults who were enjoined to ask permission.

In order to emphasize and attract the attentions, at the end of the verse, it says:

"... Thus does Allah make clear His revelations for you. Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise."

This is just like the sentence that was at the end of the previous verse, but in that holy verse the word /al'ayat/ (the revelations) was used and in this verse the word /'ayatihi/ (His revelations) is used. However, there is not much difference in their meanings.

Some details about philosophy of taking permission:

Only giving heed to executing fixed punishments and flogging wrongdoers is not enough to eradicate a social mischief such as immodest unchaste actions. Such a treatment does not produce a good result in any one of social issues. In fact we must have a package which includes intellectual cultural teachings, which is along with ethical and sentimental rules and correct Islamic teachings, and we must also create a sound social environment and then punishment can be considered as a factor along with them.

Consequently, this holy Sura, which is the Sura of chastity, begins with the act of flogging and punishment of adulterer and adulteress, and covers the issues such as paving ground for a sound marriage, observing Islamic veiling, prohibiting ogling, banning the act of accusing people to

unchaste pollution, and, finally, children's taking permission at the time of entering parents' room. This shows that no subtle thing about chastity is ignored in Islam.

Servants must take permission when they want to enter a room in which wife and husband exist. Matured children must take permission when they want to enter such a room, even immature children, who are always with parents, are also taught not to enter the parents' room without permission at least at three special times, (before morning ritual prayer, after night prayer, and at noon time when parents are taking rest).

This is a kind of Islamic politeness which is unfortunately observed less today. Although the holy Qur'an has mentioned it explicitly in the above holy verses, we see that this Islamic ordinance and its philosophy is less discussed in lectures and writings and it is not clear that why this decisive ordinance of the holy Qur'an has been ignored.

Although the verse apparently obligates people to observe this ordinance, even if we suppose that this ordinance is recommended, it must be talked about and its details must be discussed.

Contrary to what some simple-minded individuals, who think that children do make nothing of these issues and servants do not pay attention to them, it is proven that children (let alone adults) are extraordinarily sensitive to this matter and sometime parents' carelessness and children looking at scenes that they must not see, are the source of ethical deviations and even psychical maladies.

We have experimented the individuals who themselves confessed that as a result of the carelessness of their parents to this matter and that they observed them busy having a sexual intercourse those individuals had reached such a stage of sexual stimulation and psychical complex that they felt the enmity of their parents in them, nigh to kill them or perhaps, nigh to commit self-murder.

It is here that the value and magnificent of this Islamic ordinance appears that the issues and matter that scientists have found today, Islam foresighted in its ordinances fourteen centuries ago.

It is also necessary to recommend parents to take these matters earnest and to make their children accustomed to taking permission of entrance. They also must avoid actions, such as sleeping together in a room discerning children sleep, which may excite children as much as possible. You must know that these affairs have got extraordinarily educational effect on children's fate.

It is interesting that there is a tradition from the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) who said: "Be careful that you

do not have sexual intercourse while a child is looking at you from cradle."[1]

[1] Bihar-ul-'Anwar, Vol. 103, p. 295

Commentary : Verse 60

60. لَهُنَّ خَيْرٌ يَسْتَعْفِفْنَ وَأَنْ يَزِينَنَّهُنَّ جَاتٍ مُتَبَرِّغًا غَيْرَ تِيَابِهِنَّ يَضَعْنَ أَنْ جُنَاحٌ عَلَيْهِنَّ فَلَيْسَ نِكَاحًا يَرْجُونَ لَا اللَّائِي النَّسَاءِ مِنَ وَالْفَوَاعِدُ عَلَيْهِمْ سَمِيعٌ وَاللَّهُ

60. "And (as for) women advanced in years, who have no hope of marriage, it is no sin for them if they put off their (outer) clothes in such a way as not to show adornment. And if they refrain themselves, it is better for them; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

Commentary:

Islam rules are in accord with realities, necessities, needs, and social abilities. Therefore we should slacken it for an old woman who does not have inclination for husband and does not apply cosmetics.

Thus in this verse an exception for the ordinance of the veil of women is mentioned by which exempts old women from this ordinance. It says:

"And (as for) women advanced in years, who have no hope of marriage, it is no sin for them if they put off their (outer) clothes in such a way as not to show adornment...."

In fact, there are two conditions for this exception:

1. Reaching an age in which there is usually no hope of marriage in them. In other words, they have lost any sexual attraction completely.
2. They should not have any cosmetics when they take away their veil.

It is clear that with these two conditions there will be no mischief when veil is discarded in them. For this reason Islam exempts them from this ordinance.

It is also obvious that its purpose is not to be naked and to take off all clothes, but it means to remove outer garments that in some narrations it has been interpreted into veil (chador) and scarf.

In a tradition Imam Sadiq (a.s.) about this verse says: "The purpose (of it) is veil (chador) and scarf." The narrator says he asked Imam: "Before every one?" Imam said: "Before every one, but she must not apply cosmetics and she must not wear adornments." [1]

Some other narrations with the same content are narrated from Imams, Ahl-ul-Bayt (a.s.). [2]

It is added at the end of the verse implying that yet if they refrain and cover themselves it is better for them, because from the view point of Islam the more a woman observes her veiling and chastity, she will be more admirable, pious, and pure. The verse says:

"... And if they refrain themselves, it is better for them;..."

Since some old women may misuse this calculated and lawful freedom and so have possibly improper talking with men and have impure thoughts altogether, in the end of the verse, as a warning, it says:

"... and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

He hears what is told and He knows what is in the hearts and what is in minds.

[1] Wasa-'il-ush-shi-'ah, the book of An-Nika-h, Vol. 14, P. 147, Ch. 110

[2] For more explanation refer to the above book (the same reference)

In short, the matter of veiling is one of the stable and necessary ordinances of Islam, but the issues of how the veil should be is depended on the matter of not stirring sexual desires and saving chastity and modesty.

So, the principle that this group of women are excepted from the ordinance of veiling is not a matter of discussion among Islam scholars and learned people, because the text of the Qur'an expresses it, but there are some words about its characteristics, including: the age of these women, in what age the ordinance of 'women advanced in years' covers women.

In some Islamic narration, it has been interpreted as old women. [1] While in other narrations it has been interpreted as women retirement from marriage. [2] But some Islamic jurists and commentators think that it means the end of menstruation, the age of barrenness and people's

reluctance to marry such women.[3]

Apparently, all of these meanings refer to one reality that women must get so old that no one would like to marry them, although some of such women may rarely get married.

Moreover, about the part of the body that these women can show, there are some different interpretations in Islamic Traditions, while the Holy Qur'an says vaguely that there is no problem for such women to take off their garments, of course, their outer clothes.

In some narrations we read the answer of this question that which garments can be taken off; Imam Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

[1] Wasa-'il-ush-shi-'ah, Vol. 14, the book of An-Nika-h, C.110, Tradition No. 4

[2] The above book

[3] Jawa-hir Vol. 29, P.85 and Kanz-ul- 'Irfan, Vol. 2, p.226

"Chador." [1] While in other narration it has been interpreted as chador and scarf. [2]

Apparently, there is no inconsistency between these Islamic traditions. The purpose is that there is no problem for such women to uncover their head and to bare their hair, neck, and face. Even in some traditions and jurists' words, the wrist is exempted, but we have no reasons about more than this very extension for its exemption.

Anyway, all of these are for the time that such women do not apply cosmetics, and to cover their hidden adornments as others are enjoined to do. Also they must not wear garments that attract attentions and, in other words, they are permitted to go out without (chador) and scarf while wearing a simple garment and without applying cosmetics.

Yet, this ordinance is not obligatory, but if they do veil themselves as other women do, it is more preferred, as it is explicitly mentioned in the end of the verse, because there is the possibility of deviation and offence in such people, although very rarely.

[1] Wasa-'il-ush-shi-'ah, the book of Al-Nekaah, C.110, Tradition No.1

[2] The above book, Traditions 2 and 3

Commentary : Verse 61

أَوْ آبَائِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ بُيُوتِكُمْ مِنْ تَأْكُلُوا أَنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَلَيَّ وَلَا حَرَجُ الْمَرِيضِ عَلَيَّ وَلَا حَرَجُ الْأَعْرَجِ عَلَيَّ وَلَا حَرَجُ الْأَعْمَى عَلَيَّ لَيْسَ 61. مَلَكْتُمْ مَا أَوْ خَالَاتِكُمْ بُيُوتِ أَوْ أَخْوَالِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ عَمَّاتِكُمْ بُيُوتِ أَوْ أَعْمَامِكُمْ بُيُوتِ أَوْ إِخْوَانِكُمْ بُيُوتِ أَوْ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ بُيُوتِ طَيِّبَةً مُبَارَكَةً اللَّهُ عِنْدَ مَنْ تَحِيَّةً أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَلَيَّ وَافْسَلِمُ بُيُوتًا دَخَلْتُمْ فَإِذَا أَوْ أَشْنَاتًا جَمِيعًا تَأْكُلُوا أَنْ جُنَاحٌ عَلَيْكُمْ لَيْسَ صَدِيقِكُمْ أَوْ مَفَاتِحَهُ تَعْقُلُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَكُمْ اللَّهُ يُبَيِّنُ كَذَلِكَ

61. "There is no blame upon the blind nor any blame upon the lame nor any blame upon the sick nor on yourselves that you eat from your houses, or the houses of your fathers, or the houses of your mothers, or the houses of your brothers, or the houses of your sisters, or the houses of your fathers' brothers, or the houses of your fathers' sisters, or the houses of your mothers' brothers, or the houses of your mothers' sisters, or (from that) whereof you hold the keys, or (from the house) of your friend. No sin shall it be for you whether you eat together or apart. But when you enter houses, salute one another with a greeting from Allah, blessed and good. Thus does Allah make clear His revelations for you, so that you might understand."

Commentary:

Imam Baqir (a.s.) said: "efore Islam the blind, the lame and the sick were not allowed to eat food with healthy people. This verse permitted them to eat food in group, with healthy people or if they wanted they could eat food lonely."[1]

Anyway, since the previous verses talked about taking permission at certain times or when entering special place of parents, the concerned verse is, in fact, an exception from this ordinance, indicating that a group can enter their relatives' home and the like in certain conditions and without taking permission, and they can even eat food without having permission. At first, the verse says:

"There is no blame upon the blind nor any blame upon the lame nor any blame upon the sick nor on yourselves that you eat from your houses,..."

According to some narrations, before converting to Islam, the people of Medina prevented the blind, the lame and the sick to eat with them at a table. They did not eat with those people and they hated such a matter.

And, on the contrary, after Islam some people thought that this kind of people must eat lonely, not because they hated eating with them, but maybe because they thought that the blind could not see the existing good food while they could and they ate, which was against ethics, and also the lame and the sick were not as fast in eating as healthy people were so they tarried. Anyway, they did not eat food with such people for any reason they had , so the blind, the lame and the

sick withdrew themselves, because it was possible that they caused others to worry and also thought that this was a sin.

[1] Nar-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary

This matter was presented to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and this verse was sent down, indicating that there is no blame upon the blind, nor any blame upon the lame nor any blame upon the sick, nor on yourselves that you eat food with together.[1]

The writer of *Jawami'-ul-Jami'* says: In the advent of Islam, some of believers brought the disabled and the afflicted persons to the houses of their wives, to the houses of their own offsprings, their relatives' houses, and their friends' houses, and they fed them. Gradually these believers thought that this job might be counted a sin for them, and so they avoided this deed. Then this verse was sent down and indicated that this deed is not as sin.

The purpose of: "There is no blame ... nor on yourselves..." is that there is no heaviness and sin for you and for the believers who are like you.

Some have said that the sick and the poor did not eat and associate with other people, because they thought people might not like their company.

Some others have said that when Muslims wanted to go to war, they gave the key of their houses to the disabled so that these people could eat whatever they found in those houses. But they thought that this interference might be unlawful for them, then they avoided eating food of their houses. Then Allah said that there is no blame on them and you in this eating.

Then the holy Qur'an adds implying that there is not any blame on yourselves if you eat from these houses without permission: from your houses, (the objective is the children

[1] *Dur-ul-Manthar* and *Nar-uth-Thaqalyn*, following the verse. A part of other commentators also have mentioned this narration in their books such as: *Tabarsa* in *Majma'-ul-Bayan*, the deceased *Fiyd* in *Tafsar-us-Safa*, *Fakhr-i-Raza* in *Tafsar-ul-Kabar*, and *Shaykh Tasa* in *Tibyan*.

and wives which have been rendered into 'your houses'). The verse continues:

"... or the houses of your fathers, or the houses of your mothers, or the houses of your brothers, or the houses of your sisters, or the houses of your fathers' brothers, or the houses of your fathers' sisters, or the houses of your mothers' brothers, or the houses of your mothers' sisters, or (from that) whereof you hold the keys, or (from the house) of a friend. No sin shall it be for you whether you eat together or apart...."

It seems that, at the advent of Islam, some Muslims avoided eating food lonely and if they could not find anyone as company for eating food, they would remain hungry for a time. Then the Qur'an taught them that eating lonely, or with other persons, is lawful.[1]

Some commentators have also said that some Arabs believed that, as a respect, the food of their guest must be served separately and they ought not to be with him during eating food (lest the guest might become shy or feel uneasy). This verse removed these considerations and taught them that this was not an admirable custom.[2]

Another group of commentators have said that some people believed that the poor must not eat with the rich, and class division must be observed even at the time of eating food. The holy Qur'an rejected this wrong and unjust custom with the above sentence.

There is no problem if this verse refers to all of above affairs. Then the verse refers to another ethical matter, where it says:

[1] Tibyan, the Commentary, following the verse

[2] Ibid

"... But when you enter houses, salute one another with a greeting from Allah, blessed and good...."

And finally it says:

"... Thus does Allah make clear His revelations for you, so that you might understand."

That which houses are the purpose of the Qur'anic word /buyut/ (houses), some say that it refers to 11 houses that are mentioned in above.

Some others say it refers specially to mosques. But, as it is clear, the verse is unconditional and it embraces all houses, including those 11 ones which a person enters for eating food, or other houses such as: friends' houses and relatives' houses and so on, because there is no reason for limiting the vast concept of the verse.

There are some commentaries on the purpose of the Qur'anic phrase: /fa sallimu 'ala 'anfusikum/ 'saluting one another':

Some say that it means 'to salute one another' as in the story of the Children of Israel the holy

Qur'an says /faqtulu 'anfusakum/: "... and slay one another (the wrong doers) ...!"[1]

Some commentators say that ,it means to greet to wife, issues and family, because they are considered as man himself and therefore, it is stated in the verse in the form of/'anfus/. In the verse of mutual cursing (Sura 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 61) we see such a meaning, and it shows that sometime when a person gets relationally closed to one another the word /'anfus/ (self, man himself) will be used, as Imam Ali's closeness to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) is stated in this way.

Some commentators say that this verse refers to the houses in which no one lives and when one wants to enter them one

[1] Sura Al-Baqarah, No.2, verse 54

salutes himself with this sentence: "Our greeting and peace will be from our Lord." or "Our peace be upon us and upon Allah's righteous servants," We think there is not any inconsistency between these commentaries; entering every home we must salute, believers must salute believers, household must salute each other, if there is no one we must salute ourselves, because all of these, in fact, refer to saluting oneself.

On the commentary of this verse, Imam Baqir (a.s.) said: "The purpose of saluting household at the time of entering home is that they will naturally answer him and returns peace and salutation on himself, and this is saluting oneself."[1]

Again, Imam Baqir (a.s.) said: "When a person enters his home and sees some one there so he must salute him (or her), and if there is no one there, he must say, peace be upon us from Allah, as Allah has said in the holy Qur'an: "... a greeting from Allah, blessed and good ... "[2] Some Points:

1. Do we not need to take permission for eating others' food? As the above verse has mentioned, Allah has permitted man to eat food from close relatives' houses and some friends' houses and such like (on the whole these houses are 11). In this verse taking permission was not mentioned as its condition and certainly it does not need taking permission,because when permission is taken we can eat everyone's food and it will not be limited to these 11 houses. But, is obtaining inward consent necessary as a condition because of intimacy and close acquaintance that is between two parties?

[1] Nar-uth-Thaqalyn, vol. 3, p. 627

[2] Ibid

The holy verse apparently rejects this condition, too, and considers it enough if only he or she is likely consent.

But if the status of two parties is in a way that certainly there is no assent, although the verse apparently includes all cases from this viewpoint, it is not impossible that the verse excludes such a case, especially when such people are rare and general applications do not cover these rare people.

Therefore, the above verse particularizes, in a certain field, verses and narrations that limit using others' property to having permission from their owners save in a special boundary; but we repeat that this particularization is inside a certain field, such as eating food as it is necessary and without immoderation.

What was said above is well known among our Islamic jurists and some of it is mentioned explicitly in narrations from Ahl-ul-Bayt (a.s.).

We read in an authentic narration that when Imam Sadiq (a.s.) was asked about the Qur'anic phrase /'a Saduqikum/ (or of a friend), he said: "By Allah! Its purpose is that man enters his friend's (brother's) home and eats food without having permission." [1]

There are numerous narrations mentioned that have the same concept and in them it is said that taking permission is not necessary in these cases.

On 'lack of corruption and immoderation', some narrations have also mentioned it explicitly. [2]

The only thing that remains is a narration that is about this matter. It says: "Only special nutritional materials can be

[1] Wasa'il-ush-Sha'ah, Vol. 16, p. 434, the book of "At'imah wa Ashribah", chapters of 'adab-ul-Ma'idah, C. 24, Tradition No. 1

[2] Ibid

eaten, not every food." But since this narration is objected by Islamic jurists, its document would not be valid.

Some Islamic jurists have excepted some foods which are superior and special, and possibly the landlord has kept for himself or for an honored guest or for some particular times. It is not impossible that the verse excepts this case. [1]

2. The philosophy of this Islamic ordinance:

Comparing with other severe divine ordinances that prohibit usurpation, this ordinance may raise question how Islam permits such a thing while it is very exact and fastidious in the issue of usurping others' property.

We think that this question is proper for fully material environments, such as western societies, in which parents may force their children to go out of their house when they become a little old! And when parents get old and disable, they will be dismissed! They do not want to be kind and gratitude towards them, because in those societies all affairs are based on economical and financial relationships and usually humane sentiments do not exist.

With regard to the Islamic culture and humane profound sentiments, especially between the members of the family, relatives and particular friends, which dominate this culture, there is nothing to get surprised at.

In fact, Islam considers close relationships of relatives and friends as being superior to these issues. This, in fact, indicates the ultimate friendship and peacefulness that must dominate an Islamic society, and conceits, exclusionisms, and selfishness must be wiped out from it.

Undoubtedly, the ordinances of usurpation exist in fields other than this, but in this special field Islam gives priority to

[1] For more explanation refer to the book Jawahir-ul-Kalam, Vol. 36, p. 406

sentimental issues and humane relationships and it is, in fact, an example for other relations of relatives and friends.

3. Who does /sadiq/ mean?

Undoubtedly friendship and friendliness has got a vast meaning, and here its purpose is certainly those special and close friends that have very close relationship with each other and whose relation necessitates going to each other's house and to eat from their food. In such cases, as we said before, there is no need for being sure about the consent of other party, if only someone is not sure about the discontentment of that one, this will be enough.

Thus some commentators have said about this phrase that the purpose is a friend who treats sincerely with you in his friendship. Some others say that the purpose is a friend that usually has outwardly and inwardly the same relation with you. Apparently, all of these statements refer to one matter.

Meanwhile, in short, it gets clear that those who are not in this extent generous and forgiving toward their friends, are not in fact friend.

It is appropriate here to mention a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) who declared comprehensive conditions of friendship and its vast concept. He (a.s.) said: "Friendship is materialized only when its conditions and terms are met. Count a person who has all of these terms, or some of them, as friend. And a person who has nothing of these terms is not a friend. (Conditions and terms of friendship)

- A) His outward and inward are the same for you.
- B) He considers your honour, reputation, and enhancement as his and he counts your fault and gracelessness as his.
- C) His rank, wealth and status do not change his position toward you.
- D) He does not withhold from you what he can do.
- F) A person who has got all of the above attributes does not leave you alone when you are down on your luck."^[1]

4. The commentary of /mamalaktum mafatihahu/ ('(from that) whereof you hold the keys'):

In some occasions of revelation we read that at the advent of Islam, when Muslims went to war, they sometimes gave the key of their house to the disabled who could not fight and even permitted them to eat whatever food was in the house, but they avoided eating food, because they thought that this might be sin.

According to this narration, the purpose of this phrase is 'the houses that you have become the owner of whose keys'^[2]

It has been narrated from Ibn Abbass who said the purpose of this sentence is man's lawyer or agent due to his domestic animals, farming, ground, and water. Such person is permitted to eat fruit from the garden and to drink milk from the animals as much as he needs. Some others also have interpreted it as storekeeper who has the right to eat some of the foodstuff.

But, with regard to other groups that are mentioned in this verse, it seems that the purpose of the phrase is those who give the key of their house to other person for the sake of close relationship and trust. Their close relationship has caused them to be like close relatives and friends, whether

he is formally lawyer or not.

If we read in some narrations that this phrase has been interpreted as a lawyer who is responsible for someone's property, it is, indeed, only expressing the extension of the meaning and it is not limited to it.

[1] 'Usal-i-Kafa, Vol. 2, p. 467

[2] Qurtaba, the Commentary, following the verse

5. Salutation and greeting:

As we said before, the Arabic word /tahiyyat/ is derived from the word /hayat/ (life) and it means to pray for someone's health and life, whether this prayer is in the form of 'Salamun 'Alaykum' (peace on you), or 'As-Salamu 'Alayna' (Peace on us), or 'Hayyaka Allah' (Allah salutes you). But usually every kind of expression of kindness that is done in the beginning of a meeting is called 'Tahiyyat'.

The purpose of the sentence "... a greeting from Allah, blessed and good ..." is to join greeting with Allah in a way, that is, the purpose of 'Salamun 'Alaykum' will be that 'Allah salutes you' or 'I ask Allah your health.', because in the opinion of a believer every prayer that is in this form is both full of blessings (Muburak) and pure (Tayyib).

Some Islamic traditions on salutation and its importance and obligation to answer every kind of greeting:

1. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "The stingiest person is the one who is reluctant to salute (and to greet), and the most generous person is one who spends his wealth and his life in the path of Allah." [1]

2. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Salutation is recommended and answering salutation is obligatory." [2]

3. Imam Hussayn (a.s.) said: "Salutation has got 70 good points of which 69 belong to one who begins salutation and one belongs to one who answers it." [3]

4. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: "(This is the sign) of modesty that you salute to whom you meet."

[1] Bihar, Vol. 73, p. 12

[2] Ibid

[3] Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 471

5. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: "One who starts saluting is more prior to (have the blessing and favour of) Allah and the Prophet (p.b.u.h.)."

6. Imam Rida (a.s.) said: "One who salutes the poor in a way that is different from the way he salutes the rich will meet Allah, Almighty and Glorious, on the Day of Hereafter while He is angry at him." [1]

7. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "The stingiest individual is one who meets other Muslim and does not salute him." [2]

8. Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "When someone salutes you, you salute him in a better way, and when someone confers you a blessing, you confer him a better blessing. But prior is the one who has started saluting and offering blessing." [3]

[1] Wasa'il-ush-Sha'ah, Vol. 5, p. 442

[2] Bihar, Vol. 75, p. 12

[3] Nahj-ul-Balaqah, Translated by Fiydul-Islam, p. 1114

Section 9 : Not to act without Apostle's Permission Commentary : Verse 62

None to act without the Apostle's permission - The Apostle (Muhammad's) call is not like the call of any one else - Everything in the Universe belongs only to Allah

62. الَّذِينَ أُولَئِكَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ الَّذِينَ إِنْ يَسْتَأْذِنُوهُ حَتَّى يَذْهَبُوا لَمْ جَامِعٍ أَمْرٍ عَلَيَّ مَعَهُ كَانُوا وَإِذَا وَرَسُولِهِ بِاللَّهِ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِنَّمَا
رَحِيمٌ غَفُورٌ اللَّهُ نَا اللَّهُ لَهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرُ مِنْهُمْ شِئْتِ لِمَنْ فَأَنْ شَأْنَهُمْ لِيَعُضِ اسْتَأْذِنُوكَ فَإِذَا وَرَسُولِهِ بِاللَّهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ

62. "Only these are the (true) believers who believe in Allah and His messenger and, when they are with him on a matter requiring collective action, they go not away until they have asked leave of him. Verily those who ask leave of you, are they who believe in Allah and His Messenger. So, if

they ask your leave for some affair of theirs, give leave to whom you please of them, and ask forgiveness of Allah for them. Verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Occasion of revelation:

In commentaries there are many things mentioned about the occasion of revelation of this verse that we present to you some of them:

1. Some say that this verse is about Hanzaleh in whose wedding night the commandment of holy war was issued. He took permission from the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) to go home for doing the ceremony of wedding night. Because of shortage of time, he went to battle-field without taking legal bath and then he became martyr. The holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Angles did bathe him." After sleeping only that night with his wife, Allah gave Hanzaleh a child whose history is lengthy.[1]

2. Some other commentators say that this verse is about the hypocrites who performed ritual prayer when they were with people and if no one saw them and they were alone, they did not perform ritual prayer.[2]

3. A group of commentators say that this verse is about some persons who were ordered by the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) to do a job, but they did their personal jobs.

4. Some say that this verse is about those Muslims who were busy digging a moat and took permission from the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) for visiting their family.

Commentary:

Being with godly leader for helping him and solving problems is the sign of faith, and leaving him alone is the sign of hypocrisy and weakness of faith. In social life, the existence of a leader and following him is necessary.

How this verse is related to other previous verses, some commentators, including the deceased Tabarsi in Majma'ul-Bayan and the writer of Fi Zilal, have said that because the previous verses talked about the way of association with friends and relatives, the current verse talks about the way of Muslims' association with their leader and puts emphasis on observing regulations before him so that they obey him in

[1] Al-Mazan, the Commentary

[2] Fakhr-i-Raza

every thing, and, even in many important affairs, without his permission they should not leave the group.

Another probability is that: in some former verses the necessity of obeying Allah and the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was mentioned and one of its conditions was that without his permission Muslims should not do anything, therefore, the verse under discussion talks about this matter.

Anyway, in the beginning of the verse it says:

"Only these are the (true) believers who believe in Allah and His messenger and, when they are with him on a matter requiring collective action, they go not away until they have asked leave of him...."

The purpose of the Qur'anic phrase: /'amrin Jami'/ (some common errand) is any important affair that necessitates gathering of people and their cooperation and help, whether this issue is a crucial matter of consultation or a matter of holy war and fighting with foe, or Friday prayer in very critical conditions, and such like. Therefore, if we see that some commentators interpreted it as consultation about holy war or Friday prayer and feast prayer, we must say that they have referred to some part of the meaning of the verse, and the previous occasions of revelation are the extensions of this general ordinance.

This is in fact a disciplinary order or command that no united group or society can ignore it, because in such conditions, the absence of one person can cost a bomb and harms the ultimate aim, especially when the chief of the group is Allah's messenger and a sagacious, influential spiritual leader.

Paying attention to this matter is important that the purpose of taking permission is not that everyone takes permission superficially and goes after his own job, but he must really take permission; that is, if the leader sees that his absence is insignificant, he permits him to go, otherwise, he must not go and sometimes he must forfeit his personal and private job to a more important aim.

Thus, following this matter, the Qur'an adds implying that those who ask you permission and their belief in Allah and His Messenger is not a mere oral one, but they obey you and Allah's commandment with their soul and spirit, then give them leave. The verse says:

"... Verily those who ask leave of you, are they who believe in Allah and His Messenger. So, if they ask your leave for some affair of theirs, give leave to whom you please of them,..."

It is clear that such faithful persons have gathered for an important affair and they would not take permission for a trivial matter; and the purpose of the holy phrase /sa'nihim/, mentioned in this verse, is some important and necessary jobs.

On the other hand, the will of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) does not mean he issued permission without considering conditions and consequence of individuals' absence, but this means that the leader is free to prevent people from going away if he thinks that their presence is vital.

The evidence of this matter is verse 43 of Sura At-Taubah, No.9 in which the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was reprimanded for giving permission to some persons, where it says: "May Allah pardon you! Why did you give them leave before you had found out those who spoke the truth and before you had known the liars?" This verse shows that even the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) must be careful in giving permission to individuals and he must count the cost and he is divinely responsible.

In the end of the verse, concerning when giving them permission, it says:
"... and ask forgiveness of Allah for them. Verily Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Now the question is that why forgiveness. Were they still wrongdoers while they asked the permission of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.)? There are two ways for answering this question: first, although they were allowed to their jobs, they gave more priority to their personal and private jobs than Muslims' common job and this was not free from a kind of leaving the better[1] and, therefore, they needed forgiveness (like asking forgiveness for a disapproved action).

Moreover, this matter shows that Muslims must not ask permission as much as possible and they must be altruistic and benevolent, because after taking permission their action is abandonment of what is primary, lest trivial matters are considered as excuses of leaving important jobs and works.

The other matter is that they deserve Allah's favour, because of their politeness toward their leader, and the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) asks Allah's forgiveness as thanking them.[2]

Anyway these two answers are not inconsistent, and both of them may be the purpose of the verse.

Of course, these two very important Islamic disciplinary commands are not limited to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and his companions, but this is true about all Divine leaders including prophet, Imam and the scholars who are their successors to observe them, for the issue of Muslims' destiny and Islamic society is under consideration in it. Even, in addition to the commandment of the glorious Qur'an, it is based on reason

[1] The commentary of Fakhr-i-Raza, Rah-ul-Bayan, and Qurtaba, following the verse under discussion

[2] Fakhr-i-Raza

and logic, for no organization and group remains without observing this principle, and correct management is impossible without it.

It is really strange that some famous Sunni commentators consider this holy verse as an evidence for exertion and leaving the judgment to religious jurist's opinion, but it must be said that the exertion that is mentioned in the discussions of fundamental dogmas and jurisprudence is about religious ordinances and not about subjects. No one can reject exertion in subjects and the opinion of every commander and every chief and manager in deciding about executive issues is respected, but this does not mean that we can use independent reasoning in general ordinances of religion and reject or enact an ordinance according to the benefit and interest.

Commentary : Verse 63

63. أَنْ أَمْرِهِ عَنِ الْخَالِفُونَ الَّذِينَ فَلْيُحَدَّرْ لَوْ أَدَا مِنْكُمْ يَتَسَلَّلُونَ الَّذِينَ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ قَدْ بَعْضًا بَعْضِكُمْ كُدَعَاءَ بَيْنَكُمْ الرَّسُولِ دُعَاءَ تَجْعَلُوا لَا. أَلَيْمٌ عَذَابٌ يُصِيبُهُمْ أَوْ فِتْنَةٌ تُصِيبُهُمْ

63. "Make you not the calling of the Messenger among you as your calling one of another. Allah does know those of you who steal away, hiding themselves. Therefore let those who go against His order beware lest a trial afflicts them or a painful punishment befalls them."

Commentary:

Divine leadership has got realm which must be respected and has got high status. Both his name must be called politely and his orders must be obeyed with whole entity, and his call must not be equaled to that of others. Thus, in this verse, in connection with the commandments of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), it says:

"Make you not the calling of the Messenger among you as your calling one of another...."

When he calls people for an issue, which is certainly divinely and religiously important, his call must be counted as vital and important and it must be always paid attention to. His invitations and calls must not be taken simply for his command is Allah's command and his call is Allah's.

Then, the verse continues saying:

"... Allah does know those of you who steal away, hiding themselves. Therefore let those who go against His order beware lest a trial afflicts them or a painful punishment befalls them."

The Arabic word /yatasallalun/ is derived from the word /tasallul/ which originally means to draw something. Those who escape stealthily and secretly are called /mutasallilun/.

The Arabic word /liwaoan/ is derived from the word /mulawaoah/ which means concealment, and here it means to hide oneself behind someone else or behind a wall, and so to speak, they make others asleep and then escape. This was what hypocrites used to do when the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) called people for holy war or an important job.

The holy Qur'an implies that if this hypocritical and hideous act of theirs is kept concealed from people, it will never remain concealed from Allah, and their oppositions against the command of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) call for a painful punishment both in this world and the Hereafter.

Commentators are of various opinions about the purpose of the Qur'anic word /fitnah/ (grief). Some Commentators say that it means murder, some say that it means aberration, some say that it means domination of an oppressing king, and some say that it means malady of hypocrisy that appears in the heart of men.

Another possibility is that it means social disorders, riots, defeat and other miseries that entangle society because of disobeying the leader's commandment. Anyway, the concept of /fitnah/ is so extensive that it includes all these affairs and many others, as 'a painful punishment' may include worldly punishment, or Hereafter chastisement, or both of them.

It is interesting that, besides what was said, there are mentioned two other possibilities in the commentary of the above verse. First, the purpose of the first sentence of the verse ("Make you not the calling of the Messenger among you as your calling one of another") is that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) must be called politely as his status and rank deserves, not to call him as others are called, because some persons, who were not familiar with the Islamic politeness, came to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and only called him among people, or alone, repeatedly in this way; Oh Muhammad!, Oh Muhammad!... . They behaved in a way that was not suitable for a great divine leader. The purpose was to call him in such ways (politely and reasonably): Oh Messenger of Allah! Oh Prophet of Allah!

In some narration this commentary is also mentioned, but, with regard to the previous verse and the rest of this verse, sentences that are about answering the call of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and not leaving him without his permission, this commentary is not consistent with the appearance of the

verse, unless we say that it indicates both matters and we add the first commentary to the concept of the verse.

The third commentary that has been mentioned for this verse, seems very weak. It indicates that they must not take the invocations and curses of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) like those of theirs[1], for his invocations and curses are surely calculated and are a divine plan that will certainly work. But, since this commentary is not in line with the rest of the verse and there is no narration about it from Ahl-ul-Bayt (a.s.), therefore it cannot be accepted.

It is also necessary to mention that the scholars of theology understand from the Qur'anic sentence which says: "... therefore let those who go against His order beware lest'..." that the commands of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) contains an indication to obligation but this argument has got some problems that are referred to in theology.

[1] If the letter 'L' is used after the word /du'a'/, it means pray and if the word /'ala/ is used after it, it means curse, and if there is none of them after it, it can mean both meanings.

Commentary : Verse 64

64. عَلِيمٌ شَيْءٍ بِكُلِّ وَاللَّهُ عَمَلُوا بِمَا فَيَنْبِئُهُمْ إِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ وَيَوْمَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْتُمْ مَا يَعْلَمُ قَدْ وَالْأَرْضِ السَّمَاوَاتِ فِي مَا لِلَّهِ إِنَّ أَلَا

64. "Beware! verily unto Allah belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth. He does know what state you are upon; and (He knows) the Day when they shall be returned unto Him, then He will inform them of what they did; and Allah is Knower of all things."

Commentary:

Allah is surely the owner of all things and is aware of all intentions and thoughts; therefore, belief in Allah's awareness of man's deeds and thoughts prevents man from doing wrong actions.

In this noble verse a delicate and meaningful reference is made to the issue of Origin and Resurrection that is the motivation of obeying all divine orders. It, in fact guarantees the execution of all His orders and prohibitions, including those important ones that are mentioned throughout this Sura. The verse says:

"Beware! verily unto Allah belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth...."

He is the Lord Whose knowledge covers the entire world and, the verse continues saying:

"... He does know what state you are upon; ..."

All your deeds, your approach, your intention and opinion are known to Him.

All these matters are recorded on the page of knowledge. The verse says:

"... and (He knows) the Day when they shall be returned unto Him, then He will inform them of what they did; and Allah is Knower of all things."

It is worthy noting that emphasis is thrice put on Allah's awareness of men's deeds and this is for the sake that when man feels that someone is watching him ceaselessly, and nothing out of all his concealed and manifest things is hidden from him, this belief and opinion has got a very extraordinarily effect on him and it guarantees man to control him against these sins and deviations.

Supplication:

Oh Allah! May illuminate the lamp (Misbah) of our heart with the light of knowledge and faith and strengthen the niche (Mishkat) of our entity for protecting faith in us so that we may pave the straight path of Your prophets for the sake of Your consent and to be saved from any deviation under the aegis of Your favour as the extension of 'La Sharqiyyah Wa La Qarbiyyah' !

Oh Allah! May illuminate our eyes with the light of modesty, our heart with the light of cognition, our soul with the light of piety, and all our entity with the light of guidance and do save us from wandering around, ignorance, being entangled in the claws of Satan's temptations!

Oh Allah! May fortify fundamentals of government of Islamic justice for executing Your prescribed punishments and protect our society from being immodest and indecent; and verily You are All-Powerful over everything.

The End of Sura An-Nur