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Section 27, Questions about various important topics

Persecution during the sacred month – Mischief graver than carnage –Pardon and Mercy for the emigrants and those who strive and struggle in the way of the Lord –Question about intoxicants and gambling, Alms –Orphans –Matrimony with believer men and women.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 217-218

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدٌّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَاعُوا وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

217. "They ask you (O' Muhammad) concerning the sacred month about fighting in it. Say: 'Fighting in it is a grave (sin); but to bar (people) from Allah's and to deny Him (to prevent access) to the Sacred Mosque, and to drive its people there from is, a graver (crime) with Allah. Sedition is more grievous than slaughter. They will not cease fighting against you until they turn you back from your religion, if they can. But whoever of you turns back from his religion, and

dies disbelieving – such are they whose deeds shall be of no avail in this world and Hereafter; those are the inhabitants of the Fire, wherein they shall dwell forever."

218. "Those who believed and those who migrated (suffered exile) and struggled in the way of Allah – these are they who hope for Allah's Mercy; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Occasion of Revelation

It is said that this verse was revealed about the struggle of 'Abdillah ibn Jahish. The event was as follows:

Before the occurrence of the battle of Badr, the Messenger of Islam (S) sent for 'Abdillah ibn Jahish. When he came, the Prophet (S), accompanying him eight men from among the Emigrants, gave him a letter and told him to start on a journey immediately, and after two days of paving the way, then he would open the letter to read and follow what it said.

So, after two days of traveling, 'Abdillah opened the letter and found thus: *"When you opened the letter, you go forward to 'Nakhlah', (a land between Mecca and raw, and from there watch the situation of Quraysh. Then report to us the circumstances."*

'Abdillah told his companions the matter and added that the Prophet (S) had commanded him not to force them on that way. So, those who would be ready to be killed might follow him, and the rest could return.

All the members decidedly started to go forward with him. When they reached Nakhlah, they encountered a caravan from Quraysh wherein was 'Amr-ubn-i-Hadrami. That day was the last day of Rajab (one of the Sacred Months), so, they began consulting whether they could attack that group or not.

A few of them said if they left the caravan to continue their way, they would enter the limits of the sacred town, Mecca, where it was forbidden to attack them. Hence, finally, the Prophet's agents invaded them bravely.

They succeeded to kill 'Amr-ubn-i-Hadrami and brought the caravan with two captives to the Prophet (S). The Messenger of *Allah* (S) said he had not ordered them to fight in a sacred month. Therefore, he did not mix himself with the booties and the captives.

The victorious warriors felt annoyed and Muslims thereby began scolding them. Infidels also sarcastically stated that the Prophet Muhammad (S) made fighting, blood shedding, and capturing in the Sacred Months lawful. At that time the first verse of the above verses was revealed.

After the revelation of this verse, 'Abdillah-ibn-i-Jahish and his companions stated that they had strived on that way to obtain the reward concerning the Holy War. They also asked the Prophet (S) whether

they had got the reward of the strivers. Then, the second verse in the above was sent down. 1

As the occasion of revelation denotes, the verse intends to answer the questions about fighting in Sacred Months. It clearly proclaims the prohibition of fighting in Sacred Months and counts such a fighting a great sin.

"They ask you (O' Muhammad) concerning the sacred month about fighting in it. Say: 'Fighting in it is a grave (sin)..."

Yet, it emphasizes that the infidels who have committed great sins such as infidelity to *Allah*, banning people from being lead to the straight path, expelling the inhabitants of Mecca from their home, trampling on the divine sanctuary and security of the sacred premises of Mecca, where the birds, beasts and plants should be secured, are not rightful to object to a group of Muslims who took action in fighting by mistake during a Sacred Month.

"...but to bar (people) from Allah's way, and to deny Him (to prevent access) to the Sacred Mosque, and to drive its people there from is, a graver (crime) with Allah..."

In addition to that, pagans have made mischief, because any subversive move against truthful people and barring them from embracing the theistic creed is a movement to creating a mischievous environment full of infidelity and idolatry. This crime is graver than fighting in a Sacred Month.

"...Sedition is more grievous than slaughter..."

Thus, these Qur'anic words address Muslims and warn them to be careful not to be affected by the evil propagations of infidels. It informs them to have insight and be conscious for pagans who always try to convert them from Islam. It says:

"...They will not cease fighting against you until they turn you back from your religion, if they can..."

To prevent this situation, the Qur'an warns that whoever of Muslims turns back from the Truth and dies in that status while the one is an infidel, this infidelity nullifies all his good deeds of this world and the next world totally.

"... But whoever of you turns back from his religion, and dies disbelieving –such are they whose deeds shall be of no avail in this world and Hereafter'..."

When a person, with such a condition of disbelief, has no valid good deeds in Hereafter, reasonably the one will be permanently involved in the torment of *Allah*.

"...those are the inhabitants of the Fire, wherein they shall dwell forever..."

There is a description about the Arabic term / habṭ/ (forfeiture) in Al-Mizan, , a part of which is as

follows: In short, **"habt of deeds"** means their coming to nothing and their being of no effect. It has been said that it is derived from / habata / which is used when an animal over-eats and its stomach distends, often resulting in its death.

The gist of the verse under discussion, like other verses of forfeiture, is that disbelief and apostasy make the deeds ineffective, i.e., such deeds lose their power to make life blissful. On the other hand, true faith and belief give life to the deeds and they create felicity, bliss and happiness in life.

If someone acquires true faith after disbelief, his deeds are given a new life and they become effective in making life blessed and happy (although they were forfeited and ineffective before).

Likewise, if he apostatizes after having been a believer, all his deeds become dead, null and void; they cannot make life in this world or in the Hereafter happy. Thereafter, if he leaves his apostasy and comes back to the fold of Islam, it is hoped that his deeds will be revived; but if he dies in the apostasy, the forfeiture will have been confirmed and misery unhappiness will be written down for him. 2

The Arabic term /jihad/ literally means striving that can be with wealth i.e. spending money in the way of *Allah*, or with life which means giving away life or getting killed in *Allah's* way i.e. for *Allah's* cause.

"Those who believed and those who migrated (suffered exile) and struggled in the way of Allah - these are they who hope for Allah's Mercy...."

This point is also remarked in the second verse that some warriors in the cause of *Allah* (s.w.t.), as a result of being unaware or being insufficiently cautious, may make some errors, (the foregoing story of 'Abdillah-ibn-i-Jahsh was an example of this meaning), but *Allah* will forgive them for their greater services that they usually do faithfully and sincerely.

"...and Allah is Forgiving Merciful."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 219

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنْفَاعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ

219. "They ask you concerning wine and gambling. Say: 'There is a great sin in both of them and (some) profits for people; but their sin are greater than their profit'. They ask you as to what they

should spend. Say: 'Whatsoever can be spared'. Thus does Allah make the Signs clear to you, in order that you may ponder. "

The statement in this verse is about two questions and their divine answers. ***The first question*** is about 'wine' and 'gambling', thus:

"They ask you concerning wine and gambling...."

The term 'Khamr' in Arabic lexicon means 'a cover', hence the veil that women wear to cover their heads to observe 'Hijab', it is called 'khimar'. Since the alcoholic beverages often delude the ability of the distinction of the person who drinks and, in fact, it covers the wisdom, in Arabic language that kind of liquor is called 'khamr'.

The term 'Maysir' is derived from the Arabic word /yusr/ which means: 'ease, easiness, and facility', as if, in gambling, each of the two parties wants to take the wealth of the other easily.

In answer to the question of some believers about wine and gambling, the verse, addressing the Prophet (S), says:

"...Say: 'There is a great sin in both of them, and (some) profits for people..."

This profit maybe refers to those interests that the producers of wine obtain through planting vineyards or preparing raisins for wine, or selling wine; or the money taken as taxes, charges, and custom-duties; or the profit some gain by establishing game-houses. But the sin and interior loss of these two is graver than their exterior profits.

Here are a few disadvantages resulting in drinking wine and gambling listed in some commentary books:

1. Shortening the lifetime
2. The negative effects on the procreation of babies especially if the intercourse of the couple happens when the person is intoxicated.
3. The spread of immorality and the increase in the number of crimes such as: theft, combat, murder, sexual offenses, and dangerous driving accidents.

One of the scholars, expert in natural science has said: "If governments in the drunkard nations close half of the vintneries, we will be able to close half of the hospitals and psychiatric asylums."

Gambling is also known among the causes of: disturbance, neurasthenic diseases, apoplexies –cerebral and hemacardiorrhagia, the increase of heartbeats, inappetence, paleness, and so on. Those who deal with the factors of crimes (in some societies) have formally issued that about thirty percent of the number of crimes are related to gambling.

By the way, gambling surely has a destructive function in the development of economics, because it wastes the mirth of the useful work.

Gambling has been announced forbidden and illegal in some of non-Islamic countries during the recent years. In England, for instance, that law passed to be executed in 1853, in America in 1855 (where it is again now practiced in some states), in Russia in 1854, and in Germany it passed in 1873.

The second question is regarding to the quality of /afw/ 'charity', when the Prophet (S) is asked about:

"... They ask you as to what they should spend. Say:

'Whatsoever can be spared.'

Thus does Allah make the Signs clear to you,

in order that you may ponder..."

In the Arabic dictionary, the term /afw/, in addition to the sense of 'pardon' and 'forgiveness', means: 'moderation, superfluous goods, and the best thing of the wealth'. Each of these meanings is fitting in the verse; and the purpose of the term /afw/, here, may conclude all of these senses.

That is, if you desire to spend, you should observe both moderation, and do not disburse all your property as charity so that thereafter you yourself become needy, and when you give something to someone, give that of your most beloved things; for the Qur'an says:

"By no means shall you attain to righteousness until you spend (benevolently) out of what you love;..." (Surah Ale-Imran No.3, verse 92).

Explanations

1- When dealing a thing, we must be just. The verse does not connive the profits of wine and gambling, but it propounds the subject so that it animates the power and faculty of contemplation and meditation in us.

2- Both wine and gambling are the means of destruction of body and soul. They are both causes of failure, so, they have come together in the Qur'an.

3- Protect both wisdom and peace. With the prohibition of wine, wisdom and contemplation has been protected; and by the prohibition of gambling, the safety of peace and spiritual and economical security have been guarded.

4- As the commentary books indicate, at the advent of Islam, the prohibition of wine had been introduced step by step until when it was fully performed throughout the Islamic society.

At the call of Islam, people habitually used to drink wine although it had been forbidden in the former religions. The Divine Messages gradually made them ready to accept its prohibition.

In **Surah An-Nahl No. 16, verse 67** the revelation says: ***"And of the fruits of the palms and the grapes –you obtain from them intoxication and goodly provision..."*** which means you may obtain both spirituous liquor and good provision from grapes, i.e., spirituous liquor is not a good provision.

After that, concerning wine and gambling, the verse under discussion was sent down, saying that their harm, in comparison, is more than their profits:

"...There is a great sin in both of them and (some) profits for people; but their sin are greater..."

Then, in another occurrence, a different verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed,³ and commanded Muslim believers:

"...do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated."

And, finally, the prohibition of wine was completely made manifest and perpetual when the word of *Allah* announced in **Surah Al- Maidah, No.5. Verse 90**, thus:

"... intoxications and gambling...are only an uncleanness, the Satan's work..."

There are so many traditions and narrations from the Prophet (S) and also from the holy Imams (as) condemning the use of wine and as to what a miserable fate awaits the individual on the Day of Judgment.

The holy Prophet (S), for example, is narrated to have said: *"All intoxicants are prohibited; and, curse of Allah is on liquor, on him who manufactures it, on him who helps its manufactures, on its seller, its purchaser, its distributor, the user of its money, its loader, its bearer, and its consumer."*⁴

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 220

فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْيَتَامَىٰ قُلْ إِصْلَاحٌ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ وَإِنْ تُخَالِطُوهُمْ
فَأِخْوَانُكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَأَعْنَتَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ
حَكِيمٌ

220. "(Ponder) over this world and the Hereafter. And they ask you concerning orphans. Say: 'To set right for them (their affairs) is best; and if you become co-partner with them, they are your brethren. Allah knows well the mischief maker from the peace-maker; and had He willed, He would have surely made, it hard for you. Verily Allah is the Mighty, the Wise.'"

The initial phrase of the verse: 'over this world and the Hereafter' refers either to the subject of charity, which was mentioned at the end of the previous verse, meaning that your charity is for your happiness in

this world and the next.

This act of spending should, of course, be neither in a manner that you donate your whole wealth so that you fall into trouble in your life, nor in a form of stinginess that causes your deprivation of the divine rewards in Hereafter. 5

Or, it refers to pondering over that which was mentioned in the former verse. If so, it means that everybody should think about the affairs of this world and the next, because we have to obtain the spiritual rewards of the next world only in this very world.

This pondering can simply be contemplating over the problems such as Unity of *Allah*, Resurrection, the secrets of creation, and the dominating laws of nature in order to understand them and to accept them, although the acceptance of the creed is not conditioned to the recognition of all secrets perfectly. So, the verse says:

"(Ponder) over this world and the Hereafter...."

Concerning the question about orphans, the commentary books denote that: when the tenth verse of **Surah An-Nisa 'No.4.** was revealed announcing that those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, swallow fire into their bellies, the families who had orphans in their houses felt anxious so that some of them even exiled the orphans from their houses and some others separated the dishes of the orphans' food from those of theirs. In that situation both the orphans and the householders encountered several annexing difficulties.

Therefore, they went to the Prophet (S) and asked him about the quality of their manner towards the orphans. The Prophet (S) replied to them that if they tried to improve the affairs of orphans it would be better for them.

They should not dismiss the orphans and shirk the responsibility of managing them for that their wealth could be mixed with that of theirs while the orphans are religiously their brethren. So, it did not matter that they might mix their properties with each other in the case that their intention in living with orphans was not to swallow their wealth.

"..And they ask you concerning orphans. Say:

'To set right for them (their affairs) is best; and if you become co-partner with them, they are your brethren..."

They should also be aware that *Allah* recognizes good doers from evil doers; and His Will is not to ordain hardship for the believers; and He is, of course, Almighty and All- Wise.

***"...Allah knows well the mischief-maker from the peace-maker;
and had He willed, He would have surely made, it hard for you.
Verily Allah is the Mighty, the Wise."***

Explanations

- 1- Orphans are neither our sons nor our servants, but they are our younger brothers and are counted with us in number: "*They are your brethren*"; so, they must live with us and be inside our lives.
- 2- To shirk the affairs of orphans is not right, but public interest is that we, as a custom, endeavor justly for them with a good intention and brotherly.
- 3- It is not important that some individuals claim for improvement, because *Allah* knows who is a peace-maker and who is a mischief-maker. So, beware not to swallow the wealth of orphans under the pretext of improvement, nor to evade it for the fear of mischief.
- 4- There is no unbearable duty in Islam, (considering the occasion of revelation of the verse cited in the above).
- 5- Any improvement given in the life of orphans is valuable. The term 'improvement', mentioned in the verse, has come in an absolute form to encompass all sorts of improvement including: scientific, financial, practical, educational and theological aspects.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 221

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَاتِ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنَ وَلَأَمَةٌ مُؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكَةٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ
وَلَا تُنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنُوا وَلَعَبْدٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكُمْ
أُولَئِكَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيُبَيِّنُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

221. "And do not marry idolater women until they believe, and a believing maid is definitely preferable to an idolater (free) woman even though she may please you. Nor give (your women) in marriage to idolater men until they believe; and certainly a believing servant is preferable to an idolater (free man), though he may please you. Those invite to the Fire while Allah invites to paradise and forgiveness by His Will, and He makes clear His Signs to people, so that they may take heed."

Occasion of Revelation

Once there came a man into Mecca by the name of Marthad. He was a brave man who had converted to Islam. He occasionally met "Anagh", the beautiful woman whom he was acquainted with formerly, at the time of Ignorance.

She invited him to sinful actions as before, but Marthad, who had become a Muslim, did not accept her wish. Hence, the woman asked him to marry her. Marthad replied that it was contingent on the permission of the Prophet (S).

Then, after performing his affairs, he returned to Medina and told the Prophet (S) about the matter. So, this verse was revealed and stated that the idol-worshippers and pagan women are not eligible to be married by Muslim men.

The term /nikah/ in Arabic philology means: 'matrimony, wedlock, and marriage'.

Islam has considered a number of conditions for the wife that a man wants to select. These conditions are identified in Islam because this religion takes the matrimonial life important for the sake of the assured heritable effects upon offspring, and, also, for the sake of the training issues of the family environment over the fate of the children.

It says, for example, that a pagan woman is not suitable to be married by a Muslim. Supposing that such a woman be chosen for marriage, the resulting children will naturally obtain her spiritualities and qualities under the principle of heritage, and after birth, if they trained by that mother, (whereas it is often thus), these children may have an abominable end. That is why the Holy Qur'an, in this verse, has explicitly prohibited marriage' with the women who are infidel or idol-worshippers.

"And do not marry idolater women until they believe, and a believing, maid is definitely preferable to an idolater (free) woman even though she may please you...."

In addition to that, if pagans, who are counted foreigners in an Islamic society, penetrate into the houses of Muslims by means of marriage, that society will be inflicted with disorder and interior enemies. In such a situation the different towns and categories therein are not recognized from each other. Hence, the Qur'an, hereby, tells them not to marry with that group of women.

However, Islam has not closed all the doors absolutely to them. Therefore, in order to use their sexual tendency towards their felicity, the Qur'an says:

"...Nor give (your women) in marriage to idolater men until they believe; and certainly a believing servant is preferable to an idolater (free man), though he may please you...."

Similar to the statement at the threshold of the verse that prohibits men from marrying idolatress or infidel women, in this part of the verse, giving girls and women in marriage to infidels and idolater men is prohibited, too.

And, similar to the idea that the believing maids are more eligible to marry with than the free idolater women even with admirable beauty or wealth, the believing servants and slaves are more eligible to

marry with than the handsome men who are apparently of dignity but disbelieving.

In fact, the wedlock of believing women with disbelieving men is forbidden while they are infidels; but there is no sin in marrying them when they accept the truth, and believe. This is the very way of return which was also pointed out at the beginning of the verse.

In the subsequent sentence, the reason of the prohibition for the wedlock of believing ones with idolaters and infidels, men and women, is expressed:

"...Those invite to the Fire while Allah invites to Paradise and forgiveness by His Will..."

The prohibition of marriage with an idolater is for the reason that they call their companions towards idolatry and some disgraceful manners. Their behaviour, of course, originates from idolism especially when this companionship is via matrimony whose intensity of mutual effect is deeper and more impressive. The fruit of this conduct is the blazing Fire of Hell.

Briefly speaking, acquaintance with them, particularly through the way of marriage, is in acquaintance with *Allah*; and approaching them is, indeed, keeping aloof from the Lord.

The believers, unlike that group, because of belief and high human qualities resulting from their true Faith, call their companions to the Truth and excellence. The fate of this manner is Paradise and the forgiveness of *Allah*.

In this occasion, regarding the close and sincere relation that the true believers have with *Allah*, He has applied His own appellation instead of using 'believers' and has said:

"...Allah invites to Paradise and forgiveness by His Will..."

Commenting on the last part of this holy verse, the author of *Atyab-ul-Bayan* says: *Atyab-ul-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 441

Allah (s.w.t) makes His Signs clear to people to be guided and consequently, they haply take heed. When they recognize the difference between obedience and disobedience, they may avoid sin and follow worship.

These Signs are irrespective of revealed prescripts, applicable duties, and ethical instructions; or the verses of macrocosm and microcosm which lead the servants towards the path of felicity and salvation so that they are rescued from the calamities of this world and those of the next world."

"... and He makes clear His signs to people, so that they may take heed."

1. Sirah Ibn-i-Husham vol. 2 p. 252

2. Al-Mizan, , vol. 3, pp. 245, 247, (English version)

3. Surah An- Nisa', No.4, verse 43
4. Al-Kafi, vol. 6, p. 398
5. 'Ilahi-Qumshih-'ie, translation of the Qur'an, Persian version

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