

Section 4: Control and Regulation of Morals

Sura An-Nur – Verse 27

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْذِنُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

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.”

The Arabic word /’istinas/ 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 (S) whether he had to ask permission for entering his mother's house.

He said:

“Yes.”

That man said:

“Except her no one lives in the house, and except me no servant she has!”

The Prophet (S) said:

“Do you like to see your mother nude?”

The man said:

“No.”

Then the Prophet (S) said:

“So ask permission.”

There is another narration in which the Prophet (S) prohibited men from entering the houses in which women’s guardians are not present.²

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.³

Whenever the Prophet (S) 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.⁴

In another authentic narration we read that when the Prophet (S) wanted to enter the house of his daughter, Fatimah (as), he put his hand on the door and then pushed it aside a little.

Then he said:

“Peace be upon you!”

Fatimah (as) answered her father.

Then the Prophet (S) said:

“May I enter?”

Fatimah (as) said:

“Yes, O’ Messenger of Allah (S)!”

The Prophet (S) 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 (S) made salutation again and Fatimah (as) answered. Again he (S) asked permission for himself. And after her agreement, he asked permission for

his companion, Jabir Ibn ‘Abdullah.

This tradition shows well how exactly the noble Prophet (S), 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’ⁱⁿinu’, 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: /ⁱⁿalikum xayrun lakum/

(“That is better for you”),

and /la‘allakum taḥakkurun/

(“...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.”⁵

Sura An-Nur – Verse 28

فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَا أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّى يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمْ ارْجِعُوا
فَارْجِعُوا هُوَ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ

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.”

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.”

Sura An-Nur – Verse 29

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ مَسْكُونَةٍ فِيهَا مَتَاعٌ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا
تُبْدُونَ وَمَا تَكْتُمُونَ

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.”

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.

Sura An-Nur – Verse 30

قُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُغَضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكٰى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ

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

In Kafi book there is a narration by Imam Baqir (as) 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 (S) and retell him this event.”

When the Prophet (S) 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.⁶

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 may 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 /qaclu/ has been applied with the sense of ‘to decrease’ means the same.⁷

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 (as) 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.”⁸

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 (S) said:

“Whoever supplies his eyes with what is unlawful, in Hereafter his eyes will be filled with fire, unless he repents.”⁹

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.¹⁰

3. Imam Ali (as) 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.”¹¹

4. We read in a tradition¹² that the Prophet (S) said:

“Do not sit on the way of people!”

The audience said:

“We have no choice.”

The Prophet (S) said:

"Then honour what is true and right!"

They asked:

"What is the right?"

The Prophet (S) said:

*"Withdrawal from ogling and bothering people, answering others' salutation, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong."*¹³

5. Hadrat 'Isa (as) 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."*¹⁴

6. Imam Ali (as) 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.)¹⁵

7. The Prophet (S) 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."*¹⁶

8. Concerning permissible looking at a woman, Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*"Looking at her face, palms, and front part of the feet is lawful (but purely and chastely)."*¹⁷

9. The Prophet (S) 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 other than her husband, Allah has right to burn her after He chastises her in the purgatory world."*¹⁸

10. The Prophet (S) said:

“A man who funs a woman who is not related to him in any form of marriage contract, Allah will confine him in chastisement for a thousand years for every word that he has jested her.”¹⁹

11. The Prophet (S) 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).”²⁰

Sura An-Nur – Verse 31

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرَ أُولِي الْإِرَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوْ الْطِفْلَ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَىٰ عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

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.”

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 (S) 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.²¹

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.

Some of them say that hidden adornment is the very natural adornment (women's beautiful body), whereas the Arabic word /zinat/ 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 (as) we see the same matter that the interior adornment, in Arabic, is interpreted as 'Qalladah' (necklace), 'Dumlaj' (armlet), 'Khalkhal' (anklet).²²

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 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 (S) 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.”*²³

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!

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 /aḥka 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 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 (as) and Imam Sadiq (as) 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'in*/ also strengthens this meaning.²⁴

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 (as) emphasized such group of old men in a tradition.

However, the verse does not imply that such men are like those who are unmarried. 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 sexual 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 fully 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.

Sura An-Nur – Verse 32

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامِي مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

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.”

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 (as) in a tradition said:

“The best intercession is to mediate between two persons for the sake of marriage so that they get married.”²⁵

In a tradition by Imam Kazem Musa Ibn Ja’far (as) 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 brother's marriage; those who help another Muslim who needs help; those who hide other Muslim brother's secrets."²⁶

The Prophet (S) 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."*²⁷

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 (as) said:

"Life will be prosperous by getting married."

Again Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"One who does not get married for fear of poverty is suspicious of Allah."

And the same Imam (as) 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."*²⁸

There is a famous tradition by the Prophet (S) 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."*²⁹

In another tradition by the Prophet (S) we read:

*"One who gets married has saved one half of his religion and must protect the other half."*³⁰

The Prophet (S) said:

“The worst of you is the one who is unmarried.”³¹

The Prophet (S) 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.”³²

The Prophet (S) 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.”³³

Sura An-Nur – Verse 33

وَلَيْسَتَعْظِفَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا حَتَّى يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَالَّذِينَ يَبْتَغُونَ
الْكِتَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا وَءَاتُوهُمْ مِّنْ مَّالِ اللَّهِ
الَّذِي ءَاتَاكُمْ وَلَا تُكْرَهُوا فَتَيَاتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَاءِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا لِّتَبْتَغُوا عَرَضَ
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَنْ يُكْرِهْنَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِكْرَاهِهِنَّ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

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.”

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 (S) and complained about this matter. Then, at this time, the above verse was revealed and prohibited this action.³⁴

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 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.

Sura An-Nur – Verse 34

وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ آيَاتٍ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَثَلًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَمَوْعِظَةً
لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

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.”

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.

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1. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary
 2. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn
 3. Tafsir-i-Kabir by Fakhr-i-Razi
 4. Tafsir-i-Kabir, and Fi Zilal
 5. Sura Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 99
 6. Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, Vol. 14, p. 139, Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Al-Mizan, and Ruh ul-Ma'ani
 7. Take care
 8. 'Usul Kafi and the commentary by Ali ibn Ibrahim, Nur-uth-Thaqalyn Vol.3, p. 587
 9. Bihar ul-'Anwar, Vol. 76, p. 336 and Man layahdaroh ul-Faqih
 10. Kanz ud-Daqa'iq, the Commentary
 11. Ibid
 12. recorded in Sahih Bokhari
 13. Ruh ul-Bayan, the Commentary
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16. Bihar ul-‘Anwar, Vol. 104, p. 38
17. Kanz ud-Daqa’iq
18. Man Layahduruh ul-Faqih
19. Ibid
20. E’aqaab Al-A’amal
21. Qurtabi, Commentary
22. Ali-ibn-Ibrahim, the Commentary
23. Nur-uth-Thaqallyn, the commentary
24. Wasa’il-ush-Shi’ah, chapter 124, Tradition 8
25. Wasa’il-ush-Shi’ah, Vol. 14, p. 27
26. Ibid
27. Ibid
28. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn
29. Safinah-tul-Bihar, Vol. 1, p. 561
30. Ibid
31. Majam’ul-Bayan, under the verse
32. Man la Yahduruh ul-Faqih, Vol. 3, p 255
33. Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 103, p. 237
34. Majma’ ul-Bayan and Qurtabi Commentary

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