

Section 8: The Knowledge of the Hour of Judgment

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verse 59

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ
ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

59. “O’ Prophet! Say to your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers that they draw their veils close to them, that is most convenient that they should be known (as such) and not be annoyed, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.”

The Arabic word */jalabib/* is the plural form of */julbab/* in the sense of a veil which covers the head and the neck, or a long cloth which can cover the whole body as well as the head and the neck.¹

Upon the occasion of revelation of this verse it is recorded in the commentary book of Ali-ibn-’Ibrahim that at that time Muslim women used to go to the mosque and establish prayer behind the Prophet (S).

At night, when they went to perform their evening and night prayers, some young abusive men sometimes waited in their way and hurt them with their jokes and evil words and by this means they bothered them.

The above verse was revealed and ordered the women to observe their veil perfectly so that they would become recognized clearly and nobody could find any pretext for brothering them. So, in this verse, the Qur’an orders the believing women not to give any pretext to mischief-mongers.

Then with the most intensive threat, which is very rare in the verses of the Qur’an, attacks the hypocrites, troublesome persons, and gossipers.

By the first part, the holy verse says:

“O’ Prophet! Say to your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers that they draw their veils close to them, that is most convenient that they should be known (as such) and not be annoyed...”

The commentators have delivered two views upon the sentence “...***that they should be known (as such)***...” which are not contrary with each other.

The first is that in those days it had been customary that the maid servants would come out of home without covering their head and neck, and since from the point of manner they were not so well, sometimes some impolite young persons made trouble for them.

Here the free Muslim women were ordered to observe wearing a complete Islamic veil in order to be recognized from the maid servants and do not give the wicked persons a pretext to cause trouble.

It is evident that the concept of this statement is not this that the wicked persons had the right of causing trouble for the maid servants, but the purpose is that the Muslim women should take the pretext from the mischievous persons. Another aim of it is that the Muslim women might not be careless or heedless in wearing their veil.

There are some women who are so careless that, in the meantime that they have veils, they are so disrespectful and ill-mannered that some parts of their bodies are often visible, and this state attracts the attention of the mischievous persons to them.

The philologists and commentators have introduced some meanings for the Arabic word ***/jilbab/***:

1– The first is */milhafah/* (chadur). It is a long cloth which is longer than scarf and covers the head, neck, and the chest.

2– The second is */maqna‘ah/* and */xamar/* (scarf).

3– The third meaning is ‘a wide shirt’.²

Apparently these meanings are different but their average concept is that: it covers the body. By the way this Arabic word is pronounced in two ways: */jilbab/* and */jalbab/*.

But it mostly seems that the objective meaning of it is a cover which is longer than a scarf and shorter than a chadur, (a mantle), as the writer of *Lisan-ul-‘Arab* has said.

And the purpose of the Arabic term ***/yudnin/*** (***draw close***) is that women make the veil close to their own body so that it justly protect them, not in a manner that now and then it goes aside and their body becomes manifest. In other words, it simply means that they must arrange their clothes properly.

Some have tried to use this sentence in the sense of covering the face, too, but there is no indication to this meaning in it, and few commentators believe that covering the face is inside the concept of the verse.

However, it is understood from this verse that the ordinance of Hijab (veil) for free women had been sent down before that time, but some women simply were not careful of it, the above verse emphasizes that they must observe it carefully.

Since when this ordinance was revealed it caused some faithful women to become worried about their past, at the end of the verse it says:

“...and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.”

This statement indicates that if you have had shortcoming in this subject since before (until now), because it has been done as the result of ignorance, Allah will forgive it. You must repent and return toward Him and fulfil the duty of chastity and cover yourself well.

Some Corruptions of Unveiling

- 1- The growth of the act of looking gloatingly.
- 2- The increase of corruption and lewdness.
- 3- To intend malice, and transgression by violence.
- 4- Unlawful pregnancies and abortion.
- 5- The appearance of psychic and venereal diseases.
- 6- Suicide and desertion from house because of disgrace.

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verse 60

لَئِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهِ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَالْمُرْجِفُونَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لَنُغْرِبَنَّكَ
بِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَا يُجَاوِرُونَكَ فِيهَا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

60. “If the hypocrites and those in whose heart is a disease and the agitators in the city do not desist, We shall certainly rouse you up against them, then they shall not be your neighbours in it, but a little while;”

Islam takes the security of society so important that it has issued the command of banishment of those

who create terror among people.

Next to the divine command which was given to the faithful women through the previous verse, this verse refers to another dimension of this subject, i.e. the insidious activities of some wicked persons, and says:

“If the hypocrites and those in whose heart is a disease and the agitators in the city do not desist, We shall certainly rouse you up against them, then they shall not be your neighbours in it, but a little while;”

The Arabic term /murjifun/ is derived from ***’irjaf*** in the sense of spreading lies or false rumors with the purpose of saddening others, and its root /’irjaf/ means: anxiety and agitation, and since spreading lies and rumours causes the common and general anxiety, this word has been used for it.

The Qur’anic term ***Inuqriyannaka*** is derived from /’iqra’/ in the sense of inviting to do something accompanied with encouragement.

From the tone of the verse, it is understood that there were three groups in Medina who were busy disturbing the affairs, and each group fulfilled their own evil aims in a way which had been formed as a current program, and had not a personal and individual aspect.

Hypocrites were the first group who worked for abolishing Islam by their anti-Islamic plots.

The second group were the rascals and lewd persons about whom the Qur’an says:

“Those in whose hearts is a disease.”

This meaning is also used in the current Surah, verse 32 about the voluptuous persons, where it says:

“...then be not soft in speech lest he in whose heart is disease aspire (at you)...”

The third group were those who by spreading rumours in Medina specially when the Prophet (S) and the army of Islam went out for a war used to weaken the spirit of the remaining people. They often gave false news about the failure of the Prophet (S) and the believers to them. According to the statement of some commentators this group were the Jews.

Thus, the Qur’an has intensively threatened all those three groups.

There is another probability in the commentary of the holy verse, too, that the above mentioned three corruptive programs were wholly performed by the hypocrites and separating them into three groups is for separating their qualities, not the persons.

However, the Qur’an indicates that if they go on their ugly and shameful deeds Allah will issue the command of attack of general people to them so that the believers, with an attack, eradicate all of them

from Medina in a manner that they can not live there any more.

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verses 61-62

مَلْعُونِينَ أَيْنَمَا ثُقِفُوا أُخِذُوا وَقُتِلُوا تَقْتِيلًا

سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا

61. “Accursed, wherever they are found they shall be seized and slain with a (fierce) slaughter.”

62. “(Such has been) the way of Allah concerning those who have passed away before, and you shall never find any change in the way of Allah.”

The Qur’anic term /**uqif**/ is derived from /**aqafah**/ in the sense of a just skilful victory; therefore knowledge and culture in Arabic is called /**aqafah**/.

No place should be a secure abode for those who seek disturbance and cause disorder in the security of the society.

Some commentators consider all these severities for those who hurt the believers mentioned in the previous verses; but it seems that all these threats and deserving death is for those who intend to disturb the security of the society and to abolish the system of the government, not only those who are sometimes troublesome for the people’s wives.

In this verse, the Qur’an implies that when they are driven out from this city and are sent out from the support of the Islamic government, they are accursed.

It says:

“Accursed, wherever they are found they shall be seized and slain with a (fierce) slaughter.”

This indicates that, after this general attack, they will not be secured in any place because they will be sought carefully and when they are found they will be annihilated.

Concerning the purpose of this verse that whether they will be sought outside of Medina and will be killed, or if after the ordinance of general banishment they remain inside of Medina they will be faced with such a fate, there are two probabilities, and in the meantime, there is no contradiction between these two.

That is, after the negation of security from these ‘heart-diseased ones, destructive plotters’ and the ordinance of their banishment from Medina, they will not be secured from the side of brave Muslims whether they remain there or they go out.

Then the next verse adds that it is not a new commandment, but this has been the way of Allah among the nations who have passed away before, that whenever the corruptive groups violate the limits with shamelessness and plots, the Divine command of general attack will be issued.

It says:

“(Such has been) the way of Allah concerning those who have passed away before...”

And since the ordinance is Allah’s way of treatment, it will never change, because:

“...and you shall never find any change in the way of Allah.”

In fact, this change defines that this threat is earnest, and they should know that the subject is completely decisive and there is no way of change in it. They must either put an end to their evil deeds, or wait for such a painful fate.

By the way, there arises a question here that what is mentioned in these verses upon the eradicating the corruptions such as the plots of the hypocrites, the constant troublesome unto the Muslims’ women, and seeking mischief of the gossipers, are these ordinances permissible for all Islamic governments in other times and centuries, too?

Few of the commentators have discussed upon this subject, but it seems that this ordinance, like other Islamic ordinances, is not limited to a particular time, place, and persons.

If enmity and plotting really exceeds the limits and forms as a current state in a manner that causes the Islamic society to face with some serious dangers, it does not matter that the Islamic government practices the commandments mentioned in the above verses given to the Prophet (S), and it mobilizes people for eradicating the roots of mischief.

But, no doubt, such things and the like are not permissible to be done unconditionally, specially that it has been introduced as an unchangeable tradition. So it must be done only by the leave of the master of the affairs of Muslims and Islamic judges.

Surah Al-’Ahzab – Verse 63

يَسْأَلُكَ النَّاسُ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ تَكُونُ قَرِيبًا

63. “The people will ask you concerning the Hour (of Judgment). Say: ‘The knowledge of it is only with Allah; what shall make you know? Perhaps the Hour (of Judgment) is nigh’.”

The former verses were about the plots of the hypocrites and the vile men. This holy verse refers to one of their other destructive programs. Sometimes as mockery or with the purpose of creating doubt in the hearts of some simple minded people, they propounded this question that when would happen the Hereafter with those qualities that Muhammad (S) informed of?

It says:

“The people will ask you concerning the Hour...”

This is also probable that some of the believers, because of the sense of curiosity, or for receiving some more information, had asked such a question from the holy Prophet (S), but regarding to the verses which come after this verse, it is understood that the first commentary is closer to the meaning of the verse.

The evidence for this statement is the verses in this field mentioned in Surah Ash-Shura which say:

“...and what shall make you that haply the hour be nigh?”

“Those who do not believe in it would hasten it on, and those who believe are in fear from it, and they know that it is the truth...”³

Then, by the verse under discussion, the Qur’an answers them as follows:

“...Say: ‘The knowledge of it is only with Allah...’”

Even the Divine messengers and the near-stationed angels are also unaware of it. Then, after it, the Qur’an adds:

“...what shall make you know? Perhaps the Hour (of Judgment) is nigh.”

Thus, we must be always ready to confront the Hereafter, and principally, the philosophy of its being hidden is in this that none sees his self in security and does not think of Hereafter as a distanced event and that he is far off from the Divine punishment.

Surah Al-’Ahzab – Verses 64-65

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَنَ الْكَافِرِينَ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ سَعِيرًا

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا لَا يَجِدُونَ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا

64. “Verily Allah has cursed the Unbelievers and has prepared for them a flaming fire,”

65. “Wherein they will abide for ever. They will find no protecting friend nor a helper.”

Allah’s wrath upon the disbelievers is certain. They will have neither a protector to protect them from entering into the Hell, nor a helper to save them.

This verse contains a threat against the unbelievers, and it explains a part of their painful punishment in the Hereafter.

It says:

“Verily Allah has cursed the Unbelievers and has prepared for them a flaming fire,”

Then, in the next verse it continues saying:

“Wherein they will abide for ever. They will find no protecting friend nor a helper.”

The difference between the Qur’anic words */waliyy/* and */nasir/* is in this sense that */waliyy/* (protector) undertakes the accomplishment of all affairs, while */nasir/* (*helper*) is the one who helps man so that he reaches his destination. But in Hereafter, these disbelievers will have neither a protector nor a helper.

Surah Al-’Ahzab – Verse 66

يَوْمَ تُقَلَّبُ وُجُوهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ يَقُولُونَ يَا لَيْتَنَا أَطَعْنَا اللَّهَ وَأَطَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ

66. “On the Day when their faces are turned over in the Fire, they say: ‘Oh! Would that we had obeyed Allah and had obeyed the Messenger!’”

In Hereafter, regret will never be useful. So, the only way of being saved is to obey Allah and His Messenger.

The above noble verse explains another part of the painful (punishment) of the unbelievers in Hereafter.

It says:

“On the Day when their faces are turned over in the Fire...”

This change in their faces is either from the point of the colour of the faces: that sometimes they become

red and grey, and sometimes they become yellow and pail. Or it is from the point that their faces will be put over the flames of Fire that sometimes this side of their faces will be put over the fire, and sometimes another side.

It is here that they shout of regret and say that if they had obeyed Allah and the Prophet, they would not have encountered such a painful fate.

The verse continues saying:

“...they say: ‘Oh! Would that we had obeyed Allah and had obeyed the Messenger!’”

Surah Al-’Ahzab – Verse 67

وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبَرَاءَنَا فَأَضَلُّونَا السَّبِيلَ

67. “And they shall say: ‘O our Lord! Verily we obeyed our chiefs and our elders, and they led us astray from the path’.”

Those who in the world did not say “**Our Lord**” even for one time, they will be faced with groan and regret in Hereafter.

The Arabic word **/sadah/** is the plural form of /sayyid/ with the sense of owner and a great person who has undertaken the management of the affairs of some important cities or a country.

The Arabic word **/kubara’/** is the plural form of /kabir/ in the sense of some great men, whether from the point of age, or knowledge, or social position, and the like.

Thus, the Qur’anic word **/sadah/** has an indication to the great chiefs of the locality, and **/kubara’/** means those who run the affairs under their control, as if they were their assistants and counsellors.

In fact, we have set a simple obedience instead of the obedience of Allah, and have exchanged the obedience from the Prophet (S) for the obedience from the elders, and that is why we have encountered kinds of deviations and kinds of misfortunes.

It is evident that the criterion of /siyadat/ (to be a chief) and greatness among them was the criterions of force, oppression, unlawful wealth, and deceit and guile. The choice of these two meanings here is for the sake that they show their excuse adjusted and say that they have been under the effect of their apparent greatness.

Surah Al-'Ahzab – Verse 68

رَبَّنَا آتِهِمْ ضِعْفَيْنِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَالْعَنُّهُمْ لَعْنًا كَبِيرًا

68. “O’ our Lord! Give them double chastisement and curse them with a great curse.”

This holy verse indicates that on the Day of Hereafter the misguided hellish people will be excited and ask for a grievous punishment from Allah (s.w.t.) for those who misguided them. They will ask Him to give them two kinds of punishment, one punishment for their own aberration and another one for their misleading them.

They say:

“O’ our Lord! Give them double chastisement and curse them with a great curse.”

It is certain that they deserve a curse and chastisement, but ‘double chastisement’ and ‘a great curse’ is for the attempt that they applied for leading others astray.

It is interesting that in Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, when these aberrant followers ask a double chastisement for their leaders, they will be told:

“...For each one there is double (chastisement), but you do not know’.”⁴

That is, there will certainly be a double chastisement both for them and for you.

The double chastisement for the leaders of disbelief and aberration is clear, but the double chastisement for the aberrant followers is a question.

The reason of it is that they have a punishment for their aberration, and another one for the sake of their strengthening and helping the unjust ones, because the unjust ones can not do anything by themselves, but their friends and helpers assist them in increasing their injustice and their infidelity, though in comparison, the punishment of the leaders is more grievous and more painful.

1. The commentary of Majma'-ul-Bayan, and Al-Mizan

2. Lisan-ul-Arab, Majma'-ul-Bahrayn, Mufradat by Raqib, Qutr-ul-Muhit, Taj-ul-'Arus

3. Surah Ash-Shura, No. 42, verses 17-18

4. Surah Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 38

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