

Muḥammad is not a father of any of your men, but he is a messenger of Allah and the last of the prophets. And Allah is Knowledgeable of every thing. [40]

Commentary

The verse quoted above refutes the contention of those people who, in accordance with the custom of the days of ignorance, used to call Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Harithah ﷺ as son of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and used to taunt at the *nikah* (marriage) of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with Sayyidah Zainab رضى الله عنها , after she had been divorced by Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Harithah ﷺ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had married his son's wife. It was enough to say in refutation that the father of Sayyidnā Zayd ﷺ is not the Holy Prophet ﷺ but Harithah ﷺ. But in order to emphasis the matter, the statement has been generalized in the following words: (مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ) (Muḥammad ﷺ is not a father of any of your men). The sense is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has no son at all. How can it be asserted against him that he has a son and that his divorced wife is forbidden to him because of being his son's wife?

A brief expression for this statement could have been مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّنكُمْ (Muḥammad is not a father of any of you). But the wise Qur'an, by adding the word (رجال) (any of your men) has removed a possible objection that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is father of four sons - three sons Qāsim, Ṭayyib and Ṭāhir ﷺ born to Sayyidah Khadijah رضى الله عنها and Ibrāhīm ﷺ born to Sayyidah Mariyah al-Qibṭiyyah رضى الله عنها but all of them died during childhood and none of them reached manhood. It can also be said that at the time of revelation of this verse, none of his sons was alive, because Qāsim ﷺ, Ṭayyib and Ṭāhir had died, while Ibrāhīm ﷺ was not born at that time.

Although the objection of the opponents had been adequately replied by the above sentence, yet in order to remove other doubts as well, it is stated وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ (but a messenger of Allah). The word لكن *lakin* (but) is used in Arabic language to remove any doubt that could be raised about the preceding statement. In this case, a doubt could be raised against the negation of the statement that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not a father of any one. One could say that every prophet and messenger is the father of every man and women of his Ummah, and therefore the negation of his fatherhood would be tantamount to negation of his prophethood. This

doubt has been dispelled by لَكِنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (but a messenger of Allah) which means that the rules regarding permissibility or impermissibility of marriage are applicable to the real and biological fatherhood that is quite different from a spiritual fatherhood enjoyed by the prophets in relation to the members of their Ummah. In this relationship these laws do not apply. Now the meaning of the full sentence is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not the biological father of any of the men of the Ummah but he is the spiritual father of all of them.

This is also a rejoinder for another sarcasm that some Mushriks (polytheists) had uttered against the Holy Prophet ﷺ that (Allah forbid) he is أَبْتَرٌ (issueless) that is, since he has no male offspring to continue the lineage and to propagate his message further; after a few days the whole story would come to an end. The above words have made it clear that although he has no biological sons, yet the biological sons are not in any case essential to spread the message of prophethood or to maintain and propagate it. This function is normally performed by one's followers who are his spiritual children, and since he is the spiritual father of the whole Ummah who are there to carry forward his mission, he excels all of you in the number of his (spiritual)children.

Then, once the prophethood and messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was mentioned here in which he carries a very special and distinct excellence over all other prophets, this distinctive eminence surpassing all other prophets has been indicated by the following words: (and the Last of the Prophets) وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ .

There are two ways to read the word خَاتِمَ Imām Ḥasan رحمه الله تعالى and 'Aṣim read this word as *khatam* whereas other leading scholars read it as *khatim*. The meaning remains the same in both cases, that is, 'the last of the prophets'. In both the cases, the word means the 'last' as well as the 'seal'. The meaning of the seal is also the 'last' because the seal is applied to something when it is intended to be closed. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has been called the seal of the prophets because the process of sending new prophets has come to an end on his advent. This is the gist of the explanation given in Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, Tafsīr of Al-Baydawī and Aḥmadi. The fact that both the words '*khatam*' and '*khatim*' carry the same meaning in this sentence has been affirmed by all the famous lexicons of the Arabic language.

Ibn Sidah, for example, in his *Almuḥkam* states that the the words '*khatim*' and '*khatimah*' with regard to everything means its end and its termination.

The gist is that both readings of the verse (*khatam* and *khatim*) convey the same meaning, that is, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has concluded the line of prophets; he has succeeded all the prophets and he is the last among all of them.

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ attribute of being the last of all the prophets demonstrates his excellence and distinction in all the perfections of prophethood and messengership, because in general, all things progress gradually reaching completion at the highest stage, and the end result is the real objective. The Holy Qur'ān has stated this clearly in *أَلْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي* (Today, I have perfected your religion for you and have completed My blessings upon you. - 15:3).

The religions of the previous prophets were also complete with regard to their respective times - none was defective. But absolute perfection was reached by the religion of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ which is the authority for all the ancient and modern human beings and will continue to be so up to the Doomsday.

By adding the phrase 'last of the prophets' after negating his being a father of a male boy, another point has been clarified here. The polytheists used to pass negative remarks against the Holy Prophet ﷺ by saying that he has no son, and therefore his lineage would not continue. By saying that he is the last of the prophets it is indicated that these remarks are based on ignorance, because he is the spiritual father of the whole Ummah which follows him and being the last prophet, all the races and nations to come in this world till the Doomsday would be included in his Ummah; as such the number of persons in his Ummah would be more than in other Ummah and his spiritual sons would be more than those of other prophets.

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ being the last prophet has also told us that his kindness and affection for his spiritual sons (i.e. for his Ummah) would be more than that of other prophets and he would be fully seized of the concern to identify and appreciate the needs which may arise till Doomsday because no prophet or wahy (Divine revelation) would come

after him. The prophets preceding him did not have this concern because they knew that when the nation would deviate and adopt erring ways, other prophets would come after them and reform the nation. But the Last Prophet ﷺ was seized of the concern that he should impart instructions to the Ummah for all the situations that it may face uptill Doomsday. The *aḥādīth* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ bear witness to the above, because he has told us even the names of most of those people who could be followed and who would come after him. Similarly, he has told us the details about the leaders who would misguide humanity in a manner that anybody who cares to ponder over those warnings would not have the slightest doubt left in his mind. That is why the Holy Prophet ﷺ said *أَبَى* *تَرَكْتُكُمْ عَلَى شَرِيعَةٍ بَيِّضَاءَ لَيْلُهَا وَنَهَارُهَا سَوَاءٌ* "I have left (you) on such an illuminated path where it does not make any difference whether it is day or night; there is no danger of being misguided at any time."

Another point to note in this verse is that Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ has been referred to in the beginning of the sentence as a *rasul* (messenger) and as such it would have been apparently more appropriate to use the word *khatam-ur-rusul* or *khatam-ul-mursalīn* (the last of the messengers) for him. But the wise Qur'ān has, instead, used the word *khatam-un-nabiyyin* (the last of the prophets). The reason is that according to the consensus of scholars, there is a difference between Nabī (prophet) and *rasul* (messenger). Nabī is that person whom Allah Ta'ālā (the Almighty) has selected for the reformation of His slaves and has honored him with His *Waḥy* (revelation), irrespective of whether He has given him a Book and a new Shari'ah (set of revealed rules and precepts) or He has appointed him to guide the followers of a previous Nabī according to a previous Nabī's Book and Shari'ah, like Sayyidnā Hārūn عليه السلام was appointed to guide and reform his followers according to the Book and Shari'ah of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام. On the contrary, the word *rasul* (messenger) is used exclusively for a particular Nabī who has been given a Book and a new Shari'ah. As such Nabī is more general than *Rasūl*.

So the meaning of this verse is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ, being the last of the prophets, has concluded the line of prophets and no prophet will come after him, irrespective of whether he is given a Book and a Shari'ah or he succeeds a previous Nabī to follow his Book and Shari'ah.

It is now very clear that all kinds of prophets appointed by Allah came to an end with the Holy Prophet ﷺ; no prophet will be appointed after him.

Imām Ibn Kathīr, in his Tafsīr, says:

فَهَذِهِ الْآيَةُ فِي أَنَّهُ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدَهُ، وَإِذَا كَانَ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدَهُ فَلَا رَسُولَ بِالطَّرِيقِ الْأُولَى، لِأَنَّ مَقَامَ الرِّسَالَةِ أَحْصُ مِنْ مَقَامِ النَّبُوءَةِ، فَإِنَّ كُلَّ رَسُولٍ نَبِيٌّ وَلَا يَنْعَكِسُ، بِذَلِكَ وَرَدَّتِ الْأَحَادِيثُ الْمُتَوَاتِرَةُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْ حَدِيثِ جَمَاعَةٍ مِنَ الصَّحَابَةِ.

"This verse is the unambiguous proof of the belief that there would be no Nabī after the Holy Prophet ﷺ and since there would be no Nabī, there is no question of there being any rasul after him because Nabī is a general term and rasul is particular. And this is the belief which is evidenced by mutawatir *aḥādīth* which have reached us through the reports of a very large number of the Noble Companions ﷺ."

The Literal explanation of this verse has been given here in considerable detail because one imposter by the name of Mirzā Qadiyānī, considering this verse to be a hindrance in his way, has distorted the meanings of the verse and has introduced a host of conjectures in its explanation. The foregoing, al-Hamdulillah, is a befitting reply.

The Issue of Termination of Prophethood

That the Holy Prophet ﷺ was the last of the prophets who has sealed and thus terminated prophethood, and that no other prophet is to be appointed after him and every claimant to prophethood is a liar and an infidel are well-settled issues on which there has been complete unanimity and consensus right from the days of the noble companions ﷺ upto the date. Therefore there was no need for a lengthy discussion on this subject. But the Qadiyānī sect has put in a lot of effort to create doubts in the minds of Muslims on this issue; by publishing hundreds of pamphlets and books they have tried to misguide those Muslims who are not well versed in religious knowledge. So this humble author has written a book titled "*Khatm-e-Nabuwat*" in which this issue has been fully detailed and clarified in the light of one hundred Qur'ānic verses, more than two hundred *aḥādīth* and hundreds of dictum of the classic as well as later scholars and learned people; the Qadiyānī deception and doubts created

thereby have been fully refuted. Some important points from that book are being reproduced here.

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ Being the Last Prophet does not negate the descent of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام in the last days

It is proved from many verses of the Qur'ān and from *mutawatir ahādīth* that in the last days before the doomsday, Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام would come into this world again, kill Dajjal (the Antichrist) and bring all misguidance to an end. The detailed proofs of this fact are given in my Arabic book 'At-tasrih'. Mirzā Qadiyānī, denying the descent of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام, has proclaimed himself to be the predicted Masiḥ with the reasoning that if reappearance of Sayyidnā 'Īsā Ibn Maryam عليها السلام who was a prophet of Israelites, is accepted, then it would negate the Holy Prophet's ﷺ being the last of the prophets.

The clear reply is that the Holy Prophet's ﷺ being the last prophet means that nobody would be appointed as a prophet after him; it does not imply that somebody who was appointed a prophet earlier would be dismissed from his prophethood or that such a prophet would not be able to return to this world. But, of course, the prophet who returns to this world for the reformation of the Ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ while maintaining his prophethood, would carry out the reforms in the *Ummah* in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as clarified in authentic *ahādīth*.

Imām Ibn Kathir, in explanation of this verse, has said:

والمراد بكونه عليه السلام خاتمتهم انقطاع حدوث وصف النبوة في احد من الثقلين بعد تحليته عليه السلام بها في هذه النشأة، ولا يقدر في ذلك ما اجتم عليه الأمة واشتهرت فيه الاخبار، ولعلها بلغت مبلغ التواتر المعنوي و نطق به الكتب على قول ووجب الايمان به وأكفر منكروه كالفلاسفة من نزول عيسى عليه السلام آخر الزمان، لأنه كان نبياً قبل ان يحلّى نبينا صلى الله عليه وسلم بالنبوة في هذه النشأة.

"The Holy Prophet ﷺ being the last of the prophets means that the office of prophethood stands terminated after him. No one would get this office after him. But it does not have any effect on the fact of the descent and reappearance of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام in the last days on which there is a consensus of the whole *Ummah* and which is proved by a large number of *ahādīth* that

are almost mutawatir and by the Qur'ān itself according to some interpretations, because he had been given prophethood before the Holy Prophet ﷺ."

Distortion of the Meaning of Prophethood and invention of new kinds of Prophethood

This claimant of prophethood adopted a new trick to pave the way for his claim by inventing a new kind of prophethood which simply does not exist in Qur'ān and Sunnah and neither is there any proof for it, but according to him this new kind of prophethood does not negate the decree of Qur'ān regarding the termination of prophethood. Briefly, he has introduced in prophethood the concept of reincarnation, which is well known in Hinduism and other religions. His contention is that if a person is dyed in the color of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, by virtue of his complete obedience to him and by following his footsteps, his coming to this world is the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself; such a person is in fact the shadow and incarnate demonstration of none else but the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, his claim does not negate the belief in the termination of prophethood after him.

But how can this invented kind of prophethood find its way to Islamic beliefs? There is no proof of it. Besides, the belief in termination of prophethood is a basic belief of Islam and as such it has been so thoroughly clarified by the Holy Prophet ﷺ under different topics at various times that no imposter can distort it. The full details can be seen in this author's book referred to earlier, but only some necessary proofs of this belief are being presented here.

Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim and almost all books of Ḥadīth have reported from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه with authentic chain of narrators that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said,

ان مثلي ومثل الانبياء من قبلي كمثل رجل بنى بيتاً فاحسنه واجمله الاموضع لبنة من زاوية، فجعل الناس يطوفون به ويعجبون له ويقولون هلاً: وضعت هذه اللبنة؟ وانا خاتم النبيين، رواه احمد والنسائي والترمذي وفي بعض الفاظه فكنت انا سدوت موضع اللبنة وختم بي النبيان

"The example of all the prophets before me and of myself is like a man has built a very strong and well decorated house in one corner wall of which space has been left vacant for one brick; people roam about in the home to see it and admire the

construction but all of them say that why did not the builder put a brick in that space also which would have completed the construction. I am that last brick (of the palace of prophethood)" and in some versions he said "I have filled up that vacant space and thus completed the palace of prophethood."

The gist of this eloquent simile is that prophethood is like a grand palace composed of Prophets ﷺ. This grand palace was complete in all respects before the Holy Prophet ﷺ except for the placement of one brick. The Holy Prophet ﷺ completed this grand palace by filling up that vacant space for one brick. Now there is no more space for any prophet or messenger. Even if it is supposed that there are other kinds of prophets and messengers, there is just no more space for them in the palace of prophethood.

In another Ḥadīth narrated by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported in Ṣaḥīḥs of Bukhārī, Muslim, Musnad of Aḥmad, etc., the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

كانت بنو اسرائيل تسوسهم الانبياء كلما هلك نبي خلفه نبي وانه لاني بعدى و
سيكون خلفاء فيكثرون (الحديث)

"The politics and administration of Banu Isrā'īl was being handled by the prophets themselves. When one prophet expired, another prophet would take his place. And after me there is no prophet, but of course, there would be my khulafā' (caliphs - successors) who would be numerous."

This Ḥadīth has made it clear that there would be no prophet after the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the education and instruction of the Ummah would be carried out by his Khulafā'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has explicitly and clearly told us that there is no prophethood of any kind after him, otherwise he would have mentioned it in this Ḥadīth where he has mentioned Khulafā'.

Ṣaḥīḥs of Bukhārī and Muslim have reported a Ḥadīth narrated by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه :-

لَمْ يَبْقَ مِنَ النَّبُوَّةِ إِلَّا الْمُبَشِّرَات

"Nothing is left of prophethood except *mubashshirat* (true dreams)".

As reported in Musnad of Aḥmad, etc., Sayyidah Ṣiddiqah 'Ā'ishah

رضى الله عنها and Sayyidah Umm Kurz al- K'abiyah رضي الله عنها have stated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

لا يبقى بعدى من النبوة شيء إلا المبشرات، قالوا: يا رسول الله! وما المبشرات؟
قال: الرؤيا الصالحة يراها المسلم أو ترى له. (طبراني، كذا في الكنز)

"Nothing is left of prophethood after me except *mubashshirat*. The noble companions ﷺ asked: O Holy Prophet ﷺ! What is *mubashshirat*? He replied, "True dreams that a Muslim sees himself or somebody else sees about him."

This Ḥadīth has so explicitly told that no kind of prophethood, either one with a new law or without it, either *Zilli* (shadowy) or *Buruzi* (incarnate), is possible after the Holy Prophet ﷺ; people would only have *mubashshirat* (true dreams) through which they would find out a few things.

Musnad of Aḥmad and Tirmidhī carry a narration of Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه wherein the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

إن الرسالة والنبوة قد انقطعت فلا رسول بعدى ولا نبي (رواه الترمذى وقال: هذا حديث صحيح)

"No doubt *risalah* (messengership) and *nubuwwah* (prophethood) stand terminated after me; after me there would neither be a *rasūl* (messenger) nor a *Nabī* (prophet)".

This Ḥadīth has made it clear that prophethood even without a new law is simply not there after the Holy Prophet ﷺ what to say of *zilli* or *buruzi* prophethood which are neither any form of prophethood nor are they recognized as such in Islam.

The objective is not to collect here all the *aḥādīth* pertaining to the issue of termination of prophethood; more than two hundred *aḥādīth* on this subject have been put together in my book "Khatm-e-Nabuwwat". The objective, by quoting a few of them is to advise that the categories of *zilli* and *buruzi* prophethood invented by Mirzā Qadiyānī is without any basis or proof, and moreover the *aḥādīth* quoted above have told explicitly that there is no kind of of prophethood whatsoever left to come after the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

That is why, right from the days of the noble companions رضي الله عنهم uptill today, all the schools of Muslim *Ummah* are unanimous on the belief that there cannot be any kind of *Nabī* or *Rasūl* after the Holy Prophet ﷺ and

whoever claims to be so is a liar and denier of the Qur'ān and is a disbeliever. The first general consensus of the noble companions رضي الله عنهم had evolved on this very issue as a result of which a holy war (*jihād*) was fought with Musaylimah, the liar, the false claimant of prophethood, during the period of the first Khalīfah Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, in which he (Musaylimah) and his followers were killed.

The dictums and clarifications of the past Imāms and wise scholars of the *Ummah* are reproduced in considerable detail in the book "Khatm-e-Nabuwwat", some of them are being copied here also.

Ibn Kathir, in his tafsir, writes under this verse:

اخبر الله تعالى في كتابه ورسوله الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في السنة المتواترة عنه أنه لا نبي بعده ليعلموا ان كل من ادعى هذا المقام بعده فهو كذاب أفاك دجال ضالّ مضلّ. ولو تحرق وشعبذ واتي بانواع السحر والطلاسم والنيرنجيات فكلها محال وضلال عند اولى الالباب كما اجرى الله سبحانه على يد الاسود العنسى باليمن ومسيلمة الكذاب باليمامة من الاحوال الفاسدة والاقوال الباردة ما علم كل ذي لب وفهم وحجى انهما كاذبان ضالان لعنهما الله تعالى وكذلك كل مدع لذلك الى يوم القيمة حتى يختموا بالمسيح الدجال. (ابن كثير)

"Allah Ta'ālā in this Book and the Holy Prophet ﷺ in successive *aḥādīth* has informed that there is no Nabī after the Holy Prophet ﷺ so that people should know that whoever claims to be a prophet after him is a liar, a cheat, an imposter, a deviator who misguides others, no matter how many conjuring tricks he shows, magic spells he binds or talismanic wonders and sorceries he performs which are, in fact, sheer fallacies recognized as such by the people who have knowledge and understanding. Allah Ta'ālā had let such perverse acts and utterances manifested at the hands of Aswad Al-'Ansi (claimant of prophethood) in Yemen and Musaylimah, the liar, (another claimant of prophethood) in Yamamah in a way that every intelligent and comprehending person, after hearing and seeing them, knew that both of them were liars and misguided. May Allah curse them. In the same way anyone who claims to be a prophet upto the Doomsday is a liar and an infidel and this stream of claimants of prophethood would end at Dajjal, the Anti-Christ."

Imām Ghazzali, while explaining the above mentioned verse and

discussing the belief in the termination of prophethood, has observed in his book '*Al-Iqtisād fil I'tiqād*' as follows,

وليس فيه تاويل ولا تخصيص ومن أوله بتخصيص فكلامه من الهديان لا يمنع الحكم بتكفيره لأنه مكذب لهذا النص الذي اجمعت الامة على انه غير مأول ولا مخصوص .

"The entire Ummah has unanimously understood from these words and from circumstantial evidences that there will never be a prophet after him ever, nor will ever come a messenger of Allah. These words (of the verse) can neither be interpreted in any other sense, nor can their generality be restricted."

Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ in his book '*Ash-shifa*', after declaring that a person who claims to prophethood after the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a liar and an infidel who does not believe in this verse, has observed as follows:

واجمعت الامة على حمل هذا الكلام على ظاهره، وان مفهومه المراد به دون تاويل ولا تخصيص، فلا شك في كفر هؤلاء الطوائف كلها قطعاً اجماعاً وسمعاً.

"The Ummah holds by consensus that this discourse bears the obvious meaning and that this verse means what it says, without any other interpretation or any exception. Therefore, there is no doubt in the *kufr* (infidelity) of all those sects (who follow any claim out of prophethood) rather their *kufr* stands absolutely proved in view of the consensus of the *Ummah* and the express texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Verses 41 - 48

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٤١﴾ وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٤٢﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّيْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ط وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا ﴿٤٣﴾ تَحِيَّتُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَلْقَوْنَهُ سَلَامٌ مَّ وَاَعَدَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٤٤﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿٤٥﴾ وَدَاعِيَا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِأَذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا ﴿٤٦﴾ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ فَضْلًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٤٧﴾ وَلَا تَطِعِ الْكُفْرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَدَعُ أَذْيَهُمْ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ط

وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٤٨﴾

O those who believe, remember Allah abundantly, [41] and proclaim His purity at morn and eve. [42] He is such that He and His angels send blessings to you, so that He brings you out from all sorts of darkness into Light. And He is Very-Merciful to the believers. [43] Their greeting, the Day they will meet Him, will be, "Salām" (Peace). And He has prepared for them a noble reward. [44]

O prophet, We have sent you as a witness and a bearer of good news and a warner, [45] and as one who calls (people) towards Allah with His permission, and as a luminous lamp. [46] And give good news to the believers that they are to receive a huge bounty from Allah. [47] And do not obey the infidels and the hypocrites, and just ignore any hurt (that afflicts you) from them, and place your trust in Allah. And Allah is sufficient (for you) to take care of all matters. [48]

Commentary

Mentioned in the preceding verse was the incident of Sayyidnā Zaid رضي الله عنه and Sayyidah Zainab رضي الله عنها, and in relation to it the Holy Prophet's being the last of the prophets has been stated in the context of directions for the respect and reverence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and saving oneself from causing any pain to him.

Further on also, the perfect attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are going to be stated; his person and attributes are the greatest blessings for Muslims in this world. The instruction of remembering Allah in abundance is given in the above verse to show gratitude for those blessings.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has stated that there is no form of worship except ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ *dhikrullah* (remembrance of Allah) for which Allah has not fixed a limit; for example, Ṣalāh is prescribed five times a day and the number of *rak'at* are determined for each Ṣalāh; fasting throughout the month of Ramadan is determined, Ḥajj can be performed only at a particular place and at a particular time, Zakāh is prescribed once a year at a particular rate. But *dhikrullah* is a form of worship for which there is no limit or defined quantity, no particular time or period, no defined

posture or position, nor even the state of purity through ablution is required. Dhikrullah is required all the time, in all circumstances, whether one is traveling or is at home, whether one is healthy or ill, whether one is on land or at sea, whether it is day or night - *dhikrullah* is required all the time.

Therefore no excuse is acceptable for neglecting *dhikrullah* except that one may have lost his senses and become unconscious. In case of all forms of worship, other than *dhikrullah*, if one becomes unable due to illness or compelling circumstances, one is allowed reduction, brevity or exemption altogether, but in case of *dhikrullah* there are no extenuating circumstances. Therefore, no excuse is considered valid for omitting it and the merits, blessings and rewards for doing it are also numerous.

Imām Aḥmad has reported from Sayyidnā Abū ad-Darda' رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said to the noble companions رضي الله عنهم, 'Should I not tell you a thing that is better than all your deeds and is most acceptable to your Lord, and which would raise your grades, and is better than giving silver and gold in charity and alms and is also better than your embarking for Jihad wherein you face and kill the enemy and the enemy kills you? The noble companions رضي الله عنهم asked the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم about that thing. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ that is, remembrance of Allah, the Mightiest the Most Glorious". (Ibn Kathīr)

Imām Aḥmad and Tirmidhī also have reported that Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه said that he had heard a prayer from the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم which he does never miss. It is the following:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي أُعْظِمُ شُكْرَكَ وَأَتَّبِعُ نَصِيحَتَكَ وَأُكْثِرُ ذِكْرَكَ وَأَحْفَظُ وَصِيَّتَكَ

"O Allah make me so that I keep thanking You profusely, I keep obeying your instructions, I keep remembering You abundantly and I safeguard (to follow) your advice." (Ibn Kathīr)

Here the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has supplicated to Allah Ta'ālā for ability to engage in dhikrullah abundantly.

A Beduin said to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that the number of good deeds, obligations in Islam are many; so please tell me something concise and comprehensive which I could hold on to firmly. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم told him,

لَا يَزَالُ لِسَانُكَ رَطْبًا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى

That your tongue remains always wet with the *dhikr* of Allah.
(Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Kathīr)

Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd رضي الله عنه has narrated that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said "أذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ تَعَالَى حَتَّى يَقُولُوا مَجْنُونٌ" "Remember Allah, the Almighty so much so that people start calling you crazy." (Ibn Kathīr from Musnad Aḥmad)

And Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه has narrated that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said that a gathering of people wherein Allah is not mentioned would prove to be a matter of remorse on the Doomsday for those sitting therein. (Aḥmad, Ibn Kathīr)

وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ("And proclaim His purity at morn and eve". 33:42)
Here morning and evening may, metaphorically, mean all the time. Alternatively, morning and evening have been mentioned specifically to lay emphasis on carrying out *dhikrullah* during these times and to indicate that it carries more blessings - otherwise *dhikrullah* is neither specified nor limited to any particular time.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّيْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ (He is such that He and His angels send blessings to you. 33:43) It means that when you have become used to *dhikrullah* in abundance and have become regular in recounting the perfections of Allah morning and evening, Allah would honor you and respect you by bestowing His Blessings and by the angels supplicating for you.

The word 'Ṣalāh' has been used in this verse for Allah Ta'ālā as well as for the angels but the applicable meaning are different. For Allah it means His bestowing blessings, and for angels who have no volition on their own, it means their supplication to Allah to bestow His blessings.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has stated that Ṣalāh from Allah is blessing, from angels it is prayer for forgiveness and from humans it is supplication. The word Ṣalāh carries all the three meanings.

نَحِيْبُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَقْبَلُوْنَهُ سَلَامٌ (Their greeting, the Day they will meet Him, will be, "Salām" - 33:44). This is the explanation of the Ṣalāh that is sent to believers from Allah. It means that the day they would meet Allah, they will be respectfully addressed by Him with the word, 'Salām' i.e. (Assalamu 'alaykum) . The day of meeting Allah according to Imām

Rāghib, would be the Doomsday; some other leading exegetes say that it would be when they enter Paradise and they would receive Salām from Allah Ta'ālā as well as from the angels; and yet other scholars consider it to be the day of death when they would leave the whole world to be present before Allah as stated by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه that when the Angel of Death goes to a believer to extract the spirit of life out of him, he gives him a message that his Lord has sent to him Salām. The word 'meeting' is true in all the three cases. Therefore there can be no objection or contradiction in the traditions, because Salām from Allah Ta'ālā is sent on all the three occasions.

Note

This verse has proved that when Muslims meet each other, their greeting should be *assalamu 'alaykum* whether from the older to the younger or from the younger to the older.

Special Attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا

O prophet, We have sent you as a witness and a bearer of good news and a warner and as one who calls (people) towards Allah with His permission, and as a luminous lamp. (33:45-46)

The text here reverts to the special perfect attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Five attributes have been mentioned here - 'Shāhīd', 'mubashshir', 'nadhir', 'da'i ila Allah'. 'sirāj munīr'. 'Shāhīd' (a witness) means that the Holy Prophet ﷺ will be a witness of the *ummah* on the Day of Judgment according to a *ḥadīth* narrated by Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه and reported by Bukhārī, Nasa'ī and Tirmidhī. It is mentioned in some parts of that *Ḥadīth* that on the Day of Judgment when Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام will be presented before Allah, he will be asked whether he had conveyed Allah's Message to his Ummah. He will reply that he did. Then his Ummah will be presented and they will deny having received any message of Allah. Then Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام will be asked whether he has any witness to his claim of having conveyed the message of truth, and he will reply that Muḥammad ﷺ and his Ummah are witnesses. Some narrations have it that he will present the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ as witness and this Ummah will give evidence in his favour. At this, the Ummah of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام will argue 'How can they, who were not even born at that time, give evidence in our case?'

Now the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ will be asked to substantiate their evidence and they will answer that no doubt they were not born at that time but they were told about it by their Holy Prophet ﷺ in whom they believe and trust. At this time the Holy Prophet ﷺ will be asked to give testimony regarding the veracity of his Ummah's statement.

Briefly, the Holy Prophet ﷺ through his testimony, will confirm and verify the statement of his Ummah that, of course, he had given them that news.

Another general meaning of being a witness for the Ummah may be that the Holy Prophet ﷺ will give evidence about the good and bad deeds of all the individuals of his Ummah. And this evidence would be on the basis that the deeds of the Ummah are presented before the Holy Prophet ﷺ every morning and evening daily; some narrations state that the deeds are presented once a week. The Holy Prophet ﷺ thus recognizes each and every individual of his Ummah by their deeds and as such he will be made witness for the Ummah on the Doomsday. (Ibn al-Mubarak from Sa'īd Ibn al- Musayyab, Mazhari)

'Mubashshshir' means bearer of good news, and as such the Holy Prophet ﷺ is the announcer of the good news of Paradise for the righteous people of his *Ummah*.

'Nadhir' means the one who warns; thus the Holy Prophet ﷺ also puts the fear of Allah's punishment in the hearts of his Ummah in case they violate or disobey the injunctions of Shari'ah.

'One who calls people to Allah' means that the Holy Prophet ﷺ calls his Ummah to believe in Allah's Being, Oneness and obedience. The act of calling towards Allah has been qualified by the phrase 'with His permission'. It means that the Holy Prophet ﷺ calls and invites people towards Allah with His permission. This condition is an indication that preaching and inviting towards Allah are very difficult tasks which cannot be performed successfully without Allah's permission and help.

سِرَاج (Sirāj) means lamp and مُنِير ('Munir') means luminous. The fifth attribute of the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been stated that he is a luminous lamp, and some are of the view that 'luminous lamp' refers here to the Qur'ān. But the context suggests that this is also an attribute of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Qāḍī Thana'ullāh has stated in Tafsīr Maḥzarī that "the Holy Prophet's ﷺ function of calling towards Allah pertains to his speech and outward acts, his attribute of being a 'luminous lamp' pertains to his blessed heart. Just as the sun illuminates the whole world, in the same way, the hearts of the faithful become illuminated by the radiant light of his heart. That is why the noble companions who were the beneficiaries of his company in this world are superior and more exalted than the whole of the Ummah, because their hearts were illuminated and graced by his heart directly; the rest of the Ummah received this radiant light indirectly through the noble companions and their successors and so on."

It can also be said that all prophets, specially the Holy Prophet ﷺ, after having passed away from this world are alive in their graves. Their life in *barzakh* (transition between death and the Day of Resurrection) is much more superior than the transit-life of common people, the reality of which is known to Allah Ta'ālā only. However due to this life, the hearts of all Muslims would keep on receiving the radiant light of his blessed heart, and the share of each individual would be in accordance with the intensity of love and reverence he has towards the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the abundance of Ṣalāh (*durud*) he offers to him.

The radiant light of the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been metaphorically described as a 'lamp', even though his inner radiance is far brighter than the sun. This is because the sun illuminates only the surface of the world, whereas his blessed heart illuminates the inside of the whole world and the hearts of the faithful. The reason for this simile appears to be that obtaining advantage from the light of a lamp is voluntary and available all the time easily, whereas approaching the sun is well-nigh impossible and its light is not available all the time.

The attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as stated in the Holy Qur'ān, are also mentioned in Torah as reported by Imām Bukhārī that Sayyidnā 'Ata' Ibn Yasar says that one day when I met Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr Ibn al-'As ؓ asked him to tell me the attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as stated in Torah. He said, "of course, I will tell you. By Allah! some of the attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ mentioned in the Qur'ān are also there in Torah" And then he quoted the following extract.

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَحُرًّا لِلْأَمِّيِّينَ، أَنْتَ عَبْدِي وَرَسُولِي سَمِيَّتِكَ

الْمُتَوَكِّلِ، لَيْسَ بَفِظٍ وَلَا غَلِيظٍ وَلَا سَخَابٍ فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ وَلَا يَدْفَعُ السَّيِّئَةَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ
وَلَكِنْ يَغْفُو وَيُغْفِرُ لَنْ يَقْبِضَهُ، اللَّهُ تَعَالَى حَتَّى يُقِيمَ بِهِ الْمِلَّةَ الْعُوجَاءَ بَانَ يَقُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ
إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَيَفْتَحْ بِهِ أَعْيُنًا عُمَيًّا وَأَذَانًا صُمًّا وَقُلُوبًا غُلْفًا.

"O Prophet ﷺ! We have sent you as a witness, as a bearer of glad tidings, as a warner and as a refuge and protection for the illiterate Arabs. You are My slave and messenger. I have named you "mutawakkil" (i.e. one who trusts in Allah). You are neither ill-tempered nor hard natured nor one who raises noise in the markets; you do not repay wickedness with wickedness, rather you forbear and forgive. Allah Ta'ālā would not recall you from the world till He has straightened out the crooked Ummah through you and they start saying 'lā ilaha illallāh'. Allah would open up unseeing eyes, un-hearing ears and locked-up hearts through you".

The Holy Qur'ān, after attributing the above qualities to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, is asking him to carry on his functions, that is, to give the good news to the faithful that they are going to receive great bounties and mercy from Allah and not to obey the desires of the infidels and hypocrites. It was, though, not possible for the Holy Prophet ﷺ obey the infidels and the hypocrites or to give up preaching and inviting people, yet there was a chance that, in order to avoid people's sarcasm and taunts, he might have inclined to avoid marrying Sayyidah Zainab رضي الله عنها that was, in fact, a practical demonstration of the divine rule of Shari'ah. This has been alluded to as obeying the infidels and hypocrites. He was further directed not to mind any vexation that he may receive from the infidels and hypocrites (as he did) and also not to worry about physical harm afflicted by them, but in case such a thought crosses his mind, he was directed to trust in Allah, because Allah is enough to put all matters right - He will protect him from all harms, and if an apparent harm is caused during preaching, it is a gain in reality, and is not against the promise of protection and putting things right.

Verse 49

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَكَحْتُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ طَلَقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ
تَمْسُوهُنَّ فَمَالِكُمْ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ عِدَّةٍ تَعْتَدُونَهَا فَمَتَّعُوهُنَّ

وَسَرَّحُوهُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا ﴿٤٩﴾

O those who believe, when you marry the believing women then divorce them before you have touched them, then they have no obligation of any 'iddah (waiting period) for you that you may count. So give them (due) benefits, and release them in a pleasant manner. [49]

Commentary

Some attributes and the special eminence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ have been mentioned in the preceding verse. Some special rules that are exclusive to him in matters of marriage and divorce are intended to be mentioned in forthcoming verses in which he has a distinction over the general Ummah. But before that, a general rule regarding divorce has been mentioned as a prologue which is applicable to all Muslims in general.

There are three injunctions regarding divorce in this verse.

The first injunction is that if after *nikah* (marriage) a woman is divorced before the spouses have had full privacy *الخلوة الصحيحة* (Al-khalwah Aṣ-ṣaḥīḥah), then she is not liable to any period of 'iddah (waiting period), which means that she can enter into another marriage immediately. In the present verse, 'touching' means having sexual intercourse, either actually or by presumption, because if the spouses meet together at a private place without any apprehension of interference by someone and there is nothing to prevent them from having sex, this type of privacy (Al-khalwah Aṣ-ṣaḥīḥah) carries the same legal consequences as an actual intercourse.

The second injunction is that the divorced woman should be separated gracefully and by giving some gifts to her. Giving something to a divorced woman at the time of her departure is desirable according to Sunnah, and in some cases it is compulsory as elaborated in verse 236 of Sūrah Al-Baqarah *لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ* - There is no sin on you if you divorce women when you have not touched them. - 2:236. The use of the word '*mata*' here is perhaps based on the wisdom that this word has a wide and general meaning and is applicable to anything which may be beneficial, which includes the woman's obligatory rights,

like *mahr* (dower), etc., which means that the dower, if not already paid, has to be paid at the time of divorce gladly; and it also includes her rights that are not compulsory, for example, a set of clothes to be gifted to her at the time of departure, which is *mustahab* (commendable) in respect of every divorced woman and the Qur'ān has persuaded the husband for both, the compulsory as well as commendable rights.

A leading scholar of Ḥadīth 'Abd Ibn Ḥumayd has narrated the dictum of Sayyidnā Ḥasan رضي الله عنه that every divorced woman has to be given something as *mut'ah* whether one has had Al-khalwah Assaḥīḥah (full privacy) with her or not and whether her *mahr* (dower) was fixed or not.

Details of Mut'ah to be given at the time of Divorce

Badai', the famous book of Ḥanafī *fiqh* has mentioned that *mut'ah* of divorce means those clothes which a woman wears necessarily when going out. It includes a pair of trousers, long shirt, *shawl* and a large sheet as covering from head to feet. Clothes can be graded as high quality, medium and ordinary. Muslim jurists have determined that if both the husband and wife belong to wealthy families, the clothes have to be of high quality; if they are both poor, then the clothes should be of ordinary quality, and if one is poor and the other wealthy, then the clothes may be of medium quality.

Islam's matchless teaching in discharging social obligations gracefully

Recognition of rights and a courteous behavior towards others is restricted in common practice to relatives, friends and at the best it is extended to common people. Recognizing and discharging of the rights of opponents and foes and devising rules and regulations for their execution is a distinct feature of Islamic teachings. Although many organizations have been established in our days exclusively for the protection of human rights, and some rules and regulations have also been devised for this purpose. Huge sums of money are collected as donations from all over the world for this objective, but all of them are politically oriented and whenever they do help the suffering people, such help is not available everywhere, nor is it without a motive. It is rather given to fulfill their own political aims. And, supposing, these organizations do start functioning properly to serve the suffering humanity, the most they can do is to help when some area is affected by a devastating storm, epidemic

disease, etc. But who would know about the suffering of individuals and single persons? Who can reach them? Let us look at the matter of divorce which obviously is a result of mutual discord, anger and disharmony which usually results in the relationship which was established on the basis of extreme concord, love and affection changing to the opposite i.e. combined emotions of hate enmity and revenge. The above mentioned verse of the Holy Qur'ān and many other similar verses have given such instructions to Muslims to be observed right at the time of divorce that they fully test gracefulness of behavior and courteous discharge of social obligations. The emotions keep on inciting one to take as much revenge as one can from the woman who has inflicted so much pain and agony to him that the relationship had to be terminated. But the noble Qur'ān has bound the common divorced woman to stay during the period of *'iddah* in the house of her husband; it has been made obligatory on the husband not to turn the divorced woman out of his house during the period of *'iddah* and to continue to provide her the usual daily maintenance and upkeep during that period. It has also been made desirable for the husband to give her *mut'ah* i.e. a set of clothes at the time of departure after completion of the period of *'iddah* and to release her with grace and respect. Only those women are exempt from the period of *'iddah* who have only gone through *nikah* without stepping into the husband's house, without having had true privacy, but more stress has been laid on offering *mut'ah* to them as compared to other women.

The third injunction is: (سَرِّحُوهُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا) "Release them gracefully" which has imposed a restriction on the husband not to say anything harsh even verbally nor to indulge in taunts or sarcasms.

Only that person can honor the rights of the opponents during confrontation who can control his emotions and passions. All the teachings of Islam have laid due emphasis on this principle.

Verses 50 - 52

يَأَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَحْلَلْنَا لَكَ أَزْوَاجَكَ الَّتِي آتَيْتَ أُجُورَهُنَّ وَمَا
 مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ مِمَّا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ وَبَنَاتِ عَمِّكَ وَبَنَاتِ عَمَّتِكَ
 وَبَنَاتِ خَالِكَ وَبَنَاتِ خَالَتِكَ الَّتِي هَاجَرْنَ مَعَكَ وَامْرَأَةً مُؤْمِنَةً إِنْ

وَهَبَتْ نَفْسَهَا لِلنَّبِيِّ إِنْ أَرَادَ النَّبِيُّ أَنْ يَسْتَنْكِحَهَا خَالِصَةً لَّكَ مِنْ
 دُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۖ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا فَرَضْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِي أَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَمَا
 مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ لِكَيْلَا يَكُونَ عَلَيْكَ حَرَجٌ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا
 رَحِيمًا ﴿٥٠﴾ ۝ تُرْجَى مِنْ تَشَاءُ مِنْهُنَّ وَتُؤَى إِلَيْكَ مِنْ تَشَاءُ ۖ وَمِنْ
 ابْتِغَيْتَ مِمَّنْ عَزَلْتَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكَ ۗ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ تَقْرَءَ عَيْنُهُنَّ
 وَلَا يَحْزَنَ وَيَرْضَيْنَ بِمَا آتَيْتَهُنَّ كُلَّهُنَّ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ ۗ
 وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَلِيمًا ﴿٥١﴾ ۝ لَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ النِّسَاءُ مِنْ بَعْدُ وَلَا أَنْ
 تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ حُسْنُهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ ۗ
 وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رَقِيبًا ﴿٥٢﴾

O prophet, We have made lawful for you all your wives whom you have given their dowers, And those (bondwomen) whom you own, out of the captives Allah has given to you as spoils of war, and daughters of your paternal uncle, and daughters of your paternal aunts, and daughters of your maternal uncle, and daughters of your maternal aunts, who have migrated with you, and a believing woman who offers herself for (marrying) the prophet without dower, if the prophet wishes to bring her into his marriage, these rules being exclusive for you, and not for the (rest of the) believers, — We know what We have prescribed for them in respect of their wives and the slave-girls they own --- so that there should be no difficulty for you. And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [50] You may postpone (the turn) of any one you wish from among them, and may accommodate with you any one you wish. And should you recall any one from those whom you kept aside, there is no blame on you. It is more likely, in this way, that their eyes will stay content, and they will not grieve, and all of them will be happy with whatever you give to them. And Allah knows whatever lies in your hearts. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. [51] No women are lawful for you after this, nor is it lawful that you replace them (the present wives) with other wives, even though their goodness may attract you,

except the bond-women you own. And Allah is watchful of every thing. [52]

Commentary

These verses contain seven injunctions about marriage and divorce that are specific to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and these specifics signify his distinctive eminence and his special honor. Some of these injunctions are such that their being specific to the Holy Prophet ﷺ is absolutely plain and obvious and some of them are such that, despite their being general for all Muslims, they are subject to certain conditions and qualifications that are specific to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The details are given below:

The First injunction

إِنَّا أَخْلَلْنَا لَكَ أَزْوَاجَكَ الَّتِي أَنْتَ أُجُورُهُنَّ (O prophet We have made lawful (*ḥalāl*) for you all your wives whom you have given their dowers - 50.) Apparently, this ruling is general for all Muslims, because their existing wives are lawful for them too, but the reason for its being specific is that, at the time of revelation of this verse, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had more than four wives, while it is not permissible for Muslims in general to keep more than four wives at any time. So it was particular for the Holy Prophet ﷺ that having more than four wives was made lawful for him.

The words, الَّتِي أَنْتَ أُجُورُهُنَّ "whom you have given their dowers" in this verse are not of restrictive nature nor a pre-condition for permissibility of keeping them as wives, but it is a statement of fact that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had paid the mahr (dower) of all the women with whom he had performed nikah promptly in cash and did not leave it as debt payable by him. His noble practice was to pay or give whatever was due to him immediately and become free of the liability, without delaying it unnecessarily. The statement of this fact is to persuade Muslims in general to follow this practice.

The second Injunction

وَمَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ مِمَّا آفَاءَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ (And those (bond women) whom you own out of the captives Allah has given to you as spoils of war").

The word آفَاءَ used here for the spoils of war is فَيْ 'fai' which in its technical sense is restricted to the wealth acquired from the enemy without actual fighting. But at times it is used for the spoils of war acquired through actual fighting. Here the word is used in a general

sense. Moreover, it does not mean that only those slave-girls will be lawful for him who would come to him as his share in the spoils of war, but the permissibility covers those bondwomen also who were purchased by him. But, apparently, in this injunction, there is nothing particular for the Holy Prophet ﷺ because this is a rule for all Muslims and the whole Ummah that those bondwomen whom they own as their share in the spoils of war or those who are purchased for a price are lawful for them. At the same time the style of the context indicates that the injunctions contained in these verses should have some special applications for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. As such it is stated in 'Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī' as a particularity of the Holy Prophet that just as the *nikāḥ* of any of his ﷺ wives with any other Muslim is not lawful after him, similarly any of his bondwomen is not lawful for any Muslim after him ﷺ. Accordingly the *nikāḥ* of Sayyidah Mariyah Al-Qibṭiyyah رضى الله عنها who was sent by the Roman Emperor Muqauqis as gift to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, was not made lawful for anyone after him.

The third Injunction

بَنَاتِ عَمِّكَ وَبَنَاتِ عَمَّتِكَ The daughters of paternal uncle and of paternal aunts and the daughters of the maternal uncle and of maternal aunt have been made lawful for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This injunction includes all the women of his "father's family and of his mother's family". And this rule is, though, applicable to all Muslims in general, yet in the case of the Holy Prophet ﷺ it has been subjected to a condition imposed on him exclusively that they must have migrated with him from Makkah- not necessarily in his company or at the same time, but the words, "with you" are to denote that they should have migrated at any time in accordance with his command. If any of them did not migrate for any reason, they did not become lawful for him as was the case with Umm Hani' رضى الله عنها, the daughter of his paternal uncle Abū Ṭālib who, as per her statement, was not lawful for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, because she did not migrate from Makkah.

Migration being the condition of lawfulness for the Holy Prophet ﷺ was only with regard to the women of his parent's family. This condition was not applicable to other women in general - their being Muslim was enough. The wisdom in applying this condition of migration for the women of his parent's family was perhaps that the women of the family

are proud of their family which is unbecoming for the wife of a prophet. This propensity was taken care of by imposing the condition of migration, because only that women would migrate whose love for Allah and His Messenger ﷺ prevails over her love for her family, home and property. Also, one has to suffer great difficulties during migration and these sufferings in the way of Allah have a special place in ones spiritual reform.

Fourth Injunction:

وَأَمْرًا مُّؤْمِنَةً إِنْ وَهَبَتْ نَفْسَهَا لِلنَّبِيِّ إِنْ أَرَادَ النَّبِيُّ أَنْ يَسْتَنْكِحَهَا خَالِصَةً لَّكَ مِنْ
دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And a believing woman who offers herself for (marrying) the prophet without dower if the prophet wishes to bring her into his marriage, these rules being exclusive for you, and not for the (rest of the) believers". (33:50)

The exclusiveness of this exception for the Holy Prophet ﷺ is absolutely obvious, because dower is an essential condition for the marriage of common Muslims, so much so that if, at the time of marriage, the woman says that she does not want any dower or the man says that he will not pay any dower, even this mutual agreement is considered by Shari'ah as null and void, and dower as prevalent in their families would become compulsory. Only the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been exclusively permitted to marry without dower when the woman is desirous of marriage with him without dower.

Scholars differ in determining whether the Holy Prophet ﷺ did actually marry a woman without dower who offered herself for marriage without dower. Some scholars say that marriage of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with a woman in this way is not proved, whereas some others have proved some such marriages (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī)

Some scholars have considered the sentence خَالِصَةً لَّكَ (exclusively for you) to be specific to the fourth injunction, whereas some other commentators like Zamkshshri, etc., have applied it to all the injunctions mentioned before it, meaning that all the above mentioned rules are exclusively for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. And at the end it is stated لِكَيْلَا يَكُونَ عَلَيْكَ حَرَجٌ which means that these injunctions have been made exclusive for the Holy Prophet ﷺ to save him from any difficulty. Of these

exclusive rules mentioned above, the first rule wherein more than four wives have been allowed for him and the fourth rule that marriage without dower has been made lawful for him are obviously meant to facilitate and remove difficulties; but the second, third and fifth rules apparently add more conditions which should increase difficulty. But this is a hint that despite these conditions being apparently more strict, they are, in fact, for his good because in their absence he would have suffered from mental anguish. As such, even the additional conditions are to remove his difficulty.

Fifth Injunction:

The fifth injunction deduced from the words "believing women" in the above verses is that unlike the common Muslims who can marry the Christian or Jewish women, it is not permissible for the Holy Prophet ﷺ to marry them. It is necessary for him that his wives are Muslims.

After stating the exclusiveness of the five rules for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the Holy Qur'ān has briefly mentioned the rule for Muslims in general:

قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا فَرَضْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِي أَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ

"We know what We have prescribed for them in respect of their wives and the slave girls they own" - 50.

It means that the above mentioned rules are exclusive for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but as for the marriage of other Muslims, Allah Knows what He has prescribed for them. For example, no Muslim can marry a woman without dower and a Muslim is allowed to marry a Christian or a Jewish woman. Similarly, the conditions in the previous rules determined to be obligatory for the Holy Prophet ﷺ are not applicable to other Muslims.

Towards the end, it is said, لِكَيْلَا يَكُونَ عَلَيْكَ حَرَجٌ (so that there should be no difficulty for you - 50). It means that these special injunctions in the matter of *nikāh* for the Holy Prophet ﷺ were prescribed so that he does not face any difficulty. As for the restrictions and conditions imposed on the Holy Prophet ﷺ and not on other Muslims which appear to be difficult, but keeping in view the expedience and wisdom under which the restrictions were placed, those restrictions were, in fact, to remove the spiritual discomfort and embarrassment.

So far five rules of marriage have been enunciated which have some exclusiveness for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Further on two rules have been stated which are related to the above five rules.

Sixth Injunctions

تُرْجَى مِنْ نَشَاءِ مِنْهُنَّ وَتَوَى إِلَيْكَ مِنْ نَشَاءِ ("You may postpone (the turn) of any one you wish from among them, and may accommodate with you any one you wish." - 51) This rule is specific to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The normal rule is that a Muslim husband having more than one wife must distribute his nights between his wives in equal numbers and similarly must provide means of sustenance and maintenance to each one of them equally. It is not permissible to violate the principle of equality. But the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been exempted from this rule and has been allowed to postpone the turn of any one of his blessed wives according to his own expedience; he could also recall the one whose turn he had postponed earlier.

Allah Almighty so honored the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he was exempted from observing equality between his wives but the Holy Prophet ﷺ never availed of this concession in practice; he always maintained full equality between all his blessed wives. Imām Abū Bakr al-Jassas has stated that as per narrations of Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ always maintained equality between the blessed wives even after the revelation of this verse; he goes on to a Ḥadīth from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها, with his own chain of narrators, which is also available in Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhī, Nasa'I, Abū Dāwūd etc.:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقْسِمُ فَيَعْدِلُ فَيَقُولُ: اللَّهُمَّ هَذَا قَسْمِي فِيمَا أَمْلِكُ فَلَا تَلْمَنِي فِيمَا لَا أَمْلِكُ قَالَ أَبُو دَاوُدَ يَعْنِي الْقَلْبَ

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to maintain equality between all wives and used to supplicate, "O Allah I have maintained equality in whatever is within my power (meaning provision of means of sustenance and in spending of nights), so do not reprove me for that which is not within my power (meaning love and affection being more for someone and less for another that is not within one's control).

According to another narration, also from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها and reported by Bukhārī, if the Holy Prophet ﷺ had to postpone his visit to any of the blessed wives at her turn, for some reason, he would seek her permission even after the revelation of this verse wherein he was

exempted from observing equality between his blessed wives.

Another Ḥadīth is also well known and is found in all books of Ḥadīth that when it became difficult for the Holy Prophet ﷺ during his last illness to move between the houses of his blessed wives on daily basis, he sought permission from all of them before staying in the house of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها where he passed the remaining days of his illness.

It was the habit of all the prophets in general, and that of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in particular, that whenever a concession was given to them by Allah Ta'ālā in a rule of Sharī'ah, they generally used to act upon the original rule as a demonstration of their gratitude to Allah, and did not avail of the concession except at a time of a dire need.

The wisdom of Sixth Injunction

The Holy Qur'an has then stated the wisdom of the sixth injunction i.e. exempting the Holy Prophet ﷺ from maintaining equality between his wives and making all options open for him in this regard. In the words of the Holy Qur'an the wisdom behind this exemption was the following, ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ تَقْرَأَ عَنْهُنَّ وَلَا يَحْزَنَّ وَيَرْضَيْنَ (it is more likely, in this way, that their eyes will stay content, and they will not grieve, and all of them will be happy with whatever you give to them. - 51)

A doubt may arise here that, apparently, this rule of exemption would be against the wishes and intent of the blessed wives رضى الله عنهن and may cause them anguish; how can it be considered to be a source of their happiness? In answer to this question, one has to bear in mind that the real reason for one's grievance is one's perception of his or her due rights. If one believes that a certain right is due on somebody and he is neglecting or violating it, then one feels hurt and aggrieved. But if somebody who does not owe us anything and still gives us something, this act of kindness generates sheer pleasure. Accordingly, when it has been stated that it is not obligatory upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ to observe equality among all the blessed wives رضى الله عنهن rather he may use his discretion, then whatever attention and company a wife gets from him would be considered a favor and an act of courtesy and kindness which would be a source of happiness and satisfaction.

At the end of this injunction the Holy Qur'an has declared:

وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَلِيمًا

"And Allah knows whatever lies in your hearts. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise." - 51

The context of the foregoing and forthcoming verses is the mention of the rules peculiar to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the matter of marriage. In between these rules, the statement that Allah knows whatever lies in your hearts and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise does not appear to bear any nexus with the subject. It is stated in Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī that the permission given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ to marry more than four wives or to marry without dower could have created satanic scruples in somebody's mind. So, this verse, coming in between, has directed that Muslims have to guard themselves against such suspicions and scruples and have to firm up their faith that all these exclusive exemptions are given by Allah Almighty on the basis of His infinite wisdom and expedience, and that the selfish desires have no room here.

The pious life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the issue of polygamy

The enemies of Islam have always targeted the issue of polygamy, specially the number of the wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ for their criticism. But if the whole life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is kept in view, even the Satan cannot find scope to cast doubts on the character of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is a proved fact that his first marriage at the age of twenty-five was with Sayyidah Khadijah رضى الله عنها who was an aged widow with children and had been married twice before. The Holy Prophet ﷺ spent his whole prime of life, upto the age of fifty, with that aged wife only. All these fifty years were spent right before the eyes of the people of Makkah who had started his opposition when he was of forty years and had announced his prophethood. His opponents did not leave any stone unturned in harassing and stigmatizing him. They called him a magician, a poet, a mad man, but no enemy could ever find a single chance to cast doubts in his piety, modesty or purity.

At the age of fifty, after the death of Sayyidah Khadijah, he married Sayyidah Sawdah رضى الله عنها who was also a widow.

After migration to Madinah, at the age of fifty-four, in the second year of Hijrah, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها came to the Holy Prophet's home as wife. He married Sayyidah Hafsa رضى الله عنها a year later and

Sayyidah Zainab bint Khuzaymah رضى الله عنها a few days after that, who expired a few months later. He married Sayyidah Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها, a widow with children, in the year 4 of Hijrah. In the year 5 when he was fifty eight years old, he married Sayyidah Zainab bint Jahsh رضى الله عنها in accordance with Allah's order, as detailed in the beginning of the present surah. The rest of the blessed wives entered his house in the last five years.

The rules pertaining to the private life of a prophet and his domestic affairs constitute a major portion of a religion. The contribution of these nine blessed wives رضى الله عنهما to the propagation and education of Islam can be imagined from the fact that Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها alone narrated two thousand two hundred and ten *aḥādīth* and Sayyidah Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها narrated three hundred and sixty-eight *aḥādīth* which have been collected in reliable books. Hafiz Ibn al-Qayyim, in his *I'lmul Muwaqqi'in*, has commented that the rulings of Shari'ah (fatawa) disclosed by Sayyidah Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها would constitute a separate book. More than two hundred noble companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were disciples of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها who learnt *ḥadīth*, *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and fatawa from her.

Another wisdom of bringing a number of the blessed wives رضى الله عنهما to the house of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was to attract their clans towards Islam. After keeping these facts in view and considering the general pattern of his pure life, can one find any scope for saying that the multiplicity of his wives was, Allah forbid, to fulfill selfish or sexual desires? If this was the case, why the last stage of life would have been selected for this purpose after spending the whole prime of life either in celibacy or with an aged widow. This subject along with the religious, intellectual, biological and economic issues of the polygamy has been thoroughly discussed with full details under the explanation of the third verse of Sūrah Nisa' in volume II of this book.

Seventh Injunction:

لَا يَجِلُّ لَكَ النِّسَاءُ مِنْ بَعْدُ وَلَا أَنْ تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ حُسْنُهُنَّ

(No women are lawful for you after this, nor is it lawful that you replace them (the present wives) with other wives, even though their goodness may attract you. - 52),

The words "من بعد" after this" in this verse may be interpreted in two ways. One is that no women are lawful for you after the present wives. Some noble companions رضي الله عنهم and leading commentators have adopted this meaning. Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه has stated that when the blessed wives رضي الله عنهن were given the choice by Allah Ta'ālā to either opt for the pleasure of the worldly life and its charms but separation from the Holy Prophet ﷺ or to remain with him and be content with every economic condition they may face, all of them gave up their demand for increase in maintenance and elected to remain with him. Allah Ta'ālā, as a reward for their decision, restricted the Holy Prophet ﷺ to those nine wives and it was no more permissible for him to marry other women. (Al-Baihaqi, as quoted by Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī)

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has stated that Allah Ta'ālā has restricted the blessed wives رضي الله عنهن exclusively to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in that they could not marry anybody after him. Similarly, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been restricted to the blessed wives in the sense that he could not marry any other women. Sayyidnā 'Ikrimah has also given this explanation as per one narration.

The second interpretation of these words, as reported by different authorities, like Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ikrimah and Mujahid, according to some narrations is that "من بعد" after this" means it is not lawful for the Holy Prophet ﷺ to marry any women beyond the categories mentioned in the earlier verse. For example, the earlier verse has allowed for him only those women of his parents' families who had migrated from Makkah to Madinah either with him or later, according to his command; similarly the restriction that his wife must be a Muslim has made the Christian or Jewish women unlawful for him. As such the meaning of the words, "after this" would be that he cannot marry those women who do not fall in the categories made lawful for him. Thus, according to this explanation, this is not a new injunction; it is rather an elaboration to highlight the consequential outcome of the rule already laid down in the preceding verse. According to this interpretation, this verse does not prohibit marriage with other women after the nine blessed wives رضي الله عنهن; instead, it prohibits marriage with non-Muslims and with women of the parents families who did not migrate, as already known from the previous verse.

This second interpretation finds support from a narration of Sayyidah 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها to the effect that the permission of further marriages remained applicable for him (even after the revelation of the present verse)

"Nor is it lawful that you replace them (the present wives) with other wives" - 52.

The clear meaning of these words in view of the second explanation of this verse is that although the Holy Prophet ﷺ is permitted to marry other women besides his present wives subject to the conditions mentioned, yet it is not lawful for him to divorce a wife and to marry another woman to replace her.

However, the meaning of these words in view of the first explanation of this verse would be that he can neither marry any woman in addition to the present wives, nor can he replace them by divorcing one and marrying another.

Towards the end of these verses it is clarified that a bond woman owned by the Holy Prophet ﷺ is exempt from fifth and seventh rules in the sense that she is lawful for him, even if she is a Christian or Jew, and it is also permitted for him to replace her with another bondwoman. Lastly it has been reminded that Allah Ta'ālā is watchful of everything's reality, appearance and underlying reasons. All these injunctions and rules are based on divine wisdom and expedience, even if the wisdom is not stated specifically, and hence no one has the right to question them or raise objections against them.

Verses 53 - 55

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَى
طَعَامٍ غَيْرِ نَظِيرِينَ إِنَّهُ لَا وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ
فَانْتَشِرُوا وَلَا مُسْتَأْنِسِينَ لِحَدِيثٍ ۗ إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ يُؤْذَى النَّبِيَّ
فَيَسْتَحْيِي مِنْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۗ وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا

فَسَعَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ ۖ ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَنْ تَنْكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا ۗ إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا ﴿٥٣﴾ إِنْ تَبَدُّوا شَيْئًا أَوْ تَخَفُوهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٥٤﴾ لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِنَّ فِي آبَائِهِنَّ وَلَا أَبْنَائِهِنَّ وَلَا إِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَلَا أَبْنَاءَ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَلَا أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ وَلَا نِسَائِهِنَّ وَلَا مَمَالِكْتِ أَيْمَانِهِنَّ ۗ وَاتَّقِينَ اللَّهَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا ﴿٥٥﴾

O those who believe, do not enter the houses of the Prophet, unless you are permitted for a meal, not (so early as) to wait for its preparation. But when you are invited, go inside. Then, once you have had the meal, then disperse, and (do) not (sit for long) being keen for a chat. This (conduct of yours) hurts the Prophet, but he feels shy of (telling) you (about it). And Allah is not shy of the truth. And when you ask any thing from them (the blessed wives of the Prophet), ask them from behind a curtain. That is better for the purity of your hearts and their hearts. And it is not allowed for you that you hurt Allah's Messenger, nor that you ever marry his wives after him. Indeed, it would be an enormity in the sight of Allah. [53] If you disclose any thing, or conceal it, Allah is All-Knowing about every thing. [54] There is no sin for them (the wives of the Prophet) in (appearing without *hijāb* before) their fathers, or their brothers, or the sons of their brothers, or the sons of their sisters, or their own (Muslim) women, or their slave-girls. And (O wives of the Prophet,) fear Allah. Surely, Allah is witness to every thing. [55]

Commentary

These verses have laid down some etiquettes and rules of Islamic social behavior. The reason for mentioning them in the context of the previous verses is that these rules were initially revealed for the Holy Prophet's household and his wives, although their applicability is not specific or exclusive to him.

The First Injunction

Etiquettes for hosts and guests

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَى طَعَامٍ غَيْرٍ نَظِيرٍ إِنَّهُ
وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوا وَلَا مُسْتَأْسِنِينَ لِحَدِيثٍ

(O those who believe, do not enter the houses of the Prophet, unless you are permitted for a meal, not (so early as) to wait for its preparation. But when you are invited, go inside. Then, once you have had the meal, then disperse, and (do) not (sit for long) being keen for a chat. This (conduct of yours) hurts the Prophet, but he feels shy of (telling) you (about it). And Allah is not shy of the truth). (33:53)

This verse has laid down three rules pertaining to a situation where a person is invited to have meal in someone's house. These rules are applicable to all Muslims in general, but since they were prompted by an incident which took place in the house of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, therefore the Prophet's ﷺ house has been mentioned in the text.

The first rule is: "لا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ" "Do not enter the houses of the Prophet, unless you are permitted.."

The second etiquette is that despite invitation to dine and permission to enter the house, one should not enter the house so early as to wait for the meal's preparation; rather he should go inside the house when he is invited to do so.

The third etiquette is that once the invitees have had the meal, they should disperse and should not sit for long being keen for a chat. This direction is restricted to the general cases where guests' sitting for long after having the meal causes inconvenience to the host, either because the host wants to get busy with his own work, or because he has to serve meals to others after these guests. But where the practice and norm is that the guests remaining busy in conversation till late after they had their meals does not pose any problem for the hosts, as it has become customary in dinners and parties these days, this rule would not apply, because the next sentence of the verse has specifically highlighted the reason of this rule where it is said that this behavior brings discomfort to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In the specific incident that was the cause of the revelation of this verse, the meals were served in the ladies apartments of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the discomfort caused to the family members

because of the guests staying till late is obvious.

The verse also states that although such behavior of the guests hurts the Holy Prophet ﷺ, yet since they are his own guests, he feels shy of telling and educating them about it, but Allah Ta'ālā is not shy of telling them the truth.

The above sentence of the verse also tells us the extent to which a host is required to show respect and give honor and regard to his guests, because despite the fact that it was one of the obligations of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to teach people how they should behave when they are invited as guests, he postponed to teach his own guests this etiquette (lest they should feel disgraced) till Allah Ta'ālā Himself taught this etiquette in the Qur'ān.

The Second Injunction - Ḥijāb for Women

وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَسْأَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ

And when you ask any thing from them (the blessed wives of the Prophet), ask them from behind a curtain. That is better for the purity of your hearts and their hearts. (33:53)

This rule has also been prompted by a particular incident involving the blessed wives ﷺ, but the rule is general for the whole Ummah. Briefly, the rule states that if non-*mahram* men have to ask anything of common use from women, they should ask them from behind a curtain - not face to face. The reason stated for this rule is that it is better for the purity of the hearts of both.

The special Importance of Women's Ḥijāb

It is worth noting here that the men and women who are the direct addressees of these rules of ḥijāb are, on the one hand, the women who are the blessed wives رضي الله عنهما of the Holy Prophet ﷺ the purification of whose hearts has been undertaken by Allah Ta'ālā Himself as mentioned in the verse preceding the present one, and on the other hand they are the men who are the noble companions ﷺ of the Holy Prophet ﷺ many of whom have been exalted even above angels. Despite all these credentials, *ḥijāb* was deemed to be necessary between men and women for the purity of their hearts and to protect them from sensual scruples. Who can claim that his inner-self is purer than those of the noble companions ﷺ and the inner-selves of his women are purer than those of

the blessed wives رضى الله عنهن and thus believe that mixing of men and women would not have any bad consequences?

The Background of the revelation of these verses

Different incidents have been related by the commentators as the background for the revelation of the these verses. But there is no contradiction between these narrations, because it is likely that all these incidents combined together constitute the reason for the revelation. As for the first verse which lays down the etiquettes of guests, its background is mentioned by Sulaymān Ibn Arqam, as reported by Ibn Abī Hatim, that it was revealed about some boorish people who would enter a house without being invited and keep waiting there for the preparation of a meal.

And Imām ‘Abd Ibn Ḥumaid has reported the statement of Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه that this verse was revealed about some people who would look for an opportunity to enter and sit in the Holy Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم house well before the time of dining, remain busy in conversation between themselves till the preparation of the meal and then would join the dining. These incidents took place before the injunction of *ḥijāb* when men used to enter women's apartments.

As for the second rule relating to the *ḥijāb* of women, Imām Bukhari has cited two narrations about the reason for its revelation. One is narrated by Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه that Sayyidnā ‘Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه said to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, "O Messenger of Allah ! you are visited by all sorts of people, and as such it appears advisable that you order your blessed wives رضى الله عنهن to observe *Hijāb*". At this, the verse of *ḥijāb* was revealed.

Imām Bukhari and Imām Muslim both have reported the following statement of Sayyidnā ‘Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه :

وافقت ربي في ثلث: قلت يا رسول الله! لو اتخذت في مقام إبراهيم مصلًى، فأنزل الله تعالى واتخذوا من مقام إبراهيم مصلًى وقلت: يا رسول الله! إن نساءك يدخل عليهن البر والفاجر فلو حجبتهن فأنزل الله آية الحجاب وقلت لأزواج النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لما تمالأن عليه في الغيرة عسى ربه إن طلقكن أن يبدله أزواجاً خيراً منكن، فنزلت كذلك

"My opinion appeared to be in consonance with my Lord in three things. One is that I asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ to adopt the Station of Ibrāhīm (Maqām Ibrāhīm) as the place of your prayers (Ṣalāh). Then Allah Ta'ālā revealed the verse *وَاتَّخِذُوا مِنْ مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى* (And take the Station of Ibrāhīm as a place of prayer). And I said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that all sorts of good and bad people appear before your blessed wives *رضى الله عنهن* ; it would be better if you ask them to observe *ḥijāb*. Then the verse of *ḥijāb* was revealed. And when the blessed wives *رضى الله عنهن* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ developed envy between themselves, I told them that if the Messenger of Allah ﷺ divorces you, it is not unlikely that Allah Ta'ālā may provide him wives better than you. So Qur'an was revealed in the same very words."

Sayyidnā 'Umar's respectful speech is worth noting that instead of saying that his Lord accorded with him in three things, he said that his opinion was found to be in consonance with Him in three things.

Another narration reported in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, also from Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه is that he said:

"I know the facts about the verse of *ḥijāb* more than anybody else, because I was present when Sayyidah Zainab bint Jahsh *رضى الله عنها*, after her marriage with the Holy Prophet ﷺ, entered his house and was present in the house with him, when some of the people whom he had invited for *walimah* (the dining arranged after consummation of marriage) which he ﷺ had got prepared for them, just kept sitting there and talking. The narration in Tirmidhī adds that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was also present there along with Sayyidah Zainab *رضى الله عنهن* and she had turned her face towards the wall due to modesty. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was displeased by the people sitting there so long; he went out of the house to meet and greet other blessed wives *رضى الله عنهن*. When he came back, they were still there. And then they realized and dispersed. The Holy Prophet entered the house, but came out after a little while. I was present there. He recited this verse of *ḥijāb* which had been revealed just at that time.

The narrations of Ḥadīth mention these three incidents as the causes for the revelation of the verses of *ḥijāb*. There is no contradiction between them, because possibly all the three incidents combined together constitute the cumulative cause of the revelation of these verses.

The Third Injunction

وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَنْ تُنكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا ("And it is not allowed for you that you hurt Allah's Messenger, nor that you ever marry his wives after him".) (33:53)

The first part of this verse has declared all such utterances and actions unlawful (*ḥarām*) which cause anguish or hurt to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Then it is laid down that no one can marry his blessed wives *رضى الله عنهن* after him.

All the rules mentioned in this verse are though addressed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ or his blessed wives *رضى الله عنهن*, their application is general for the whole Ummah, except this last rule which is specific to the blessed wives *رضى الله عنهن* that they cannot marry any one after him, while the rule for the Ummah in general is that after the death of the husband, his wife can marry another person after the expiry of the period of *iddah*. The reason may be that according to Qur'ān, the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are mothers of the Muslims, and although their being mothers does not affect their spiritual offspring in the sense that, being brothers and sisters, they would not be able to marry each other, yet their motherhood was limited to their own-selves in the sense that they cannot marry anyone.

It may also be said that they Holy Prophet ﷺ is alive in his honored grave, his *رضى الله عنهن* expiry being like a husband missing from his home. That is why his inheritance was not distributed, and that is why his blessed wives *رضى الله عنهن* were not in the same situation as that of the wives of common men after the death of their husbands.

Another reason for this injunction is that according to the rule of Shari'ah, every woman in Paradise would be with her last husband. Sayyidnā Hudhaifah *رضى الله عنه* had told his wife at his death that if you wish to be my wife in Paradise, do not marry any one after me because in Paradise, a woman would go to her last husband. (Qurtubī)

So, the honor that Allah Ta'ālā had bestowed upon the blessed wives *رضى الله عنهن* in this world was thus preserved for them in paradise also by forbidding their marriage to anyone after him.

Besides, no husband naturally likes that his wife should marry

anyone, but for common people, the Shari'ah did not make it necessary to fulfill this desire. Allah Ta'ālā, by respecting this natural desire of the Holy Prophet ﷺ bestowed an exclusive honour upon him.

There is a consensus in the Ummah that the above rules apply to all the blessed wives رضى الله عنهن who remained in the bond of marriage with the Holy Prophet ﷺ till his expiry. However there are different views about whether or not this rule is applicable to those of his wives who were either divorced by him or who separated from him for some other reason. Qurtubī has detailed these views.

إِنَّ ذَلِكَ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا (Indeed, it would be an enormity in the sight of Allah - 53). It means that causing any harm to or to hurt the Holy Prophet ﷺ in any way or to marry his wives after him would be an enormity in the eyes of Allah.

إِنْ تُبْدُوا شَيْئًا أَوْ تَخْفَوْهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا (If you disclose any thing, or conceal it, Allah is All-Knowing about every thing - 33:54). It has been repeated again in this verse that Allah Ta'ālā knows even the intents and thoughts hidden in the hearts. So whether you disclose or conceal, Allah Ta'ālā knows it all. What is being emphasized here is that one should not let any doubt or suspicion enter one's mind or heart about the above-stated rules, and must avoid any violation of these rules.

The issue of Hijāb for women, out of the three injunctions in the above mentioned verse, needs some further elaboration which is being given below.

Injunctions of Hijāb

And the Islamic system for prevention of misdeeds

Immodesty, adultery and the overtures leading to them are some of those destructive evils of this world which do not only affect the individuals, but also ruin families and tribes, and sometimes destroy large countries as well. If the cases of murder and plunder in this world are thoroughly investigated, sexual emotions would be found behind the scenes. This is the reason that ever since this world came into existence, there has been no nation, religion or region that has not unanimously believed in the evil and destructive nature of these misdeeds.

The European nations in the present age, after doing away with the religions limits and breaking away from their ancient and entrenched customs and traditions, do not consider adultery a crime in itself and they have moulded their culture and society in such a fashion that sexual anarchy and immodest acts are permitted freely, but even they could not exclude the consequences of these evil acts from the list of the crimes - prostitution, rape and obscenities in public had to be declared punishable offences.

This is really comparable to somebody collecting inflammables, sprinkling oil on them, then setting them on fire and when it bursts into flames, then prohibiting the flames and taking measures to stop them. Another example would be to kindle a fire under a cooking pot and then try to stop it from steaming and boiling.

Islam, on the other hand, when declares some harmful acts as punishable offences, it also imposes restrictions on the overtures leading to them and declares them forbidden also. In the present case the real objective was to prevent adultery and fornication. So the start was made by the rule to keep one's eyes down, by preventing free mixing of men and women, by directing women to stay inside the four walls of houses; by requiring women to cover their bodies from head to feet by means of a covering dress called '*burqa*' or simply by a longish shawl when they have to go out due to some need, and to walk on the side of the street and not to wear perfume or to wear a ringing ornament when going out. If someone crosses all these limits, breaks all these barriers and defies all the restrictions to do what is forbidden, then the punishment is so severe and terrifying that once it is given to some adulterer or fornicator, the whole nation would learn an unforgettable lesson.

The Europeans and their camp-followers have put forward arguments justifying their obscenities by trying to prove the *ḥijāb* for women to be harmful for the society in regard to women's health, economic and social status and by trying to prove the benefits for women being without *ḥijāb*. Their detailed rejoinder has been given by many modern scholars in their books. Here it would be adequate to understand that no crime or sin is devoid of some gain or benefit. Even stealing, robbery, cheating are very profitable in some respects. But when the destructive harms that take place as a result and consequence of these acts come to view, nobody

dares to call them profitable businesses. The absence of *ḥijāb* for women, even if it has economic gains, cannot be called beneficial by sensible and wise people when it engulfs the whole nation and the country in mischief and disorder.

The Golden Islamic Principle of Barring the Ways and Means for Prevention of Crimes in a moderate manner

Just as the basic principles of faith, like belief in the Oneness of Allah, the prophethood and in the life Hereafter are common to the religious systems of all the prophets, similarly crimes, obscenities and evil deeds have been held unlawful (*ḥarām*) in all revealed laws and divine religions. But in the previous religions and their laws, the ways and means which led to the violations were not declared absolutely unlawful in themselves, unless a crime or sin was committed through them. But since the Shari'ah of Islam has to be in force till the Doomsday, it has been safeguarded by Allah Ta'ālā specially in that not only the crimes and sins but even their causes and means that normally lead one to those crimes and sins have been declared unlawful themselves. For example, when drinking was forbidden, the processing, selling purchasing and presentation of alcoholic drinks was also forbidden. Similarly when interest and usury was forbidden, then all affairs involving interest or resembling usury were also declared unlawful. That is why the Islamic jurists have declared all profits derived from invalid businesses to be filthy earning like interest. To associate any being with Allah Ta'ālā (Shirk) and idolatry have been declared by Qur'ān to be the greatest injustice and unpardonable sins, so severe prohibitions have been placed on their causes and means also. Since the polytheists (*mushrikin*) used to worship the sun at sunrise, sunset and at midday, saying of prayers (Ṣalah) in those particular times would bear a resemblance to sun worshipers and this resemblance itself could lead to 'Shirk', therefore the revealed laws declared even saying of prayers (Ṣalah) and prostration (Sajdah) to be unlawful (Ḥarām) in those times. Statues and pictures of idols are very close to idolatry, so sculpturing of idol's statues and making of their pictures is forbidden and their usage is not permissible.

Similarly while forbidding adultery, all its immediate causes and means have also been declared unlawful by Shari'ah. To look at any boy or woman with sexual lust is held as a fornication through the eyes, to

hear their speech with that intent is held as fornication through the ears, to touch them as fornication through the hands and to walk in their pursuit as fornication through the feet, as recorded in authentic Ḥadīth. The injunctions of *ḥijāb* for women were revealed to safeguard one against these very sins.

But there is a very long list of causes and means - immediate and distant. if even the distant causes of a sinful act are forbidden, life would become very difficult and considerable difficulty would be faced in carrying out day-to-day affairs which is against the nature of this religion. The Holy Qur'ān's open declaration in this matter is: *مَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ*. It means that no difficulty has been placed on you in religion. Therefore, in the matter of causes and means, it was wisely decided that those acts and deeds which are such immediate causes of any sin that, generally, one who commits them does necessarily get involved in that sin, have been annexed with the real sin and forbidden as well. If one commits some acts and deeds that are distant causes of a sin and do not necessarily involve one generally in that sin, but they do have some share in the involvement in it, they have been declared reprehensible (*makruh*). Those causes which are even farther away from involving one in a sin, and which cause one's involvement in very rare cases, they have been considered permissible.

An example of the first case is selling of alcoholic drinks which has been declared as unlawful as drinking itself, because it is an immediate means of drinking. Similarly touching a non-mahram woman, although not fornication in itself, but since it is an immediate cause and means for it, it has also been declared unlawful like the fornication is unlawful.

An example of the second case would be selling of grapes to a person about whom it is known that he would make wine out of the grapes, either because he is a wine maker by profession or because he has clearly said that this is his purpose for its purchase. This is not unlawful in the same way as selling of alcoholic drinks, but this is reprehensible and not permissible. The same rule applies to renting out land or building for a cinema house or an interest-based bank that if it was known at the time of finalizing the deal or contract that the purpose of living for rent is not permissible, then renting would be *Makruh Tahrimī* (reprehensible bordering on being unlawful).

An example of the third case would be selling of grapes to the common public. While it is possible that anyone of them might make wine out of the grapes, but neither has anyone said that he will do so, nor is it in the seller's knowledge that anyone makes wine, such sale and purchase has been considered permissible under the rules.

Important Caution

It is important to note that all those acts and deeds which have been declared unlawful by the rules because they are immediate causes or means of involving one in sin, all of them are absolutely unlawful now after the injunction, irrespective of whether these acts involved one in sin or not; their being unlawful is itself a permanent rule of the religion and its violation is impermissible.

It is easier to understand, after this introductory explanation that *ḥijāb* for women is also based upon this principle of barring the ways and means of a sin that leads to getting involved in sin. Here also the rules for the three categories of causes aforementioned would apply. For example, a young woman's uncovering her body in front of a young man is such an immediate cause of commission of sin that as per general nature of men and women, this act would almost certainly lead to commission of sin. Therefore the rules declare it to be forbidden just as fornication is forbidden. Now that this act has been ruled to be the same as fornication, it is absolutely prohibited, even if the person involved is innocent or he is positive that he would not commit the further sin because he has control over himself. The exemption of the circumstances of necessity, medical treatment, etc. do not effect its being forbidden. Even the change of times and ages do not affect it because the rule is just as applicable today in these times of evil and adultery as it was in the first period of Islam.

The second category of the causes would be that women step out of the four walls of their houses wearing *burqa'* (dress which covers from head to feet) or a longish shawl to cover their bodies completely from head to feet. This is a distant cause of *fitnah* (mischief). The rule in this case is that if doing so would cause *fitnah*, then it is not permissible but if there is no apprehension of *fitnah* in doing so, then it is permissible. Therefore this rule is subject to change depending upon circumstances and times. Such outings of women were not cause of mischief during the period of

the Holy Prophet ﷺ. That is why he had given permission to women to go to mosques after having covered themselves completely from head to feet, subject to certain conditions and he had forbidden people from preventing women from going to mosques. Even at that time, although women were being persuaded to offer their prayers in their own homes, because, for them, the reward of offering prayers in their homes is greater than the reward of offering their prayers in mosques, but they were not disallowed from saying their prayers in mosques because there was no apprehension of *fitnah*. The noble companions ؓ, after the expiry of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, realized that going of women to mosques, even if they are covered from head to feet, was no longer free from apprehension of *fitnah*, so they evolved a consensus among themselves and stopped women from joining the congregation in mosques. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها stated that if the Holy Prophet ﷺ could see the circumstances prevailing today, he would, most certainly, have stopped women from going to mosques. This tells us that the decision of the noble companions was no different from that of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, rather the rule itself changed according to the change in conditions as laid down by the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The rules regarding Ḥijāb for women have been stated in seven verses of the Holy Qur'ān - three in Sūrah An-Nūr earlier, four in Sūrah Al-Aḥzab out of which one is mentioned earlier, the second is under review and the other two would come later, wherein the determination of the category of Ḥijāb, details of the rules and the exemptions have been stated in detail. Similarly, in more than seventy *aḥādīth* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the verbal and practical orders of Ḥijāb have been stated. All these injunctions, rules and regulations have been collected by the author in a booklet titled "Tafsilul Khitāb fī Tafsīrī 'Āyat- il-ḥijāb" in Arabic language, already published as a part of Sūrah Al-Aḥzab in "Aḥkām- ul Qur'ān", some important extracts of which are being reproduced below.

The Advent of Ḥijāb in Historical Perspective

Free mixing among men and women has never been considered appropriate in the entire history of the world from Sayyidnā 'Ādam ؑ to the last prophet, Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ, and it is no peculiarity of the people following religious codes; in fact, such mixing has not been held as proper in good families universally.

At the time when Sayyidnā Mūsā ﷺ was traveling through Madyan, two women are mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān who were standing aside, holding their flock of goats while waiting for their turn to take these to the water trough. The reason given for this is no other but that these women did not like to push and shove into the crowd of men, instead, preferred to remain content with whatever water was left. The first verse of Ḥijāb was revealed at the time of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab bint Jahsh رضى الله عنها. Even before its revelation, a narration appearing in the Jami' of Tirmidhī describes the position in which she was sitting in the house: وَهِيَ مُوَلِّئَةٌ وَجْهَهَا إِلَى الْحَائِطِ (and she was [sitting] with her face turned towards the wall).

This tells us that, even before the revelation relating to Ḥijāb, the custom of free mixing among men and women, no-holds-barred dates, rendezvous, get-togethers and chats did not exist among good people anywhere. The First Age of Ignorance marked by personal display (*tabarruj*) by its women referred to in the Qur'ān was something peculiar to bondwomen and women of loose character - certainly, not in good families of Arabia. They saw it as low and reprehensible. The whole history of Arabia bears testimony to this. In India, among the adherents of Hindu, Buddhist and other polytheistic faiths, free mixing between men and women was not tolerated. All those claims of working with men shoulder to shoulder, parading in bazaars and streets, free mixing of men and women in almost every department of life and the chain of intimate contacts in parties and clubs are the product of immodesty and obscenity among Europeans - a disease they too have been afflicted with after having veered away from their past. In those earlier days of theirs, they too were no victims of this situation they are in. Allah Ta'ālā has created women physically different from men. Similarly, He has also placed in their temperaments the essential ingredient of natural modesty which automatically inclines them to maintain a certain aloofness from the general run of men and to remain properly covered. This screen of natural and temperamental modesty has always been present there between women and men since the very beginning. In the early period of Islam too, the mutually imposed absence of free mixing - a forerunner of the Ḥijāb - was of this very nature.

This particular kind of the Ḥijāb of women - that the real place for

women be within the walls of the home and when they have to go out to take care of a need valid in the sight of the Shari'ah, then, they go out after having covered their whole body - was instituted after the hijrah to Madīnah in the Hijrah year 5. Relevant details follow.

By a consensus of the scholars of Muslim Ummah, the first verse about this kind of Ḥijāb is the one mentioned above: لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ (do not enter the houses of the Prophet - 53) and this verse was revealed at the time of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab bint Jahsh رضى الله عنها and her entry into the home of the prophet as his blessed wife. As for the date of this marriage, Ḥafiz Ibn Hajar in Isabah and Ibn 'Abd-ul-Barr in Isti'ab have reported two sayings that it took place in the Hijrah year 3, or in the Hijrah year 5. Ibn Kathīr has preferred Hijrah year 5. Ibn Sa'd has reported Hijrah year 5 also from Sayyidnā Anas رضى الله عنه, This very view seems to be the preferred one from some narrations of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها as well. And Allah knows best.

In the cited verse, women were ordered to observe Ḥijāb and men were ordered to ask from them, if they have to ask for something, from behind the Ḥijāb. Here, particular emphasis has been placed on the observation of Ḥijāb in the sense that non-maḥram men and women have to remain apart, however, should there be the need to talk to women, men could do so from behind a Ḥijāb, curtain or something that obstructs the view.

Revealed in the noble Qur'an there are seven verses about the Ḥijāb of women and its details. Out of these, four have gone by right here in Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb while three of them have already appeared in Sūrah An-Nūr (Mā'ariful-Qur'an, Volume VI). It is universally agreed upon that the first verse to have been revealed about Ḥijāb is this very verse: لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤَدِّنَ لَكُمْ (Do not enter the houses of the prophet, unless you are permitted for a meal - 53). The three verses of Sūrah An-Nūr and the initial verse of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb where the blessed wives have been commanded to stay in their homes though appear earlier in the order of the Qur'an, yet in terms of their revelation, they come later. It has been explicitly said in the initial verse of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb that the said command has been given at a time when the blessed wives were divinely given the right to choose one of the following two courses. If they wanted to have extended worldly means, they should take a divorce from the

Holy Prophet ﷺ, and if they preferred the benefits of the Hereafter and were willing to remain satisfied with whatever worldly means were available to them in their present state of life, then, they could stay married to him.

It has also been mentioned in this event of choice that, among the wives given this choice, Sayyidah Zainab bint Jaḥsh رضى الله عنها was also included. This tells us that her marriage was already solemnized before the revelation of this verse. The said verse came after that. Similarly, there are the verses of Sūrah An-Nūr that carry details relating to Ḥijāb. These are, though earlier in the order of the Qur'ān, but in terms of their sequence of revelation, they too have been revealed with the incident of *Ifk* which came to pass on return from the battle of Banī al-Mustaliq or Muraisi'. This battle took place in the Hijrah year 6 - and the injunctions governing the Islamic legal Ḥijāb came to be enforced from the time when the verse of Ḥijāb was revealed in relevance to the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab رضى الله عنها. The verses of Sūrah An-Nūr relating to Ḥijāb have already appeared in Sūrah An-Nūr (Mā'ariful-Qur'ān, Volume VI).

The difference between the injunctions of *Satr-ul-'Aurah* and Veiling of Women (Ḥijāb)

The part of the body, of a man or woman, called '*awrah* عورت in Arabic, *satr* (ستر) in Urdu and Persian is something the concealing of which is obligatory for everyone - legally, naturally and rationally - and is, after the initial article of Faith (Imān), the foremost obligation which must be carried out necessarily by concealing the private parts of the body. This duty has remained an obligation since the very beginning and has been a standing obligation in all religious codes brought by the noble prophets عليهم السلام. In fact, even before the advent of religious codes when, because of the tasting of the forbidden fruit in Jannah, the Paradisical apparel of Sayyidnā 'Ādam and Sayyidah Ḥawwā' came off leaving the cover-worthy parts of the body uncovered, even in that situation which was beyond his control, Sayyidnā 'Ādam ﷺ did not take it as permissible. Therefore, both of them, Sayyidnā 'Ādam and Sayyidah Ḥawwā', covered their private parts by placing a string of leaves over them. Thus, their '*awrah* came to be concealed. This is what is meant by the verse of the Qur'ān: طَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ (and they began to patch together upon themselves some leaves of Paradise - 7:22). From the

coming of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام into this world right up to the last of the prophets, Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa ﷺ, the concealment of 'awrah has remained obligatory in the religious code of every prophet. There could be a difference in the precise determination and limitation of body parts to be concealed, but the essential obligation of *satr* is decisively established in all religious codes of the prophets. Then, this obligation applies to all human beings, men and women, in its own right - whether nor not there be someone else to see. For this reason, should there be a person who offers his Ṣalah in naked state in the darkness of night - then, despite the fact that nobody is seeing him, his Ṣalah will not be acceptable, if he does have with him something to wear that is sufficient to cover the private parts of his body (*Satr*) - (Al-Baḥr- ur-Rā'iq).

There is no difference of opinion in the fact that it is obligatory to cover those parts of the body which are included in 'awrah' before people, even when one is not performing Ṣalah. But, in a state of privacy where no one is around to look, even there, it is not permissible, according to the correct view, to sit naked with one's coverable parts ('awrah) exposed without a need recognized by the Sharī'ah, (Al-Baḥr from Sharḥ al-Munyah).

This much was about the injunction of *satr-ul-'awrah* (the concealment of the coverable parts of the body) which has been obligatory from the advent of Islam, rather, from the very beginning, in all religious codes of the noble prophets, and in which, men and women are equal, equal in private and in public, just as it is not permissible to be naked before people, it is also not permissible to stay unnecessarily naked when alone or in private.

The second issue - the Ḥijāb of women

Ḥijāb essentially requires that women do not appear before male strangers without proper cover. About this issue, at least this much has always remained established among prophets and the righteous and noble persons that there should be no free mixing between male strangers and women. In the incident about the two daughters of Sayyidnā Shu'aib عليه السلام, it is mentioned in the Qur'ān (Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:23, Part 20) that when the girls went to water their goats on the public well in the locality, they found it crowded with people who were watering their own flocks. It appears in the Qur'ān that these girls were standing aside, aloof from them. Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, who was passing by as a traveler, saw the

girls standing so aloof from others. When he asked them about the reason for it, they told him two things:

1. 'Right now, there is a crowd of men out there. We shall water our goats when these people will have finished watering gone'.

2. 'Our father is old and weak' which indicates that coming out to water domestic animals was not the job of women in terms of the commonly recognized practice. But, it was because of the old age and weakness of the father, or because of the absence of any other man around, they had to do this job.

This state of the daughters of Sayyidnā Shu'aib رضي الله عنه pointed out in the noble Qur'ān tells us that, even during that time and in their religious code too, free mixing of men and women and their working together shoulder to shoulder was not liked. In fact, any job which caused free contact with men was just not entrusted with women. However, keeping this whole thing in view, it appears that the injunction requiring women to observe regular Ḥijāb was yet to be enforced formally. Similarly, during the early period of Islam, the same situation kept prevailing. It was in the Hijrah year 3 or 5 that women were obligated with the observance of Ḥijāb before male strangers, the details of which appear later.

Now we know that the *satr* of 'awrah and the Ḥijāb of women are two separate issues and different from each other. *Satr-ul-'awrah* (concealment of coverable parts) has always been obligatory. The Ḥijāb of women was made obligatory in the Hijrah year 5. *Satr-ul-'awrah* is obligatory on men and women both while Ḥijāb is obligatory on women only. *Satr-ul-'awrah* is obligatory both in public and in private while Ḥijāb is obligatory only in the presence of male strangers. These details have been provided for the reason that by the jumbling of both these issues so many doubts rise impeding the understanding of the rulings and injunctions of the Qur'ān. For example, the face and the palms of a woman are excluded from *Satr-ul-'awrah* under the authority of consensus (*ijma'*). Therefore, should the face and palms remain uncovered in the state of Ṣalāh, the Ṣalāh is permissible, as agreed upon and as borne by consensus. As for face and palms, these are exempt in accordance with definitive textual authority. The feet have been

exempted by Muslim jurists on the analogy of face and palms.

But, whether or not the face and palms are exempted in the observance of Ḥijāb before male strangers is a matter in which difference exists, details of which have appeared earlier under the commentary on the verse of Sūrah An-Nūr: لَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا (and must not expose their adornment except that which appears thereof - 24:31), a summary of which will follow later.

The degrees of Islamic legal Ḥijāb and the injunctions relating to them

The sum of seven verses of the Qur'ān and seventy narrations of Ḥadīth about the Ḥijāb of women seems to be that the real objective desirable in the sight of the Shari'ah is Ḥijāb-ul-ashkhas i.e. physical hiding of women from strangers. In other words, women and their movement should remain hidden from the sight of men, something that can be accomplished by means of the four walls of homes or tents or hanging curtains. All forms of Ḥijāb allowed other than this are all restricted by or conditional with the ground of need, time of need and measure of need.

Thus, the first degree of Ḥijāb - which is the really desired objective of the Shari'ah - is that women stay in their homes. But, the Shari'ah of Islam is a comprehensive and complete social system in which full consideration has been given to all human needs. Then, it is all too obvious that women will face inevitable circumstances when they have to go out of the house at some or the other time. For this purpose, the second degree of Ḥijāb, in the light of the Qur'ān, and Sunnah, seems to be that they should go out wearing a *burqa'* or long *shawl* concealing their whole body. To see their way, they leave only one eye open from inside the sheet, or use a patch of net before the eyes as is placed in a *burqa'* for this purpose. On occasions of need, this second degree of Ḥijāb too - like the first one - is agreed upon among all Muslim scholars and jurists.

From some narrations of Ḥadīth, there seems to emerge a third degree of Ḥijāb as well - in which the views of Ṣaḥābah, the Tabi'in and the jurists of Muslim community differ - according to which women, when they go out from the house, of necessity, they can let their face and palm remain open before people subject to the condition that their entire body is

concealed. A detailed description of these three degrees of Islamic legal Ḥijāb follows.

The first degree of Ḥijāb from people by virtue of staying home

According to the Qur'ān and Sunnah, this degree is the one really desired. It stands clearly proved by the verse of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb under study right now: **وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَاسْأَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ** (And when you ask any thing from them (the blessed wives of the Prophet), ask them from behind a curtain - 53). Still more explicit is the very initial verse of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb, that is: **وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ** (And remain in your homes.) The manner in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ put the guidance given in these verses into practice hardly leaves room for any further explanation.

We have already come to know that the first verse about the Ḥijāb of women was revealed at the time of the marriage of Sayyidah Zainab رضى الله عنها. As in the narrations of Ḥadīth, Sayyidnā Anas رضى الله عنه said, "I know this event of Ḥijāb more than anyone else for the reason that, at that time, I was present in the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. When this verse requiring the observance of Ḥijāb was revealed, he put a sort of make-shift curtain from a sheet and had thus made Sayyidah Zainab رضى الله عنها seated hidden behind it - not that he would conceal her personally in a *burqa*' or long sheet.

The event relating to Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb رضى الله عنه appearing under the Background of Revelation described earlier also seems to indicate that Sayyidnā 'Umar رضى الله عنه simply wished that the blessed wives stay inside, away from the sight of men - as is evident from the words he used on this occasion: **يَدْخُلُ عَلَيْكَ الْبُرُ وَالْفَاجِرُ** (among those coming to you there are [all sorts of people] the righteous and the sinning).

According to a narration of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها appearing in the chapter of the battle of Muthah in the Ṣāḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was informed of the Shahadah (martyrdom) of Sayyidnā Zayd Ibn Harithah, Ja'far and 'Abdullāh Ibn Rawahah رضى الله عنه, he was in the Masjid. His blessed face showed signs of intense grief and shock. I was watching what was happening there from inside my room through a crack in the door.

This proves that, the Ummul-Mu'minin, even at the time of such a shocking occurrence, did not come out in a *burqa*' to join the crowd of

people, instead, witnessed the proceedings from a crack in the door.

And in the chapter on 'Umratu 'l-Qada' in Kitāb- ul-Maghazī of the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhari, it appears that the nephew of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها, Sayyidnā 'Urwah Ibn Zubayr رضى الله عنه, and Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنه were sitting in the Mosque of the Prophet fairly close to the outer side of the living quarters of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah and were busy talking about the 'Umra visits of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنه says that, during that time, we could hear the voice of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah doing her *miswak* and clearing her throat coming out from inside the living quarters. Onward from here, mentioned there are the 'Umra visits of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. From this narration too, we learn that soon after the revelation of the verses of Ḥijāb, it had become the regular practice of the blessed wives that they would observe Ḥijāb virtually by staying at home.

Similarly, there is a Ḥadīth in the chapter on the battle of Ṭa'if in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhari saying that the Holy Prophet ﷺ gargled in a utensil of water and gave it to Sayyidnā Abu Mūsā and Bilāl رضى الله عنه to drink and wipe their faces with. Ummul-Mu'minin, Sayyidah Umm Salāmah رضى الله عنها was watching this incident from behind a curtain. She called the two blessed souls from inside the curtain asking them to spare a little from that *tabarruk* for their mother (meaning for herself).

This Ḥadīth too testifies that soon after the revelation of the order of Ḥijāb, the blessed wives used to stay inside homes and behind curtains.

Special Note

Also noteworthy in this narration is the fact that even the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were fond of his *tabarrukat* (plural of *tabarruk* meaning something blessed) just like other Muslims. This too is a singularity of his sanctified person alone, otherwise, the informal relationship a husband has with his wife would have made it habitually impossible to maintain this degree of reverence.

And according to a narration of Sayyidnā Anas رضى الله عنه in Kitāb-ul-'Adab of the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhari, he and Sayyidnā Abū Ṭalḥah رضى الله عنه were once going somewhere with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He was riding a camel. Ummul-Mu'minin, Sayyidah Safiyyah رضى الله عنها was also riding with him. En route, the camel stumbled all of a sudden and, according to the

report of Sayyidnā Abū Ṭalḥah, when he and Sayyidah Ṣafiyyah fell down from the back of the camel, Abū Ṭalḥah presented himself before him and submitted, 'May Allah accept me as ransom for you, are you hurt?' He said, 'No, you take care of the woman.' The first thing Sayyidnā Abū Ṭalḥah did was to hide his face with a piece of cloth, then he reached Sayyidah Ṣafiyyah and threw a sheet of cloth over her after which she stood up. Then, in the same manner, keeping her hidden behind proper cover, he had her mount her camel.

In this event too which came suddenly in the form of an accident, there is a lesson. It provides testimony to the fact that the noble Ṣaḥabah and the blessed wives gave great importance to the matter of Ḥijāb. The attention paid and the care and concern shown in this incident hardly leave any room for further explanations.

A Ḥadīth of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه in Jami' of Tirmidhī reports that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

إِذَا خَرَجَتِ الْمَرْأَةُ اسْتَشْرَفَهَا الشَّيْطَانُ (قال الترمذی هذا حديث حسن صحيح غريب)

When a woman comes out (of her house), the Shaytan marks her out (that is, makes her a means of spreading evil among Muslims) - (Tirmidhī has termed this Ḥadīth as *ḥasan, ṣaḥīḥ, gharīb*).

And Ibn Khuzaymah and Ibn Ḥibban have also reported the following additional words in this Ḥadīth: وَأَقْرَبُ مَا تَكُونُ مِنْ وَجْهِ رَبِّهَا وَهِيَ فِي فَعْرِ بَيْتِهَا (And [a woman] is closer to her Rabb [Lord] when she is [hidden] in the midmost [section] of her house.

Present in this Ḥadīth too is the evidence of the fact that the real thing for women is no other but that they stay in their homes and do not go out (occasions of need remaining an exception).

And in a Ḥadīth; the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said: لَيْسَ لِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ فِي الْخُرُوجِ إِلَّا مَضْطَرَّةٌ (For women, there is no share in going out except when inevitable) - reported by Ṭabarānī, as quoted by Kanz, p. 283, v. 8)

And says a narration from Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه: 'Once I was present in the company of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. He asked the noble Ṣaḥabah, أَيُّ شَيْءٍ خَيْرٌ لِلْمَرْأَةِ "What is better for women? The Ṣaḥabah kept silent. They said nothing in response. Later, when I went home, I repeated the same