

SPREAD KNOWLEDGE

THE
HOLY QURAN

ENGLISH TAFSEER
CHAPTER 24
SURAH AN-NUR

COMMENTARY & EXPLANATORY

By
ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI

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HOLY QURAN

CHAPTER

024

SURAH AN-NUR

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Introduction and Summary

The environmental and social influences which most frequently wreck our spiritual ideals have to do with sex especially with its misuse, whether in the form of unregulated behaviour, or false charges or scandals, or breach of the refined conventions of personal or domestic privacy. Our complete conquest of all pitfalls in such matters enables us to rise to the higher regions of Light and God-created Nature. This subject is continued in the next Surah. (R).

As the reprobation of false slanders about women (24:11-20) is connected with an incident that happened to Aisha in A.H. 5-6 that fixes the chronological place of this Madinah Surah.

Summary- Sex offences should be severely punished, but the strictest evidence should be required, and false slanderers are also worthy of punishment. Light talk about women is reprobated (24:1-26, and C. 157).

Privacy should be respected, and the utmost decorum should be observed in dress and manners (24:27-34, and C. 158).

Parable of light and Darkness; order and obedience in Nature point to the spiritual duty of man (24:35-57, and C. 159).

Domestic manners and manners in public or collective life all contribute to the highest virtues, and are part of our spiritual duties leading up to Allah (24:58-64, and C. 160).

C.157 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(24:1-26)

*Chastity is a virtue, for men and women.
Whether joined in marriage, or single,
Or widowed. The punishment for offences
In such matters should be public. No less
Grave is the launching of false charges
Or rumours against the fair reputation
Of women, or the spreading of such
Slanders, or the facile belief in them.
Evil is ever spreading its net,
Good men and women should ever be
On their guard, and pray for Allah's grace and mercy.*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

سُورَةٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهَا وَفَرَضْنَاهَا...

1. A Surah which We have sent down and which We have ordained:

C2953. It must not be thought that the checking of sex offences or of minor improprieties, that relate to sex or privacy, are matters that do not affect spiritual life in the highest degree. These matters are intimately connected with spiritual teaching such as Allah has sent down in this Surah.

The emphasis is on "**We**": these things are not mere matters of convenience, but Allah has ordained them for our observance in life.

...وَأَنْزَلْنَا فِيهَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ (١)

in it have We sent down Clear Signs, in order that ye may receive admonition.

الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي ...

2. The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication --

C2954. Zina includes sexual intercourse between a man and a woman not married to each other.

It therefore applies both to adultery (which implies that one or both of the parties are married to a person or persons other than the ones concerned) and to fornication, which, in its strict signification, implies that both parties are unmarried.

The law of marriage and divorce is made easy in Islam, so that there may be the less temptation for intercourse outside the well-defined incidents of marriage. This makes for greater self-respect for both man and woman.

Other sex offences are also punishable, but this Section applies strictly to **Zina** as above defined.

[Although **Zina** covers both fornication and adultery, in the opinion of Muslim justice, the punishment laid down here applies only to un-married persons. As for married

persons, their punishment, according to the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be on him), is stoning to death. (Eds.)]

... فَأَجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِئَةَ جَلْدَةٍ...

flag each of them with a hundred stripes:

C2955. Cf. 4:15, and n. 523.

...وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ...

let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by Allah, if ye believe in Allah and the Last Day:

...وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (٢)

and let a party of the Believers witness their punishment.

C2956. The punishment should be open, in order to be deterrent.

الزَّانِي لَا يَنْكِحُ إِلَّا زَانِيَةً أَوْ مُشْرِكَةً...

3. Let no man guilty of adultery or fornication marry any but a woman similarly guilty,

...وَالزَّانِيَةُ لَا يَنْكِحُهَا إِلَّا زَانٍ أَوْ مُشْرِكٌ...

or an Unbeliever nor let any but such a man or an Unbeliever marry such a woman:

...وَحَرَّمَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (٣)

to the Believers such a thing is forbidden.

C2957. Islam commands sex purity, for men and for women, at all times,

- before marriage, during marriage, and after the dissolution of marriage.

Those guilty of illicit practices are shut out of the marriage circle of chaste men and women.

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ...

4. And those who launch a charge against chaste women, and produce not four witnesses, (to support their allegation) --

...فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا ...

flag them with eighty stripes: and reject their evidence ever after:

C2958. The most serious notice is taken of people who put forward slanders or scandalous suggestions about women without adequate evidence.

If anything is said against a woman's chastity, it should be supported by evidence twice as strong as would ordinarily be required for business transactions, or even in murder cases. That is, four witnesses would be required instead of two. Failing such preponderating evidence, the slanderer should himself be treated as a wicked transgressor and punished with eighty stripes. Not only would he be subjected to this disgraceful form of punishment, but he would be deprived of the citizen's right of giving evidence in all matters unless he repents and reforms, in which case he can be readmitted to be a competent witness.

The verse lays down the punishment for slandering "**chaste women**", which by consensus of opinion also covers slandering chaste men.

Chaste women have been specifically mentioned, according to Commentators, because slandering them is more abhorrent. (Eds).

...وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ (٤)

for such men are wicked transgressors --

إِنَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا ...

5. Unless they repent thereafter and mend (their conduct):

C2959. The punishment of stripes is inflicted in any case for unsupported slander. But the deprivation of the civic right of giving evidence can be cancelled by the man's subsequent conduct, if he repents, shows that he is sorry for what he did, and that he would not in future support by his statement anything for which he has not the fullest evidence.

Secular courts do not enforce these principles, as their standards are lower than those which good Muslims set

for themselves, but good Muslims must understand and act on the underlying principles, which protect the honour of womanhood.

Abu Hanifa considers that neither the stripes nor the incompetence for giving future evidence is cancelled by repentance, but only the spiritual stigma of being "wicked transgressors". This of course is the more serious punishment, though it cannot be enforced in the Courts.

... فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (٥)

for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ أَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُمْ شُهَدَاءُ إِلَّا أَنفُسُهُمْ...

6. And for those who launch a charge against their spouses, and have (in support) no evidence but their own --

C2960. The case of married persons is different from that of outsiders. If one of them accuses the other of unchastity, the accusation partly reflects on the accuser as well.

Moreover, the link which unites married people, even where differences supervene, is sure to act as a steadying influence against the concoction of false charges of unchastity particularly where divorce is allowed (as in Islam) for reasons other than unchastity.

Suppose a husband catches a wife in adultery. In the nature of things four witnesses - or even one outside witness - would be impossible. Yet after such an experience it is against human nature that he can live a normal married life. The matter is then left to the honour of the two spouses.

If the husband can solemnly swear four times to the fact, and in addition invoke a curse on himself if he lies, that is prima facie evidence of the wife's guilt. But if the wife swears similarly four times and similarly invokes a curse on herself, she is in law acquitted of the guilt. If she does not take this step, the charge is held proved and the punishment follows.

In either case the marriage is dissolved, as it is against human nature that the parties can live together happily after such an incident.

...فَشَهَادَةُ أَحَدِهِمْ أَرْبَعُ شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ (٦)

their solitary evidence (can be received) if they bear witness four times (with an oath) by Allah that they are solemnly telling the truth;

وَالْخَامِسَةُ أَنَّ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ (٧)

7. And the fifth (oath) (should be) that they solemnly invoke the curse of Allah on themselves if they tell a lie.

وَيَدْرَأُ عَنْهَا الْعَذَابَ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَرْبَعَ شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ...

8. But it would avert the punishment from the wife, if she bears witness four times (with an oath) by Allah,

...إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ (٨)

that (her husband) is telling a lie;

وَالْخَامِسَةَ أَنَّ غَضَبَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ (٩)

9. And the fifth (oath) should be that she solemnly invokes the wrath of Allah on herself if (her accuser) is telling the truth.

وَلَوْ لَأَفْضَلُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ...

10. If it were not for Allah's grace and mercy on you,

...وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ حَكِيمٌ (١٠)

and that Allah is Oft-Returning, Full of Wisdom -- (ye would be ruined indeed).

C2961. Cf. [24:11-14](#), and n. [2962](#), which illustrates the matter by a concrete instance.

Section 2

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ...

11. Those who brought forward the lie are a body among yourselves:

C2962. The particular incident here referred to occurred on the return from the expedition to the Banui Mustaliq, A.H. 5-6.

When the march was ordered, Hadhrat Aisha was not in her tent, having gone to search for a valuable necklace she had dropped. As her litter was veiled, it was not noticed that she was not in it, until the army reached the next halt. Meanwhile, finding the camp had gone, she sat down to rest, hoping that some one would come back to fetch her when her absence was noticed.

It was night, and she fell asleep. Next morning she was found by Safwan, a Muhajir, who had been left behind the camp expressly to pick up anything inadvertently left behind. He put her on his camel and brought her, leading the camel on foot.

This gave occasion to enemies to raise a malicious scandal. The ringleader among them was the chief of Madinah Hypocrites, Abdullah ibn Ubai, who is referred to in the last clause of this verse.

He had other sins and enormities to his debit, and he was left to the punishment of an unrepentant sinner, for he died in that state. The minor tools were given the legal punishment of the law, and after penitence mended their lives. They made good.

...لَا تَحْسِبُوهُ شَرًّا لَّكُمْ بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ...

think it not to be an evil to you: on the contrary it is good for you:

C2963. It is worse for a scandal to be whispered about with bated breath, than that it should be brought into the light of day and disproved.

...لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّا كَسَبَ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ...

to every man among them (will come the punishment) of the sin that he earned,

...وَالَّذِي تَوَلَّى كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ (١١)

and to him who took on himself the lead among them, will be a Penalty grievous.

C2964. The ringleader: see [n. 2962](#) above.

لَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بِأَنفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا...

12. Why did not Believers -- men and women -- when ye heard of the affair -- put the best construction on it in their own minds

C2965. Both men and women were involved in spreading the scandal. Their obvious duty was to put the best, not the worst, construction on the acts of one of the "mothers of the Believers".

...وَقَالُوا هَذَا إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ (١٢)

and say, "This (charge) is an obvious lie"?

لَوْلَا جَاءُوا عَلَيْهِ بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ...

13. Why did they not bring four witnesses to prove it?

C2966. If any persons took it seriously, it was their duty to search for and produce the evidence, in the absence of which they themselves became guilty of slander.

...فَإِذْ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِالشُّهَدَاءِ فَأُولَئِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ (١٣)

When they have not brought the witnesses, such men, in the sight of Allah, (stand forth) themselves as liars!

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ...

14. Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah on you, in this world and the Hereafter,

...لَمَسَّكُمْ فِي مَا أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ (١٤)

a grievous penalty would have seized you in that ye rushed glibly into this affair.

C2967. Cf. [24:10](#) above.

It was Allah's mercy that saved them from many evil consequences, both in this life and in the Hereafter,

- in this life, because the Prophet's wise measures nipped in the bud any incipient estrangement between those nearest and dearest to him, and
- from a physical aspect in that the minor agents in spreading the scandal repented and were forgiven.

No doubts and divisions, no mutual distrust, were allowed to remain in their hearts after the whole matter had been cleared up.

إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَتَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ...

15. Behold, ye received it on your tongues, and said out of your mouths things of which ye had no knowledge;

...وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّئًا وَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ (١٥)

and ye thought it to be a light matter, while it was most serious in the sight of Allah.

C2968. There are three things here reprobated by way of moral teaching:

1. if others speak an evil word, that is no reason why you should allow it to defile your tongue;
2. if you get a thought or suspicion which is not based on your certain knowledge, do not give it currency by giving it expression; and
3. others may think it is a small matter to speak lightly of something which blasts a person's character or reputation: in the eyes of Allah it is a most serious matter in any case, but specially when it involves the honour and reputation of pious women.

وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ فَلْتُمْ مَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ بِهِذَا...

16. And why did ye not, when ye heard it, say --

"It is not right of us to speak of this:

...سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ (١٦)

Glory to Allah!

this is a most serious slander!"

C2969. The right course would have been to stop any further currency of false slanders by ignoring them and at least refusing to help in their circulation.

The exclamation "**Subhanaka**", "Praise to Thee (O Allah)", or "Glory to Allah!" is an exclamation of surprise and disavowal as much as to say,

"We do not believe it! And we shall have nothing to do with you, O false slanderers!"

يَعْظَمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَعُوذُوا لِمِثْلِهِ أَبَدًا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ (١٧)

17. Allah doth admonish you, that ye may never repeat such (conduct), if ye are (true) Believers.

وَيَبِّينُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ...

18. And Allah makes the Signs plain to you:

...وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (١٨)

for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا...

19. Those who love (to see) scandal published broadcast among the Believers,

...لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ...

will have a grievous Penalty in this life and in the Hereafter:

...وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (١٩)

Allah knows, and ye know not.

C2970. What mischief's can be planned by Evil to delude simple folk who mean no harm in their own minds but who by thoughtlessness are deluded step by step to become the instruments of Evil, may not be known to the most instructed of men, but it is all known to Allah.

Man should therefore always be on his guard against the traps of Evil, and it is only Allah's grace that can save him.

وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ رَوْؤُفٌ رَحِيمٌ (٢٠)

20. Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah on you, and that Allah is full of kindness and mercy (ye would be ruined indeed).

C2971. Note the refrain that comes four times in this passage, "Were it not for the grace and, mercy of Allah Each time it has a different application.

1. In [24:10](#), it was in connection with the accusation of infidelity by the man against his wife, they were both reminded of Allah's mercy and warned against suspicion and untruth.
2. In [24:14](#), the Believers were told to be wary of false rumours lest they should cause pain and division among themselves: it is Allah's grace that keeps them united.
3. Here is an admonition for the future:
there may be conspiracies and snares laid by evil against simple people; it is Allah's grace that protects them.
4. In [14:21](#), the general warning is directed to the observance of purity in act and in thought, concerning one's self and concerning others: it is only Allah's grace that can keep that purity spotless, for He hears prayers and knows of all the snares that are spread in the path of the good.

Section 3

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطَوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ...

21. O ye who believe! follow not Satan's footsteps:

...وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ خُطَوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ...

if any will follow the footsteps of Satan, he will (but) command what is shameful and wrong:

...وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا...

and were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah on you, not one of you would ever have been pure:

C2972. See [last note](#).

...وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَن يَشَاءُ...

but Allah doth purify whom He pleases:

C2973. Spotless purity in thought, word, and deed, includes the disposition to put the best construction on

the motives of others, so that we ascribe no evil motive to the seeming indiscretions of virtuous people.

Such a high standard can only come by the grace of Allah, Who hears all prayers and knows all the temptations to which human nature is subject. His Will and Plan make both for spiritual protection and spiritual peace, and we must place ourselves trustingly in His hands.

...وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ (٢١)

and Allah is One Who hears and knows (all things).

وَلَا يَأْتِلْ أَوْلُوا الْفَضْلَ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةَ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا...

22. Let not those among you who are endued with grace and amplitude of means resolve by oath against helping

C2974. The immediate reference was to Hadhrat Abu Bakr, the father of Hadhrat Aisha. He was blessed both with spiritual grace from Allah and with ample mean; which he always used in the service of Islam and of Muslims.

One of the slanderers of Hadhrat Aisha turned out to be Mistah, a cousin of Hadhrat Abu Bakr, whom he had been in the habit of supporting. Naturally Hadhrat Abu Bakr wished to stop that aid, but according to the highest standards of Muslim ethics he was asked to forgive and forget, which he did, with the happiest results to the peace and unity of the Muslim community.

But the general application holds good for all time. A generous patron should not, in personal anger, withdraw his support even for serious faults if the delinquent repents and mends his ways.

If Allah forgives us, who are we to refuse forgiveness to our fellows?

...أُولِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ...

their kinsmen, those in want, and those who have left their homes in Allah's cause:

...وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا...

let them forgive and overlook:

...أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ...

do you not wish that Allah should forgive you?

...وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (٢٢)

For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْعَافِلَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ...

23. Those who slander chaste women, indiscreet but believing,

C2975. Good women are sometimes indiscreet because they think of no evil. But even such innocent indiscretion lands them, and those who hold them dear, in difficulties. Such was the case with Hadhrat Aisha, who was in extreme pain and anguish for a whole month because of the slanders spread about her.

Her husband and her father were also placed in a most awkward predicament, considering their position and the great work in which they were engaged.

But unprincipled people, who start false slanders, and their unthinking tools who help in spreading such slanders, are guilty of the gravest spiritual offence, and their worst punishment is the deprivation of Allah's grace, which is the meaning of a state of Curse.

...لَعْنُوا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ (٢٣)

are cursed in this life and in the Hereafter:

for them is a grievous Penalty -

يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (٢٤)

24. On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their feet will bear witness against them as to their actions.

C2976. Our own limbs and faculties are the strongest witnesses against us if we misuse them for evil deeds instead of using them for the good deeds for which they were given to us.

يَوْمَئِذٍ يُؤْقِدُهُمُ اللَّهُ دِينَهُمُ الْحَقَّ...

25. On that Day Allah will pay them back (all) their just dues,

...وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ (٢٥)

and they will realize that Allah is the (very) Truth, that makes all things manifest.

C2977. All that we thought of hiding will be clear as day before Allah's Judgment Seat, because He is the very essence of Truth and Reality. He is the true Light (24:35), of which all physical light is merely a type or reflection.

الْخَبِيثَاتُ لِلْخَبِيثِينَ وَالْخَبِيثُونَ لِلْخَبِيثَاتِ...

26. Women impure are for men impure, and men impure are for women impure;

...وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ...

and women of purity are for men of purity, and men of purity are for women of purity:

...أُولَئِكَ مُبَرَّءُونَ مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ...

these are not affected by what people say:

C2978. The pure consort with the pure, and the impure with the impure. If the impure, out of the impurity of their thoughts, or imaginations, impute any evil to the pure, the pure are not affected by it, but they should avoid all occasions for random talk.

...لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ (٢٦)

for them there is forgiveness, and a provision honorable.

C2979. Forgiveness for any indiscretion which they may have innocently committed, and spiritual provision or protection against the assaults of Evil.

It is also meant that the more evil ones attempt to defame or slander them, the more triumphantly will they be vindicated and provided with the physical and moral good which will advance their real life.

C.158 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(24:27-34)

*Privacy in the home is a nature of virtue:
Respect it with dignity and decorum. Guard
You eyes and thoughts with rules of modesty
In dress and manners; and learn from these
To keep your spiritual gaze from straying
To any but Allah. True marriage should teach
Us charity and purity, and such
Are the virtues which lead us to the Light
Sublime which illuminates the world.*

Section 4

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا...

27. O ye who believe!

... لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْذِنُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا...

enter not houses other than your own, until ye have asked permission and saluted those in them:

...ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ (٢٧)

that is best for you in order that ye may heed (what is seemly).

C2980. The conventions of propriety and privacy are essential to a refined life of goodness and purity.

The English saying that an Englishman's home is his castle, suggests a certain amount of exclusiveness and defiance.

The Muslim principle of asking respectful permission and exchanging salutations ensures privacy without exclusiveness, and friendliness without undue familiarity.

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَا أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّى يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ...

28. If ye find no one in the house, enter not until permission is given to you:

C2981. That is, if no one replies;

- there may be people in the house not in a presentable state. Or,
- even if the house is empty, you have no right to enter it until you obtain the owner's permission, wherever he may be.

The fact of your not receiving a reply does not entitle you to enter without permission. You should wait, or knock twice or three times, and withdraw in case no permission is received.

If you are actually asked to withdraw, as the inmates are not in a condition to receive you, you should a fortiori withdraw, either for a time, or altogether, as the inmates may wish you to do.

Even if they are your friends, you have no right to take them by surprise or enter against their wishes. Your own purity of life and conduct as well as of motives is thus tested.

...وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمْ ارْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا...

if ye are asked to go back, go back:

...هُوَ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ...

that makes for greater purity for yourselves:

...وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ (٢٨)

and Allah knows well all that ye do.

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ مَسْكُونَةٍ فِيهَا مَتَاعٌ لَكُمْ...

29. It is no fault on your part to enter houses not used for living in, which serve some (other) use for you:

C2982. The rule about dwelling-houses is strict, because privacy is precious, and essential to a refined, decent, and well-ordered life.

Such a rule of course does not apply to houses used for other useful purposes, such as an inn or caravanserai, or a shop, or a warehouse. But even here, of course, implied permission from the owner is necessary as a matter of common-sense.

The question in this passage is that of refined privacy, not that of rights of ownership.

...وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا تَكْتُمُونَ (٢٩)

and Allah has knowledge of what ye reveal and what ye conceal.

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ...

30. Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty:

C2983. The rule of modesty applies to men as well as women. A brazen stare by a man at a woman (or even at a man) is a breach of refined manners.

Where sex is concerned, modesty is not only "good form": it is not only to guard the weaker sex, but also to guard the spiritual good of the stronger sex.

...ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ...

that will make for greater purity for them:

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ (٣٠)

and Allah is well acquainted with all that they do.

وقل للمؤمنات...

31. And say to the believing women

...يَعْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ...

that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty;

C2984. The need for modesty is the same in both men and women. But on account of the differentiation of the sexes in nature, temperaments, and social life, a greater amount of privacy is required for women than for men, especially in the matter of dress and the uncovering of the bosom.

...وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا...

that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof;

C2985. Zinat means both natural beauty and artificial ornaments.

I think both are implied here, but chiefly the former. The woman is asked not to make a display of her figure except to the following classes of people:

- her husband,
- her near relatives whom a certain amount of *neglige'* is permissible;
- her women,
- slaves, male and female, as they would be in constant attendance; but this item would now be blank, with the abolition of slavery;
- men who are free from sexual desire and who usually frequent the houses; and
- infants or small children before they get a sense of sex. Cf. also 33: 59.

...وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ...

that they should draw their veils over their bosoms

...وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا...

and not display their beauty except

...لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ...

to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers,

...أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ...

their sons, their husbands' sons,

...أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ...

their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons,

...أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ...

or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess,

...أَوْ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أَوْلِيِ الْبَرَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ...

or male servants free of physical needs,

...أَوْ الطُّفْلَ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ...

or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex;

...وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ...

and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments.

C2986. It is one of the tricks of showy or unchaste women to tinkle their ankle ornaments, to draw attention to themselves,

...وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (٣١)

And O ye Believers! turn ye all together towards Allah, that ye may attain Bliss.

C2987. While all these details of the purity and good form of domestic life are being brought to our attention, we are clearly reminded that the chief object we should hold in view is our spiritual welfare.

All our brief life on this earth is a probation, and we must make our individual, domestic, and social life all contribute to our holiness, so that we can get the real success and bliss which is the aim of our spiritual endeavour. (R).

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَى مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ...

32. Marry those among you who are single, or the virtuous ones among your slaves, male or female:

C2988. The subject of sex ethics and manners brings us to the subject of marriage.

Single (ayama, plural of Aiyim) here means any one not in the bond of wedlock, whether unmarried or lawfully divorced, or widowed.

If we can, we must marry in our own circle, but if we have not the means, there is no harm if we choose from a lower circle, provided our choice is determined by virtue. Poverty in the other party does not matter if there is virtue and love. A happily married man has the best wealth in a virtuous wife, and his very happiness make him a better potential earner of wealth. A slave becomes free by marriage.

...إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ...

if they are in poverty, Allah will give them means out of His grace:

...وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ (٣٢)

for Allah encompasseth all, and He knoweth all things.

C2989. Cf. 5:57.

Allah's mercy is for all: it is not confined to a class or grade of people.

وَلَيْسَتُغْفَبِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا حَتَّى يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ...

33. Let those who find not the wherewithal for marriage keep themselves chaste, until Allah gives them means out of His grace.

C2990. A Muslim marriage requires some sort of a dower for the wife. If the man cannot afford that, he must wait and keep himself chaste.

It is no excuse for him to say that he must satisfy his natural cravings within or outside marriage. It must be within marriage.

...وَالَّذِينَ يَبْتَاعُونَ الْكُتَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ

فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا...

And if any of your slaves ask for a deed in writing (to enable them to earn their freedom for a certain sum), give them such a deed if ye know any good in them;

C2991. The law of slavery in the legal sense of the term is now obsolete. While it had any meaning, Islam made the slave's lot as easy as possible.

A slave, male or female, could ask for conditional manumission by a written deed fixing the amount required for manumission and allowing the slave meanwhile to earn money by lawful means. Such a deed was not to be refused if the request was genuine and the slave had character.

Not only that, but the master is directed to help with money out of his own resources in order to enable the slave to earn his or her own liberty.

...وَأَوْثُومٌ مِّنْ مَّالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكُمْ...

yea, give them something yourselves out of the means which Allah has given to you.

...وَلَا تُكْرَهُوا فَتَيَاتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَاءِ ...

But force not your maids to prostitution

C2992. Where slavery was legal, what is now called the "white slave traffic" was carried on by wicked people like 'Abdullah ibn Ubai, the Hypocrite leader at Madinah. This is absolutely condemned.

While modern nations have abolished ordinary slavery, the "White Slave Traffic" is still a big social problem in individual States. Here it is absolutely condemned. No more despicable trade can be imagined. (R).

... إِنْ أَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا لِّنَبَاتِكُمْ أَعْرِضْنَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ...

when they desire chastity, in order that ye may make a gain in the goods of this life.

C2993. I have translated "In" (literally, -if") by -when-because this is not a conditional clause but an explanatory clause, explaining the meaning of 'force'.

"Forcing" a person necessarily means that it is against the wish or inclination of the person forced. Even if they were to give a formal consent, it is not valid because the persons concerned are in (legal, or now) economic slavery.

...وَمَنْ يُكْرِهْنَهُنَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِكْرَاهِهِنَّ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (٣٣)

But if anyone compels them, yet, after such compulsion, is Allah Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful (to them).

C2994. The poor unfortunate girls, who are victims of such a nefarious trade, will yet find mercy from Allah, whose bounties extend to all His creatures.

...وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ آيَاتٍ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ...

34. We have already sent down to you verses making things clear,

...وَمَثَلًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ (٣٤)

an illustration from (the story of) people who passed away before you, and an admonition for those who fear (Allah).

C2995. This prepares the way for the magnificent Verse of Light that follows, and its sublime meaning. (R).

C.159 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(24:35-57)

*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.
High above our petty evanescent lives.
He illumines our souls with means that reach
Our inmost being. Universal is
His Light, so pure and so intense
That grosser beings need a veil
To take His rays: His elect are e'er
Absorbed in prayer and praise and deeds
Of love, unlike the children of Darkness,
Struggling in Depths profound of vanities
False. All Nature sings to the glory
Of Allah, and men of fraud and hypocrisy
Are but rebels in the Kingdom of Allah.*

Section 5

اللَّهُ نُورٌ ...

35. Allah is the Light ...

C2996. Embedded within certain directions concerning a refined domestic and social life, comes this glorious parable of light, which contains layer upon layer of transcendent truth about spiritual mysteries.

No notes can do adequate justice to its full meaning. Volumes have been written on this subject. In these notes I propose to explain the simplest meaning of this passage. (R).

... السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ...

... of the heavens and the earth.

C2997. The physical light is but a reflection of the true Light in the world of Reality, and that true Light is Allah.

We can only think of Allah in terms of our phenomenal experience, and in the phenomenal world, light is the purest thing we know, but physical light has drawbacks incidental to its physical nature: e.g.

- it is dependent upon some source external to itself;
- it is a passing phenomenon; if we take it to be a form of motion or energy it is unstable, like all physical phenomena;
- it is dependent on space and time;

its speed is 186,000 miles per second, and there are stars whose light takes thousands of years before it reaches the earth.

The perfect Light of Allah is free from any such defects. (R).

... مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِثْقَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ ...

The parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and within it a lamp:

...المصباحُ في زُجاجةٍ...

the Lamp enclosed in Glass:

C2998. The first three points in the Parable centre round the symbols of the Niche, the Lamp, and the Glass.

1. The **Niche (Mishkat)** is the little shallow recess in the wall of an Eastern house, fairly high from the ground, in which a light (before the days of electricity) was usually placed. Its height enabled it to diffuse the light in the room and minimised the shadows.

The background of the wall and the sides of the niche helped to throw the light well into the room, and if the wall was white-washed, it also acted as a reflector: the opening in front made the way for the light.

So with the spiritual Light; it is placed high, above worldly things; it has a niche or habitation of its own, in Revelation and other Signs of Allah; its access to men is by a special Way, open to all, yet closed to those who refuse its rays.

2. The Lamp is the core of the spiritual Truth, which is the real illumination; the Niche is nothing without it; the Niche is actually made for it.
3. The Glass is the transparent medium through which the Light passes. On the one hand, it protects the light from moths and other forms of low life and from gusts of wind, and on the other, it transmits the light through a medium which is made up of and akin to the grosser substances of the earth (such as sand, soda, potash, etc.), so arranged as to admit the subtle to the gross by its transparency.

So the spiritual Truth has to be filtered through human language or human intelligence to make it intelligible to mankind.

...الزُّجاجةُ كأنَّها كوكبٌ دُرِّيٌّ...

the glass as it were a brilliant star:

C2999. The glass by itself does not shine. But when the light comes into it, it shines like a brilliant star.

So men of God, who preach Allah's Truth, are themselves illuminated by Allah's light and become the illuminating media through which that Light spreads and permeates human life.

...يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ...

lit from a blessed Tree, an Olive,

C3000. The olive tree is not a very impressive tree in its outward appearance. Its leaves have a dull greenish-brown colour, and in size it is inconspicuous. But its oil is used in sacred ceremonies and forms a wholesome ingredient of food. The fruit has a specially fine flavour.

Cf. n. 2880 to 23:20.

For the illuminating quality of its oil, see [n. 3002 below](#).

...لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ...

neither of the East nor of the West,

C3001. This mystic Olive is not localised. It is neither of the East nor of the West. It is universal, for such is Allah's Light.

As applied to the olive, there is also a more literal meaning, which can be allegorised in a different way.

An olive tree with an eastern aspect gets only the rays of the morning sun; one with a western aspect, only the rays of the western sun. In the northern hemisphere the south aspect will give the sun's rays a great part of the day, while a north aspect will shut them out altogether, and vice versa in the southern hemisphere.

But a tree in the open plain or on a hill will get perpetual sunshine by day; it will be more mature, and the fruit and oil will be of superior quality. So Allah's light is not localised or immature: it is perfect and universal.

...يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ...

whose Oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it:

C3002. Pure olive oil is beautiful in colour, consistency, and illuminating power.

The world has tried all kinds of illuminants, and for economic reasons or convenience, one replaces another. But for coolness, comfort to the eyes, and steadiness, vegetable oils are superior to electricity, mineral oils, and animal oils.

And among vegetable oils, olive oil takes a high place and deserves its sacred associations. Its purity is almost like light itself: you may suppose it to be almost light before it is lit.

So with spiritual Truth: it illuminates the mind and understanding imperceptibly, almost before the human mind and heart have been consciously touched by it.

... نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ ...

Light upon Light!

... يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ...

Allah doth guide whom He will to His Light.

... وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ ...

Allah doth set forth Parables for men:

... وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (٣٥)

and Allah doth know all things.

C3003. Glorious, illimitable Light, which cannot be described or measured. And there are grades and grades of it, passing transcendently into regions of spiritual height, which man's imagination can scarcely conceive of. The topmost pinnacle is the true prototypal Light, the real Light, of which all others were reflections, the Light of Allah. Hence the saying of the Holy Prophet about Allah's "Seventy thousand veils of Light".

... فِي بُيُوتٍ ...

36. (Lit is such a light) in houses,

C3004. The punctuation of the Arabic text makes it necessary to carry back the adverbial clause "**in houses**", to something in the last verse, say "Lit from a blessed Tree", the intervening clauses being treated as parenthetical.

... أذِنَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ...

which Allah hath permitted to be raised to honor; for the celebration, in them of His name:

C3005. That is, in all places of pure worship;

but some Commentators understand special Mosques, such as the Ka'bah in Makkah or Mosques in Madinah or Jerusalem; for these are specially held in honour.

... يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ (٣٦)

in them is He glorified in the mornings and in the evenings, (again and again) --

C3006. In the evenings: the Arabic word is **Asal**, a plural of a plural, to imply emphasis:

I have rendered that shade of meaning by adding the words "again and again".

رَجَالٌ لَّا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ...

37. By men whom neither traffic nor merchandise can divert from the Remembrance of Allah,

C3007. "Remembrance of Allah" is wider than Prayer: it includes;

- silent contemplation, and
- active service of Allah and His creatures.

... وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ ...

nor from regular Prayer, nor from the practice of regular Charity:

The regular Prayers and regular Charity are the social acts performed through the organised community.

...يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ (٣٧)

their (only) fear is for the Day when hearts and eyes will be transformed (in a world wholly new) --

C3008. Some renderings suggest the effects of terror on the Day of Judgment. But here we are considering the case of the righteous, whose "fear" of Allah is akin to love and reverence and who (as the next verse shows) hope for the best reward from Allah. But the world they will meet will be a wholly changed one.

...لِيَجْزِيَهِمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَيَزِيدَهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ...

38. That Allah may reward them according to the best of their deeds, and add even more for them out of His Grace:

C3009. The best of the righteous do not deserve the reward that they get: all their faults are forgiven, and only their best actions are considered in the reward that they get.

Nay, more!

Out of the unbounded Grace of Allah even more is added to them. For in giving rewards, Allah's bounty is boundless.

...وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (٣٨)

for Allah doth provide for those whom He will, without measure.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيَعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمَانُ مَاءً...

39. But the Unbelievers -- their deeds are like a mirage in sandy deserts, which the man parched with thirst mistakes for water;

C3010. We have had various metaphors to give us an idea of the beneficent Light of Allah. Now we have contrasted metaphors to enable us to see those who deny or refuse that Light, and are overwhelmed in utter darkness.

The Light (of Allah) is an absolute Reality, and is mentioned first, and the souls that follow that Light are a reflected reality and are mentioned after the Light.

On the other hand the Darkness is not a reality in itself, but a negation of reality; the reflected existences that refuse the Light are mentioned, and then their state, which is Unreality.

Two metaphors are given:

- a mirage, in this verse,
- and the depths of darkness in the sea, in the next,

... حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا ...

until when he comes up to it, he finds it to be nothing:

C3011. The mirage, of which I have seen several instances in the Arabian deserts and in Egypt, is a strange phenomenon of illusion. It is a trick of our vision.

In the language of our Parable, it rejects the Light which shows us the Truth, and deceives us with Falsehood.

A lonely traveller in a desert, nearly dying of thirst, sees a broad sheet of water. He goes in that direction, lured on and on, but finds nothing at all. He dies in protracted agony.

... وَوَجَدَ اللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ فَوْقَاهُ حِسَابَهُ ...

but he finds Allah (ever) with him, and Allah will pay him his account:

C3012. The rebel against Allah finds himself like the man deluded by a mirage. The Truth which he rejected is always with him. The mirage which he accepted leads to his destruction.

... وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ (٣٩)

and Allah is swift in taking account.

أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لُجِّيٍّ ...

40. Or (the Unbelievers' state) is like the depths of darkness in a vast deep ocean,

... يَعْشَاهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ...

overwhelmed with billow topped by billow, topped by (dark) clouds:

C3013. What a graphic picture of darkness in the depths of the Ocean, wave upon wave, and on top of all, dense dark clouds!

There is so little light even in ordinary depths of the Ocean that fishes which live there lose their eyes as useless organs.

...ظُلُمَاتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ...

depths of darkness, one above another:

C3014. A contrast to "Light upon Light" in [24:35](#) above.

... إِذَا أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ لَمْ يَكَدْ يَرَاهَا...

if a man stretches out his hand, he can hardly see it!

...وَمَنْ لَمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ نُورٍ (٤٠)

for any to whom Allah giveth not light, there is no light!

C3015. The true source of Light in the world of Reality is Allah, and anyone who cuts himself off from that Light is in utter darkness indeed, for it is the negation of the only true light, and not merely relative darkness, like that which we see, say, in the shadows of moonlight.

Section 6

... أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ...

41. Seest thou not that it is Allah Whose praises all beings in the heavens and on earth do celebrate,

C3016. Cf. 21:19-20.

... وَالطَّيْرُ صَاقَاتٍ...

and the birds (of the air) with wings outspread?

C3017. All denizens of the heavens, such as angels, all denizens of the earth (including the waters) such as man, animals, insects, fishes, etc., and all denizens of the air, such as birds, celebrate the praises of Allah.

Each has his own mode of prayer and praise. It is not necessarily with words, for language (as we know it) is peculiar to man. But actions and other modes of self-expression recognise and declare the Glory of Allah.

...كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُ وَتَسْبِيحَهُ...

Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise.

...وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ (٤١)

And Allah knows well all that they do.

...وَاللَّهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ...

42. Yea, to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth;

...وَالِىَ اللَّهُ الْمَصِيرُ (٤٢)

and to Allah is the final goal (of all).

C3018. From Him we are; To Him we belong; and to Him we shall return. Not only we, but all Creation, proclaims this in the whole world.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُرْجِي سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ رُكَامًا...

43. Seest thou not that Allah makes the clouds move gently, then joins them together, then makes them into a heap? --

...فَقَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِطَالِهِ...

then wilt thou see rain issue forth from their midst.

C3019. Artists, or lovers of nature, or observers of clouds will appreciate this description of cloud effects-

thin clouds floating about in fantastic shapes, joining together and taking body and substance, then emerging as heavy clouds heaped up, which condense and pour forth their rain. Then the heavy dark clouds in the upper regions, that bring hail,-

how distinct and yet how similar!

They are truly like mountain masses! And when the hailstones fall, how local their area! It hits some localities and leaves free others almost interlaced!

And the lightning- how blinding flashes come from thunderous clouds!

In this Book of Nature can we not see the hand of the powerful and beneficent Allah?

...وَيُنزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنْ بَرَدٍ...

And He sends down from the sky mountain masses (of clouds) wherein is hail:

...فَيُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَنِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ...

He strikes therewith whom He pleases and He turns it away from whom He pleases.

...يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرْقِهِ يَذْهَبُ بِالْأَبْصَارِ (٤٣)

The vivid flash of His lightning well-nigh blinds the sight.

يُقَلِّبُ اللَّهُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ...

44. It is Allah Who alternates the Night and the Day:

C3020. His power, wisdom, and goodness are shown no less in the regular phenomena of nature like the succession of Day and Night, than in the seasonal or seemingly irregular movements of clouds and rain and hail and lightning.

Those who have the spiritual vision can read this Book of Allah with delight and instruction.

...إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لَأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ (٤٤)

verily in these things is an instructive example for those who have vision!

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَابَّةٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ...

45. And Allah has created every animal from water:

C3021. Cf. 21:30, n. 2691.

Protoplasm is the basis of all living matter, and "the vital power of protoplasm seems to depend on the constant presence of water".

...فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى بَطْنِهِ...

of them there are some that creep on their bellies;

...وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى رِجْلَيْنِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى أَرْبَعٍ...

some that walk on two legs; and some that walk on four.

C3022. The creeping things include worms and lowly forms of animal life as well as reptiles (like snakes), centipedes, spiders, and insects. Where these have legs they are small, and the description of creeping or crawling is more applicable to them than that of walking.

Fishes and sea-animals generally cannot be said to walk: their swimming is like "creeping on their bellies".

Two-legged animals include birds and man.

Most of the mammals walk on four legs. This includes the whole of the animal world.

...يَخْلُقُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ...

Allah creates what He wills:

C3023. In Allah's Will and Plan, the variety of forms and habits among animals is adapted to their various modes of life and stages of biological evolution.

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (٤٥)

for verily Allah has power over all things.

لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ مُّبِينَاتٍ...

46. We have indeed sent down Signs that make things manifest:

...وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ (٤٦)

and Allah guides whom He wills to a way that is straight.

وَيَقُولُونَ ...

47. They say,

C3024. The Hypocrites, far from profiting from Allah's Light and Revelation, or declaring their open hostility,

play fast and loose according to their selfish worldly aims.

... آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالرَّسُولِ وَأَطَعْنَا...

"We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey":

... ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّى فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ...

but even after that, some of them turn away:

... وَمَا أَوْلَتْكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ (٤٧)

they are not (really) Believers.

وَإِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مُّعْرَضُونَ (٤٨)

48. When they are summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that He may judge between them,

behold some of them decline (to come).

وَإِنْ يَكُنْ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ يَأْتُوا إِلَيْهِ مُذْعِنِينَ (٤٩)

49. But if the right is on their side, they come to him with all submission.

C3025. The Hypocrites only wanted to go to the judge who they thought was likely to give judgment in their favour.

If their case was incontestable, and justice was on their side, they readily came to the Prophet, knowing that he was just and would judge in their favour, even against his own adherents. But if they had done wrong, an impartial judge was not to their taste. They would rather go to some one who would tip the balance in their favour!

This form of selfishness and iniquity was not confined to the Hypocrites of Madinah. It is common in all ages, and should be suppressed.

أَفِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ ...

50. Is it that there is a disease in their hearts?

... أم ارتأبوا ...

Or do they doubt,

... أم يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَحِيفَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَرَسُولَهُ...

or are they in fear, that Allah and His Messenger will deal unjustly with them?

...بَلْ أَوْلِيكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ (٥٠)

Nay,

it is they themselves who do wrong.

C3026. The real fact is that their conscience smites them. They know their own iniquity, and do not wish to go before a just judge who would be open to no influence and would be sure to give a righteous decree.

Section 7

إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ...

51. The answer of the Believers, when summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that He may judge between them, is no other than this:

...أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا...

they say, "We hear and we obey":

C3027. Cf. 2:285.

Contrast with it the attitude of the Unbelievers or Hypocrites, who say aloud, "we hear", but intend in their hearts to disobey (2:93).

...وَأَوْلِيكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (٥١)

it is such as these that will attain felicity.

C3028. True happiness, whether here or in the Hereafter, is not to be attained by fraud or duplicity: it is the privilege of those who listen attentively to good counsel and carry it out in their lives.

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَخْشَ اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقْهُ...

52. It is such as obey Allah and His Messenger, and fear Allah and do right,

...فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ (٥٢)

that will win (in the end).

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ أَمَرْتَهُمْ لَيَخْرُجُنَّ...

53. They swear their strongest oaths by Allah that, if only thou wouldst command them, they would leave (their homes).

C3029. Some people, especially hypocrites, give hyperbolic assurances, as did the Madinah Hypocrites to the holy Prophet, that they would do any bidding, even to the forsaking of their hearths and homes.

To this they are ready to swear their strongest oaths, which mean nothing. They are asked to spare their oaths, and quietly do at least such unheroic duties as they are asked to do in every-day life.

Idle words are not of the least value. Allah will judge by your actions, and He knows all, whether it is open or secret.

...قُلْ لَّا تُفْسِمُوا طَاعَةَ مَعْرُوفَةً...

Say:

"Swear ye not; obedience is (more) reasonable:

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ (٥٣)

verily, Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do."

قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ...

54. Say:

Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger:

...فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْهِ مَا حُمِّلَ وَعَلَيْكُمْ مَا حُمِّلْتُمْ...

but if ye turn away, he is only responsible for the duty placed on him and ye for that placed on you.

...وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوهُ تَهْتَدُوا...

If ye obey him, ye shall be on right guidance.

...وَمَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ (٥٤)

The Messenger's duty is only to preach the clear (Message)."

C3030. 'If you disobey Allah's commands as explained by His Prophet, you are not going to be forced.

The Prophet's mission is to train your will and explain clearly all the implications of your conduct. The responsibility for your conduct rests entirely on yourselves.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ...

55. Allah has promised, to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds,

...لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ...

that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land, inheritance (of power), as He granted it to those before them;

C3031. Three things are promised here, to those who have Faith and obey Allah's Law:

1. that they will inherit power and authority in the land, not for any selfish purposes of theirs nor by way of favouritism, but in order that they may maintain Allah's Law;
2. that the Religion of Right, which Allah has chosen for them, will be openly established, and will suppress all wrong and oppression;
3. that the righteous will live in peace and security, instead of having to suffer persecution, or leave their hearths and homes for the cause of Allah, or practise the rites of their Faith in secret.

...وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ ...

that He will establish in authority their religion -- the one which He has chosen for them;

... وَلِيُبدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا ...

and that He will change (their state), after the fear in which they (lived), to one of security and peace:

C3032. If this verse was revealed about the time of the Battle of the Ditch (*Khandaq*), also called the Battle of the Confederates (*Ahzab*), A.H. 4-5, we can imagine the comfort it gave to the Muslims who were besieged in Madinah by a force ten times their number.

The Muslims then lived in a state of great suspense and danger, and under arms for days on end. (See 23:9-20).

The security and authority they were promised came to them subsequently in abundant measures.

... يَعْبدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا ...

'They will worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me.'

... وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ (٥٥)

If any do reject faith after this, they are rebellious and wicked.

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ (٥٦)

56. So establish regular Prayer and give regular Charity:
and obey the Messenger; that ye may receive mercy.

... لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ...

57. Never think thou that the Unbelievers are going to frustrate (Allah's Plan) on earth:

... وَمَأْوَاهُمْ النَّارُ وَلَيْسَ الْمَصِيرُ (٥٧)

their abode is the Fire -- and it is indeed an evil refuge!

C.160 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(24:58-64)

*For a self-respecting life on earth, respect
For others' privacy is most essential*

*In the home and abroad; but superstitions
Are not met in intercourse amongst kin
Or true friends. In public council never
Fail to observe the most punctilious
Form and order: your self-respect
Demands that ye should give your Leader
Sincere respect and all obedience
Ye may not know but Allah doth know
the inwardness of things both great and small.*

Section 8

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ...

58. O ye who believe!

C3033. We now come to rules of decorum within the family circle in refined society.

Servants and children have rather more freedom of access, as they come and go at all hours, and there is less ceremony with them. But even in their case there are limitations. During the night, before morning prayer, i.e., before dawn, they must discreetly ask for permission before they enter, partly because they must not unnecessarily disturb people asleep, and partly because the people are then undressed.

The same applies to the time for the midday siesta, and again to the time after night prayers, when people usually undress and turn in to sleep.

For grown-ups the rule is stricter: they must ask permission to come in at all times (24:59).

... لَيْسَتَأْذِنُكُمْ الَّذِينَ مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ...

let those whom your right hands possess,

C3034. This would mean slaves in a regime of slavery.

But the principle applies to all personal servants who have to render personal service to their masters or mistresses by day and night.

...وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلُمَ مِنْكُمْ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ...

and the (children) among you who have not come of age ask your permission (before they come to your presence), on three occasions,

C3035. 1 have translated "come of age" euphemistically for "attain the age of puberty".

...مِن قَبْلِ صَلَاةِ الْفَجْرِ وَحِينَ تَضَعُونَ ثِيَابَكُمْ مِّنَ الظَّهْرِ وَمِن

بَعْدِ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ...

- before morning prayer;
- the while ye doff your clothes for the noonday heat;
- and after the late-night prayer:

...ثَلَاثَ عَوْرَاتٍ لَّكُمْ...

these are your three times of undress:

C3036. It is a mark of refinement for ladies and gentlemen not to be slipshod or vulgarly familiar, in dress, manners, or speech; and Islam aims at making every Muslim man or woman, however humble in station, a refined gentleman or lady, so that he or she can climb the ladder of spiritual development with humble confidence in Allah, and with the cooperation of his brothers and sisters in Islam.

The principles here laid down apply, if they are interpreted with due elasticity, even if social and domestic habits change, with changes in climate or in racial and personal habits.

Punctilious self-respect and respect for others, in small things as well as great, are the key-notes in these simple rules of etiquette.

...لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌ بَعْدَهُنَّ...

outside those times it is not wrong for you or for them

...طَوَّافُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ...

to move about attending to each other:

...كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ...

thus does Allah make clear the Signs to you:

... وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (٥٨)

for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.

وَإِذَا بَلَغَ الْأَطْفَالُ مِنْكُمُ الْحُلُمَ...

59. But when the children among you come of age,

C3037. Children among you: i.e., in your house, not necessarily your own children.

All in the house, including the stranger within your gate, must conform to these wholesome rules.

... فَلْيَسْتَأْذِنُوا كَمَا اسْتَأْذَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ...

let them (also) ask for permission, as do those senior to them (in age):

C3038. Those before them, i.e., those who have already been mentioned in the previous verse.

It is suggested that each generation as it grows up should follow the wholesome traditions of its predecessors. While they were children, they behaved like children: when they grow up, they must behave like grown-ups.

...كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ...

thus does Allah make clear His Signs to you:

... وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (٥٩)

for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.

C3039. The refrain connects up this verse with the last verse, whose meaning is completed here.

The slight variation ("His Signs" here, against "the Signs" there) shows that this verse is more personal, as

referring to children who have now become responsible men and women.

وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ اللَّاتِي لَا يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحًا...

60. Such elderly women as are past the prospect of marriage --

C3040. For elderly women in the home the rules of dress and decorum are not so exacting as for younger women, but they are also enjoined to study modesty, both because it is good in itself, and as an example to the younger people.

...فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجَاتٍ بِزِينَةٍ...

there is no blame on them if they lay aside their (outer) garments, provided they make not a wanton display of their beauty:

...وَأَنْ يَسْتَعْفِفْنَ خَيْرٌ لَهُنَّ...

but it is best for them to be modest:

...وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ (٦٠)

and Allah is One Who sees and knows all things.

C3041. Another example of a refrain: see [n. 3039](#) above.

[Verses 58 and 59](#) were closer connected: their refrain was practically identical.

This verse, though ancillary, is less closely connected: its refrain comes in like a half-note in a melody.

لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ...

61. it is no fault in the blind nor in one born lame,

...وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَنْ تَأْكُلُوا مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ...

nor in one afflicted with illness, nor in yourselves, that ye should eat

- in your own houses,

C3042. There were various Arab superstitions and fancies which are combated and rejected here.

1. The blind, or the halt, or those afflicted with serious disease were supposed to be objects of divine displeasure, and as such not fit to be associated with us in meals in our houses: we are not to entertain such a thought, as we are not judges of the causes of people's misfortunes, which deserve OUT sympathy and kindness.
2. It was considered unbecoming to take meals in the houses of near relatives: this taboo is not approved.
3. A similar superstition about houses in our possession but not in our actual occupation is disapproved.
4. If people think they should not fall under obligation to casual friends, that does not apply to a sincere friend, in whose company a meal is not to be rejected, but welcomed.
5. If people make a superstition either that they should always eat separately, or that they must always eat in company, as some people weary of their own company think, either of them is wrong.

Man is free and should regulate his life according to needs and circumstances. (R).

...أَوْ بُيُوتِ آبَائِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ إِخْوَانِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ
أَخَوَاتِكُمْ...

- or those of your fathers, or your mothers,
- or your brothers, or your sisters,

...أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَعْمَامِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ عَمَّاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخْوَالِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ
خَالَاتِكُمْ...

- or your father's brothers, or your father's sisters,
- or your mother's brothers, or your mother's sisters,

...أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتُمْ مَفَاتِحَهُ أَوْ صَدِيقِكُمْ...

- or in houses of which the keys are in your possession,
- or in the house of a sincere friend of yours:

...لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَأْكُلُوا جَمِيعًا أَوْ أَشْتَاتًا...

there is no blame on you, whether ye eat in company or separately.

...فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمْ بُيُوتًا فَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ تَحِيَّةً مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُبَارَكَةٌ

طَيِّبَةٌ...

But if ye enter houses, salute each other -- a greeting or blessing and purity as from Allah.

C3043. The shades of meaning in Salam are explained in n. 2512 to 19:62.

Here, we were first told that we might accept hospitality and good fellowship in

Here, we were first told that we might accept hospitality and good fellowship in each other's houses.

Now we are told what spirit should animate us in doing so. It should not be a spirit only of self-satisfaction in a worldly sense. It should rather be a spirit of good-will in the highest spiritual sense of the term-purity of motives and purity of life, as in the sight of Allah.

...كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (٦١)

Thus does Allah make clear the Signs to you: that ye may understand.

C3044. See notes [3039](#) and [3041](#) above. The refrain comes again, in a different form, closing the argument from a different point of view.

Section 9

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ...

62. Only those are Believers who believe in Allah and His Messenger:

...وَإِذَا كَانُوا مَعَهُ عَلَىٰ أَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ لَّمْ يَذْهَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَسْتَأْذِنُوهُ...

when they are with him on a matter requiring collective action, they do not depart until they have asked for his leave:

C3045. Matter requiring collective action: anything that affects the Community as a whole: Jumuah and 'Id prayers are periodical occasions of this kind, but what is meant here is, I think, joint consultations with a view to joint undertakings, such as a Jihad, or some kind of organisation in peace.

...إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ...

those who ask for thy leave are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger;

...فَإِذَا اسْتَأْذَنُوكَ لِبَعْضِ شَأْنِهِمْ فَأَذِّنْ لِمَن شِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ...

so when they ask for thy leave, for some business of theirs, give leave to those of them whom thou wilt,

C3046. That is, those to whom, in the exercise of your impartial discretion, you think it expedient to give leave.

"Will", unless the context shows otherwise, means "right will", not a will without any definite principle behind it.

... وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ ...

and ask Allah for their forgiveness:

C3047. In important matters of general consultation, even though leave of absence is given on sufficient excuse, it implies some defect in duty on the part of the person to whom the leave is given, and therefore the need of forgiveness from Him to Whom we owe duty in a perfect measure.

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ (٦٢)

for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

لَا تَجْعَلُوا دُعَاءَ الرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَاءِ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا...

63. Deem not the summons of the Messenger among yourselves like the summons of one of you to another:

C3048. Three significations are possible.

- One is that adopted in the Translation, which agrees with the view of most Commentators.
- Another would be:

'Do not think that the prayer of the Prophet of Allah is like your ordinary requests to another: the Prophet's prayer will be about serious matters and will be accepted by Allah'.

- A third interpretation would be:

'Do not address the Prophet familiarly as you would address one another: use proper terms of respect for him.'

...قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ يَتَسَلَّلُونَ مِنْكُمْ لِوَاذًا...

Allah doth know those of you who slip away under shelter of some excuse:

...فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ...

then let those beware who withstand the Messenger's order lest some trial befall them,

C3049. The "**trial**" is understood to be some misfortune in this life, and the "grievous Penalty" to be the punishment in the Hereafter.

... أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (٦٣)

or a grievous Penalty be inflicted on them.

أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ...

64. Be quite sure that to Allah doth belong whatever is in the heavens and on earth.

...قَدْ يَعْلَمُ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ...

Well doth He know what ye are intent upon:

C3050. The condition or position you are in, the motives which actuate you, and the ends you have in view.

... وَيَوْمَ يُرْجَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ فَيُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا عَمِلُوا...

and one day they will be brought back to Him, and He will tell them the truth of what they did:

C3051. Things misunderstood or maligned, falsely praised or held in honour, or fraudulently shown to be good when they are evil-everything will be revealed in its true light on the Day of final Judgment.

...وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (٦٤)

for Allah doth know all things.