
THE QURAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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Contents

24:30 Lower thy Gaze	2
24: 31-32	5
24:33 The Stance on Slavery	6
24:6 Those who charge against their spouses	7
24:61	11
29:8 We have enjoined on man kindness to parents	14
2:219 Wine and Gambling	15
2:220 Orphans	18
2:221 Marriage to the People of the Book	21
2:224 Oaths	23
2:225 Allah will not call you to account for thoughtlessness in your oaths, but for the intention in your hearts	24
2:226 For those who swear not to have sexual relations with their wives is a waiting time of four months	25
2:228 But men have a degree (of advantage) over them	28
2:254 The Muslim in the Shadow of his Zakat	29
2:256 Let there be no compulsion in religion	30
2:282 Contract all transactions	32
31:14 (hear the command), "Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me	

is (thy final) Goal	35
31:6 Hobbies and Pastimes approved by the Prophet (S)	36
49:11 "Let Not Some People Mock at Other People"	38
4:1 who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, his mate	43
4:11 Inheritance	46
4:127	47
4:135 Stand out firmly for justice	49
4:148Allah loveth not that evil should be noised abroad in public speech,	50
4:161 Usury	51
4:19 O you who have believed, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion	52
4:3 Marriage	53
4:34 Men are the care-takers of women	55
4:4 Marriage Dower	58
4:43 The steps to making Alcohol Haram	59
4:6 Orphans	61
4:9 Inheritance	63
62:3 Islam is a religion for all humanity, all races, cultures and creeds	64
81:9 For what crime she was killed	65
85:4 Woe to the makers of the pit (of fire)	66
90:3 And (the mystic ties of) parent and child	67
By no means! He will be sure to be thrown	

into That which Breaks to Pieces	68
Relations Between Muslims and Non-	
Muslims	69
Relaxing the Mind: A Time for	
Seriousness and a Time for Recreation	79
The Muslim in the Shadow of his Zakat	82
The Notion of 'Islamophobia'	85
The Sacredness of Human Life and	
Honour	86

Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: And Allah is well acquainted with all that they do.

Commentary

Classical Qur'ānic commentary commonly presents Sūrah al-Nūr as a chapter centrally concerned with safeguarding chastity and preventing indecency. Within this interpretive framework, the earliest verses establishing women's *ḥijāb* are associated with Sūrah al-Aḥzāb and linked to the Prophet Muhammad's marriage to Zaynab bint Jaḥsh. Scholars differ over whether these verses were revealed in 3 AH or 5 AH, although some authorities prefer the latter date. The verses in Sūrah al-Nūr addressing modest conduct are placed later in the chronology, connected to the incident of *Ifk* following the campaign of Banī Muṣṭaliq in 6 AH. From this perspective, the practice of *ḥijāb* began with Sūrah al-Aḥzāb and was later reinforced and elaborated through the moral and social regulations in Sūrah al-Nūr.

Qur'ān 24:30 instructs believing men to lower their gaze and guard their private parts. Exegetes explain "lowering the gaze" as redirecting one's sight away from what Islamic law prohibits viewing, including intentional gazes driven by sexual desire. Commentary literature frequently distinguishes between an accidental glance, which is treated as excusable, and deliberate or repeated looking, which is treated as blameworthy or prohibited. In this reading, guarding one's private parts is understood broadly as avoiding illicit sexual acts and the pathways that lead to them, with "the gaze" described as an initiating step and adultery as a culminating act. Prophetic

traditions are cited in tafsīr sources to emphasize that visual temptation can serve as a major moral risk, and believers are urged to resist it as part of spiritual discipline (Ibn Kathīr).

Qur’ān 24:31 reiterates the directive of modesty for women and expands it through additional guidelines, including restrictions on displaying adornment and instructions to cover the chest and neckline with a head covering. “Adornment” (*zīnah*) is often interpreted not merely as jewelry or clothing, but as the bodily areas where such adornment is worn, thereby linking the verse to rules of concealment in public. The verse includes two categories of exceptions: (a) what may appear unavoidably during ordinary activity, and (b) specific classes of people before whom full concealment is not required. Classical authorities differ on how to interpret the phrase “except what ordinarily appears,” with some restricting it primarily to outer garments and others allowing the face and hands. Despite these differences, commentators frequently emphasize a shared principle: where there is a credible risk of *fitnah* (sexual temptation or social harm), concealment becomes more strictly required, and intentional looking without legitimate need is discouraged or prohibited (Ibn Kathīr; al-Ālūsī).

The verse then lists categories of individuals who may be exempted from full *ḥijāb*—including husbands and close male relatives (*maḥārim*), as well as certain household or social categories (e.g., women, servants or dependents in particular interpretations, men lacking sexual desire, and children not yet aware of sexual matters). Commentators distinguish between exemption from *ḥijāb* requirements and exemption from *‘awrah* coverage: the former concerns public modesty boundaries, while the latter concerns what must remain covered even in private settings, with the husband typically treated as the only person granted maximal exception. Jurists also debate whether “their women” includes non-Muslim women, with some treating non-

Muslim women as analogous to non-*maḥram* men for purposes of concealment, while others interpret the phrase more broadly and treat concealment as recommended rather than obligatory in those contexts, especially given practical constraints (al-Ālūsī; Ibn Kathīr).

Qur’ān 24:31 further prohibits behavior that indirectly reveals concealed adornment, such as stamping the feet in a manner that makes jewelry audible. On the basis of this principle, some jurists extend the reasoning to additional forms of attraction, including perfume and intentionally attention-drawing display. Legal discussions also address whether a woman’s voice is inherently part of *‘awrah*. Positions vary across schools and within traditions, but a common synthesis in juristic commentary is that speech itself is not categorically forbidden; rather, it becomes impermissible when it reasonably leads to *fitnah*, while necessity-based communication—particularly with appropriate boundaries—remains permissible.

Finally, the passage concludes with a general call to repentance (Qur’ān 24:31), which commentators interpret as a reminder that moral failures related to desire may be hidden from people but remain fully known to God. Prophetic traditions describing lustful looking as a form of “zina of the eye” are frequently cited to reinforce the idea that ethical responsibility includes both outward behavior and inward intention, and that believers should respond to lapses through repentance and renewed restraint (Ibn Kathīr; Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim).

References:

Al-Qaradawi, Yusuf (1960). The Lawful and Prohibited in Islam. (p. 149-150).

24: 31-32

24:31

And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty. that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O ye Believers! turn ye all together towards Allah, that ye may attain Bliss.

24:32

Marry those among you who are single, or the virtuous ones among yourselves, male or female: if they are in poverty, Allah will give them means out of His grace: for Allah encompasseth all, and he knoweth all things.

24:33 The Stance on Slavery

Let those who find not the wherewithal for marriage keep themselves chaste, until Allah gives them means out of His grace. 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: yea, give them something yourselves out of the means which Allah has given to you. But force not your maids to prostitution when they desire chastity, in order that ye may make a gain in the goods of this life. But if anyone compels them, yet, after such compulsion, is Allah, Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful (to them),

Qur'an 24:33 instructs individuals who lack the financial means to marry to remain chaste until Allah provides for them from His grace. In Islamic law, marriage generally requires the husband to provide the wife with a marital gift, known as *mahr*. Therefore, a person who is unable to meet the financial responsibilities associated with marriage is expected to exercise patience and self-restraint. Financial inability does not permit sexual relationships outside marriage, as personal desires must be fulfilled only through a lawful marital relationship.

The verse also addresses the historical institution of slavery and establishes measures intended to facilitate emancipation and protect enslaved individuals from exploitation. Although slavery is no longer legally recognized, Islamic law historically permitted an enslaved man or woman to seek freedom through a written manumission agreement known as *mukatabah*. Under this arrangement, the enslaved person agreed to pay a specified amount in exchange for freedom and was permitted to earn money lawfully to satisfy the terms of the contract.

When an enslaved person made a sincere request for such an agreement and demonstrated honesty, responsibility, and good

character, the owner was encouraged to approve it. The owner was also instructed to provide financial assistance from the wealth Allah had granted, thereby helping the individual complete the payment and attain freedom. Furthermore, the verse strictly prohibited forcing enslaved women into prostitution for financial gain and emphasized divine forgiveness and mercy toward those who were subjected to such coercion (Qur'an 24:33).

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 24 verse 33).

24:6 Those who charge against their spouses

And for those who launch a charge against their spouses, and have (in support) no evidence but their own,- their solitary evidence (can be received) if they bear witness four times (with an oath) by Allah that they are solemnly telling the truth;

Commentary

Islamic jurisprudence introduces the legal procedure of *li'ān* as a specific ruling related to accusations of adultery between spouses. *Li'ān* refers to a formal exchange of oaths in which a husband and wife invoke divine curse or wrath upon themselves if they are lying. According to classical tafsīr and fiqh literature, this process applies when a husband accuses his wife of adultery or denies paternity of a child, and the wife rejects the accusation while seeking punishment for false allegation. Under ordinary legal standards, a claimant must present four eyewitnesses to prove adultery; failure to do so results in the penalty for false accusation. However, because of the unique emotional and social circumstances of marital accusations, Islamic law provides the alternative mechanism of *li'ān* (Tafsīr Mazhari).

The procedure begins with the husband swearing four times that his claim is truthful, followed by a fifth oath invoking God's curse upon himself if he is lying. If the husband refuses to complete the required statements, he may face legal consequences, including the penalty for false accusation. If he completes the oaths, the wife is then given the opportunity to

swear four times that the allegation is false, followed by a fifth oath invoking divine wrath upon herself if the husband's claim is true. Completion of the process removes worldly punishment from both parties, leaving ultimate judgment to God. Following *li'ān*, the spouses are permanently separated and cannot remarry

one another; separation may be effected by divorce or judicial decree if necessary.

Classical commentators explain that the legislation of *li'ān* addresses the psychological difficulty faced by a husband who claims to have witnessed adultery but cannot produce the required witnesses. While ordinary individuals are commanded to avoid accusations without evidence, marital circumstances necessitated a distinct legal provision. The ruling thus balances the protection of honor with the prevention of false accusations.

Two well-known historical incidents are frequently cited as contexts for the revelation of the verses of *li'ān* (Qur'ān 24:6–9). One concerns Hilāl ibn Umayyah, who reported witnessing misconduct involving his wife. According to narrations preserved in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Musnad Aḥmad*, and other sources, the Prophet Muhammad initially instructed him to produce four witnesses or face punishment for false accusation. Subsequently, the verses establishing *li'ān* were revealed, and the couple underwent the oath procedure, after which they were permanently separated. Another incident involves 'Uwaimir al-'Ajlānī, whose case followed a similar pattern and reinforced the application of the same ruling. Scholars such as Ibn Ḥajar and al-Nawawī regarded both events as closely connected to the revelation and implementation of the law.

From a legal perspective, several rulings emerge from the completion of *li'ān*. First, the marital bond is irrevocably dissolved, and the couple becomes permanently unlawful to one another, comparable to the prohibition between certain kinship

relations. Second, any child born from the disputed conception is legally attributed to the mother rather than the husband. Third, although spiritual accountability remains with God, worldly punishments for adultery or false accusation are suspended once

the oaths are completed. Islamic legal texts also emphasize that neither the woman nor the child may be publicly stigmatized following the process, preserving social dignity and legal protection.

It is no fault in the blind nor in one born lame, nor in one afflicted with illness, nor in yourselves, that ye should eat in your own houses, or those of your fathers, or your mothers, or your brothers, or your sisters, or your father's brothers or your father's sisters, or your mother's brothers, or your mother's sisters, or in houses of which the keys are in your possession, or in the house of a sincere friend of yours: there is no blame on you, whether ye eat in company or separately. But if ye enter houses, salute each other – a greeting of blessing and purity as from Allah. Thus does Allah make clear the signs to you: that ye may understand.

Commentary

Social Etiquettes After Entering a House in Sūrah al-Nūr

Following the earlier injunctions requiring permission before entering another person's home (Qur'ān 24:27–29), exegetical literature explains that subsequent verses outline additional social etiquettes to be observed after entry has been granted. These guidelines are presented within the broader Qur'ānic emphasis on safeguarding the rights of others (*ḥuqūq al-'ibād*) and avoiding any use of another person's property without consent. Classical commentators connect the revelation of these instructions to several historical incidents that illustrate the companions' heightened sense of moral caution and their reluctance to inconvenience others (Tafsīr Mazharī; al-Baghawī).

One reported background concerns social attitudes toward eating with individuals who were blind, ill, or physically disabled. Some companions avoided shared meals out of concern that their condition might inconvenience others or lead to unequal portions. Another narration describes the opposite

concern: when Qur'ān 2:188 warned against consuming another's wealth unjustly, some Muslims hesitated to share meals with the disabled out of fear that they might unintentionally deprive them. In response, the verse clarified that communal eating was permissible and that minor differences in portions should not be treated as moral violations. A third narration links the revelation to practices during military expeditions, when companions entrusted their homes to vulnerable individuals; those entrusted sometimes refrained from eating despite having permission, fearing that the owners might not have granted consent wholeheartedly. The verse addressed such anxieties by affirming that established customs of mutual generosity were acceptable where genuine consent existed (Tafsīr Mazharī).

Jurists explain that the permission to eat in the homes of certain relatives or acquaintances was grounded in the prevailing Arab custom of open hospitality, where mutual understanding eliminated the need for formal requests. However, exegetes emphasize that this concession is conditional upon clear assurance of the owner's approval. Where such customary permission does not exist—or where the owner's willingness is uncertain—eating without explicit consent remains impermissible. Consequently, many commentators argue that the ruling is not abrogated but rather context-dependent: its application depends on the presence of genuine, socially recognized consent (Tafsīr Mazharī).

Some jurists further note that the concession is not limited strictly to the relatives listed in the verse. Rather, it extends to any relationship in which there is established confidence that the host would welcome such behavior. The central ethical principle, therefore, is the avoidance of harm or offense, consistent with broader Qur'ānic teachings on mutual respect and social harmony.

In addition to permissions related to eating, the verse also outlines post-entry etiquette. Once admitted into a home, visitors are instructed to greet those present with *salām*, described metaphorically as “greeting your own selves,” reflecting the Qur’ānic portrayal of believers as a unified community. Hadith literature reinforces the importance of exchanging greetings as an act that strengthens social bonds and expresses goodwill among Muslims..

We have enjoined on man kindness to parents: but if they (either of them) strive (to force) thee to join with Me (in worship) anything of which thou hast no knowledge, obey them not. Ye have (all) to return to me, and I will tell you (the truth) of all that ye did.

The Qur'ānic verse, “And We have instructed man to be good to his parents” (Qur'ān 29:8), emphasizes the moral obligation of children to treat their parents with kindness and respect. The term *waṣiyyah* refers to an instruction or recommendation given with sincere advice and goodwill. Likewise, the word *ḥusn* conveys the meaning of goodness or virtuous conduct, indicating that individuals are encouraged to demonstrate honorable and compassionate behavior toward their parents.

However, the verse also establishes an important limitation to this obligation. While kindness and respect toward parents remain essential, obedience to them must not extend to actions that conflict with the commands of God. The verse specifically states that if parents urge their children to associate partners with God or to commit acts of disbelief, they should not be obeyed in such

matters. This principle is supported by a prophetic tradition stating that obedience to a created being is not permissible when it involves disobedience to the Creator. This hadith is reported in collections such as those of Imam Aḥmad and al-Ḥākim, the latter of whom considered it authentic.

Classical commentators relate that this verse was revealed in connection with the Companion Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, one of the ten companions whom the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have promised Paradise (*al-ʿAsharah al-Mubashsharah*). Sa'd was known for his deep respect and devotion toward his

mother. When his mother learned that he had accepted Islam, she strongly opposed his decision and attempted to compel him to abandon the new faith. According to reports preserved in sources such as Muslim and al-Tirmidhī, she vowed that she would neither eat nor drink until he renounced Islam, even declaring that she would allow herself to die so that he would bear the blame.

Despite his affection and concern for her, Sa'd remained steadfast in his faith, recognizing that obedience to God must take precedence over all other obligations. He reportedly told his mother that even if she possessed many lives and they departed one by one, he would not abandon his religion. Faced with his unwavering determination, she eventually ended her protest and resumed eating. This account is often cited by commentators to illustrate the Qur'ānic teaching that devotion to parents must be maintained with kindness, but not at the expense of obedience to God.

References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .6 surah 29 verse 8).

2:219 Wine and Gambling

They ask thee concerning wine and gambling. Say: “In them is great sin, and some profit, for men; but the sin is greater than the profit.” They ask thee how much they are to spend; Say: “What is beyond your needs.” Thus doth Allah Make clear to you His Signs: In order that ye may consider-

Qur'an 2:219 acknowledges that wine and gambling may provide certain material or temporary benefits; however, it emphasizes that their harmful and sinful consequences are considerably greater than any benefit they may offer. The verse also instructs believers to spend from their wealth whatever exceeds their essential needs, encouraging both personal moderation and concern for the welfare of others (Qur'an 2:219).

According to Emerick, this verse formed part of the gradual Qur'anic prohibition of intoxicants. 'Umar ibn al-Khattab and Mu'adh ibn Jabal reportedly asked the Prophet Muhammad for a clear ruling because intoxicants contributed to drunkenness and immoral behaviour. Qur'an 2:219 was subsequently revealed, identifying the harms of intoxicants as greater than their benefits. A later revelation prohibited believers from approaching prayer while intoxicated (Qur'an 4:43). The final and categorical prohibition appeared in Qur'an 5:90–91, which instructed Muslims to avoid intoxicants and gambling altogether (Emerick, n.d.).

Emerick also compares the Qur'anic position with the statement attributed to Paul in 1 Timothy 5:23, in which Timothy is advised to consume a small amount of wine for health-related reasons. Although red wine contains antioxidants that may provide certain health benefits, similar compounds can be obtained from nonalcoholic sources, including red grapes, grape

juice, and açai berries. Consequently, alcohol is not necessary for obtaining these nutritional benefits.

Any limited benefit associated with alcoholic beverages must also be evaluated against their substantial social and medical harms. These may include intoxication, accidental deaths, liver disease, birth defects, domestic violence, and the mistreatment of children or spouses. From this perspective, the negative consequences of alcohol outweigh its possible advantages, which is consistent with the principle expressed in Qur'an 2:219. Concerns regarding these harms also contributed to Christian temperance movements and to the prohibition of alcoholic beverages in the United States from 1920 to 1933 (Emerick, n.d.).

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an in Today's English (p. 76, 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

2:220 Orphans

(Their bearings) on this life and the Hereafter. They ask thee concerning orphans. Say: “The best thing to do is what is for their good; if ye mix their affairs with yours, they are your brethren; but Allah knows the man who means mischief from the man who means good. And if Allah had wished, He could have put you into difficulties: He is indeed Exalted in Power, Wise.”

Qur'an 2:220 establishes that decisions concerning orphans should be guided primarily by their welfare. Guardians are permitted to combine an orphan's financial affairs with their own when doing so genuinely benefits the orphan, since orphans are regarded as members of the broader community of believers. However, the verse warns that Allah distinguishes between those who act sincerely and those who intend exploitation or wrongdoing (Qur'an 2:220).

The question concerning orphans is closely connected to the responsibility of social care discussed in Qur'an 2:215. Islamic teachings place a duty upon individuals to support parents, close relatives, orphans, and people in need, particularly when there are family ties. When an orphan has no income or means of support, relatives and guardians are expected to provide assistance. When the orphan possesses property, the guardian must preserve, manage, and, where possible, increase its value without exploiting it or demanding improper compensation.

Managing an orphan's property could raise practical concerns. A guardian might find it more effective to combine household expenses, business interests, or property management with those of the orphan. In some circumstances, the guardian might also marry the orphan's widowed mother to provide greater stability and protection for the family. Nevertheless, because the Qur'an

places considerable emphasis on safeguarding orphans and their property, conscientious guardians could fear that combining financial affairs might expose them to accusations of misconduct or lead to an unintentional violation of the orphan's rights.

The Qur'an repeatedly condemns the unlawful consumption of an orphan's wealth. It describes those who wrongfully consume such property as filling themselves with fire, thereby emphasizing the seriousness of this offence. In view of these warnings, a God-conscious individual would be reluctant to mix personal finances with an orphan's property without clear religious permission.

Qur'an 2:220 responds by establishing the principle that improving the orphan's circumstances is the preferred course of action. The decisive consideration is not whether the finances are kept separate or combined, but whether the arrangement protects the orphan and promotes the orphan's best interests. A guardian may therefore maintain separate accounts when separation offers greater protection. Alternatively, the guardian may combine financial affairs when doing so allows for more effective care, supervision, and management.

This permission is accompanied by a serious moral warning. Allah knows whether a guardian is acting honestly for the orphan's benefit or using the arrangement as a means of unlawfully consuming the orphan's property. Guardians must therefore remain aware that their intentions and actions are known to Allah and that they will ultimately be held accountable for any misuse of the orphan's wealth.

The permission to combine financial affairs represents a concession intended to reduce difficulty for those responsible for orphans. Requiring complete separation in every circumstance could create significant practical and financial hardship for guardians. The verse therefore provides flexibility while maintaining strict ethical accountability. Guardians should be

grateful for this accommodation and must not use it as an opportunity for personal gain or exploitation.

The Arabic term *i' nāt* refers to placing someone under difficulty or hardship. Its use in this context reflects a broader principle of Islamic law: the Sharī'ah seeks to facilitate human affairs and avoid imposing unnecessary burdens, while continuing to protect the rights and welfare of vulnerable individuals.

References:

Islahi, Amin Ahsan. Pondering Over The Qur'an: Surah al-Fatiha and Surah al-Baqarah (Kindle Locations 12784-12809). Islamic Book Trust. Kindle Edition.

2:221 Marriage to the People of the Book

Do not marry unbelieving women (idolaters), until they believe: A slave woman who believes is better than an unbelieving woman, even though she allures you. Nor marry (your girls) to unbelievers until they believe: A man slave who believes is better than an unbeliever, even though he allures you. Unbelievers do (but) beckon you to the Fire. But Allah beckons by His Grace to the Garden (of bliss) and forgiveness, and makes His Signs clear to mankind: That they may celebrate His praise.

Qur'an 2:221 prohibits Muslim men and women from marrying polytheists until they accept faith. The verse emphasizes that religious commitment and moral character are more valuable than social status, physical attraction, wealth, or personal admiration. Accordingly, a believing enslaved woman or man is described as preferable to an attractive polytheist because faith directs individuals toward divine forgiveness and Paradise, whereas disbelief may lead them away from spiritual salvation (Qur'an 2:221).

According to *The Study Quran*, Islamic law distinguishes between polytheists and the People of the Book. Qur'an 5:5 permits Muslim men to marry chaste women from among those who received earlier scriptures, particularly Jewish and Christian women. Some commentators maintain that Qur'an 5:5 partially abrogated the ruling in Qur'an 2:221 by creating an exception for women from the People of the Book. This interpretation assumes that the prohibition in Qur'an 2:221 originally included all non-Muslim women.

Other scholars argue that no abrogation occurred because the term "polytheists" in Qur'an 2:221 was never intended to include Jews and Christians. Under this interpretation, Qur'an 2:221 prohibits marriage with polytheists, whereas Qur'an 5:5

independently confirms the permissibility of marriage between Muslim men and chaste women from the People of the Book. Despite differences in interpretive reasoning, the predominant legal position permits Muslim men to marry Jewish and Christian women.

Some jurists extended the category of the People of the Book to other religious communities. For example, certain scholars included Zoroastrians, while some Muslim jurists in India considered whether Hindus could also be placed within this category. These interpretations, however, were not universally accepted.

A minority of scholars adopted the opposite view, maintaining that Qur'an 2:221 abrogated the permission mentioned in Qur'an 5:5. According to this interpretation, Muslims would not be permitted to marry any non-Muslim. This position remained a minority opinion within the Islamic legal tradition.

The command not to marry Muslim women to polytheistic men has generally been understood as prohibiting the marriage of a Muslim woman to a non-Muslim man. Although some alternative interpretations have been expressed, the dominant juristic position maintains that Muslim women may marry only Muslim men. Thus, the mainstream legal distinction permits Muslim men to marry chaste Jewish or Christian women while prohibiting marriage between Muslim women and non-Muslim men (*The Study Quran*).

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). *Study Quran*.

2:224 Oaths

And make not Allah's (name) an excuse in your oaths against doing good, or acting rightly, or making peace between persons; for Allah is One Who heareth and knoweth all things.

According to Tafsir As Saranbi,

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to mould the first Muslim community that will be responsible for carrying His (swt)'s Message to mankind. Here Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims what they were created for. They were created to worship and serve Allah (swt). They were created to be a source of good in this world. This is the purpose of their existence. In this ayah Allah (swt) reminds them that there is nothing that should stand in the way of them fulfilling this purpose for which they were created. Not even their own oaths and promises. Not even the oaths and promises that they made in the Name of Allah (swt).

References:

As Saranbi, Abduraheem (2019). Tafsir As-Saranbi. (p. 62).

2:225 Allah will not call you to account for thoughtlessness in your oaths, but for the intention in your hearts

Allah will not call you to account for thoughtlessness in your oaths, but for the intention in your hearts; and He is Oft-forgiving, Most Forbearing

This means that a person will not be held accountable for those of his oaths that are uttered thoughtlessly and without any premeditated intention. They are just words of mouth without any serious intent behind them. They are not the result of any greed or expediency, but are occasionally blurted out in the course of a conversation. Allāh will, however, take account of those deliberate and premeditated oaths in His name that are intended to hurt others. Vain oaths will not be held against those who utter them, as Allāh is most Forgiving and most Forbearing. By describing these oaths as vain, clearly suggests that serious and upright people must also avoid them. One of the prominent characteristics of sober and decent people specifically mentioned in the Qur'ān is that they avoid anything frivolous.

References:

Islahi, Amin Ahsan. Pondering Over The Qur'an: Surah al-Fatiha and Surah al-Baqarah (Kindle Locations 13056-13062). Islamic Book Trust. Kindle Edition.

2:226 For those who swear not to have sexual relations with their wives is a waiting time of four months

For those who swear not to have sexual relations with their wives is a waiting time of four months, but if they return [to normal relations] – then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

Qur'an 2:226 addresses the practice known in Islamic law as *īlā'*, in which a husband swears an oath to abstain from sexual relations with his wife. The verse establishes a maximum waiting period of four months. During this period, the husband may reconsider his oath and resume normal marital relations. If reconciliation occurs, Allah is described as Forgiving and Merciful (*Qur'an* 2:226).

Before Islam, a husband could withdraw from marital relations for an extended period without formally divorcing his wife. This practice placed the wife in a harmful and uncertain position because she was deprived of marital companionship while also remaining unable to marry another person. The four-month limitation therefore protected the wife from indefinite abandonment and prevented the husband from using abstinence as a means of emotional or marital harm.

In this context, *īlā'* refers specifically to an oath by which a husband declares that he will not engage in sexual relations with his wife. Such an oath does not immediately constitute divorce. Instead, the four-month period provides an opportunity for reflection and reconciliation while establishing the maximum length of time for which the wife may be denied normal marital relations. Abstinence continuing beyond this period may be interpreted as evidence of an intention to harm the wife.

The expression “if they return” is commonly understood to mean that the husband resumes sexual relations with his wife. Some commentators maintain that a sincere intention to resume the marriage is sufficient when physical reconciliation is temporarily prevented by circumstances beyond the husband’s control. Others hold that the husband may formally declare or provide testimony that he has withdrawn his oath and returned to the marital relationship.

Scholars have differed regarding whether expiation is required when the husband breaks his oath. Some interpret the reference to divine forgiveness and mercy as indicating that no additional expiation is necessary. Others argue that because the husband has violated a sworn oath, he must perform the customary expiation for breaking an oath, such as feeding people in need.

There is also disagreement concerning the circumstances in which the ruling applies. Some scholars restrict it to oaths made in anger or with the deliberate intention of harming the wife. Under this interpretation, an oath made for another legitimate reason, such as temporarily protecting the health of a nursing mother or child, would not necessarily fall under this ruling. Other scholars maintain that the verse applies to any oath that prevents normal marital relations, regardless of the husband’s stated motivation.

Some interpretations extend the principle beyond sexual abstinence. According to this broader view, any oath intended to harm or isolate the wife—such as refusing to speak to, touch, or interact with her—may be treated similarly because the essential concern is the prevention of marital abuse and prolonged neglect.

A significant legal disagreement concerns what occurs after the four-month period expires. Some jurists maintain that divorce takes effect automatically at the end of the period if the husband has not resumed the marriage. Others hold that divorce does not

occur automatically; instead, the husband must either reconcile with his wife or formally divorce her. According to another position, a judge may order the divorce at the wife's request if the husband refuses both reconciliation and formal separation. Despite these differences, the central purpose of the verse is to prevent a husband from indefinitely suspending his wife's marital rights and leaving her in a state of uncertainty (*The Study Quran*, n.d.)

References:

Nasr, Hossein (2015). Study Quran.

2:228 But men have a degree (of advantage) over them

Divorced women shall wait concerning themselves for three monthly periods. Nor is it lawful for them to hide what Allah Hath created in their wombs, if they have faith in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands have the better right to take them back in that period, if they wish for reconciliation. And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable; but men have a degree (of advantage) over them. And Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.

The ‘edge’ that this verse refers to is the fact that men are obligated to care for women and thus have more responsibility. This translates into a few seemingly inequitable things such as a man receiving twice the inheritance of a woman. However this seeming advantage actually rebounds back upon them for men are responsible to spend of their money on the family, while women are not obligated to do so. Further, men must pay a dowry to their brides and also support their elderly parents and other disadvantaged relatives. See the first clause contained in 4:34 where men are given this responsibility. The edge also may refer to the fact that men are thought to have the first choice at initiating reconciliation talks.

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an in Today's English* (p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition

2:254 The Muslim in the Shadow of his Zakat

O ye who believe! spend of that wherewith We have provided you ere a day come when there will be no trafficking, nor friendship, nor intercession. The disbelievers, they are the wrong-doers

Narrated Abu Huraira: I heard the Prophet (S) saying, “Who ever spends a couple (of objects) in Allah’s cause, will be called by the Gatekeepers of Paradise who will say, “O so-and-so, come on!” Abu Bakr said, “Such a person will never perish or be miserable’ The Prophet (S) said, “I hope you will be among such person.”

References:

[2]Sahih al-Bukhari 3216 In-book reference : Book 59, Hadith 27 USC-MSA web (English) reference : Vol. 4, Book 54, Hadith 439 (deprecated numbering scheme)

2:256 Let there be no compulsion in religion

Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things.

The following excerpt is taken from “Maariful Quran” pg. 638-639:

Islamic scholars explain that steadfast adherence to Islam protects a believer from moral and spiritual loss, similar to someone holding firmly to a strong rope that prevents a fall (Thanavi, n.d.). The Qur’anic principle “there is no compulsion in religion” is sometimes questioned in light of teachings on jihad and qital; however, classical commentators clarify that armed struggle was not intended to force conversion but to prevent oppression and social disorder (Mazhari; Qurtubi). Evidence for this interpretation includes the institution of jizyah, which granted non-Muslims protection of life, property, and honor without requiring them to embrace Islam. Islamic law also prohibited harm to non-combatants such as women, children, the elderly, and the infirm, demonstrating that the objective was the preservation of justice and public order rather than coercion in matters of faith. Historical reports, such as the account of Caliph ‘Umar declining to compel an elderly Christian woman to convert, further illustrate that belief is understood as an inner conviction beyond external force. Accordingly, commentators maintain that verses permitting fighting address the removal of corruption and aggression, while the principle of non-compulsion affirms that genuine faith cannot be imposed (Thanavi, n.d.; Mazhari; Qurtubi).

References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .1 pg. 638-639). English – Maariful Quran : Mufti Muhammad Shafi (r.a) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

2:282 Contract all transactions

O ye who believe! When ye deal with each other, in transactions involving future obligations in a fixed period of time, reduce them to writing Let a scribe write down faithfully as between the parties: let not the scribe refuse to write: as Allah Has taught him, so let him write. Let him who incurs the liability dictate, but let him fear His Lord Allah, and not diminish aught of what he owes. If they party liable is mentally deficient, or weak, or unable Himself to dictate, Let his guardian dictate faithfully, and get two witnesses, out of your own men, and if there are not two men, then a man and two women, such as ye choose, for witnesses, so that if one of them errs, the other can remind her. The witnesses should not refuse when they are called on (For evidence). Disdain not to reduce to writing (your contract) for a future period, whether it be small or big: it is juster in the sight of Allah, More suitable as evidence, and more convenient to prevent doubts among yourselves but if it be a transaction which ye carry out on the spot among yourselves, there is no blame on you if ye reduce it not to writing. But take witness whenever ye make a commercial contract; and let neither scribe nor witness suffer harm. If ye do (such harm), it would be wickedness in you. So fear Allah; For it is Good that teaches you. And Allah is well acquainted with all things. If ye are on a journey, and cannot find a scribe, a pledge with possession (may serve the purpose). And if one of you deposits a thing on trust with another, let the trustee (faithfully) discharge his trust, and let him Fear his Lord conceal not evidence; for whoever conceals it, – his heart is tainted with sin. And Allah knoweth all that ye do.

The following excerpt is taken from “The Quran with Annotated Interpretation” by Ali Unal note 161:

The reason why the Qur’ân demands two women in place of one man in commercial transactions is straightforward. It does not at

all mean that the Qur'ân regards a woman as half of a man. For what is important here is not the relative status of women or men but reliability, justice and equity in business transactions, particularly transactions involving debt. Typically, across the diverse cultures in the world, men engage in business more than women, and men are directly responsible for the livelihood of the family. Furthermore—again, typically (but not always)—women are more emotional than men and more susceptible to forgetting. Accordingly, it is reasonable to expect that, in matters wherein they are not typically engaged, women may be more susceptible to erring or forgetting than men. Of course, there will always be some women with a keener memory than some men, and some men more emotional than some women. However, rather than exceptions, the norm and the typical majority are considered in matters relating to institutions for the community. Islam does not demand two women in place of one man in all cases of bearing testimony. For example, whether it be a wife or husband, whoever accuses his/her spouse of adultery, he or she must swear by God four times. Likewise, there is no difference between a man and woman in scanning the sky and bearing testimony to seeing the crescent, in order to establish whether a lunar month has begun or ended. In addition, the testimony of two women is not sought in place of a man in the matters in which women have greater knowledge or specialty than men. It is of considerable significance that this verse contains the rules necessary for the establishment of the office of “notary public.” It is one of the many proofs for the universality of the Qur'ân, for its being timeless, that it established these rules at a time when, and for a society in which, there were few who knew how to read and write, and there was almost no paper to write on. These rules are based on justice, equity, ensuring accuracy in testimony, and removing all doubts concerning the terms of the transaction, thus reducing the potential for future disagreement

References:

Unal, Ali (2006). The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English. (p. 155)

31:14 (hear the command), “Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thy final) Goal

And We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning: (hear the command), “Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thy final) Goal.

Now, at this place, where command has been given to be grateful to parents and fulfill their rights, also pointed out is its efficient cause. Is it not that one’s mother has undergone great trial in the phenomena of his or her life and survival? She has kept the child in her body for nine months remaining vigilant and protective all the time. Because of this, day by day, her weakness and discomfort kept increasing. This she braved through. Then, even after the birth of the child, she handled the task of feeding the child, a task that demanded painstaking attention day and night and which also added to the already receding graph of her weakness. Since, it is the mother who faces most of the hardship in bringing up the child, therefore, the right of mother has been made to precede even the right of father in the Shari’ah of Islam. What has been said in: (And We commanded man [to be good] about his parents. His mother carried him facing weakness after weakness, and his weaning is in two years – 14) comes to mean exactly this. After that, in: (And if they force you 15), it was pointed out that the matter of ascribing anyone other than Allah with Him is serious. In it, even the (otherwise essential) obedience to parents is haram (unlawful).

References:

Shafi, Muhammad (2008). Maariful Quran. (Vol .6 surah 31 verse 14).

31:6 Hobbies and Pastimes approved by the Prophet (S)

But there are, among men, those who purchase idle tales, without knowledge (or meaning), to mislead (men) from the Path of Allah and throw ridicule (on the Path): for such there will be a Humiliating Penalty.

Qur'an 31:6 condemns those who use frivolous discourse to mislead others from the path of Allah or to ridicule religious truth. Although some conservative scholars have cited this verse as evidence that all forms of music and singing are prohibited, this interpretation is not universally supported by the broader Hadith literature.

The verse appears to criticize entertainment that is deliberately used to distract people from knowledge, promote ignorance, or compete with meaningful religious instruction. Therefore, the primary concern is not necessarily music or storytelling themselves, but the harmful purpose for which they may be employed. Entertainment becomes objectionable when it encourages people to mock divine guidance or abandon beneficial knowledge.

Several narrations indicate that the Prophet Muhammad permitted singing and the playing of drums or tambourines during lawful celebrations, particularly weddings and festive occasions. Reports found in collections such as those of al-Bukhari, al-Tirmidhi, al-Tabarani, and Ibn Majah describe women and young girls singing and playing simple percussion instruments in the Prophet's presence. One reported wedding song welcomed guests with words expressing mutual hospitality and celebration.

Singing was also associated with communal labour and travel. The Prophet and his Companions reportedly recited or sang verses while digging the trench around Medina. During long journeys, rhythmic songs and drums were sometimes used to reduce fatigue

and relieve the monotony of travel. Traditional reports most clearly identify drums and small tambourines as permissible musical instruments in such settings.

The Islamic tradition also provides evidence that recreation and physical activities were not universally discouraged. The Prophet reportedly participated in or approved activities such as wrestling, archery, running, swimming, horseback riding, target practice, poetry, and storytelling. These examples suggest that permissible recreation may contribute to physical fitness, social relationships, emotional rest, and personal well-being.

Some commentators have attempted to prohibit hobbies and recreational activities on the grounds that they distract individuals from religion. However, such a broad prohibition is difficult to reconcile with reports describing the Prophet's participation in and approval of lawful pastimes. The statement attributed to the Prophet, "Allow your hearts to rest from time to time," has consequently been understood by many scholars as recognition of the human need for appropriate relaxation and recreation (*Ma'ariful Qur'an*, n.d.).

Accordingly, the verse should not necessarily be interpreted as a categorical prohibition of music, hobbies, or entertainment. Rather, it condemns activities used to promote falsehood, ridicule religion, or divert people from their moral and spiritual responsibilities. Recreation that remains lawful, moderate, and consistent with Islamic ethical principles may therefore be permissible.

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an in Today's English (p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

49:11 “Let Not Some People Mock at Other People”

O ye who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: It may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): Nor let some women laugh at others: It may be that the (latter are better than the (former): Nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by (offensive) nicknames: Ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness, (to be used of one) after he has believed: And those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong.

Qur'an 49:11 establishes several ethical principles intended to preserve human dignity, social harmony, and the unity of the Muslim community. The verse prohibits believers from ridiculing, insulting, or assigning degrading nicknames to others. It reminds individuals that those whom they regard as inferior may, in fact, possess greater moral and spiritual worth in the sight of Allah (Qur'an 49:11).

According to Al-Qaradawi (1960), mockery is incompatible with sincere faith because it commonly arises from pride, arrogance, and contempt. A believer who is conscious of Allah should not turn another person into an object of ridicule, sarcasm, or entertainment. Human worth cannot be accurately measured through physical appearance, wealth, social position, or worldly influence. Rather, Islamic teachings evaluate individuals according to faith, sincerity, moral conduct, and the condition of their hearts.

This principle is reinforced by a Prophetic tradition stating that Allah does not judge people according to their bodies or possessions but according to their hearts and actions (Muslim, as cited in Al-Qaradawi, 1960). Consequently, ridiculing someone because of poverty, disability, physical appearance, or social weakness contradicts the Islamic understanding of human dignity.

Al-Qaradawi (1960) refers to the example of 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud, whose thin legs caused some people to laugh. The Prophet

Muhammad corrected them by emphasizing that Ibn Mas‘ud’s legs carried greater weight in Allah’s scale than Mount Uhud. The incident demonstrates that outward weakness does not indicate spiritual insignificance and that physical characteristics provide no valid basis for judging another person’s worth.

The Qur’an also describes how disbelieving wrongdoers mocked vulnerable believers and exchanged gestures of ridicule when passing them. Although they assumed that the believers were misguided, the Qur’an explains that their positions would ultimately be reversed in the Hereafter (Qur’an 83:29–34). This account warns that those who mock others may eventually become the subjects of humiliation themselves.

Although the opening command in Qur’an 49:11 applies to everyone, the verse separately instructs women not to ridicule other women. This additional statement reinforces the universality of the prohibition and ensures that no form of interpersonal mockery is treated as socially acceptable.

The Prohibition of Defamation

The verse also prohibits *lamz*, a term associated with piercing or stabbing but used figuratively to describe fault-finding, defamation, and verbal injury. Al-Qaradawi (1960) explains that exposing another person’s faults can resemble inflicting a physical wound. In some circumstances, verbal harm may remain painful longer than a bodily injury because damaging words can affect a person’s dignity, reputation, and emotional well-being.

The Qur’anic instruction is expressed as a command not to defame “yourselves,” meaning that believers should not defame one another. This wording reflects the Qur’anic conception of the Muslim community as a unified body. When one believer humiliates or injures another, the harm ultimately damages the moral and social integrity of the entire community.

The Prohibition of Offensive Nicknames

Calling people by offensive nicknames is another form of verbal abuse prohibited by the verse. Such names commonly draw attention to a person's physical condition, background, weakness, past conduct, or other characteristics for the purpose of humiliation. A believer should therefore avoid addressing another person in a manner that causes embarrassment, resentment, or emotional pain.

The prohibition does not necessarily apply to every descriptive title or familiar nickname. Its primary concern is the use of names that the person dislikes or that are deliberately intended to degrade or ridicule. Respectful speech is an essential part of Islamic brotherhood and the preservation of individual dignity. Those who continue such behaviour without repentance are described in the verse as wrongdoers (Qur'an 49:11).

Qur'an 49:12: Avoiding Suspicion and Protecting Privacy

Qur'an 49:12 continues the discussion of social ethics by prohibiting excessive suspicion, spying, and backbiting. Islamic society is intended to be founded upon mutual trust, moral responsibility, and respect for personal dignity rather than suspicion, accusation, and intrusive investigation (Al-Qaradawi, 1960).

The verse does not suggest that every form of caution or concern is sinful. Instead, it condemns suspicion that assigns immoral motives to others without adequate evidence. The fundamental assumption should be that a person is innocent unless reliable proof establishes otherwise. Unsupported suspicion must not be transformed into accusation or used to damage another person's reputation.

The Prophet reportedly warned believers to avoid suspicion because it can become one of the most deceptive forms of speech (al-Bukhari, as cited in Al-Qaradawi, 1960). Human beings may occasionally experience negative thoughts, particularly when relationships are strained. However, individuals remain responsible for refusing to pursue, publicize, or act upon unverified assumptions. A person who experiences suspicion should therefore avoid investigating it without legitimate cause.

Suspicion can create inward hostility and lead outwardly to spying. For this reason, the prohibition against spying immediately follows the warning against suspicion. Islamic ethics seek to maintain integrity in both private thought and public behaviour. Individuals are not permitted to intrude into private affairs merely to discover faults or hidden misconduct.

Al-Qaradawi (1960) relates a report involving Abu al-Haytham and ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Amir. When Abu al-Haytham considered reporting neighbours who privately consumed alcohol, ‘Uqbah advised him to counsel and warn them rather than expose them. This account illustrates the distinction between correcting wrongdoing constructively and deliberately searching for private faults in order to disgrace others.

The Prophet strongly condemned those who publicly profess belief while seeking to uncover the faults of Muslims. He warned that whoever searches for another person’s concealed faults may have his or her own faults exposed by Allah, even within the privacy of the home (al-Tirmidhi, as cited in Al-Qaradawi, 1960). The teaching emphasizes that religious commitment should encourage self-examination and mercy rather than intrusive judgment of others.

Respect for the Privacy of Homes and Conversations

Islamic teachings also protect the physical privacy of the home. Qur’an 24:27–28 instructs believers not to enter another person’s residence without first requesting permission and offering a greeting. When permission is refused, visitors are required to withdraw without resentment. These instructions recognize the home as a protected private space.

Prophetic traditions similarly prohibit looking into another person’s house without permission. Although some reports employ severe legal language to emphasize the seriousness of such intrusion, their central principle is that residents have a strong right to privacy and protection from unauthorized observation (al-Bukhari & Muslim, as cited in Al-Qaradawi, 1960).

Secretly listening to private conversations is likewise forbidden. Al-Qaradawi (1960) cites traditions warning against listening to people who do not consent to being overheard. These teachings apply not only to physical eavesdropping but also, by extension, to any deliberate attempt to obtain private information through deceptive or unauthorized means.

The Responsibility of Governments and Authorities

The prohibition against spying and fault-finding applies to both individuals and governing authorities. According to a report attributed to the Prophet, leaders who continually investigate the private faults of the population may contribute to their moral and social corruption (Abu Dawud, as cited in Al-Qaradawi, 1960). A society dominated by surveillance, suspicion, and public exposure may weaken trust and encourage hypocrisy rather than genuine moral reform.

This principle does not eliminate legitimate investigations into crimes, public harm, or violations of the rights of others. Instead, it opposes unnecessary intrusion motivated by suspicion, personal hostility, or a desire to expose private shortcomings. Authorities must distinguish between protecting society through lawful evidence-based procedures and violating privacy through unjustified surveillance.

Overall, Qur'an 49:11–12 presents a comprehensive framework for protecting human dignity. It prohibits mockery, defamation, offensive nicknames, baseless suspicion, spying, and backbiting. These commands encourage believers to control both speech and thought, respect personal privacy, presume innocence, and address wrongdoing through just and constructive means. In this way, Islamic ethics seek to develop a society based upon mutual respect, trust, compassion, and accountability before Allah.

References:

Al-Qaradawi, Yusuf (1960). *The Lawful and Prohibited in Islam*.

4:1 who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, his mate

O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women;- reverence Allah, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for Allah ever watches over you.

Qur'an 4:1 addresses humanity as a whole and emphasizes the common origin, dignity, and interconnectedness of men and women. The verse calls upon all people to remain conscious of Allah, who created humanity from a single soul, created its mate from the same nature, and produced from the two countless men and women. It also commands respect for family relationships and reminds humanity that Allah continually observes human conduct (Qur'an 4:1).

The expression *nafs wāḥidah*, commonly translated as “a single soul” or “a single being,” may be understood as referring to the shared origin and fundamental nature of all human beings. According to the interpretation presented in *Bahr al-Muḥīṭ* and by al-Rāzī, the Arabic preposition *min*, meaning “from,” does not necessarily indicate that one being was physically formed from a portion of another. Rather, it may signify that the two belong to the same kind, species, or essential nature. Al-Hasan similarly interpreted the phrase as meaning that the mate was created “of the same kind” (*Bahr al-Muḥīṭ*, as cited in the commentary).

Under this interpretation, the statement that Allah created the mate from the single soul should not necessarily be understood as teaching that woman was physically created from Adam's rib. Instead, it indicates that men and women belong to the same human species and share the same essential nature, abilities,

inclinations, and moral responsibilities. This interpretation differs from a literal reading of the biblical account in which Eve is created from Adam's rib (Genesis 2:21).

Other Qur'anic passages are cited in support of this understanding. Qur'an 35:11 describes humanity as having been created from dust and subsequently from a drop of fluid before being formed into pairs. Qur'an 16:72 states that Allah created spouses for human beings from among themselves, while Qur'an 42:11 similarly declares that He made pairs from their own kind. These verses suggest that human partners were created from the same species and nature rather than one sex being physically derived from the other. Qur'an 30:20–21 likewise presents the creation of spouses as one of Allah's signs and as a source of affection, tranquility, and mercy.

The verse therefore emphasizes the shared humanity and essential equality of men and women. It reminds both sexes that their relationship is founded upon a common origin and that neither should be regarded as belonging to an inferior form of creation. Women are presented as central participants in human existence, family life, and social development and are consequently entitled to dignity, consideration, and respect.

The Prophet Muhammad reportedly recited Qur'an 4:1 as part of the marriage sermon. In this context, the verse reminded spouses of their mutual responsibilities, their obligations toward Allah, and their duties toward the wider human community. Its reference to kinship also highlights the importance of maintaining family relationships and protecting the rights associated with them.

The command to observe *taqwā*, or consciousness and reverence of Allah, appears twice in the verse, thereby emphasizing its importance. In the Qur'an, *taqwā* includes faith, moral discipline, righteousness, justice, self-restraint, and awareness of accountability before Allah. Its meaning is further illustrated in passages such as Qur'an 2:2, 2:177, 3:15–17, 3:133–135, 5:27, 9:3, 16:128, 45:19, and 65:2.

Qur'an 4:1 consequently serves as an ethical introduction to the themes that follow in the chapter, including the rights of women, the protection of orphans, inheritance, marriage, and family relationships. By beginning with humanity's common origin and the obligation of *taqwā*, the verse establishes that social and family laws should be implemented with justice, mutual responsibility, and respect for human dignity.

References:

NOORUDDÎN ,ALLÂMAH. (2015). Exegesis of The Holy Qur'ân Commentary and Reflections.

4:11 Inheritance

Allah (thus) directs you as regards your Children's (Inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females: if only daughters, two or more, their share is two-thirds of the inheritance; if only one, her share is a half. For parents, a sixth share of the inheritance to each, if the deceased left children; if no children, and the parents are the (only) heirs, the mother has a third; if the deceased Left brothers (or sisters) the mother has a sixth. (The distribution in all cases ('s) after the payment of legacies and debts. Ye know not whether your parents or your children are nearest to you in benefit. These are settled portions ordained by Allah; and Allah is All- knowing, Al-wise.

In my notes on verses 11-12, which spell out the legal shares of inheritance due to the next of kin, no attempt has been made to analyze all the legal implications of this ordinance. The laws of inheritance are the subject of a special, and very elaborate, branch of Islamic jurisprudence, and their full elucidation would go far beyond the scope of explanatory notes which aim at no more than making the text of the Qur'an accessible to the understanding of the non-specialized reader

References:

Asad, Muhammad (1980). The Message of the Quran.

They ask thy instruction concerning the women say: Allah doth instruct you about them: And (remember) what hath been rehearsed unto you in the Book, concerning the orphans of women to whom ye give not the portions prescribed, and yet whom ye desire to marry, as also concerning the children who are weak and oppressed: that ye stand firm for justice to orphans. There is not a good deed which ye do, but Allah is well-acquainted therewith.

Yahiya Emerick writes,

Islam granted automatic inheritance rights to women and to orphans. Pre-Islamic Arab traditions did allow inheritance for these two groups, but the usual practice was for unscrupulous men to seize the inheritance or otherwise play games to keep control of it. Even worse, male relatives could assume control of that inheritance by either “inheriting” the widow or forcibly marrying the orphan girl. One man complained openly in Medina about this change in custom, saying, “How can women and children have the right to inherit when they neither work nor earn a living? Are they going to start inheriting now as if they were men, even though they did not earn that wealth?” After the revelation of verse 4:3, another man, who resented the changing of longstanding Arab customs regarding the permissibility of taking advantage of orphan girls to get at their inheritances, went to the Prophet for clarification. This man, a clan leader named Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah, had an unattractive, blind female cousin under his care, (who had also happened to have inherited a fortune from her deceased father). His plan was to keep her around and prevent her from marrying another so as to keep control of her inheritance. He exclaimed to the Prophet, “Does an ugly, blind girl have the right to inherit?” The Prophet replied, “Yes, most definitely.” Then he recited this verse of the Qur’an. (at-Tabari)

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an in Today's English (p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

4:135 Stand out firmly for justice

O ye who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against your- selves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.

Yahiya Emerick writes,

We are counseled to be just and fair, no matter who is involved, for God will know if we give false testimony. The Prophet said, “The three actions that are the most difficult to succeed at are to be fair with others when you are involved in the situation, helping others by giving to them from your own possessions, and trying to remember God at all times.” One of the highest forms of faith, in Islamic theology, involves being able to confront one’s own selfishness – without fear of all that you may lose – and speak the truth. The Prophet also said that the best witness is the one who gives his testimony before he’s even asked. Imam Mawardi (d. 1058) once commented that justice “is the basis of a thriving economy, strong families and a stable government. Nothing devastates the land nor corrupts the mind as quickly as tyranny.” (Nadr an-Na’im)

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an in Today’s English (p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

Allah loveth not that evil should be noised abroad in public speech, except where injustice hath been done; for Allah is He who heareth and knoweth all things.

Abdullah Yusuf Ali writes,

We can make a public scandal of evil in many ways.

1. It may be idle sensation-mongering: it often leads to more evil by imitation, as where criminal deeds are glorified in a cinema, or talked about shamelessly in a novel or drama.
2. It may be malicious gossip of a foolish, personal kind: it does no good, but it hurts people's feelings.
3. it may be malevolent slander or libel: it is intended deliberately to cause harm to people's reputation or injure them in other ways, and is rightly punishable under all laws.
4. It may be a public rebuke or correction or remonstrance, without malice. 1, 2 and 3 are absolutely forbidden. 4 may be by a person in authority; in which case the exception applies, for all wrong or injustice must be corrected openly, to prevent its recurrence. Or 4 may be a person not vested with authority, but acting either from motives of public spirit, or in order to help some one who has been wronged; here again the exception will apply. But if the motive is different, the exception does not apply. 4 would also include a public complaint by a person who has suffered a wrong; he has every right to seek public redress.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran.
[1]Microsoft Word – 004 Nisa'.doc (quran4u.com)

4:161 Usury

That they took usury, though they were forbidden; and that they devoured men's substance wrongfully;- we have prepared for those among them who reject faith a grievous punishment.

Jews were forbidden to charge interest on loans. This injunction might have been tampered with and was possibly reworded to say that Jews were only forbidden to charge interest to other Jews, but that they could charge interest to non-Jews. (See Exodus 22:24, Deuteronomy 23:19-20 and Ezekiel 18:8-9, 13, 17) Besides being an exceptional example of injustice, many Jews (even to this day) have also continued to charge interest to other Jews, thus making them guilty of disobeying their own (possibly doctored) law. (See Exodus 22:12 where God makes this very same charge against them.) The description used here in this verse – of ‘eating’ the property of others – is especially apt given that the Hebrew word for interest is *neshek*, which literally means “a biting.”

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an in Today's English* (p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

4:19 O you who have believed, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion

O you who have believed, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion. And do not make difficulties for them in order to take [back] part of what you gave them unless they commit a clear immorality. And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them – perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein m

Asad writes,

According to one of the interpretations advanced by Zamakhshari, this refers to a man's forcibly keeping an unloved wife – and thus preventing her from marrying another man – in the hope of inheriting her property under the provisions specified in the first sentence of verse 12 above. Some authorities, however, are of the opinion that the meaning is: “It is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will” – thus expressing a prohibition of the pre-Islamic custom of inheriting the wives of deceased near relatives. But in view of the fact that Islam does not permit the “inheriting” of women under any circumstances (and not only “against their will”), the former interpretation is infinitely more plausible. Abdullah Yusuf Ali writes, Another trick, to detract from the freedom of married women was to treat them badly and force them to sue for a Khul'a divorce (see 2:229, n. 258) or its equivalent in pre-Islamic custom, when the dower could be claimed back. This is also forbidden. Or the harshness may be exercised in another way: a divorced woman may be prevented by those who have control of her, from remarrying unless she remits her dower. All kinds of harshness are forbidden.

References:

Asad, Muhammad (1980). The Message of the Quran.

4:3 Marriage

If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, Marry women of your choice, Two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one, or (a captive) that your right hands possess, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice.

The phrase “such as are good for you” refers to women whom a Muslim man may lawfully marry, excluding those prohibited for marriage in Qur’an 4:22–23 (al-Razi; al-Zamakhshari). The verse therefore directs men to marry women outside the prohibited degrees of kinship established elsewhere in the same chapter.

According to an interpretation attributed to ‘A’ishah, the widow of the Prophet Muhammad, the verse particularly concerns orphan girls under the guardianship of men who might wish to marry them without providing an appropriate marital gift, or *mahr*. Guardians who were unwilling or unable to treat orphan girls fairly were instructed to avoid such marriages and instead marry other lawful women. This interpretation is reported in the collections of al-Bukhari, Muslim, and al-Nasa’i.

However, not all early Muslim authorities understood the verse exclusively in this manner. Sa’id ibn Jubayr, Qatadah, and other members of the generation following the Companions interpreted the passage more broadly. According to their understanding, just as guardians must exercise extreme care in protecting the property and interests of orphans, men must demonstrate the same concern for the rights and welfare of the women they intend to marry. Al-Tabari cited several versions of this interpretation and expressed clear approval of it.

The expression commonly translated as “those whom your right hands possess” historically referred to captives acquired through warfare recognized under the legal conditions of the period. The clause permitting marriage to “two, three, or four” may be understood as applying to the categories of women mentioned in

the sentence, while the requirement of equal treatment governs all such marriages.

According to this grammatical interpretation, the passage directs men to marry lawful women, including those who had formerly been enslaved, but limits the total number of wives to four.

Muhammad ‘Abduh supported this reading, which is also associated with Qur’an 4:25 and 24:32, both of which discuss marriage involving enslaved women (‘Abduh, as cited in *Tafsir al-Manar*).

This interpretation maintains that lawful sexual relations require marriage. It therefore rejects the view that either the Qur’an or the example of the Prophet Muhammad authorizes sexual relationships with enslaved women outside a marital contract. Regardless of a woman’s previous legal or social status, the relationship described in the passage is understood to be governed by marriage and its corresponding responsibilities.

Although Qur’an 4:3 permits a man to marry as many as four wives, this permission is restricted by the obligation to treat them with equal justice. The verse states that when a man has reason to fear that he will be unable to maintain fairness among multiple wives, he must marry only one. The requirement applies to financial maintenance, housing, time, companionship, and other rights that can reasonably be distributed equally.

Consequently, plural marriage should not be viewed as an unrestricted entitlement. The stringent condition of justice limits its permissibility to circumstances in which a husband can fulfil the rights of each wife without discrimination or neglect. Under this interpretation, marriages involving more than one wife are appropriate only in exceptional situations in which equal and responsible treatment can be maintained.

References:

Asad, Muhammad (1980). *The Message of the Quran*.

4:34 Men are the care-takers of women

Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (Next), refuse to share their beds, (And last) beat them (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them Means (of annoyance): For Allah is Most High, great (above you all).

Qur'an 4:34 describes men as *qawwāmūn* in relation to women, a term commonly translated as protectors, maintainers, or caretakers. According to Emerick, the word is derived from an Arabic root meaning "to stand," and in this context it refers to assuming responsibility for safeguarding another person's interests, welfare, and security. The verse therefore does not necessarily present men as rulers or dictators over women. Rather, it places upon them the obligation to provide protection, financial maintenance, and practical support.

The term *faḍl*, translated as Allah having given some more than others, may refer to an additional measure of responsibility, resources, or capacity. Some commentators connect this expression to Islamic inheritance law, under which men may receive a larger share in certain circumstances because they are also legally responsible for financially supporting female family members. This interpretation does not imply that men possess greater human or spiritual worth than women or that women are incapable of earning wealth independently (Emerick).

The life of Khadijah, the Prophet Muhammad's first wife, demonstrates that a woman may possess greater wealth and business success than her husband. She was an established merchant and remained wealthier than the Prophet during their

marriage. Therefore, the verse should not be interpreted as claiming that men will always earn more than women or that women are prohibited from participating in employment, trade, or other lawful economic activities.

Emerick suggests that the verse may also recognize certain physical characteristics that can, in some circumstances, enable men to undertake demanding labour or provide physical protection for their families. Under this interpretation, such characteristics create responsibility rather than superiority. Men are expected to use whatever strength or resources they possess to support their households rather than to exercise domination over women.

Islamic teachings do not prohibit women from working, owning property, or earning independent incomes. Several women during the Prophet's time participated in business and productive labour. Zaynab bint Jahsh, Umm Salamah, and Safiyyah reportedly continued earning money during their marriages to the Prophet, while the wife of 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud produced and sold handicrafts to support herself. These examples illustrate that women's economic participation was recognized in early Muslim society (Emerick).

Nevertheless, the primary financial obligation for the household is placed upon the husband. When a woman earns income, that wealth remains her personal property, and she is not legally required to contribute it to family expenses. She may save, invest, donate, or spend her earnings according to her own judgment. The husband, by contrast, is expected to assume the greater responsibility for the family's financial needs and physical security.

The verse also describes righteous women as faithful and protective of what Allah has instructed them to preserve during their husbands' absence. Emerick interprets this as including marital fidelity, private family matters, lawful confidences, and intimate information. These responsibilities are not understood as belonging exclusively to women, because husbands are also

expected to protect their wives' privacy, dignity, and personal secrets.

Confidentiality and faithfulness are essential foundations of a successful marriage. Emerick cites a Prophetic report condemning husbands and wives who publicly disclose details of their intimate relationships. The comparison used in the narration strongly emphasizes that private marital experiences should not be exposed to others. This principle corresponds with Qur'an 30:21, which presents marriage as a relationship characterized by tranquility, affection, and mercy.

Qur'an 4:34 also addresses serious marital conflict and outlines a graduated response when persistent disloyalty or severe misconduct is feared. The verse begins with verbal admonition, followed by temporary separation in the marital bed. Its final disciplinary expression has been the subject of extensive legal and interpretive discussion and should not be understood as granting unrestricted authority to cause injury, humiliation, or abuse. The broader Qur'anic ideal of marriage remains one of compassion, fairness, privacy, and mutual responsibility.

Overall, the concept of *qiwāmah* in this verse is presented as an obligation of service, maintenance, and accountability. It does not establish men as inherently superior to women. Instead, it requires husbands to use their financial resources, abilities, and social responsibilities to care for their families while respecting women's independent property rights, dignity, and lawful participation in economic and social life (Emerick).

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an in Today's English(p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

4:4 Marriage Dower

And give the women (on marriage) their dower as a free gift; but if they, of their own good pleasure, remit any part of it to you, Take it and enjoy it with right good cheer.

In pre-Islamic Arabian society, marital practices often included a payment made by the groom to the bride's male guardian, which functioned as a form of purchase. Islamic law reformed this custom by granting women direct ownership of the marital dowry (*mahr*), redefining it as a personal financial right rather than a transactional payment. The Qur'ān refers to this gift as *ṣadaqah*, highlighting the values of sincerity and goodwill within the marital relationship (Qur'ān 2:236). Under Islamic law, the dowry belongs exclusively to the bride, who has the authority to determine its amount and stipulate its conditions, including the possibility of deferred payment.

If the husband dies before the agreed dowry has been fully paid, the outstanding amount is treated as a debt and must be settled from his estate. Classical juristic discussions further note that, although contemporary cultural practices in some communities encourage minimal dowries, Islamic teachings do not prohibit women from requesting substantial amounts. The Qur'ān also instructs men to give the dowry willingly and without resentment and forbids reclaiming it after marriage unless the wife voluntarily returns part of it. This principle corresponds with Prophetic teachings which state that property may only be taken with the free and genuine consent of its owner (*Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābīḥ*).

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an in Today's English (p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

4:43 The steps to making Alcohol Haram

O ye who believe! Approach not prayers with a mind befogged, until ye can understand all that ye say,- nor in a state of ceremonial impurity (Except when travelling on the road), until after washing your whole body. If ye are ill, or on a journey, or one of you cometh from offices of nature, or ye have been in contact with women, and ye find no water, then take for yourselves clean sand or earth, and rub therewith your faces and hands. For Allah doth blot out sins and forgive again and again.

According to Emerick, alcohol was not prohibited during the earliest period of Islam. Qur'an 16:67 refers to intoxicating drinks without issuing a direct prohibition, indicating that the Islamic ruling developed gradually over several years. This gradual approach was significant because alcohol consumption was deeply established within Arabian society.

As Islamic teachings increasingly emphasized righteousness, discipline, and self-control, the harmful consequences of alcohol became more apparent to the early Muslim community. Qur'an 2:219 acknowledged that intoxicants could provide certain benefits but declared that their harmful and sinful effects were greater. As a result, some Muslims reportedly began voluntarily reducing their alcohol consumption before a complete prohibition was revealed (Emerick).

During the Medinan period, 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Awf reportedly invited several companions to a gathering at which alcohol was consumed. When the time for prayer arrived, an intoxicated individual led the group and incorrectly recited a Qur'anic passage. By omitting a negative expression from Qur'an 109:2, he unintentionally reversed the verse's meaning. Another report describes an intoxicated gathering during which Sa'd was injured in the nose following an argument (Muslim, as cited in Emerick).

Emerick states that after these incidents were reported to the Prophet Muhammad, Qur'an 4:43 was revealed. The verse

prohibited believers from approaching prayer while intoxicated until they could understand what they were saying. Following its revelation, an announcement was reportedly made after the call to prayer instructing intoxicated individuals not to attend the congregational prayer (al-Tirmidhi & al-Razi, as cited in Emerick).

This restriction represented an intermediate stage in the Qur'an's gradual regulation of alcohol. The process began by identifying alcohol's harms, continued by prohibiting prayer during intoxication, and concluded with the categorical command to avoid intoxicants in Qur'an 5:90–91. Emerick (n.d.) characterizes this multiyear process as a successful three-stage approach to eliminating alcohol consumption from the Muslim community.

The requirement to understand one's words during prayer was also applied more broadly to states of extreme fatigue. The Prophet reportedly advised individuals who were so sleepy that they could not properly comprehend their recitation to rest before praying. This teaching reflects the principle that prayer should be performed with awareness, concentration, and understanding rather than in a condition of impaired consciousness (al-Qurtubi, as cited in Emerick).

Overall, the gradual prohibition of alcohol demonstrates how Islamic teachings addressed a deeply rooted social practice through progressive moral and legal guidance. The process sought to develop personal awareness and self-restraint before establishing a complete prohibition.

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an in Today's English* (p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

4:6 Orphans

Make trial of orphans until they reach the age of marriage; if then ye find sound judgment in them, release their property to them; but consume it not wastefully, nor in haste against their growing up. If the guardian is well-off, Let him claim no remuneration, but if he is poor, let him have for himself what is just and reasonable. When ye release their property to them, take witnesses in their presence: But all-sufficient is Allah in taking account.

Qur'an 4:6 establishes principles for protecting the property of orphans and determining when they are capable of managing it independently. Guardians are instructed to assess orphans as they approach the age of marriage. When an orphan demonstrates maturity, sound judgment, and the ability to manage financial affairs responsibly, the guardian must return the individual's property without unnecessary delay (Qur'an 4:6).

The testing mentioned in the verse involves evaluating whether the orphan possesses sufficient intellectual and practical maturity to preserve and manage wealth. Reaching puberty alone does not necessarily establish complete financial competence. The guardian must also determine whether the individual can make responsible decisions and avoid wasteful or harmful financial conduct.

The verse strictly prohibits guardians from consuming an orphan's property extravagantly or using it hastily out of fear that the orphan will soon reach adulthood and demand its return. Guardianship is a position of trust rather than an opportunity for personal enrichment. The orphan's wealth must therefore be preserved and used only for legitimate purposes connected to the orphan's care and welfare.

A financially secure guardian is instructed not to take compensation from the orphan's property. A guardian who is poor, however, may take a fair and reasonable amount for necessary expenses or services related to managing the estate. This allowance is limited to genuine needs and must not be used to support luxury, extravagance, or excessive personal consumption.

When the orphan's property is transferred, the guardian should complete the transaction in the presence of witnesses. This requirement protects both parties by creating evidence that the property was properly returned. It can prevent future disputes, including claims that the guardian withheld the property or that the orphan did not receive it.

The verse concludes by affirming that Allah is sufficient as the ultimate accountant and witness. Even when human documentation or witnesses are unavailable, no action is hidden from Allah. Guardians are therefore accountable not only under social and legal procedures but also before Allah for the honest administration and transfer of an orphan's wealth.

Overall, Qur'an 4:6 combines protection of vulnerable individuals with practical standards of financial accountability. It requires guardians to assess maturity carefully, preserve the orphan's assets, avoid exploitation, take only reasonable compensation when genuinely necessary, and document the final transfer of property.

References:

Ahmad, Israr. (2012). Bayan ul Quran. [1]4-An-Nisa.pdf (islamicweblibrary.com)

4:9 Inheritance

Let those (disposing of an estate) have the same fear in their minds as they would have for their own if they had left a helpless family behind: Let them fear Allah, and speak words of appropriate (comfort).

The commentators explain this verse to mean that if a terminally ill person has purposely left some people out of his will who might be grieved and feel unfairly treated, he should be counseled gently to amend his will so he can leave this life while doing what is right. The Prophet said, “A man might do the deeds of the righteous for seventy years, but when it comes time to compile his will he commits injustice. So his final act will be his worst, and he will therefore enter the Fire. A man might do the deeds of the wicked for seventy years; yet, he is fair in his will, and so his final act will be his best. Therefore, he enters Paradise.” (Ahmad)

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an in Today's English (p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

62:3 Islam is a religion for all humanity, all races, cultures and creeds

As well as (to confer all these benefits upon) others of them, who have not already joined them: And He is exalted in Might, Wise.

Islam is a religion for all humanity, all races, cultures and creeds. The Prophet stressed this in many sayings; the Qur'an affirmed it in numerous verses, and the multiracial and multicultural nature of the companions confirmed this view in the minds of the first generations of Muslims. This verse is one of the motivating factors for the Prophet to send letters of invitation to the rulers of both the Byzantine and Persian Empires, along with other communities near and far. Islam was for all of humanity. Many commentators believe that this verse also contains a nod towards the Prophet's Persian companion, Salman al-Farsi, for when the companions asked the Prophet about this verse, he put his hand on the shoulder of this foreign convert and said, "If faith were high up in the Pleiades (a group of stars), even then some men of these people (the Persians) would attain to it." (Ma'arifur Qur'an).

References:

Emerick, Yahiya. The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an in Today's English (p. 829). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

81:9 For what crime she was killed

For what crime she was killed;

In this world of sin and sorrow, much unjust suffering is caused, and innocent lives sacrificed, without a trace being left, by which offenders can be brought to justice. A striking example before the Quraish was female infanticide: Cf. 16:58-59, and n. 2084. The crime was committed in the guise of social plausibility in secret collusion, and no question was asked here. But in the world of Justice, full questions will be asked, and the victim herself-dumb here-will be able to give evidence, for she had committed no crime herself. The proofs will be drawn from the very means used for concealment.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran.
(surah 81 verse 9)

85:4 Woe to the makers of the pit (of fire)

Woe to the makers of the pit (of fire),

Who were the makers of the pit of fire in which they burn people for their Faith? The words are perfectly general, and we need not search for particular names, except by way of illustration. In ancient history, and in Medieval Europe, many lives were sacrificed at the stake because the victims did not conform to the established religion. In Arab tradition there is the story of Abraham: Nimrud tries to burn him to death, but on account of Abraham's Faith, the fire became "a means of safety for Abraham": 21:69, and n. 2725. Another case cited is that of Dhu Nuwas, the last Himyarite King of Yemen, by religion a Jew, who persecuted the Christians of Najran and is said to have burnt them to death. He seems to have lived in the latter half of the sixth Christian century, in the generation immediately preceding the Prophet's birth in 570 A.D. While the words are perfectly general, a reference is suggested to the persecution to which the early Muslims were subjected by the Pagan Quraish. Among other cruelties, they were stripped, and their skins were exposed to the burning rays of the Arabian summer sun. (R).

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran.
(surah 85 verse 4)

90:3 And (the mystic ties of) parent and child

And (the mystic ties of) parent and child;-

A parent loves a child: ordinarily the father is proud and the mother, in spite of her birth-pains, experiences supreme joy when the child is born. But in abnormal circumstances there may be misunderstanding, even hatred between parent and child. So Makkah cast out her most glorious son, but it was only for a time. Makkah was sound at heart; only her power had been usurped by an ignorant autocracy which passed away, and Makkah was to receive back her glory at the hands of the son whom she had rejected but whom she welcomed back later. And Makkah retains for all time her sacred character as the centre of Islam.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 90 verse 3) [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

By no means! He will be sure to be thrown into That which Breaks
to Pieces

Hutamah: that which smashes or breaks to pieces: an apt description of the three anti-social vices condemned. For scandal-mongering and backbiting make any sort of cohesion or mutual confidence impossible; and the miser's hoards up the channels of economic service and charity, and the circulation of good-will among men.

References:

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. Translation and Commentary of the Quran. (surah 104 verse 4) [1]Quran Arabic with English Translation & Commentary (Tafsir) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Free Download (quran4u.com)

Relations Between Muslims and Non-Muslims

The Qur'anic passages addressing relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims have produced several interpretations concerning friendship, cooperation, political allegiance, and social interaction. Although certain verses warn Muslims against taking non-Muslims as *awliyā'*, other passages command Muslims to act justly, compassionately, and courteously toward peaceful members of other religious communities. A comprehensive interpretation therefore requires attention to the meanings of the Arabic terminology, the historical circumstances of revelation, and the distinctions between different forms of interpersonal and political relationships.

View 1: Different Levels of Relationships

One interpretation maintains that Qur'anic prohibitions concerning relations with non-Muslims apply principally to *muwālāt*, meaning an intimate form of loyalty, emotional commitment, or alliance that compromises a Muslim's religious identity. Qur'anic passages such as 3:28, 5:51, 58:22, and 60:1 have been understood by some commentators as warnings against forming deeply committed alliances with individuals or communities that are openly hostile to Islam and Muslims.

This interpretation distinguishes *muwālāt* from several other forms of permissible interaction. Relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims may be divided into four general categories: *muwālāt*, *muwāsāt*, *mudārāt*, and *mu'āmalāt*.

Muwālāt: Intimate Loyalty and Alliance

Muwālāt refers to a close relationship involving deep emotional loyalty, political allegiance, or dependence. According to this interpretation, Muslims should not form such alliances with individuals who oppose their faith or work against the security and interests of the Muslim community. The prohibition does not necessarily concern ordinary friendship or social courtesy; rather, it addresses loyalty that may require a Muslim to support hostility

toward Islam or to place the interests of an antagonistic group above religious and communal obligations.

This view connects religious commitment with the broader purpose of human life. The Qur'an presents worship and obedience to Allah as the central objectives of human existence, declaring that prayer, sacrifice, life, and death belong to Allah, the Lord of the worlds (Qur'an 6:162). Consequently, a believer's deepest loyalties are expected to remain consistent with this spiritual purpose.

The Prophet Muhammad is also reported to have taught that complete faith includes loving and disliking for the sake of Allah. Under this interpretation, moral and spiritual commitments should guide intimate alliances and loyalties rather than immediate material interests.

Muwāsāt: Compassion and Benevolence

Muwāsāt refers to sympathy, charitable assistance, compassion, and concern for the well-being of others. This type of relationship is considered permissible with non-Muslims who are not engaged in hostility against Muslims.

Qur'an 60:8 states that Allah does not prohibit Muslims from acting benevolently and justly toward those who do not fight them because of their religion or drive them from their homes. The verse establishes that peaceful non-Muslims may be treated with kindness, generosity, fairness, and social concern.

Such benevolence may include providing financial assistance, offering condolences, supporting people in hardship, and expressing sincere concern for their welfare. These actions are understood as part of Islamic moral conduct rather than as prohibited religious allegiance.

Mudārāt: Courtesy and Cordiality

Mudārāt refers to courteous, diplomatic, and considerate conduct. It includes politeness, hospitality, respectful communication, and socially appropriate friendliness.

This form of interaction is permissible with non-Muslims, particularly when the purpose is to present Islamic teachings constructively, honour guests, maintain peaceful relations, or protect oneself from possible harm. Although cordial behaviour may outwardly resemble close friendship, it does not necessarily involve the type of ideological or political allegiance associated with *muwālāt*.

Mu‘āmalāt: Commercial and Professional Dealings

Mu‘āmalāt refers to practical dealings such as trade, employment, wages, industry, medicine, agriculture, and technology. Islamic law generally permits Muslims to conduct business with non-Muslims, employ them, or work for their organizations, provided that such relationships do not directly contribute to injustice or harm against Muslims.

Historical accounts of the Prophet, the Rightly Guided Caliphs, and the Companions demonstrate that Muslims engaged in commercial and professional relationships with non-Muslims. Jurists nevertheless imposed limitations when transactions could strengthen forces actively engaged in warfare against Muslims, such as the sale of weapons to hostile combatants.

This classification suggests that Qur’anic restrictions do not eliminate ordinary social, humanitarian, or economic relationships. Instead, they distinguish between acceptable interaction and forms of allegiance that could compromise religious principles or communal security.

Prophetic Conduct Toward Non-Muslims

The Prophet Muhammad’s conduct provides important examples of compassion and justice toward non-Muslims. Despite the persecution he experienced in Makkah, he reportedly assisted its inhabitants during a period of famine. Following the conquest of Makkah, he granted a broad amnesty to many of those who had previously persecuted him and his followers.

Non-Muslim prisoners were also treated with compassion, and delegations that had not accepted Islam were received with hospitality. The delegation of Banū Thaqīf, for example, was permitted to stay in the Prophet's mosque during its visit.

Similar conduct is attributed to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, who reportedly provided financial assistance to needy non-Muslim residents under Muslim governance. These examples are understood as expressions of *muwāsāt*, *mudārāt*, and *mu'āmalāt* rather than the prohibited form of allegiance described as *muwālāt*.

Under this interpretation, Islam requires tolerance, justice, and generosity toward peaceful non-Muslims while warning against intimate alliances with those who actively seek to undermine the Muslim community.

View 2: Friendship With Peaceful Non-Muslims

A second interpretation emphasizes that Qur'anic verses prohibiting alliances with non-Muslims are not unconditional commands applying to every Jewish, Christian, or non-Muslim individual. Instead, these passages are understood as referring specifically to communities that were hostile toward Islam, engaged in warfare against Muslims, or attempted to weaken the Muslim community from within.

A universal prohibition against friendship with non-Muslims would conflict with Qur'anic passages commanding kindness and justice toward peaceful people of other faiths. It would also be difficult to reconcile with the Qur'anic permission allowing Muslim men to marry chaste women from among the People of the Book (Qur'an 5:5).

Marriage is described in the Qur'an as a relationship characterized by affection, tranquility, and mercy (Qur'an 30:21). Therefore, the permissibility of marriage with Jewish and Christian women demonstrates that positive emotional and social relationships with non-Muslims cannot be categorically prohibited.

Qur'an 5:82 further describes certain Christians as being especially close to Muslims in affection. This passage provides additional evidence that Qur'anic teachings distinguish among non-Muslim individuals and communities rather than treating all of them as equally hostile.

Hostility as the Relevant Condition

According to Al-Qaradawi (1994), verses warning Muslims against taking non-Muslims as allies should be interpreted in relation to those who expressed hostility toward Islam, persecuted Muslims, or attempted to destroy the Muslim community. Muslims are prohibited from assisting such forces against their own community or entrusting them with confidential information that could endanger others.

Qur'an 3:118–119 describes people who outwardly interact with Muslims while privately desiring their suffering and destruction. Similarly, Qur'an 60:1 addresses those who expelled the Prophet and his followers from their homes because of their faith. These passages therefore concern political and military hostility rather than religious difference alone.

Even in such circumstances, the Qur'an does not declare reconciliation impossible. Qur'an 60:7 expresses the possibility that Allah may create affection between former enemies. This indicates that political hostility may change and that former opponents may later become peaceful neighbours or allies.

Seeking Assistance From Non-Muslims

Islamic law does not categorically prohibit Muslims from seeking assistance from non-Muslims in technical or professional matters. Cooperation may be permitted in areas such as medicine, industry, agriculture, transportation, and other fields unrelated to religious authority.

During his migration from Makkah to Madinah, the Prophet reportedly employed 'Abd Allah ibn Urayqit, who was not a Muslim, as a guide. The journey involved considerable danger, and

the Prophet's reliance upon him demonstrates that religious disbelief does not automatically make a person dishonest or professionally unreliable.

Some classical scholars also permitted Muslim leaders to seek military assistance from trustworthy non-Muslims under particular circumstances. Reports state that the Prophet received assistance from certain Jewish individuals and that Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah participated alongside the Muslims before accepting Islam.

The primary condition in such cases is trustworthiness. Assistance should not be sought from an individual, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, who is likely to betray confidential information, spread fear, or harm the community.

Gifts and Respect for Human Dignity

Muslims may give gifts to non-Muslims and accept gifts from them. Numerous traditions report that the Prophet accepted gifts from non-Muslim rulers and community leaders.

Islamic teachings also recognize the dignity of human life regardless of religious identity. In one reported incident, the Prophet stood when a Jewish funeral procession passed. When informed that the deceased was Jewish, he responded by emphasizing that the individual was nevertheless a human soul.

This account demonstrates that respect for human dignity is not restricted exclusively to members of the Muslim community.

View 3: The Meaning of *Awliyā'* in Qur'an 5:51

A third interpretation focuses upon the translation of the Arabic word *awliyā'* in Qur'an 5:51. The term is frequently translated as "friends," leading some readers to conclude that the verse prohibits ordinary friendship between Muslims and Jews or Christians. However, several scholars argue that "friends" does not adequately communicate the word's meaning.

Awliyā ' is the plural of *walī*, a word that can mean guardian, protector, patron, authority, ally, supporter, or intimate associate. The precise meaning depends upon the context in which it appears.

The Qur'an, for example, describes Allah as the *walī* of the believers, meaning their protector and guardian (Qur'an 2:257; 3:122). In another passage, the closest relative of a murder victim is described as a *walī* who possesses legal authority to seek justice (Qur'an 17:33). These examples demonstrate that the term carries meanings associated with guardianship, authority, dependence, and protection rather than casual friendship alone.

Siény (2000) argues that the central meaning of *walā* ' concerns guardianship and allegiance. Similarly, Muzammil Siddiqi maintains that *walī* should not simply be translated as "friend," because the term may refer to a protector, patron, guardian, or master.

Under this interpretation, Qur'an 5:51 advises Muslims not to take hostile Jewish or Christian groups as protectors or political patrons. The verse does not prohibit Muslims from forming ordinary friendships with peaceful Jewish or Christian individuals.

Justice and Kindness Toward Others

The Qur'an repeatedly commands Muslims to act justly, including toward individuals whom they dislike. Qur'an 5:8 warns believers not to allow hostility toward others to cause them to depart from justice.

Qur'an 60:8–9 establishes a distinction between peaceful non-Muslims and those engaged in persecution. Muslims are commanded to act kindly and justly toward people who do not fight them because of their religion or expel them from their homes. Restrictions apply specifically to those who engage in religious persecution, expulsion, and armed hostility.

The Arabic word *birr*, used in Qur'an 60:8 to describe the treatment of peaceful non-Muslims, conveys strong moral goodness and benevolence. The same term is used elsewhere to

describe the kindness and dutiful conduct expected toward parents. Its use therefore indicates that Muslims may develop sincere, respectful, and compassionate relations with peaceful people of other faiths.

The Historical Setting of Qur'an 5:51

The historical context of Qur'an 5:51 involved a period of political instability and military conflict. The early Muslim community faced threats from several directions, including Arabian polytheists, the Byzantine Empire, and hostile groups within and around Madinah.

According to one explanation reported in the commentary of Ibn Kathir, the verse was associated with events following the Battle of Uhud. After the Muslims suffered a setback, some individuals considered seeking protection from Jewish or Christian groups because they feared another attack. The verse instructed Muslims not to abandon one another or depend upon potentially hostile forces for political security.

Auda similarly argues that the verse remains relevant, but its ruling should be applied in circumstances resembling its original context. Muslims should not seek protective alliances with people who are attempting to kill them, expel them, suppress their faith, or destroy their community. The ruling should not be indiscriminately applied to peaceful Jews, Christians, or members of other religious traditions.

Moral and Political Alliance

Asad explains that the prohibition concerns a form of moral or political alliance through which a Muslim could lose an independent religious identity or become dependent upon hostile interests. He maintains that Qur'an 60:7–9 demonstrates that this prohibition does not prevent normal and friendly relationships with non-Muslims who are peaceful and well-disposed toward Muslims.

The meaning of *walī* must therefore be selected according to the context. In different passages it may appropriately be translated as

ally, protector, helper, guardian, or friend. In Qur'an 5:51, "protector" or "political ally" may more accurately communicate the verse's historical and legal meaning than the general word "friend."

Consistency With Marriage to the People of the Book

A general prohibition of friendship would also appear inconsistent with the permission granted in Qur'an 5:5 for Muslim men to marry chaste Jewish or Christian women. Marriage naturally involves companionship, trust, affection, and emotional closeness.

Qur'an 30:21 describes spouses as a source of tranquility and states that Allah places affection and mercy between them. Therefore, the permission to marry from among the People of the Book supports the conclusion that Islam does not categorically prohibit positive relationships with Jews and Christians.

The prohibition instead concerns supporting individuals or communities that are actively hostile to Islam, regardless of their religious identity. Qur'an 9:23 similarly warns Muslims against treating even fathers and brothers as protective patrons when they actively prefer hostility and disbelief over faith. This demonstrates that the decisive issue is not ethnicity or religious label alone, but active opposition to the Muslim's faith and community.

Protection Against Injustice

Muslims are not permitted to support other Muslims in oppression simply because of shared religious identity. When a Muslim wrongs a non-Muslim, Islamic justice requires intervention on behalf of the victim.

The Prophet is reported to have warned against mistreating non-Muslims living under Muslim protection and to have declared that he would advocate for those who suffered injustice. Accordingly, loyalty to the Muslim community does not permit prejudice, abuse, or the denial of another person's lawful rights.

Abrogation and Specification

Some discussions of Muslim relations with non-Muslims claim that later verses concerning warfare abrogated earlier verses commanding peace and kindness. However, this claim depends upon a misunderstanding of the distinction between *naskh* and *takhṣīṣ*.

Naskh refers to the complete replacement or cancellation of an earlier legal ruling by a later revelation. *Takhṣīṣ*, by contrast, refers to specification, in which one passage limits the circumstances in which a more general ruling applies.

Qadhi (1999) explains that specification restricts a general ruling without eliminating it entirely. Thus, verses concerning warfare with hostile groups do not necessarily cancel Qur’anic commands requiring kindness, justice, and peaceful interaction. Instead, they may specify how Muslims should respond when particular groups engage in aggression, persecution, or treaty violations.

Conclusion

The Qur’anic teachings concerning relations with non-Muslims should not be reduced to a universal prohibition against friendship. The interpretation of these passages requires a distinction between peaceful social relations and alliances with hostile forces.

Muslims are permitted—and often commanded—to act with justice, kindness, compassion, courtesy, and generosity toward peaceful non-Muslims. They may engage in trade, employment, professional cooperation, gift exchange, neighbourly relationships, and personal friendship while maintaining their religious identity.

The restrictions found in passages such as Qur’an 5:51 primarily concern dependence upon, political allegiance to, or intimate support for individuals and communities actively engaged in hostility toward Islam and Muslims. The broader Qur’anic framework therefore combines religious commitment with justice, human dignity, peaceful coexistence, and ethical treatment of people from other religious traditions.

Relaxing the Mind: A Time for Seriousness and a Time for Recreation

Islamic teachings recognize the importance of lawful recreation, humour, and relaxation in maintaining physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. According to Al-Qaradawi (1960), the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad followed his example by participating in permissible humour, play, and physical activities. Such recreation helped restore their energy and prepared them to continue their demanding efforts in support of truth and justice.

‘Ali ibn Abi Talib reportedly observed that the mind becomes tired in the same manner as the body and should therefore be refreshed through appropriate humour. He also warned that an exhausted mind may lose clarity and sound judgment. Similarly, Abu al-Darda stated that he occasionally entertained himself with simple and ordinary activities so that his heart would become stronger in fulfilling serious religious responsibilities (Al-Qaradawi, 1960, p. 287).

These statements indicate that Muslims may relax their minds through lawful sports, games, humour, and social activities. Recreation is permissible when it restores energy and contributes to a balanced life. However, pleasure and entertainment should not become the primary purpose of life or cause individuals to neglect religious, family, educational, or social obligations.

Humour should also remain moderate and appropriate. Al-Qaradawi (1960) compares humour in conversation to salt in food, suggesting that it is beneficial when used in suitable proportion but harmful when excessive. Serious matters should not be treated carelessly, and humour should never be used to attack another person’s dignity, beliefs, reputation, or honour.

Qur’an 49:11 prohibits believers from mocking others because those who are ridiculed may possess greater worth in the sight of Allah. Therefore, jokes based on humiliation, offensive nicknames, physical characteristics, social status, or personal weaknesses are inconsistent with Islamic ethics.

Islam also prohibits the use of falsehood merely to amuse others. The Prophet reportedly issued a strong warning against individuals who fabricate stories to make people laugh (al-Tirmidhi, as cited in Al-Qaradawi, 1960). Humour must therefore remain truthful and should not depend upon deception, slander, or the embarrassment of others.

Some of the Prophet's Companions initially believed that spiritual sincerity required constant seriousness and uninterrupted worship. They feared that involvement in family life, work, and ordinary recreation might weaken their faith. The experience of Hanzalah al-Usaydi illustrates how the Prophet corrected this misunderstanding.

Hanzalah reportedly told Abu Bakr that he feared he had become a hypocrite. He explained that while sitting with the Prophet, descriptions of Paradise and Hell seemed so vivid that he felt as though he could see them. However, after leaving the Prophet's company, he became occupied with his wife, children, property, and daily responsibilities and no longer maintained the same level of spiritual awareness. Abu Bakr acknowledged experiencing a similar change, and the two approached the Prophet for guidance (Muslim, as cited in Al-Qaradawi, 1960, p. 289).

The Prophet reassured Hanzalah that this variation in spiritual intensity was natural. He explained that if believers continuously maintained the same exceptional spiritual condition they experienced in his presence, angels would openly greet them during their daily activities. He then repeated that there is "a time for this and a time for that," emphasizing that human life legitimately includes periods of worship, family interaction, work, rest, and lawful enjoyment (Muslim, as cited in Al-Qaradawi, 1960, p. 289).

This teaching establishes balance as an important Islamic principle. Spiritual devotion should remain central to a Muslim's life, but it does not require withdrawal from family relationships, work, recreation, or ordinary human experiences. Lawful relaxation can strengthen the mind and body, renew motivation, and help

individuals perform their religious and worldly responsibilities more effectively.

In summary, Islam permits humour and recreation when they are truthful, moderate, respectful, and lawful. Entertainment should provide healthy renewal rather than become an obsession or a cause of neglect. The statement that there is “a time for this and a time for that” reflects an approach to life that balances worship and seriousness with family companionship, productive work, and appropriate relaxation (Al-Qaradawi, 1960).

References:

Al-Qaradawi, Yusuf (1960). *The Lawful and Prohibited in Islam*. (p. 287, 289).

The Muslim in the Shadow of his Zakat

According to Pervez, the Arabic term *zakāh* is derived from a root associated with growth, flourishing, development, and well-being. Expressions derived from this root have historically been used to describe the growth of crops and animals, as well as the development of a person's abilities and improvement in the quality of life. The fundamental meaning of *zakāh* is therefore connected with growth, nourishment, increase, and healthy development rather than purification alone (Pervez, pp. 1210–1211).

Pervez refers to Qur'an 18:19, in which the term *azkā* is used to describe food that is better or more wholesome. In this context, the word may indicate food possessing greater nutritional value. This usage supports the interpretation that the root *z-k-w* conveys the idea of benefit, nourishment, and positive growth.

Although *zakāh* is frequently translated as purification, Pervez (n.d.) distinguishes between purification and development. Purification may be understood as the removal of negative qualities, whereas *zakāh* conveys the positive process of growth and enrichment. The term therefore includes both the removal of obstacles and the creation of conditions in which individuals and communities can flourish.

Classical Arabic usage further illustrates this meaning. Fertile land that produces abundant crops may be described through a word derived from the same root. Similarly, the terms *nafsan zakiyyah* in Qur'an 18:74 and *ghulāman zakiyyā* in Qur'an 19:19 refer to a young person characterized by soundness, innocence, or healthy development.

The meaning of *tazkiyah* becomes clearer when contrasted with the word *dassāhā* in Qur'an 91:9–10. The latter term conveys suppression, concealment, or the prevention of growth. *Tazkiyah*, by contrast, may be understood as removing the conditions that restrict human development and creating a healthy environment in which the human personality can progress.

Pervez argues that human development should not be assessed merely through personal claims of moral or spiritual purity. Qur'an 53:32 cautions individuals against declaring themselves pure, as Allah possesses complete knowledge of those who are truly conscious of Him. Human growth must therefore be evaluated according to the moral and social standards established by divine guidance.

The Qur'an also connects personal development with the giving of wealth. Qur'an 92:18 describes the person who gives wealth in pursuit of self-development, while Qur'an 92:5 associates generosity with *taqwā*, or consciousness of Allah. From this perspective, an individual's personality develops through contributing to the welfare and advancement of others.

The Qur'anic expression *aqīmū al-ṣalāh wa ātū al-zakāh*, commonly translated as establishing prayer and giving zakat, appears repeatedly throughout the Qur'an. Pervez interprets this expression more broadly as a command to establish a social order in which every person is provided with the opportunity and resources required for the development of the human personality according to divine principles.

Qur'an 22:41 describes believers who, when granted authority in the land, establish prayer and provide zakat. According to Pervez (n.d.), this passage presents the establishment of a just social system and the provision of material resources for human development as central responsibilities of a Muslim government. Qur'an 23:4 similarly characterizes believers as those who actively work toward *zakāh*, understood as the nourishment and development of humanity.

Under this interpretation, the state has a responsibility to organize society so that the basic needs of all people are satisfied and each individual has the opportunity to develop. Achieving this purpose requires that sufficient economic resources be available for public welfare. Pervez therefore interprets Qur'an 2:219, which instructs believers to give what exceeds their needs, as supporting the

availability of surplus wealth for the maintenance of society and the assistance of those in need.

Pervez distinguishes this broad social and economic concept of *zakāh* from *ṣadaqāt*, which may refer to revenues or contributions designated for specific purposes. Qur'an 9:60 identifies particular categories of recipients for *ṣadaqāt*. He argues that this verse should not necessarily be treated as a complete administrative framework for all forms of zakat.

Pervez further maintains that the Qur'an itself does not explicitly establish a universal zakat rate of 2.5% or provide a comprehensive list of all property upon which zakat must be imposed. In his interpretation, the distinction between a religious tax owed to Allah and a separate secular tax collected by the government is inconsistent with an integrated Islamic social order.

Accordingly, wealth contributed through a legitimate Islamic state for the establishment of justice, public welfare, and human development may be regarded as being spent in the cause of Allah. Pervez (n.d.) rejects a strict division between religious and governmental financial obligations and instead presents zakat as part of a comprehensive social system intended to promote the material, moral, and intellectual growth of all members of society.

Overall, this interpretation understands zakat not only as an individual charitable payment but also as a principle of social and economic development. Its purpose is to remove barriers to human progress, provide the means of sustenance, and establish conditions in which individuals and communities can flourish in accordance with Qur'anic guidance (Pervez, pp. 1210–1211)

References:

Pervez, Ahmad (2010). Exposition of the Quran. (p. 1210-1211).

The Notion of 'Islamophobia'

According to Philosopher [1]Michael Walzer,

“Islamophobia is a form of religious intolerance, even religious hatred, and it would be wrong for any leftists to support bigots in Europe and the United States who deliberately misunderstand and misrepresent contemporary Muslims. They make no distinction between the historic religion and the zealots of this moment; they regard every Muslim immigrant in a Western country as a potential terrorist; and they fail to acknowledge the towering achievements of Muslim philosophers, poets, and artists over many centuries”

References:

1. Walzer, Michael (Winter 2015) [3]”Islamism and the Left”[4]Dissent

The Sacredness of Human Life and Honour

Islamic teachings regard human life, dignity, reputation, and property as sacred and legally protected. Al-Qaradawi (1960) explains that respect for human honour is not merely a matter of courtesy but a religious and moral obligation. A person's dignity must therefore be protected from humiliation, defamation, false accusations, and other forms of unjust injury.

The Sacredness of Human Honour

The importance of personal dignity is illustrated by a statement attributed to 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar. While looking at the Ka'bah, he reportedly acknowledged its great sanctity but emphasized that the sanctity of a believer—including the person's life, honour, and property—was even greater. The Prophet Muhammad similarly declared during the Farewell Pilgrimage that the lives, property, and honour of Muslims were inviolable, comparing their sacredness to that of the holy day, month, and city in which the sermon was delivered (Muslim, as cited in Al-Qaradawi, 1960, p. 320).

Islam protects individuals from backbiting even when the information being communicated is true. Making false or unfounded statements for the purpose of damaging another person's reputation is considered still more serious. Such conduct combines dishonesty with deliberate injury to personal dignity.

Al-Qaradawi (1960) cites a Prophetic report describing the unjust violation of a Muslim's honour as one of the most serious forms of wrongdoing. This principle is connected with Qur'an 33:58, which condemns those who harm believing men and women without justification and describes such conduct as both slander and manifest sin.

A particularly serious violation involves falsely accusing a morally upright person of sexual misconduct. Such allegations can damage the accused individual's reputation, disrupt family relationships, and spread scandal throughout society. Qur'an 24:19 and 24:23–25 consequently warn against promoting unsubstantiated accusations

and against taking pleasure in the circulation of scandal among believers.

These teachings demonstrate that freedom of speech does not include the right to destroy another person's reputation. Statements affecting someone's honour must be truthful, justified, and communicated through ethical and lawful means.

The Sacredness of Human Life

Islam also places strong emphasis on the protection of human life. According to Al-Qaradawi (1960), unlawfully taking a human life is among the gravest moral offences. Qur'an 5:32 teaches that killing one innocent person is comparable in seriousness to killing all humanity, while saving one life is comparable to saving humanity as a whole.

This principle reflects the unity of the human family. An unlawful attack against one person is therefore treated as an offence against society and against the value of human life itself. Qur'an 4:93 provides an especially severe warning concerning the intentional killing of a believer.

Prophetic traditions likewise emphasize the seriousness of unlawful killing. The destruction of the entire world is described as less significant before Allah than the unjust loss of a protected human life. A believer remains within the moral security of religion so long as the individual does not unlawfully shed blood (al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Nasa'i, & al-Tirmidhi, as cited in Al-Qaradawi, 1960).

Classical scholars differed concerning the repentance of a person who intentionally commits murder. Ibn 'Abbas reportedly maintained that such wrongdoing cannot be fully corrected because the victim cannot be restored or personally asked to forgive the offender. Other scholars argued that sincere repentance may still be accepted by Allah, citing Qur'an 25:68–70, which associates repentance, renewed faith, and righteous conduct with divine forgiveness.

This disagreement does not reduce the seriousness of murder. Rather, it concerns the theological question of whether sincere repentance may ultimately result in forgiveness while the offender remains accountable for the rights of the victim and the requirements of justice.

Conflict and Threatening Behaviour

The Prophet strongly condemned violence between Muslims. Insulting another Muslim was described as sinful conduct, while armed conflict between believers was treated as behaviour resembling the ignorance and tribal warfare of the pre-Islamic period (al-Bukhari & Muslim, as cited in Al-Qaradawi, 1960).

A reported tradition states that when two people confront one another with the intention of killing, both bear moral responsibility, even when only one ultimately dies. The surviving aggressor is responsible for the killing, while the other may also be accountable for possessing the same unlawful intention.

Islamic teachings therefore prohibit conduct that could lead to violence. Pointing a weapon at another person, even as a joke, is condemned because an accident, loss of control, or moment of anger could result in serious harm. Frightening another person without legitimate justification is similarly prohibited.

Responsibility for an unlawful killing may also extend beyond the individual who directly carries it out. Those who encourage, assist, organize, or knowingly permit such violence may share moral and legal accountability according to the extent of their participation. Individuals who witness serious injustice are expected, when reasonably able and without creating greater harm, to seek lawful assistance or help protect the victim.

The Protection of Non-Muslim Life

The protection of life is not restricted exclusively to Muslims. Islamic law recognizes the security of peaceful non-Muslims, including those living under a covenant, treaty, or guarantee of protection.

The Prophet warned that a person who unlawfully kills someone protected by a treaty would face severe spiritual consequences (al-Bukhari & al-Nasa'i, as cited in Al-Qaradawi, 1960). These teachings demonstrate that religious difference does not remove a person's right to life and security.

The relevant distinction is therefore not simply between Muslims and non-Muslims but between peaceful protected individuals and active combatants in a lawful conflict. Non-Muslim residents, visitors, allies, and treaty partners are entitled to legal protection, and attacks against them are prohibited.

Capital Punishment and Judicial Authority

Qur'an 6:151 prohibits taking a life that Allah has made sacred except through a legally justified process. Classical Islamic jurisprudence discussed capital punishment in connection with a limited number of offences, including intentional murder and certain serious crimes understood to threaten the legal and social order.

Al-Qaradawi (1960) emphasizes that such punishments cannot be carried out by private individuals. They require a properly constituted judicial authority, reliable evidence, and the procedural protections established by law. Individuals are not permitted to act simultaneously as accusers, judges, and enforcers, because private retaliation would produce disorder, injustice, and continuing violence.

In cases of intentional murder, the Qur'anic law of *qiṣāṣ*, or proportionate legal retaliation, seeks to restrain vengeance and protect society. Qur'an 2:179 states that there is preservation of life in *qiṣāṣ*, indicating that a controlled legal process can deter violence and prevent cycles of revenge.

Qur'an 17:33 grants the victim's lawful heirs a recognized role in seeking justice but prohibits excess. This limitation demonstrates that even when retaliation is legally available, it must remain proportionate and subject to judicial supervision.

Classical jurists also discussed other offences within the historical framework of Islamic criminal law. Interpretations concerning their definitions, evidentiary standards, and punishments differ across legal schools and modern jurisdictions. Such rulings cannot legitimately be separated from due process, authoritative courts, and the broader Qur'anic requirements of justice.

The Prohibition of Suicide

Islamic teachings extend the sacredness of life to an individual's responsibility toward his or her own life. Human life is understood as a trust from Allah rather than property that may be deliberately destroyed. Qur'an 4:29 consequently prohibits people from killing themselves and immediately emphasizes Allah's mercy.

Al-Qaradawi (1960) presents patience, faith, and moral resilience as essential responses to hardship. Personal suffering, financial loss, disappointment, or failure does not diminish the sacred value of a person's life. Islamic teachings encourage individuals experiencing distress to seek assistance, remain connected to supportive people, and avoid making irreversible decisions during periods of intense pain.

Prophetic teachings warn strongly against suicide while emphasizing human accountability for preserving life. These warnings are intended to protect vulnerable individuals and reinforce the principle that despair should not be treated as permanent or beyond relief.

The broader Islamic framework combines personal responsibility with compassion. People facing overwhelming hardship should not be mocked, abandoned, or treated only as moral offenders. Families and communities have a responsibility to offer support, protection, and access to appropriate assistance.

Conclusion

Islamic teachings present human life and honour as sacred trusts. Individuals must be protected from defamation, false accusations, intimidation, unlawful violence, and violations of privacy or

reputation. These protections apply to Muslims and to peaceful non-Muslims whose lives are safeguarded by law or covenant.

The administration of criminal justice belongs to legitimate legal authorities and must be governed by evidence, proportionality, and due process. Private revenge and unauthorized punishment are prohibited.

The same respect for life also requires individuals and communities to protect those experiencing severe distress. Human dignity is preserved through truthful speech, justice, compassion, lawful accountability, and active concern for the physical and emotional safety of others.

References:

Al-Qaradawi, Yusuf (1960). *The Lawful and Prohibited in Islam*.