

Surah al-Ahzaab

The surah mentions the 'wives of the Prophet' in the context of the ummah having expanded due to the numerous victories. The wives asked the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam to increase their financial maintenance. Allah revealed the ayaat which gave them a choice:

"O Prophet, say to your wives, "If you should desire the worldly life and its adornment, then come, I will provide for you and give you a gracious release."

"But if you should desire Allah and His Messenger and the home of the Hereafter - then indeed, Allah has prepared for the doers of good among you a great reward." (Ayat 27-28).

The wives preferred the hereafter, above the worldly life. On this occasion, Allah mentioned the greatness of the wives by highlighting 7 of their qualities, which all believing women should strive for:

- They are not soft in speech, when addressing the non-mahram.
- They do not leave their abodes without need.
- They do not adorn themselves to be noticeable in public, like in the time of jahiliyyah.
- They are constant and regular in prayer.
- They give zakah (charity).
- They obey Allah and His Messenger sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam.
- They recite the Quran and the hadeeth.

The other main topics in this surah are as follows:

The true momin needs to strive to ascertain these 10 qualities in him/herself in order to stand out in society:

- i. Islam: Act on the deen.
- ii. Emaan: Have strong conviction.
- iii. Obedience: Of Allah and His Messenger.
- iv. Truthfulness.
- v. Patience/steadfastness.
- vi. Khushoo.
- vii. Give saqadah.
- viii. Fast.
- ix. Protect their private parts.
- x. Remember Allah abundantly.

This surah also mentions the famous incident of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam marrying Zaynab radhi Allahu anha who was the divorcee of his 'so called/adopted' son Zayd bin Haaritha radhi Allahu anhu. In the pre-Islamic jahiliyyah, this was not allowed. However, Allah wanted to make it very clear that only the biological son is your real son, and that this practice of not being able to marry an adopted son's divorcee is not from Islam.

Another point worth mentioning here is in reply to the baseless propaganda by the enemies of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam marrying more than one wife due to his desire. The fact of the matter is as follows:

- The Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam remained married to his first wife, Khadijah radhi Allahu anha, who was 15 years older than him, for approx. 25 years. During this period he did not marry any other woman.
- The other marriages of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam all took place after he was 50 years of age.
- The only virgin he married was Aisha radhi Allahu anha.
- The marriages were all part of a divine plan which was full of wisdom as they had far reaching educational, collective and political benefits for the entire ummah.

Allah is reminding us of the great favour that he bestowed upon this ummah by highlighting the unique qualities of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam:

- He will be a witness on the day of judgement for the whole ummah, whether it be the 'ummah dawah' i.e. the portion of the ummah which was invited, or the 'ummah ijaaba' i.e. the portion of the ummah which accepted the invitation.
- He was the giver of glad tidings of jannah for the believers.
- He was a warner of punishment and destruction for the wrongdoers and the rejecters.
- He called to righteousness, reform, excellent morals, and steadfastness. It was not a call to gain authority, booty, nationalism, or any division within humanity. His call was purely for the pleasure of Allah, with the aim of uniting humanity and reform/progress.
- Daw'ah is the best of the action of the prophets as Allah says:

"And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah and does righteousness and says, "Indeed, I am of the Muslims." (Fussilat: Ayat 43)

The Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam is the beacon of light which removed all doubts and got rid of the darkness. Allah has called him an 'illuminating lamp' just like the sun, that pierces through the darkness to bring us light in order for us to find our way and reach our destination.

The surah then teaches us certain social etiquettes which were unknown before:

- Do not enter someone's house without permission.
- As a guest, do not prolong your stay, after taking the meal, to cause difficulty to your host.
- If you are in need of asking the non-mahram women for something, then do so from behind a screen, not face to face. However, there is no harm in women coming face to face with their mahrams.

Allah then teaches us to send salutations and prayers on the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam. This is an act which is a matter of great honour and respect for the believers, and it also is a means of increasing our ranks and wiping away sins. It was narrated by Abu Talha radhi Allahu anhu, that one day the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam appeared to be in an extra ordinarily happy mood. The signs of which could be seen in his shining face. The companions asked him; "O Messenger of Allah ! We are seeing extraordinary signs of happiness on your face today." The Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam replied: "An angel came to me and asked me: Are you not happy that Allah says that, whoever from your ummah sends salutations on you once, I will send on him 10 mercies, and that whosoever sends upon you 1 salaam., then I will send, peace upon him 10 times. I replied to the angel: I am happy."

Initially the instructions of hijab were given to the wives of the Prophet, and then the Muslim women in general. Hijab is a means of respect, dignity, and a protection as well as a matter of great honour and respect. However, certain criteria need to be met to perfect this act of worship:

- The dress should cover the entire body.
- The hijab should not in itself be attractive and eye catching.
- The dress should not be too thin, so as to expose the colour of the skin.
- It should be loose, and not tight, so as to make certain parts of the body apparent.
- It should not be perfumed so as to attract the passers by.
- It should not resemble the dress of men.
- It should not be like the dress that is known to be the identity of kuffar or mushrik women.
- It should not be such that it is worn only for fame.

Surah as-Saba

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 54 ayaat. The surah starts by praising Allah, Who created the universe and set it in motion according to a system. He has knowledge of everything and everything that He decides is full of wisdom. It then mentions that the mushriken deny the accountability and resurrection. The Prophet is instructed to swear by Allah that the day of judgement will come and the good doers will be rewarded and the wrong doers will be punished.

The other main topics in this surah are as follows:

Allah has compared the grateful and the ungrateful by mentioning the favours upon Prophets Daud and Sulaiman and comparing them with the people of Saba.

Allah gave Prophet Daud alaihis salaam many abilities:

- He was given the most beautiful of voices.
- When he would glorify Allah, the mountains and birds would join him. When he would recite the Zabur the animals would be mesmerized.
- Allah subjected the Iron to him, so that he could mould it into any shape and form he desired. It can be said that he had a factory where he would manufacture armor. We could classify this as the first steel mill.

Similarly, he Prophet Sulaiman had also been bestowed with many favours:

- He could understand the language of birds.
- Copper was subjected to him for him to mould as he wished.
- The jinns were under his instruction, whom he would use for construction and transport.
- The wind was also subjected to him, in order for him to fly on his throne.

Despite all these extraordinary favours, both father and son were humble and grateful and would never be heedless of the remembrance of Allah.

The second story mentioned here is related to the people of Saba which shows us the consequence of being unthankful and rebellious.

The people of Saba were shown many favours such as abundance of provisions, health, clean air, fertile land and dense orchards. They also had a dam in which they would collect water for irrigation. They became ungrateful and as a result the dam broke and swept away everything that caused them to be so unthankful and rebellious.

The mushriken have been reminded in this surah regarding their false beliefs and ideas. The surah asks them: who has provided for you? It also challenges them to bring forth their so called partners who they associate with Allah. The surah then goes on to outline the main reasons behind this rebellion and kufr as pride and arrogance. They thought that they were exceptionally wealthy and well off and that they would meet the same destiny if there were to be a hereafter. To which, Allah replies:

"Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills and restricts [it], but most of the people do not know." (Ayat 36).

The mushriken, based on similar ideas as the people of Saba, would ridicule and mock the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam and would even call him possessed. Allah says in return:

"Say, "I only advise you of one [thing] - that you stand for Allah, [seeking truth] in pairs and individually, and then give thought." There is not in your companion any madness. He is only a warner to you before a severe punishment." (Ayat 46)

Surah al-Faathir

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 45 ayaat. It covers 4 main topics:

- Invites to the Oneness of Allah.
- Gives proofs for the existence of Allah.
- Demolishes the very basis of the concept of shirk.
- Advises the believers to remain steadfast and patient on the deen.

The surah starts by mentioning Allah: The Creator and Originator of, time and space, humans, angels and jinn. In doing so it draws attention to the signs of the Oneness of Allah in the creation around us. It then puts forth proof for resurrection, which any person can understand and reflect upon:

- Bringing the dead soil back to life through rain water.
- Brining the day and night in continuation and perpetually.
- He takes the human through the stages of creation and development.

Surely this Creator will be able to resurrect His creation.

The surah also distinguishes between emaan and kufr, and guidance and misguidance, by putting forth proofs; just as the blind and the seeing, the dead and the living, darkness and light, sunlight and shade, are not equal, similarly the believer and rejecter cannot be the same.

The surah then mentions the fact that although the signs of Allah's Creation are everywhere to be seen, it is only these people whom benefit:

- Who have the understanding and knowledge
- Who think deeply about the signs.
- Who can lift the covers to reveal the truth.

The more a person realises these realities the more humble and God conscious would that person be.

The scholars say that the word 'ulama' in this ayat does not only include the scholars of Deen and Shariah, but also includes knowledges of all types whether it be medicine, astronomy, botany etc. The realisation of the Oneness of Allah through his signs in creation, gives birth to humility and fearing Allah.

The surah then turns the reader's attention away from the book of creation towards the signs in the written book. The book praises those who recite it and then goes on to inform us that the ummah divided into three groups after the revelation:

- Dhaalim: Those Muslims whose evil deeds are more than their good deeds.
- Muqtasid: Those Muslims whose good and bad deeds are equal.
- Saabiq: Those fortunate true believers who overtook others in their obedience and worship.

Although they will all ultimately enter jannah, some will enter it without any obstacle, while others will have to pay for their misdeeds before they are allowed to enter.

The surah ends by informing us that Allah does not seize us immediately, but in fact gives us respite and many chances:

"And if Allâh were to punish men for that which they earned, He would not leave a moving (living) creature on the surface of the earth, but He gives them respite to an appointed term, and when their term comes, then verily, Allâh is Ever All Seer of His slaves".