

Surah an-Nisaa (continued)

This juzz continues the discussion of the categories of those women whom one cannot marry.

"All others are lawful, provided you seek (them in marriage) with mahr from your property, desiring chastity, not committing illegal sexual intercourse, so with those of whom you have enjoyed sexual relations, give them their mahr as prescribed."

The other main topics of this juzz are as follows:

1. Guidance for a healthy family life is given:

- i. The male has a responsibility for the family, and a degree of responsibility over the others. This is to ensure a clear structure of roles and responsibilities, and a robust family unit.
- ii. If the husband experiences ill-conduct from his wife, he can take these steps:
 - a. Counsel and advise her,
 - b. Separate from the marital bed,
 - c. Perform a symbolic, light admonition or beating

2. The integral ingredient in any healthy community is stated to be 'ihsaan' in every affair:

Ihsan is rooted in mutual concern, trust, justice and mercy. In reality, Islam is the deen of truth, justice and equity, which encourages dealing with justice, with the entirety of creation, believers or otherwise. The incident of Uthman bin Talha is of relevance; after the conquest of Makkah, some of the Muslims were eager to replace him in his role as key-bearer of the Ka'aba. Allah commanded them to return this duty to Uthman, which led to his embracing of Islam. There is, similarly, the well-known incident where the Prophet judged in favour of a Jew instead of a Muslim, hence, upholding justice.

3. The Ummah is being told to prepare for jihad and qitaal, keeping their intentions purely and solely for the sake of Allah. The Ummah is also reminded of the difficulty and persecution that the weak experience, in the absence of such protection:

"And what is wrong with you that you fight not in the Cause of Allah, and for those weak, ill-treated and oppressed among men, women, and children, whose cry is: "Our Lord! Rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from You one who will protect, and raise for us from You one who will help." (75)

"Wherever you may be, death will overtake you, even if you are in fortresses built up strong and high!" (78)

4. The believers are being warned to stay alert with regards the plotting of the munafiqoon.

This is the group of people who have always disguised themselves as believers with the underlying intention of causing them harm. These are those people who tried to provoke dissension amongst the ranks of the Muslims in Madinah. This surah exposes their plots and hidden agendas, their hatred and enmity, and the reality of how they have nothing to do with the true believers.

Allah guides the believers to an awareness of the truth about the munafiqoon, so that no doubt or ambiguity remains concerning their real position with Allah:

"Then what is the matter with you that you are divided into two parties about the hypocrites? Allah has cast them back (to disbelief) because of what they have earned." (88)

Allah further uncovers their innermost desires and plans:

“They wish that you reject Faith, as they have rejected, and that therefore you all become equal. So take not Auliya' (protectors or friends) from them, till they emigrate in the Way of Allah.”

5. The kaffarah (expiation) for both the intentional and unintentional killing of the believer has been given here:

“But whoever kills a believer intentionally - his recompense is Hell, wherein he will abide eternally, and Allah has become angry with him and has cursed him and has prepared for him a great punishment.” (Ayat 93).

6. There is again mention of jihad, and the fact that people who strive and struggle are not the same as those who sit and await things. The fact of the matter is that as long as the Ummah strives and struggles in the way of Allah, it will be given honour and dignity, but forsaking jihad will (and has) lead to its downfall and humiliation.

7. In addition to jihad there is an emphasis on the importance of hijrah, as this is also a type of jihad. The hijrah emphasised here is to emigrate from dar ul kufr to dar ul Islam.

According to some narrations, when the commandment to make hijrah came, Hamza bin Qays, who was severely ill, became very concerned, as he was unable to walk. He told his sons to carry him and his bed towards Madinah. It was so decreed that as soon as they left Makkah, Hamza passed away. Allah then revealed the following ayat regarding this situation:

“And whoever leaves his home as an emigrant to Allah and His Messenger and then death overtakes him - his reward has already become incumbent upon Allah. And Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful.” (Ayat 100).

8. Allah has offered the believers the ease of shortening their prayers in times of need, such as when making hijrah or in jihad.

There is also mention of the importance of being just, and not being influenced by others when judging a dispute. A famous incident is cited: A Muslim falsely accused a Jew of theft, and was able to persuade the Prophet. Consequently, the Prophet was about to give the judgement in favour of this Muslim, when Allah revealed:

“We have sent down to you (O Muhammad) the Book (this Qur'an) in truth that you might judge between men by that which Allah has shown you, so be not a pleader for the treacherous. And seek the Forgiveness of Allah, certainly, Allah is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

9. Many ayaat then mention the reason behind a person's rebellion e.g. following the shaytan instead of Allah, the former eventually leading them far astray.

10. There is mention of Abu al-Anbiya (father of the prophets) i.e. Ibrahim, and the fact that only the people who follow his way will be from those who are guided.

11. There is again mention of the rights of women, as well as advice for married couples to try to reconcile their differences.

12. The juzz ends by admonishing the munafiqoon and warning them of a severe torment.