

*Does Quran Address
Sexual Violation of Women?*



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Surely all praise is due to Allah the Lord, Evolver, Maintainer of all that exists. He is the One Who taught (and teaches) the Quran and created the human being. He sent the Book down onto the heart of His servant and messenger, Muhammad. We glorify Him with praise and we seek forgiveness from Him. We ask him for all good and we seek refuge with Him from every evil. There is none to be worshipped except Him. Then, we bear witness that there is no god except Allah and we bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

About the Quran

الم ١
ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ٢

Alif, Laam, Meem. That is the Book. There is nothing in him to disturb the inner peace.
(interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 2: ayaat 1 – 2)

“*That*” is the more correct indication of the word *ذَلِكَ* and may refer to the parts of this Quran that were revealed prior to Surah tul Baqarah or to the entire Book, which had not yet been revealed.

The fact that the Author can state with certainty that there is nothing to agitate or disturb one’s inner certainty is an indication of the complete knowledge of the inner soul of the human one to whom this message is directed.

Commentaries

Ibn Katheer: *How you read ayah 2 determines how you understand the essence of the message. If you stop after the word ‘raiba’, there is one understanding. If you stop after ‘fehi’, then guidance becomes an attribute of the Quran and carries a better meaning.*

An Enlightening Commentary into the Light ...: *It is certain that the Quran was sent down for the guidance of all human beings. So, the question is why the guidance is introduced as particular to the “pious ones”.*

The reason is that it is impossible for Man to take benefit from the guidance of the Divine Books unless he attains some degree of submission and kindles the light of piety in his self. Divine Guidance means the leadership of Allah upon creatures under the regulation of creation governed by some definite laws and secrets of the world of existence.

Study Quran: *Related to the opening letters, many theologians have objected to the notion that any part of the Quran is unknowable to people (for whom he was sent).*

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ
يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٩﴾

Surely this Recitation guides to that which is more stable and gives good tidings to the faithful, those who do righteous deeds, that for them there is a great reward. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 17: ayah 9)

This ayah comes after ayaat opening the Surah and speaking of the arrogant behavior of Bani Israel and the consequences of that insolent behavior. Now they and those of other faiths are presented with the Noble Recitation.

Commentaries

Abdullah Yusuf Ali: *The instability and crookedness of the Jewish soul having been mentioned, the healing balm, which should have cured it, is now pointed out. The message of the Quran is for all ... Apart from what is past, apart from questions of national or racial history, there is spiritual Hope – and a spiritual Danger – for every soul.*

Study Quran: *That the Quran guides to “that which is most upright” can mean that it guides to the Truth or to religion. However, the Arabic pronoun rendered “that which” in “that which is most upright” is feminine and, thus some consider this to be a reference to the straight or upright path (tariqah), or to the upright religious community or creed (millah), since both are grammatically feminine.*

Ibn Katheer: The interpretation of this ayah reads:

Verily, this Quran guides to that which is most just and right and gives good news to those who believe, those who do righteous deeds, that they will have a great reward (Paradise).

Allah praises His Noble Book, the Quran, which He revealed to His messenger Muhammad (saw). It directs people to the best and clearest of ways.

The content of the Quran is active and purposed to generate movement by the imparting of knowledge that awakens a drowsy soul, removes the rust from a dulled heart, and activates latent virtues, by which one becomes noble in character. Allah ta’alaa speaks of all this active reforming with various ayaat and repeats words that generalize this active movement.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّي عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى
النُّورِ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا ﴿٤٣﴾

He is the One Who sends blessings upon you and His Angels do also, so that He will bring you out of the darkneses into the Light. And, He is Mercifully Responsive to the believers*.
(interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 33: ayah 43)

* The word مؤمنون is difficult to put into English because 'Eemaan' is stronger and more permanent than belief. It is a conviction rooted in the heart that secures the possessor in a permanent connection to the Creator. Eemaan develops and causes development.

Does the Quran Speak to Sexual Violation of Women (Rape)?

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَصَائِرٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ، وَمَنْ عَمِيَ فَعَلَيْهَا
وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ ﴿١٠٤﴾
وَكَذَلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ لِيَقُولُوا دَرَسْتَ وَلِنُبَيِّنَهُ لِقَوْمٍ
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

Indeed there has come to you clear evidence from you Guardian Evolver. Then whoever sees clearly, then it is for the benefit of his / her own soul and whoever is blind, then she (the soul) is harmed. And, I am not a guardian over you.

In that way, We have explained the signs in various manners so they will say, ‘You have been diligent.’ And so that We will make him (the Book / the matter / the Prophet) clear for people of knowledge. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 6: ayaat 104 – 105)

Commentary: Study Quran

The word بصائر is in the plural and refers to the eye of the heart or to the light of the heart, from which all vision derives. ... “Seeing clearly” is opposed to “blindness” in this verse, as it is elsewhere (6: 50; 11: 24; 35: 19; 40: 58) and in all such cases it refers to spiritual rather than physical “seeing” and “blindness”.

In the process of teaching His servants, Allah explains matters to us in different ways. Clarity is always the goal, but often that comes in increments as our own ability to understand evolves. Even the Prophet (saw) was advised to be patient with the delivery of the knowledge.

فَتَعَلَى اللَّهِ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُقْضَىٰ
إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ، وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا ﴿١١٤﴾

Then Exalted is Allah the True Sovereign. So, don’t be in a hurry with the Recitation before He completes the revelation to you and say, “My Lord, increase me in knowledge.”
(interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 20: ayah 114)

Allah, the All Knowing, the Wise, makes it clear to us that this Quran is a comprehensive text from which nothing of need to the servants has been left unmentioned.

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَمٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ مَا
فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

There is not a creature on the Earth nor a flying being flying with his wings except that they are communities similar to yourselves. We haven't neglected anything in the Book. Then, to their Cherisher they will all be gathered. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 6: ayah 38)

There are various ways to seek the answer to the question posed. One is to look at everything Allah says about women and everything said about male – female interaction and then extrapolate what is relevant to the criminal acts. That is a very extensive undertaking and certainly worthy of one's time and effort. However, that is not what I offer in this particular study.

We know that Allah requires elevated esteem of women (Surah 4: ayah 1) and their particular care and protection (Surah 2: 223, 229 – 242; Surah 4: 34, etc.) We know that Allah prohibits the following of and indulging of lusts (Surah 4: 135; Surah 28: 50) because that will cause deviation from what is right and just. In the latter ayah it states, “*And who is more astray than one who follows their base desires without any guidance from Allah?*” (interpreted meaning)

We know that men are prohibited from seeking women because of lusts, even for marriage – Surah 5: ayah 5 and Surah 4: ayah 24.

And, men are prohibited from forcing women into sexual submission.

وَلَيْسَتَعَفِيفِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا حَتَّىٰ يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَالَّذِينَ
يَبْتَغُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ
خَيْرًا وَّءَاتُوهُمْ مِّن مَّالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكُمْ وَلَا تُكْرَهُوا فَتِيَّتِكُمْ
عَلَى الْبِغَاءِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا لِّبَتْنَعُوا عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَن يُكْرِهِنَّ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِكْرَاهِهِنَّ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

Let those who do not find the means to marry stay chaste until Allah enriches them from His bounty. And those who are under your governance (as servants) seeking a contract (of freedom), then write that for them, if you know of any good in them, and give them from the wealth of Allah that He has given to you. And, do not force your female servants into fornication, when they desire chastity, seeking to gain pleasures of this material world. And whoever forces them, then Allah, after such compulsion, is One Who Forgives and Responds With Mercy. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 24: ayah 33)

Sexual crimes are general and yet there are many specifics. In Quran, Allah addresses the general. At the time of the revelation of this aysh, there were those who profitted from the prostitution of female slaves. Specific names are given and some detail. Abdullah Yusuf ‘Ali says, “*This is absolutely condemned. While modern nations have abolished ordinary slavery, the ‘White Slave Traffic’ is still a big social problem. ... Here it is absolutely condemned. No more despicable trade can be imagined.*”

The term زنى refers to all illicit sexual activity, even what is consensual. Rape may fall under the category of fornication or adultery, depending on the status of the perpetrator. The general punishment for all those guilty of such immoral acts is found at the beginning of Surah tun Nur.

سُورَةٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهَا وَفَرَضْنَاهَا وَأَنْزَلْنَا فِيهَا آيَاتٍ يَبِّنَاتٍ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١﴾
الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي
دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢﴾

A Surah We have cause to be revealed and We imposed her as a law and We sent down in her clear signs so that you will repeatedly be reminded. The man and the woman guilty of sexual crimes, lash each one of them 100 lashes and do not let pity for them overtake you in the way of Allah, if you have faith in Allah and believe in the Final Day. And, a group of Believers must witness their punishment. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 24: ayaat 1 – 2)

Commentaries

Abdullah Yusuf Ali: *The term ‘zinaa’ includes sexual intercourse between an man and a woman not married to each other. It therefore applies to both adultery (which implies that one or both of the parties are married to a person or persons other than the one(s) concerned and to fornication, which in its strict signification implies that both parties are not married ...*

Study Quran: (the Commentary here is quite extensive and I did not take the time to read it. I encourage you to do so, if you are interested in this topic.)

Societal conditions in our country and others are beyond deplorable and, if these punishments were implemented, the legal system would be completely overwhelmed until the deterrent effects could be established. In Islam, men and women are mandated to be responsible for their own restrictive efforts, not even allowing the eyes to indulge in illicit pleasure.

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَٰلِكَ
أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَيْرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

Say to the men who believe to lower their vision and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Surely Allah is well aware of what they are doing*. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 24: ayah 30)

(*The Arabic verb here given as ‘doing’ is more accurately ‘developing, building or creating’. I’ve just used ‘doing’ for simple understanding.)

The next ayah, addressed to women (quite long and I chose not to insert), begins the same way –

And say to the believing women to lower their vision and guard their private areas and do not show their beauty, except what is naturally apparent of it ...

And ends: **And turn repentantly to Allah, oh you who believe, so that you will attain success.** (interpretation of the meaning of Surah 24: part of ayah 31.)

(Falah – success – is bringing out our latent noble faculties and allowing them to develop to their full potential.)

To me, these ayaat show both the responsibility we have to our own moral character and to that of the opposite sex. Prevention of the crime is always more desired than the punishment. Allah spends great time and attention in His Book of Guidance to keep us in a beautiful moral condition. And, yet, He makes it very clear that His severity is real.

غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّلَوِّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٣﴾

The Forgiver of Sins, the Acceptor of Repentance, Severe in the Outcome, Possessor of the Long Reach. There is no god except Him; to Him is the final return. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 40: ayah 3)

Duah

الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا إِنَّنَا أَمْنَا فَأَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَقِنَا عَذَابَ
النَّارِ ﴿١٦﴾

(The servants of Allah) **Those who say, Our Guardian Evolver, truly we have secured ourselves in Faith, so forgive our sins for us and save us from the punishment of the Fire.** (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 3: ayah 16)