

RAMADAN

IMMERSION



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Introduction

- When looking at Quranic verses, especially those related to laws, it often requires context.
- How can we look at the context?
 - Tafseer from the Quran: understanding the Quran through the Quran itself.
 - Looking at other verses that speak about a similar topic in an effort to bring more clarity.
 - Tafseer from the Prophet SAW and his companions
 - Oftentimes, the Prophet SAW or the companions would directly explain what a verse means and how it is supposed to be understood.
 - Other times, a verse can be understood by looking at the life and hadith of the Prophet SAW and seeing how the verse can be understood in relation to that.
- Before we start reading the Quran, we should make sure that we are starting with a clean slate.
 - Oftentimes we find certain verses difficult to understand as a result of our pre-existing assumptions that we bring into our reading and understanding of the Quran.
 - We should attempt to recognize what biases we have adopted from non-Islamic sources and society at large and try to rectify those biases before we dive in to understanding specific verses in the Quran.

- In Arabic, the male pronoun that is used in the Quran does not limit that understanding to the male gender.
 - We use the pronoun, “هو,” when we refer to Allah. But, we understand that it does not actually carry the meaning of the male gender because Allah is far beyond any form of gender.
 - Anytime the Quran addresses people, it is always assumed that it is for both men and women unless there is an exception otherwise.
 - Umm Salamah, the wife of the Prophet SAW, clarified this and asked the Prophet SAW if the Quran also addresses women. Allah revealed the verse in Surah Al-Ahzab (ayah 35), which specifies both men and women and each ayah in order to reassure everyone that the Quran always addresses both men and women.

The Example of Hijab

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ
إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ (24:31)

And enjoin believing women to cast down their looks and guard their private parts and not reveal their adornment except that which is revealed of itself, and to draw their veils over their bosoms (24:31)

- People often assume that this verse makes no explicit mention of the obligation of Hijab. However, it is important to look at the context and use external sources to help clarify this.
- Aisha RA and Ibn Abbas RA both explicitly explained that this ayah means to cover everything except for the face and hands.
- Aisha RA said that when this verse was revealed, she praised the women of the Ansar for correctly understanding this verse and they tore their clothes in 2 pieces so that they could stretch it out and cover themselves.
 - She said, “I haven’t found a group of women who were stronger in their belief than the Ansar.”
- Do we just read this ayah out of context, or do we look at the Prophet RA and how those around him embodied this ayah?

The Example of Surah Al-Nisa

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنِ اطَّعْتَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا (4:34)

Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has made one of them excel over the other, and because they spend out of their possessions (to support them). Thus righteous women are obedient and guard the rights of men in their absence under Allah's protection. As for women of whom you fear rebellion, admonish them, and remain apart from them in beds, and beat them. Then if they obey you, do not seek ways to harm them. Allah is Exalted, Great. (4:34)

- There are a countless number of hadith from the Prophet SAW in which he talks about the correct treatment of women and taking care of them well.
 - In his last sermon, he emphasized to treat the women well.
- The wives of the Prophet SAW narrated themselves that he never hit any of them even once, nor did he ever hit anyone around him, even outside of his family.
- Scholars say that the physical discipline can never leave a mark.
 - It is something more symbolic that represents the discipline, like using a siwak or a napkin.
- In almost all cases of women complaining to Islamic jurists about their husband physically abusing them, the judge disciplines the husband in response.
 - This shows that the scholars understood from this verse that you can not physically abuse wives.
 - Domestic violence is never allowed and it is never up for debate.
- Describing the boundaries for law does not mean you have to impose the law.
 - So, just because this ayah is explaining the boundaries, it doesn't mean you have to actually do it.
- How is this relevant today?

- Many scholars of fiqh mention that, if a husband knows it is not going to benefit, then he cannot engage in that action.
 - This is true for all disciplines mentioned in that ayah.
- So, if it is culturally reprehensible and it is something that will only cause more problems, then it is not permissible.
- Culturally, it was something that was proven to be useful.
 - As soon as that usefulness is gone, then so is the permissibility to engage in that action.