

Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread) [5:91]

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَمْرِ
وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيُصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ ﴿٩١﴾

Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and from prayer: will you not then abstain?

MUHAMMAD HUSAIN TABA TABAI (AR)

QUR'AN: *The Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst Will you then desist?*: ar-Raghib has said in his *al-Mufradat*: “*al-'adw* connotes overstepping, transgression and disharmony, sometimes it is related to heart, then it is called enmity and feud; at other times it is ascribed to walking, then it is called running, yet at other occasions it refers to lack of justice in dealings, then it means transgression and overstepping; Allah says:*lest exceeding the limits they should abuse Allah out of ignorance.[6:108]*; at times it refers to parts of habitation, and then it is said, *al-'adwa'*, they say a place having '*adwa'*, i.e. whose parts are not in harmony with each other; from 'enmity' is derived '*aduw* so they say, enemy man, enemy nation. Allah says: *some of you being enemies of others; [2:36]*. Its plural comes as '*idayy* and '*a'da'*. Allah says: *And on the day that the enemies of Allah shall be brought together*” [41:19].

Al-Bughd and *al-baghda* are the opposites of love; *as-sadd* (to turn away); *al-intiha'* is to obey a prohibition; also it is opposite of beginning.

As mentioned earlier, this verse aims at explaining the clause: *the Satan's handiwork, or an abomination of the Satan's handiwork*. It is the reality of these items being: *the Satan's handiwork, or an abomination of the Satan's handiwork*, that the only goal and purpose he wants to achieve from the intoxicants and the games of chance (which are abominations of his handiwork only) is to create enmity and hatred amongst you by making you transgress your limits and hate one another, as well as to divert your attention from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer, keeping you engaged in the intoxicants, games of chance, sacrificing to set up stones and dividing by arrows.

Only the intoxicants and the games of chance are singled out as causing enmity and hatred, because the two effects are their more apparent results. Look at liquor and intoxicants: Its use agitates nervous system in such a way that it covers and dominates the reason and brings up bigotry. If it incites anger, it lets the intoxicated person commit any felony, however serious and ugly it might be, which even beast of prey do not do. It incites desire and lust, it makes to seem fair in his eyes all types of ugliness and debauchery, be it in his self, property or honor, in what he believes to be sacred and sanctified in religion or society, etc. He will commit theft and embezzlement, will not keep a secret, nor maintain the limit of a prohibited thing; in short he will indulge in affairs, which are destructive to humanity. Available data show that intoxicants have the lion's share in various types of felonies and debaucheries in that society where drinking liquor is prevalent.

As for the games of chance, i.e. gambling, it squanders in a short time all the endeavors a man had exercised for a long period in acquirement of wealth, property and status. Gambling throws the wealth away, and often it destroys honor, life, and prestige. If a gambler wins and gets wealth, it encourages him to abandon moderate way of life and indulge extravagantly in debauchery; he becomes indifferent towards earning his livelihood through lawful means. And if he loses, the loss of wealth and bitterness of defeat, leads to enmity and hatred towards the winner, and leaves irritation and grief in its wake.

Although these evil results do not manifest themselves so clearly to the simple minds in infrequent and rare cases for the first or second time, but the rare leads to dominant, the little pulls to numerous, and once becomes many times; and it does not take long for this evil to prevail in the society, and seep through all strata of the community; it thus turns into a barbaric free for all where unruly passions dominate and destructive desires rule.

All this shows that the exclusive particle *innama* (only, but) in the verse: "The Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer", covers all the items enumerated earlier on the whole, yet prevention from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer is inflicted by all, and the enmity and hatred are especial effects of the intoxicants and games of chance by nature.

Although prayer is a kind of the remembrance of Allah, yet Allah has mentioned it separately in the clause: “and keep you off from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer”; it shows how much importance the prayer has in the eyes of *shari’ah*, because it is the perfect entity of the remembrance. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said in a correct *hadith*: ‘The prayer is the pillar of religion’; and the Qur’an in numerous verses shows its unparalleled significance, which no one can entertain any doubt about. For example: *Successful indeed are the believers, who are humble in their prayers* (23:1-2); *And (as for) those who hold fast by the Book and keep up prayer, surely We do not waste the reward of the right-doers* (7:170); *surely man is created of a hasty temperament; being greatly grieved when evil afflicts him, and niggardly when good befalls him, except those who pray* (70:19-22); *Recite that which has been revealed to you of the Book and keep up prayers; surely prayer keeps (on) away from decency and evil, and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest (29:45); then hasten to the remembrance of Allah (62:9), [it refers to prayer]; and keep up prayer for My remembrance* (20:14); and there are many other such verses.

Allah, in this verse under discussion, has given precedence to His remembrance over prayer, because the remembrance is the only objective of the Divine Mission; it is the spirit of life in the body of servitude, and the basis of happiness in this world and the next. It may be seen in the words of Allah to Adam the first day He laid down the *shari’ah* for him. He said: *Get down you two there from, all (of you), one of you (is) enemy to another. So if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy. And whoever turns away from my remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, and We shall raise him, on the Day of Resurrection, blind.*” (20:123-4); *And on the day when He shall gather them, and whatever they worshipped besides Allah, He shall say: “Was it you who led astray these my servants, or did they themselves go astray from the path?” They shall say: “Glory be to Thee! It was not beseeming for us that we should take any guardian besides Thee, but Thou didst make them and their fathers to enjoy until they forsook the remembrance, and they were a people in perdition.”* (25:17-18); *Therefore turn aside from him who turns his back upon Our remembrance and does not desire anything but this world’s life. That is the (last) reach of their knowledge; (53:29-30).*

Remembrance in the Qur’anic verses only connotes that which stands opposite to oblivion of the side of Lordship which brings in its wake oblivion of the side of servitude; and the servitude, the humble adoration, is that religious behavior which is the only path to bring good fortune and happiness to the soul. Allah says: *And be not like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget their own souls (59:19).*

As for the end clause: "Will you then desist"? It is a reproving question, which indicates that the Muslims had somehow failed to desist from the prohibitions that had preceded this one. The verse: "The Satan only desires" is a sort of explanation that explains the verse: *They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: "In both of them there is a great sin and some profit for men; and their sin is greater than their profit."* (2:219). That is, their profit which is supposed to accompany the great sin is not of a type that could be separated at sometime from the sin or greater sin; unlike the lie which contains sin and profit, and occasionally its profit may be separated from its sin, e.g., a lie spoken for removing misunderstanding between two persons.

It is because of the exclusive particle: "only", in the verse: "The Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer", which comes after the words: *only an abomination of the Satan's handiwork*. It means that it is nothing other than an abomination of the Satan's handiwork, and the Satan's only aim is to create enmity and hatred among you through the intoxicants and games of chance, and to prevent you from the remembrance of Allah and from the prayer. In this framework, no situation can arise where these items' profit could be separated from their sin. In no circumstances they could ever be supposed to be lawful. Understand it.

MIR AHMED ALI (AR)

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Intoxicating agents and gambling have been prohibited through al Baqarah : 219 (see commentary). Many scholars (Abu Hanifa, Hakim Ibn Sad, Suyuti, Shibli, Ibn Hajar) have mentioned in their books about the nabidh (barley malt) held lawful and taken by some of the Holy Prophet 's companions.

In Shi-a fiqh all intoxicating agents are held unlawful.

The Holy Prophet said: *"Do not visit a sick person if he drinks wine (or any intoxicating drink), if he dies do not attend his funeral prayers, if he is in distress do not give him alms; and it is like throwing your daughter into hell if you marry her to a drunkard."*

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

According to the Ahl ul Bayt all the prophets of Allah were strict abstainers from intoxicating drinks. Hashim, Abdul Muttalib, Abdullah, Abu Talib, Jafar, Ali and the Holy Prophet, followers of the creed of Ibrahim, never touched any intoxicating drink. Some new converts continued wine-drinking till verse 219 of al Baqarah was revealed. Yet, not satisfied with the manner of its revelation, they did not altogether abandon their old habit. Then verse 43 of al Nisa was revealed. Still drinking parties were held in secret. Once, in such a gathering, where some of his prominent companions were enjoying wholeheartedly, the Holy Prophet came and recited these verses.

"We will keep away from it. We will keep away from it! O Messenger of Allah!" said the companions.

After that total prohibition prevailed. According to Iqdul Farid even after the total prohibition, a renowned companion of the Holy Prophet used to drink the nabidh on the plea that without it he could not digest camel's meat, because of which some Muslim jurists think that use of nabidh is permissible .

AYATULLAH KAMAL FAQIH IMANI AND SEVERAL SCHOLARS

At the time of the advent of Islam, the Arabs customarily were intensively interested in poetry, wine, and fighting. The Divine revelations concerning the prohibition of wine were gradually conveyed.

At first, there revealed a verse stating that provision is supplied from date and grapes either, from which you can obtain intoxication, too, (Sura An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 67) . This indication of intoxication implies the statement of its badness.

The Qur'an, then, has referred to the benefits of gambling and wine and also that their containing sin is greater than their benefits, (Sura (Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 219)) . After that the Divine verse was revealed enjoining not to establish prayer at the state of being intoxicated, (Sura An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 43) . And, finally, the above verse was revealed which considered wine as an abomination, a Satanic action, and ordained that it is unlawful.

The Arabic term /khamr/ (wine) is derived from the same root as the Arabic word /khumur/ (cover) is. In Arabic, the veil of a woman is called /khimar/; since it covers the hairs. Similarly, wine covers the wisdom.

The Arabic term /maysir/ is derived from /yusr/ with the meaning of easiness, since, in gambling, players sometimes earn money by that play without tolerating any trouble.

Musnad Ahmad-i-Hanbal, Sunan-i-Abi-Dawood, Nisaiee, and Tarmathi have stated a vast explanation about the Occasion of Revelation of this verse which are suggested to be referred to.

The Qur'anic term /'azlam/ means a kind of lottery done with some sticks of arrows. It used to be performed before Islam, at the Age of Ignorance.

Explanations:

1. In Islam, having Faith and drinking wine do not agree with each other.

2. Drinking wine and gambling are in the same row with idolatry.

"... verily wine, gambling, idols and ..."

3. The Islamic commandments and prohibitions have been ordained reasonably and wisely.

"... and (dividing by) arrows are an abomination of the Satan's work, so avoid it ..."

4. The verse enjoins to avoid not only drinking wine, but also approaching it. The reason of this ordinance is that a sound nutrition is effective in the prosperity of human beings. Therefore, it enjoins to avoid intoxication, so that you may be prosperous. The verse says:

"... So avoid it, that you may be prosperous."

Any kind of cooperation concerning wine, including its production, distribution and consumption, is prohibited.

Imam Baqir (a.s.) has narrated from the holy Prophet (S) that he cursed ten groups of people who are concerned somehow with drinking wine. They are as follows :

Its planter, its guardian, its maker, its drinker, its cupbearer, its bearer, its receiver, its seller, its purchaser, and anyone who, in a way, devours from its income.