

Al-An'am (The Cattle) [6:68]

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَخُوضُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا
فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ وَإِمَّا يُنسِيَنَّكَ الشَّيْطَانُ فَلَا تَقْعُدْ بَعْدَ الذِّكْرَى
مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

When thou seest men engaged in vain discourse about Our signs, turn away from them unless they turn to a different theme. If Satan ever makes thee forget, then after recollection, sit not thou in the company of those who do wrong.

MUHAMMAD HUSAIN TABA TABAI (AR)

And when you (Muhammad) see those who engage in a false conversation about Our verses mocking at them, stay away from them till they turn to another topic.

In Mafradat Raghīb says that “Al Khauz” means to wade through water and is also used for certain deeds like going through a certain situation. Often such situations are condemned together with entering into a useless conversation. This refers to those who indulge in conversation to mock at the verses of the Qur’an.

The word “A’riz” means the avoidance of the conversation being made to mock the verses of the Qur’an. This is like standing against them or circumventing them to being a part of that conversation.

Till they turn to another topic.

The order is limited to the time they indulge in such conversation and it is not that one should not mix with such people at all.

The verse will now mean, “When you find the people mocking the verses of the Qur’an then avoid them and do not join them till they discuss another topic.”

You can sit with them when discuss something else. Though the verse is about the hypocrites it is applicable to all such people and all such conversation.

In the verse says, *And if Satan makes you forget, then after remembrance do not sit I the company of such unjust people.*

It is unjust to sit and hear people mocking the verses of the Qur'an. This verse is however different from verse 140 of Surah Nisa that says, "Or you may become like them." It is now clear that the verse is not telling us to avoid who criticize those who mock the verses of God but that we should avoid being a part of them when they are doing so.

God says, *If Satan makes you forget*

It means that if by chance you forget this order to avoid them for Satan has made you forget, then you should move away from as soon as you realize what they say. The verse is addressed to the Messenger but includes the entire Ummah.

We have already discussed that the righteousness of the chosen prophets negates the possibility of any mistake or sin from them like forgetfulness. Those people are so pure in their deeds that they cannot be questioned or opposed. This is confirmed by the next verse that says, "those who fear Allah, keep their duty to Him, and avoid evil and are not responsible for them". This is clearer is verse 140 of Surah Nisa that says, "Indeed. He has revealed to you in the Book that when you hear the signs of God being defied and ridiculed, then do not sit with them until they enter into some other discourse; otherwise, you will become like them; verily God will gather the hypocrites and the infidels in Hell all together."

The verse of this Surah is from Madina and the verse of Surah Anam is Makkan, and both of them though addressed to the Messenger are fully applicable on the Ummah, "Those who fear Allah do their duty to Him and avoid evil." And when you see those who engage in false conversation about Our verses by mocking at them."

The purpose is to explain that the person indulging in such false conversation is individually responsible for it and this does not include others, but if they join the conversation or actively or passively or agrees with them is equally involved and condemnable. We are talking about the time when a person joins those who converse with ridicule about the verses of the Qur'an. He should not take part in the discussion and should not heartily agree with them and his presence there should not constitute his assent.

To see some one sin lessens the negative impact of the sin in a person's heart and the onlooker deems it to be a petty mistake. It is possible that this may result in his getting involved in that sin, because every soul is open to temptation, so for the righteous keeping in view his piety it is imperative that he should avoid the company of those who disbelief and ridicule the words of God. It is what the verse says about those who find people in such conversation for their attendance may make the sin seem smaller in their eyes and they may be tempted to join and be among the cursed.

From the verse we learn (the verse is about those who talk frivolously) and is addressed to the pious ones asking them not to join in such conversation. The rewards and punishments are for the doers and not for the non-doers so the verse will mean. A person will not be included in the punishment for talking frivolously about the Qur'anic verses with those who do if he abstains from taking part in it. But, we are asking the believers not to have intercourse with such people so that he or she can protect his or her piety.

And when you (Muhammad) see those who engage in false conversation about Our Verses by mocking at them, stay away from them till they turn to another topic. And if Satan causes you to forget, then after the remembrance, sit not in their company for they are unjust or Zalimun.

In Tafsir Qummi Abdul Ali bin Ayin has quoted the Holy Messenger to have said,

A person who believes in God and the hereafter does not attend such congregations where an Imam is abused or where they backbite about any person.

Abd bin Hameed has quoted Abu Jafar in Durre Manthur to have said,

Do not sit with the disbelievers because they talk frivolously about the verses of God.

Abd bin Hameed and Ibn Manzar and Naeem have quoted Muhammad bin Ali to have said,

Those who follow their own desires are those who talk frivolously about the verses of the Qur'an.

In Tafsir Ayyashi Rabi bin Abdallah has quoted a person who quoted Abu Jafar explaining this verse that it means retribution. This Hadith generalizes the meaning.

In Majmaul Bayan Abu Ja'far (AS) is recorded to have said,

When the verse, *Then after remembrance sit not you in the company of those people who are the blasphemers.* The Muslims asked what they could do. Should we stand every time and object when the idolaters mock the verses and leave? We will then not be able to enter the precinct of the Ka'aba and will not be able to encircle it. God then revealed the words, *Those who fear Allah, do their duty to Him and are not responsible for them (the disbelievers). They were thus reminded that they should avoid such company but when the disbelievers discuss some other topic they are allowed to join them.*

Ibn Jarir is quoted in Durre Manthur to have said,

The idolaters would come and sit with the Holy Messenger, and hear the revelations expressing their love for him, and then made fun of them. This is the reason for this verse being revealed.

They should abstain joining those who mock God's verses and stand. This was the reason the verse, "Those who fear Allah do their duty to Him and avoid evil and are not responsible for them." The order in this verse is abrogated by the order in the verse 140 of Surah Anam that says, "When you hear the signs of God being defied and ridiculed then do not sit with them until they enter into some other discourse."

If the verse in Surah Nisa (140) "When you hear the signs of God being defied and ridiculed then do not sit with them" is like the verse 69 of Surah Anam, "Remind them perchance they may guard themselves against evil."

It says that the righteous will not be held responsible for what others do while Surah 68 says, "and when you (Muhammad) see those engaged in false conversation about our verses, stay away from them till they discuss another topic."

It is a preventive measure that Qur'an asks the believers to stay away from such evil person lest they be drawn into evil by repeatedly listening to their discussion. As far as the meanings of these verses are concerned they do not over rule each other.

Ibn Abbas is quoted in Durre Manthur to have said, that the Makkan verse has been over ruled by the Medinian verse by the verse 140 of Surah Nisa.

Tafsir Burhan has given the names of several narrators who quoted Imam Ja'far Sadiq said,

The Unseen world is the world that has not come into existence yet and the manifest here refers to that which has already taken place.

We have been told about the famous interpretations of the Unseen and the known and we have just read that there are other interpretations of the Unseen.

MIR AHMED ALI (AR)

Calling upon Allah in times of danger shows that in the depths of their hearts people feel His need. Allah's providence saves them, and yet they ungratefully run after false gods. In addition to the physical calamities that they have to fear, there are their mutual discords and craving for vengeance which are much more destructive, and only faith in Allah can save them from all types of calamities.

The pagans of Makkah had, as a body, not only rejected Allah's message but were persecuting His messenger. The Holy Prophet's duty was to deliver His message, which he did. He was not responsible for their conduct. All warnings from Allah had their time-limit. The leaders of the resistance came to an evil end, and their whole system of fraud and selfishness was destroyed in order to make room for the religion of Allah. Apart from the particular warning in these verses there is a general warning for the present and for all time.

AYATULLAH KAMAL FAQIH IMANI AND SEVERAL SCHOLARS

It has been narrated by Imam Baqir (a.s.) who said:

When this verse was revealed and Muslims were prohibited from associating with the pagans and those who mocked the verses of the Qur'an, (a group of) Muslims said that if they wanted to treat according to that commandment everywhere, they had to neither enter the Sacred Mosque, nor circumambulate the Ka'bah. This, because those people were often about inside the Sacred Mosque busy mocking the Divine verses which they heard easily by a short pause. Then the next verse was revealed and ordered Muslims to advise them and guide them as much as they could.

However, since the statements of this Sura are mostly about the circumstances of pagans and idol-worshippers, both in the current verse and in the verse next to it, the Qur'an hints to the affairs concerning them. At first, it tells the Prophet (S) that when he sees the arrogant, illogical opponents are mocking the signs of Allah, he should turn away from them so that they give up the subject and be busy with another topic.

" And when you see those who cavil about Our Signs, turn away from them until they enter into (some) other topic. ..."

Then the Qur'an adds that this matter is so important that if Satan causes you to forget and you sit with such persons unintentionally, as soon as you remember it, you should leave that meeting and do not sit with these unjust people. The verse says :

"... And if Satan causes you to forget, then, after recollection, do not sit with the unjust people."

There arises a question here: Is it possible that Satan dominates the Prophet (S) and causes him to forget his duty?

In answer to this question, it can be said that although the addressee in this verse is the Prophet (S) , the main purpose, in fact, is the followers of the Prophet (S) . It means that if they are entangled with forgetfulness and they take part in pagans' sinful meetings, they should come out of that meeting and leave the place as soon as they remember it. The like of this status happens in our daily conversations and in the literature of different languages, that, in speech, one person is addressed but the aim is that others hear that statement.