

Sura An-Nur, Chapter 24

(Revealed in Medina)

64 verses in 9 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

The Grand View of Sura An-Nur

This Sura contains 64 verses and it has been sent down in Medina.

The reason why it has been named An-Nur (light), is its thirty fifth verse in which Allah has been introduced as:

“the Light of the heavens and the earth”.

Since this holy Sura has recommended all believers, and specially women to be virgin and chaste, Islamic narrations do give much prominence to teaching and reciting this Sura by women.

In fact, it can be considered as the Sura of virginity, chastity, and struggle against sexual defilements, because the main part of its commandments is about removing society from sexual defilements through different ways, and this aim has been set in several steps:

1) It is the statement of severe punishments of adulterers and adulteresses which is mentioned with full decisiveness in the second verse of this Sura.

2) Executing this severe prescribed punishment is not an easy issue, and from the view of Islamic judicial scales it has strict condition. If a man accuses his wife of adultery, the program ‘Li’an’ (Conjugal

anathema) must be carried out, we will explain it later.

And if a person accuses someone of fornication, that person must present 4 witnesses. Even if someone accuses other person of fornication, but he cannot prove it in the court of Islamic judgment, he will be extremely punished (one fourth of prescribed punishment of fornication), so that no one can easily think of Islamic punishment of others by accusing them, otherwise that penalty will be imposed on himself.

3) Then, in this connection, the famous tradition known as 'Ifk' and the accusation that was pinned on one of the wives of the Prophet (S) are mentioned.

The Holy Qur'an follows this issue, so that it becomes completely clear that how great the sin of inventing rumour about virtuous persons is.

4) In order to prevent this thought that Islam is only content with punishing wrongdoers, the Sura mentions one of the important ways of preventing sexual defilements.

It in details explains the issue of preventing men from gloating women and preventing women from casting amorous, coquettish, or lecherous glances at men, because one of the important factors of sexual deviations is voyeur and non-veiling of women.

And defilements would not be expunged unless these are eradicated.

5) Again, to prevent engaging in unchaste actions, the commandment of easy and simple marriage is issued, so that unlawfully satisfying sexual instinct will be struggled by its lawful way.

6) Some of the rules of etiquette and principles of training offspring, concerning parents, are mentioned; stating that there are some times when husband and wife may want to be alone and isolated, so that issues must not enter their rooms without permission, for offspring may deviate intellectually thereby.

For this end, it states some other rules of family life, though they may be unrelated to sexual matters.

7) Some of the discussions that are about monotheism, origin, resurrection, and resignation to the command of the Prophet (S) are mentioned before these discussions, because what support all practical and ethical programs are the very doctrinal issues and the belief in origin, resurrection, and rightfulness of prophecy.

There will not be any branch, leaf, flower, and fruit, if such a root does not exist.

Meanwhile, in connection with discussions about faith and righteous deed, the establishment of the worldly government by the believers is stated and some of other Islam commandments are brought up. On the whole, the Sura has formed a comprehensive collection.

Virtue of Sura An-Nur

The Prophet (S) in a tradition has said:

“Whoever reads Sura An-Nur (and applies it in his life), for each faithful woman and man who were in the past and will be in the future Allah will give him 10 good acts as reward.”

Imam Sadiq (as) says:

“Protect your property and preserve your chastity by reading Sura An-Nur and immunize your own wives against deviations through obeying its commandments, because whoever continues reading this Holy Sura in every day and night none of his family members will commit indecency as long as he lives.”¹

Paying attention to the content of the Sura which stands against immodesty through various ways of efficient struggles with factors of deviation from the path of chastity makes clear the main idea of the above-mentioned tradition as well as its practical concept.

1. Majma' ul-Bayan under the verse, the Thawab ul-'A'mal by Saduq (As it is narrated from Nur-uth-Thaqalyn Vol. 3, p. 568)

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