

Surah al-Talaq, Chapter 65

(The Divorce)

Section (juz') 28

Number of Verses: 12

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter 65, revealed in Medina, has twelve Verses. The first seven Verses treat of divorce and the related rulings, hence the designation of the Chapter. The second section deals with the fate of those who disobeyed Divine Command and thereby suffered the consequence of their disobedient as well as that of those who obeyed the Prophets and did righteous good deeds and were thereby reward by Divine Bounties.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that whoever recites Surah al-Talaq and acts upon its injunctions will pass away while following the Prophetic traditions. 1

Surah al-Talaq – Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ لِعَدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ ۚ لَا تَخْرِجُوهُنَّ مِنْ بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا يَخْرُجْنَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ ۚ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ ۚ لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ أَمْرًا

1. O Prophet! When you divorce women, divorce them at their prescribed periods [i.e. while not menstruating and not having sexual intercourse with their husbands] and count their periods. And fear Allah, your Lord. And turn them not out of your homes nor shall they leave, except in case they are guilty of some open illegal act. And those are the set limits of Allah and whosoever transgresses the limits set by Allah, he has wronged himself. You know not; it may be that Allah will afterward bring some new thing to pass.

Divorce is subject to certain conditions and specific rules and ethical principles. Likewise, there are certain requirements for confrontation with enemies and Muslims are not supposed to poison the drinking water, destroy the trees, and wrong children, women, and senior citizens. Significant factors leading to divorce include the partners' mistreatment of each other.

It is narrated from Imam 'Ali (as) that bad temper hurts one's family.² The blessed Chapter mainly treats of divorce with which it opens by addressing the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) as the great leader of the Islamic community and states the general ruling by a plural verbal form, saying:

"O Messenger! Whenever you intend to divorce your wives, do so at the time of their prescribed periods."

It is the first Injunction from amongst the five Injunctions mentioned in this blessed Verse. The Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the blessed Verse makes a reference to the ruling as per which the divorce formula should be uttered when the woman is neither menstruating nor had sexual intercourse with her husband.

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an³ that the prescribed time is specified as the passage of three menstrual periods (thalatha quru'). The blessed Verse in question emphasizes that giving divorce should follow the period of not having menstruation.

In other words, giving divorce is solely possible at the time of the woman's not having the menstrual period, since in case divorce is given at the time of menstruation, the beginning of the waiting period ('idda) will be separated from the beginning of the divorce and the beginning of the waiting period follows the period of not menstruating.

Likewise, in case the woman is not menstruating while having sexual intercourse with her husband, such not menstruating may not indicate that semen has not been ejaculated into the uterus. At any rate, it is the first requirement for giving divorce.

According to numerous Prophetic traditions, in case a man divorces his wife while she is menstruating, the divorce will be invalidated until the consummation of her waiting period.⁴ Traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt recurrently bear testimony to the same and even it is mentioned as the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question.⁵

The blessed Verse proceeds to treat of the second ruling concerning counting the waiting period, saying:

"Count the waiting period."

The blessed Verse urges Muslims to carefully attend to waiting period consisting of the passage of three menstrual periods ending in the beginning of the third period. Failure to attend to the point in question may result in going to the extreme in counting the required number of days and the woman may thereby incur some loss, since she may be deterred from remarriage.

Counting less than the required days may adversely affect the bounds of wedlock through failure to attend to the congelation of semen in the womb.

The imperative verbal form

ahsu ("count"),

deriving from the root h-s-y, is cognate with hasa ("pebble"), since it was common among ancient illiterate peoples to keep records of different things by counting with pebbles.

It is worthy of note, however, that men are herein addressed as those responsible for counting the waiting period, since they are responsible for providing women with alimony and accommodation expenses. The right to the revocation of divorce and remarriage is also vested with men, though women are also obliged to keep a precise record of their waiting periods.

The blessed Verse proceeds to call all people to the fear of God Almighty, the Lord and Fosterer of all the world of existence whose Injunctions guarantees happiness. Thus, it is incumbent upon mankind to act upon His Injunctions and refrain from disobedience to His Commands. In this respect, particular attention is to be accorded to giving divorce and counting the days of the waiting period.

The third and the fourth Injunctions concern the husbands and the wives respectively, saying:

"Do not drive them out of their homes and they, i.e., the women, are not supposed to leave their homes during the waiting period."

It is worthy of note, however, that many ignorant people do not act upon such Injunction and upon

uttering the divorce formula such ignorant men drive the women out of their homes and women imagine that they are free to return to their relatives' homes. Nonetheless, such Islamic ruling embodies a very significant point since besides paying respect to women, the ruling paves the way for the husband to revoke the divorce and strengthen the bonds of matrimony.

Failure to accord attention to such Islamic ruling which is attested in the Holy Qur'an leads many a matrimony to lead in permanent break up, though if the ruling were acted upon, it would entail settlement.

However, under certain circumstances women may not at times stay at their homes, as a consequence of which, the fifth Injunction, serving as an exception to the rule, is mentioned as per which women are obliged to refrain from committing open evil acts, e.g. mistreatment and slandering their husbands and their in-laws leading to further problems at home.

In this vein, numerous traditions have been narrated from the Imams.⁶ It is noteworthy that any insignificant issue is not herein intended, since the Arabic word *fahisha* denotes a significant vice and it is described by the adjective *mubayyina* ("open, evident").

The word *fahisha* may also connote transgression of bounds, substantiated by a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as), designating driving out for being chastised and then returning home. Both interpretations are possible.

The blessed Verse emphasizes according attention to Divine limits, saying that whoever transgresses the limits set by God Almighty has wrong himself, since these Injunctions guarantee the interests of the obliged and failure to act upon them by either men or women adversely affects their happiness.

The blessed Verse closes by a delicate allusion to the reasons lying behind the observance of the waiting period and the obligation of the women to stay at their homes, saying that you do not know, though God Almighty may bring some new things to pass thereby leading to some means of settlement.

The point is that the explosive fits of rage leading to taking hasty decisions concerning separation subsides in time and the presence of women at home during their waiting period reminds them of the evil consequence of divorce, particularly when they have children, and when one of them expresses their affection for the other, it may pave the path for their settlement and thereby the leaden clouds of hatred may be scattered.

It would be of interest to make mention of a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) as per which the divorced woman at the time of the waiting period may wear make-up, perfume, and beautiful clothes, since God Almighty says that He may make new things pass such that women may win the affections of their husbands and the latter may consent to remarry them.⁷

As mentioned above, making decisions as to separation and divorce are consequent to fleeting

excitements which may alter with the passage of time and the association of the partners during a relatively long period of time, i.e. the waiting period, and thus the stage may be set for settlement, provided that the aforesaid Islamic rulings concerning the woman's permanent stay at the ex-husband's home be strictly observed. God willingly mention will be mentioned below of the pint that such issues all concern the revocable divorce (talaq rij'i).

Now we turn to the reasons lying behind the observance of the waiting period as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and Islamic traditions. Firstly, mention is to be made of the significance of such observance with regards to survival and pregnancy.

The second issue at hand concerns the revocation of the divorce and removing the obstacles leading to separation to which a delicate allusion is made in the blessed Verse in question.

Islam lays emphasis on the point that during the waiting period, the divorced woman is supposed to stay at the ex-husband's home as a consequence of which they associate for a period of several months that provides them with the opportunity to think about their separation free from fleeting excitements.

Another point is that the ex-husband may revoke the divorce without facing any impediment and any word or deed on the part man suggesting his inclination toward the revocation of the divorce may urge him to remarry his ex-wife.

However, in case they fail to reach any settlement as to resuming their matrimony, they had better separate and make a move in their lives. In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that it would be far befitting before God Almighty when a husband stays with his wife than seeking seclusion at a mosque.⁸

One of the significant factors leading to divorce is the partners' mistreatment of each other. It is narrated from Imam 'Ali (as) that whoever is a bad tempered man hurts his family.⁹

Islam enjoins that when differences emerge between a husband and a wife, sympathetic people are supposed to be selected to serve as arbiters so that they may attend to the differences and make attempts at their removal. Thus, the partners may reach some settlement and there would be no need for referring to the court of justice and applying for divorce.

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an¹⁰ that

"If you fear a breach between the man and the woman, appoint two arbiters, one from his family and the other from hers."

According to the Islamic law, two just witnesses are supposed to attend the session in which decisions are taken for separation and bear witness to the same. Attending such witnesses may serve as an impediment to divorce, since people, owing the hideousness of divorce in the society, refrain from bearing witness for such instances leading to breaking up of families. Secondly, those urged to serve as

witnesses to divorce endeavor to make the partners reach some settlement.

Mention will be made hereunder of some traditions on the hideousness of divorce.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that no act is more hideous before God Almighty than the destruction of the pillars of a home through separation, namely divorce.¹¹

It is also narrated from the Noble Prophet (S):

"Marry and do not divorce, since divorce makes the Divine Throne tremble. ¹²

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that before God Almighty, no lawful issue is more hideous than divorce.¹³

Imam Sadiq (as) is narrated as saying:

"It would be unbecoming of women to neglect their appearance and good looks which sweeten matrimonial life. ¹⁴

Hasan ibn Jahm narrates that he was surprised to see Imam Kathim (as) having dyed his hair.

Noticing his surprise, the Noble Imam (as) said:

"The husband's comely appearance urges women to be chaster and some women turn away from chastity owing to their husbands' neglect in having a good appearance. Likewise, men do not favor to see their wives without adornment. ¹⁵

Imam Baqir (as) is narrated as saying:

"A divorced woman staying at her ex-husband's home is supposed to wear make-up, perfume, and the beautiful clothes so that they may make decisions with further insight and the husband may thereby revoke the divorce and they may resume their married life. ¹⁶

Islam enjoins men and women to abstain from looking at those outside the circle of close kinship (namahram) aiming at taking pleasure. Women are also urged to cover themselves from being looked at by those outside the circle of close kinship and refrain from attracting the attention of strangers.

Imam Sadiq (as) is narrated as saying that a brief glance, many a time, may entail regret.¹⁷ The Noble Imam (as) is also narrated as saying that it is incumbent upon men to be chaste with regard to women so that your women's chastity may be preserved.¹⁸

It is also narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that some women deviate from the path of chastity owing to their husbands' neglect of their appearance.¹⁹ Numerous traditions have been narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Ahl al-Bayt (as) with regard to marriage, divorce, and matrimonial life for which

reference may be made to tradition sources.

Surah al-Talaq – Verses 2-3

فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ فَارِقُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَأَشْهَدُوا ذَوِي عَدْلٍ
مِّنْكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ لِلَّهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَن كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۚ
وَمَن يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا

وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ ۚ وَمَن يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَالِغُ
أَمْرِهِ ۚ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا

2. Then, when they approach the end of the waiting period, either take them back in a good manner or part with them in a good manner [by paying their bridal money and other due expenses]. And take as witness two just persons from amongst you [at the time of divorce]. And establish the testimony for Allah's Satisfaction. That will be an admonition given to anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day. And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out from all hardships.

3. And He will provide him from sources unimaginable to him. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him. Verily, Allah will accomplish his purpose. Indeed Allah has set a measure for all things.

The manners of matrimonial life and divorce are supposed to be approved by the religious law and reason. Resuming the discussion concerning divorce mentioned in the preceding Verse, the blessed Verse 2 makes a reference to some other rulings.

The blessed Verse 2 opens with saying that when the waiting period comes to an end, divorced women are supposed to be kept back by remarrying them or the ex-husbands are supposed to part with them in a becoming fashion.

"Approach the end of the waiting period"

is meant by

"the attainment of the appointed term" (bulugh ajall),

since revoking the divorce following the end of the waiting period is not permissible, unless divorced

women be taken back through uttering the marriage formula once more. Nonetheless, such contextual meaning hardly sounds possible.

At any rate, the blessed Verse 3 includes one of the most significant and the most well-measured Injunctions concerning matrimonial life, saying that partners to matrimony are obliged to either live together in a befitting fashion or part with each other in a becoming manner. Likewise, matrimonial life should be based on accurate and humane principles and separation should be free from controversies, quarrels, slander, and transgression of rights.

It is quite significant that in the same manner that bonds are supposed to be established peacefully, separation should be accompanied by mutual understanding, since the ex-partners may consider remarriage, but mistreatments at the time of separation clouds their reflection such that they impede them from consideration of remarriage; even if they wish to remarry, they lose their intellectual and emotional background.

On the other hand, both of them are Muslims and belong to the Islamic community and break-ups accompanied by quarrels and unbecoming conducts adversely affect them and their in-laws and ruins their opportunities for future cooperation.

The above discussions clearly reflect that doing good righteous good deeds encompasses a broad semantic scope embracing the performance of all obligatory and supererogatory and ethical deeds imparting a series of Islamic and ethical principles and manners. The blessed Verse proceeds to make a reference to the second Injunction, saying that upon separation and divorce, appoint two just witnesses from amongst Muslims so that in case and difference breaks out, none of the parties may be able to deny the facts.

The third Injunction makes mention of the obligations entrusted with the witnesses, as per which they are required to bear testimony for the sake of God Almighty free from inclinations towards either of the partners entailing bearing untrue testimony. Their sole incentive should be to obtain Divine Satisfaction.

The witnesses are required to be just, since justice may not necessarily ward off committing sins. Thus, they are warned against deliberate or inadvertent deviation from the true path.

It is worthy of note that the term

"just" (dhawi 'l-'adl)

indicates that the witnesses are required to be Muslims, just, and male. The blessed Verse closes with an emphasis on all the preceding Injunctions, saying that only those who believe in God Almighty shall reap the fruits of this admonition.

The pronominal phrase

"this for you" (dhalikum)

reflects the particular emphasis laid on these Injunctions, such that if they are not observed and lessons are to be taken from such Injunctions, it is as if one does not believe in God Almighty and the Day of Resurrection.

However, since certain issues concerning means of living, prospective life, and other domestic problems at times impede the partners or witnesses to deviate from the path of truth and justice at the time of divorce or remarriage, the blessed Verse closes by saying that whoever fears God Almighty and abstains from committing sins, God Almighty will deliver them from entanglements and will solve their problems.

The blessed Verse 3 is saying that God Almighty will provide him from sources that he could have never imagined and whosoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him, since God Almighty will accomplish his purpose and He has set a measure for all things.

Thus, male and female witnesses are warned against entertaining fear of problems resulting from treading the path of truth, but they are enjoined to administer justice and invoke God Almighty for removing the impediments, since He guarantees that whoever puts his trust in Him, he will be delivered from entanglements. God Almighty is Omnipotent to fulfill such guarantee.

It is noteworthy that these Verses have been revealed concerning divorce and its Injunctions, but their contextual meaning embraces a wide semantic range that encompasses other affairs as well. These blessed Verses bear glad tidings by God Almighty to all those who fear Him and put their trust in Him as they will be granted Divine Grace and their impediments will be removed and they will be led to the shining horizon of happiness.

The Noble Prophet (S) was told by Muslims that they God Almighty guaranteed their sustenance they were engaged in worshipping Him. The Noble Prophet said unto them that whoever acted upon Divine Injunctions, his invocations would be answered and it was incumbent upon Muslims to strive to act upon Divine Commands.²⁰

The blessed Verse makes mention of putting one's trust in God Almighty by which it is intended that industrious Muslims are supposed to rely on Him and invoke Him for being delivered from entanglements. God is All-Aware of man's needs and is Most Gracious and Most Compassionate toward him. God Almighty is Omnipotent to remove all impediments.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that he asked Gabriel, the Messenger of Allah regarding putting one's trust in God Almighty. He was told that the truth behind such trust is that man creatures are neither able to inflict damage nor to grant benefits. In other words, they are incapable of granting favors and impeding others from gaining favors.

Man is supposed to turn away from expectations from creatures and turn toward the Creator. Thus, human acts aim at Divine Satisfaction. Thus, man never sets his hopes on anything besides Him. He may not entertain fear of anything besides Him. He does not attach heart to anything besides Him. This is the spirit of trust.²¹

The blessed Verse is saying that trust designates that industrious Muslims put their trust in God Almighty and invoke Him to remove the obstacles. God Almighty is All-Aware of man's needs. He is Most Gracious and Most Compassionate. He is Omnipotent to remove all impediments.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that Gabriel imparted to him that the truth lying behind trust in God Almighty is that it is incumbent upon man to be aware of the truth that creatures may not harm or benefit him. Man is supposed to abstain from expectations from creatures and turn toward the Creator. Thus, the spirit of putting one's trust in God Almighty lies in that man solely acts to obtain Divine Satisfaction. He never sets his hopes on anyone besides Him.

He fears no one besides Him. He does not attach his heart to anyone besides Him.²² Trust with such profound meaning gives man a new character and affects all his deeds. In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) that on the Night of Ascension, he inquired God Almighty about the best deed to which Allah replied that nothing was more cherished by Him more than putting one's trust in Him and being satisfied with His Decrees.²³

It is worthy of note, however, that such trust designates making efforts at all times rather than indolence and dodging obligations.

Surah al-Talaq – Verses 4-5

وَاللَّائِي يَئْسَنَ مِنَ الْمَحِيضِ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ إِنْ ارْتَبْتُمْ فَعِدَّتُهُنَّ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْهُرٍ وَاللَّائِي لَمْ
يَحِضْنَ ۗ وَأُولَاتُ الْأَحْمَالِ

أَجُلُهُنَّ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ ۗ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا

ذَلِكَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ أَنْزَلَهُ إِلَيْكُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَكْفِرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهُ أَجْرًا

4. and those of your women who are hopeless of having monthly courses, for them the

prescribed period, if you have doubt about their periods, is three months; and for those who have no courses their prescribed period is three months likewise, except in case of death. And for those who are pregnant, their prescribed period is until they lay down their burden; and whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make his matter easy for him. 5. That is the Command of Allah, which He has sent down to you; and whosoever fears Allah and deeps his duty to Him, He will expiate from him his sins, and will enlarge his reward.

Proceeding with the divorce Injunctions, the blessed Verse 4 is saying that those women who do not menstruate owing to advancement in years or certain ailments are supposed to wait for a period of three months in full and pregnant women are supposed to wait until they give birth to their child or children. Then, they may remarry.

There are different Qur'anic expressions for those who fear God Almighty:

"O you who believe! Fear Allah and believe in His Messenger, He will give you a double portion of His Mercy, and He will give you a light by which you shall walk straight. And He will forgive you. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Compassionate,"²⁴;

"O you who believe! If you obey and fear Allah, He will grant you a criterion to judge between right and wrong (furqan) and will expiate for you your sins, and forgive you; and Allah is the Owner of the Great Bounty"²⁵;

"And whoever fear Allah and keeps his obligation to Him, He will make a way for him to get out from difficulties"²⁶.

Seemingly reference is herein made of a natural development, since the God fearing will be granted Divine Light thanks to with he is able to distinguish truth from falsehood and thereby find the way out of the entanglements. Thus, he is delivered from many a difficulty.

It is evident that Divine Injunctions are different as per different circumstances. Thus, there are different Injunctions for pregnant and menopausal women. The blessed Verse is saying that the women who do not menstruate any longer, their waiting period is three months, if you have doubts about their pregnancy.

Likewise, the women who do not have menstrual periods are supposed to keep a waiting period of three full months. It is incumbent upon the third group, the pregnant women, to lay down their burden, namely give birth to their children.

Thus, the first two groups are supposed to keep a waiting period of three months and the third group, the pregnant women, are supposed to give birth to their children and the period may take one hour or for instance eight months following the divorce.

Three possibilities have been suggested for the contextual meaning of

"if you have doubt" (in artabtum):

1. The doubt concerns the possibility of pregnancy, namely if the possibility exists regarding pregnancy after the age of menopause, fifty in ordinary women and sixty in Qurayshi ones, the woman is supposed to keep a waiting period. Although it is less probable but there are instances of its occurrence. It is worthy of note, however, that the term "doubt" (rayba) in the sense of having doubts as to pregnancy is widely attested in traditions and jurisprudential sources.²⁷

2. Those women are herein intended who are not known whether they have reached the age of menopause.

3. The blessed Verse suggests entertaining doubt as to the Injunction. In this vein, the blessed Verse is saying that if you do not know Allah's Injunction, His Injunction is to the effect that such women are supposed to keep a waiting period. The first exegesis sounds more befitting, since

"and those of women who have passed the age of monthly courses"

indicates that such women are menopausal. It is noteworthy, however, that those women whose menstruation stops owing to ailments and other factors are subject to the same Injunction. Such Injunction is reflected in the principle of priority or the semantic referent of the blessed Verse in question. Further details regarding the question are to be found in jurisprudential sources.

The clause

"and those of your women who have not had monthly periods" (wa 'l-llati ya'isna min al-mahidh)

may suggest that those women who have attained the age of puberty, but they do not have monthly periods, in which case, it is indubitably incumbent upon them to keep a three month waiting period. It has been also suggested that the blessed Verse makes a reference to all women who have not had monthly periods whether or not they have attained the age of puberty.

However, the majority of Shi'i jurists maintain that females prior to the age of puberty are not supposed to keep a waiting period following divorce. Some scholars disagree and substantiate their arguments with certain traditions and the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question is seemingly on their side.²⁸

The above mentioned exegesis is substantiated by the occasion of Revelation. Ubayy ibn Ka'b said unto the Noble Prophet (S) that the waiting periods of some women was not mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. In this vein, mention was made of the wives yet to attain the age of puberty and menopause and pregnant women. Thus, the blessed Verse was revealed and stated the Injunctions as per their instances.²⁹

It goes without saying that keeping the waiting period is required when there is possibility of pregnancy, since the blessed Verse makes a reference to menopausal women as well suggesting that the Injunction

is the same for both.³⁰

The blessed Verse closes by laying further emphasis on the question of fearing God Almighty, saying that whoever fears God Almighty, his difficulties will be removed by Him. Such difficulties may include those in this world and the Hereafter, including separation and divorce.

The blessed Verse 5 lays further emphasis on the Injunctions regarding divorce and the waiting period mentioned in the preceding Verses, saying that this is Allah's Command sent down unto you. Whoever fears God Almighty and refrains from disobeying His Command, He will absolve him of his sins and he will be granted Great Divine Rewards.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the term

"sins" (sayyi'at)

designates minor sins and fearing God Almighty refers to abstention from committing grave sins.

Thus, abstaining from committing grave sins leads to the forgiving of minor sins.³¹ It is true that the word sayyi'at denotes minor sins at times, but the word in most of the Qur'anic Verses is employed in the sense of grave and minor sins³². It is needless to say, however, that faith and submission to Divine Will together with doing righteous good deeds lead to the forgiving of formerly committed sins.

Surah al-Talaq – Verses 6-7

أَسْكُنُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ سَكَنْتُمْ مِنْ وُجْدِكُمْ وَلَا تُضَارُوهُنَّ لِتُضَيِّقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ ۗ وَإِنْ
كُنَّ أَوْلَاتٍ حَمْلٌ فَأَنْفِقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ ۗ فَإِنْ أَرْضَعْنَ لَكُمْ فَآتُوهُنَّ
أُجُورَهُنَّ ۗ وَاتَّمِرُوا بَيْنَكُمْ بِمَعْرُوفٍ ۗ وَإِنْ تَعَاَسَرْتُم فَاسْتَرْضِعْ لَهُ أُخْرَىٰ

لِيُنْفِقَ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّن سَعَتِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ ۗ لَا يُكَلِّفُ
اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا ۗ سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا

6. Lodge them where you dwell to the end of the waiting period according to your means, and do not harm them so as to make them straitened with respect to lodging and sustenance lest they have to leave their homes. And if they are pregnant, spend on them till they lay down their burden. Then consult each other and reach to some settlement regarding your infants and if you fail to reach some settlement, ask another woman to suckle the infants.

7. Let the rich man pay the alimony according to his means; and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. Allah will soon grant ease after hardship.

The blessed Verse 6 presents further details as to the rights of women after divorce in terms of lodging, sustenance, and other things. The blessed Verse opens with the Injunctions regarding the lodging of the divorced women as per which they are supposed to reside where their ex-husbands live.

The ex-husbands are required to provide them with their lodging and sustenance according to their means. It is natural that when it is incumbent upon the ex-husbands to provide with lodging, other expenses fall into their share as well. What is mentioned regarding the rights of the pregnant women following divorce substantiates the statement.

The blessed Verse proceeds with another Injunction as per which it is forbidden to harm them or make their life straitened for them thereby forcing them to abandon their lodging and the sustenance provided by their ex-husbands lest hatred and animosity make them turn away from the path of truth and justice. Muslim men in such cases are not supposed to make their ex-wives deprived of lodging and sustenance since such straitened circumstances forces them to abandon everything.

The third injunction is saying that if the divorced women happen to be pregnant, their expenses until the time of delivery is incumbent upon their ex-husbands, since, as long as they have not given birth to their children, they are keeping their waiting period and ex-husbands are responsible for providing them with lodging and sustenance.

The fourth Injunction is saying that if the ex-wives happen to be willing to suckle their infants, they are supposed to receive their remuneration as per the time of suckling according to the common practice.

Since in many instances the infants and children cause difference between ex-spouses, the fifth Injunction enjoins Muslims to consult each other concerning the future of their children and make befitting decisions lest such differences adversely affect their children physically and emotionally. Parents are supposed to remember God Almighty in such instances without jeopardizing the future of their innocent children.

The imperative verbal form wa'tamiru baynakum bi-ma'ruf is used here in the sense of accepting a command or consulting someone.

The second sense sounds to be more fitting and the expression

"in a just way"

includes any consultation aiming at the good. Since the ex-spouses fail to reach the required settlement as per the good of their children including suckling, the sixth Injunction is saying that in case either of the twain parties make difficulties and if they fail to reach some settlement, another woman may be hired to

suckle the child such that the differences may come to a halt.

The clause

"but if you make difficulties for one another"

reflects that if the differences continued, let another woman give suck to the child. It is the right of the mother to suckle the child, but taking into account such difficulties, the rights of the child may not be consigned to oblivion and suckling is supposed to be vested with a wet nurse.

The blessed Verse 7 includes the seventh and the last Injunction in this regard, saying that those who are opulent are supposed to expend their means in Allah's Cause and God Almighty never obliges anyone beyond his capacity.

The questions arising herein are: Is this Injunction, namely expending within one's capacity concerns the women who assume the responsibility of suckling the children or is it concerning the waiting period concisely referred to in the preceding Verses, or is it concerning both? The last meaning sounds more befitting, though some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that it aims at the suckling women.

The point is that the word

"remuneration" (ajr)

rather than

"sustenance money"

or expending (nafaqa, infaq) is used in the preceding Verses. At any rate, those who possess sufficient means are not supposed to be strict in this respect and those who do not possess the same are not supposed to expend within their capacity and women may not find faults with the latter.

Since suffering from straitened circumstances may lead to deviating from the path of truth and justice and as none of the twain parties are supposed to complain from the other, the blessed Verse closes by saying that God Almighty will soon provide them with ease and convenience following their hardships. In other words, they are not supposed to entertain sorrow and be restless since circumstances undergo alteration. Such awareness is significant unless fleeting entanglements may adversely affect patience. Such Injunction is applicable to all times, particularly under quite straitened circumstances experienced by Muslims. It bears glad tidings of a promising future for the patient. God Almighty will soon grant the patient with His Infinite Blessings and Bounties.

Surah al-Talaq – Verses 8-9

وَكَايِنٍ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ عَتَتْ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهَا وَرُسُلِهِ فَحَاسِبْنَاهَا حِسَابًا شَدِيدًا وَعَذَّبْنَاهَا
عَذَابًا نُّكْرًا

فَذَاقَتْ وَبَالَ أَمْرِهَا وَكَانَ عَاقِبَةُ أَمْرِهَا خُسْرًا

8. And many a town revolted against the Command of their Lord and His Messengers. We called it to a severe account and We chastised them with an unknown torment.

9. Thus, they tasted the evil consequences of their deeds and the consequences of their deeds was loss.

The Arabic word qarya denotes a place of gathering for habitation be it a town or a village.

The past verbal form

'atat ("revolted against")

derives from '–t–w ("to be insolent, to be furious, revolt"). The Arabic nominal form wabal denotes severity and intensity herein connoting severe torment.

The preceding blessed Verses include Injunctions concerning the obligations against spouses and children even at the time of separation. The blessed Verses in question urge believers to seriously attend to the Injunctions since disobedience to God Almighty and His Messengers entails severe chastisements whose numerous instances are to be found in the history of nations down the centuries.

At any rate, God Almighty severely chastises those who disobey Him and His Messengers. Thus, the blessed Verse 9 is saying that those who disobeyed Divine Commands and Injunctions, tasted the dire consequences of their evil acts leading to loss. Severe torments and chastisement are in store for such people.

Surah al-Talaq – Verse 10

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا ۚ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۚ قَدْ أَنزَلَ
اللَّهُ إِلَيْكُمْ ذِكْرًا

10. Allah has prepared for them a severe torment. Thus, fear Allah, O men of understanding who have believed! Allah has indeed sent down to you a Reminder.

The blessed Verse makes a reference to the torments in the Hereafter in store for sinners, saying that God Almighty has prepared excruciating, horrible, disgracing, and everlasting torments for them in Hell.

Thus, refrain from disobeying Divine Command, O Men of understanding who have believed! Thought and reason on the one hand and faith and Divine Signs and Verses on the other warn you against being afflicted with the dire fates of disobeying and revolting peoples and take lessons lest they may join their ranks as God Almighty entangles the disobedient with excruciating, horrible, and unprecedented torments in this world and the Hereafter.

Addressing thoughtful believers, the blessed Verse 10 further adds that God Almighty has sent down upon you the Reminder by which the Holy Qur'an is hereby intended, since the Holy Qur'an embraces a comprehensive collection of all the Injunctions and Laws as well as the accurate forms of devotions and transactions and whatever is required by man in the affairs of this world and the Hereafter.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) is hereby intended and some hold that a reference is made to Gabriel.

Surah al-Talaq – Verse 11

رَسُولًا يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ لِيُخْرِجَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۗ قَدْ أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ لَهُ رِزْقًا

11. [The Reminder is] the Messenger reciting to you the elucidating Verses of Allah so that He may deliver those who believe and do righteous good deeds from the shadows to the light. Whoever believes in Allah and performs righteous good deeds, he will be admitted into Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever. Allah has indeed granted them an excellent provision.

God Almighty has sent a Messenger (S) unto you so that he recites the Divine Elucidating Verses and thereby led those who have believed and have done righteous good deeds from the shadows to the light.

In other words, the final goal behind sending the Messenger and the Revelation of the Heavenly Book is to deliver mankind from the shadows of disbelief, ignorance, sin, and corruption through reciting the blessed Verses of the Holy Qur'an and lead them unto the light of faith, monotheism, and fear of God Almighty.

In fact, all the goals behind the Prophetic Call of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and the

Revelation of the Holy Qur'an are summarized in one single clause: to deliver them from the shadows and lead them unto Light.

It is worthy of note, however, that the Arabic nominal form thulumat appears in the plural and the Arabic nominal form nur is employed in the singular, since polytheism, disbelief, and corruption lead to disintegration and dispersion whereas faith, monotheism, and fear of God Almighty lead to unity.

The blessed Verse closes with a treatment of the Rewards bestowed upon those who have believed and have done righteous good deeds, saying that one who believes in God Almighty and does righteous good deeds and stands steadfast on the path of truth will be rewarded by being admitted into the Gardens of Paradise and God Almighty has prepared an excellent provision for him.

The present verbal forms

yu'min and ya'mal ("believes" and "does" respectively)

make a reference to the point that having faith and doing righteous good deeds are not restricted to some specific time, but they are ongoing.

The Arabic plural present participial form

khalidin ("dwelling everlastingly")

indicates the everlastingness of Paradise, thus the following adverb of manner

Abadan ("everlastingly, forever")

is employed for the sake of emphasis.

The Arabic indefinite nominal form rizqan makes a reference to the greatness and significance of the excellent provision with which the people of Paradise are provided by God Almighty.

Such provision embraces a broad semantic domain encompassing Divine Bounties in the Hereafter and even in this world, since the fruits of faith and fear of God Almighty are not solely to be harvested in the Hereafter and believing and God fearing people lead more serene, enjoyable and purer lives in this world.

Surah al-Talaq – Verse 12

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَتَنَزَّلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ
اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا

12. It is Allah Who has created the seven heavens and the earth and from the later the like thereof. His Command descends between them at all times that you may know that Allah is Omnipotent over all things and His Omniscience encompasses surrounds all things.

The blessed Verse in question treats of the Creation of the heavens and the earth and the organization of their affairs so that man may be apprised of Divine Omnipotence and Omniscience as well as the spiritual growth as a consequence of monotheism.

In other words, the last blessed Verse of the Chapter makes a quite significant and crystal clear reference to Divine Majesty and Omnipotence in the Creation of the heavens and the earth as well as the final goal behind such Creation. Thus, the blessed Verse completes the discussion raised in the preceding blessed Verses concerning the Great Rewards promised to God fearing believers and also those leading to the removal of their difficulties.

It goes without saying that God Almighty Who is Omnipotent to have created the world of existence is also Omnipotent to fulfill the promises given to the God fearing Believers concerning the Rewards in store for them in this world and the Hereafter.

The blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty is the One Who created the seven heavens and from the earth the like thereof, namely the earths, like the heavens, are seven in number. The reference to the seven earths is solely attested in this blessed Verse. Now let us turn to the seven heavens and the earths resembling them in terms of number.

Briefly speaking, the number seven may indicate multiplicity, as it is said in common parlance

"Even if you produce the seven seas that will be sufficient."

Thus, the seven heavens and the seven earths make a reference to the innumerable celestial spheres and heavenly bodies resembling the earth.

However, in case we take the number seven as connoting numbers, it may reflect the eight heavens.

It is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an³³

"Verily We have adorned the nearest heaven with the stars"

reflecting that what we perceive constituting human knowledge all pertains to the first heaven and beyond these celestial bodies, there are six other spheres lying beyond our perception and thus inaccessible to our domain of knowledge.

Now, regarding the seven earths, it may be said that they may make a reference to the different layers of the earth, since it is proven today that the earth constitutes different layers. Reference may be made to the seven climes on the earth as well, since the earth has been divided into seven regions, though such

classification is different in former and modern times.

Today, the earth is divided into the Arctic, Antarctic, two tropics, one equatorial, and two temperate zones.

Nonetheless, the seven climes were classified differently in former times, though the number seven in this blessed Qur'anic Verse together with the expression

mithlahunna ("the like of them")

may refer to the different earths in the world of existence. Some astronomers maintain that celestial bodies like the earth revolve around suns in the vast cosmos whose number exceeds three hundred million.³⁴ It is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), as saying that the like the earth, there are cities in the stars in the sky.³⁵

At any rate, taking into account our meager knowledge concerning the cosmos beyond the solar system, it would be hard to produce numbers, though astronomers lay emphasis on the fact that the galaxy which includes the solar system embraces millions of millions of celestial bodies whose conditions resemble those of the earth such that they are centers of forms of life.

However, scientific advancements in the future may provide us with further details concerning the exegesis of such blessed Verses.

The blessed Verse in question further treats of the organization of such vast world by Divine Command, saying that His Commands are sent down at all times.

It is needless to say that by the Arabic nominal form *amr*, the Divine Existential Command regarding the organization of such vast world and the seven heavens and the seven earths is hereby intended, since He guides them with His Particular Command in a regular and precise course.

The blessed Verse resembles another Qur'anic Verse³⁶

"He manages and regulates every affair from the heavens to the earth. Then, it will go up to him, in one Day, the space whereof is a thousand years of your reckoning."

God Almighty manages the affairs of the entire world from the heavens to the earth. Had His management abandoned the world of existence for one single moment, the organization of them all would have been perished and they would have been led to non-existence.

The blessed Verse closes with the goal behind such great creation saying that the purpose of the creation of the world is that man may know that God is Omnipotent and Omniscient. The expression is of interest since the goal behind such great creation is mentioned as man's awareness of Divine Attributes including His Omniscience and Omnipotence.

Being aware of these two Divine Attributes suffices for human spiritual growth. Man is supposed to know that God Almighty is All-Aware of the secrets of his being and all his deeds and Divine Promises as to the triumph of the believers and those concerning the Resurrection and Retribution are all true.

Now, the Divine Injunctions concerning human life such as the Injunctions regarding divorce and obligations against women are all precise and well-calculated by the Omnipotent and Omniscient God Who manages all the affairs of the world of existence.

A detailed discussion on the goals behind Creation was mentioned above under 51:56. It is worthy of note, however, that different Qur'anic Verses make references to the goals behind the Creation of man or other creatures in the world of existence which may sound different at the first glance, though further reflection reflects one single truth.

The blessed Qur'anic Verse 51:56 mentions that the goal behind the Creation of mankind and jinn is worshipping God Almighty:

"And I created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me Alone."

The goal behind the Great Creation of the heavens and the earth is mentioned to be the trial of mankind³⁷:

"And He it is Who has created the heavens and the earth in six days and His Throne was on the surface of the water that He might try you as to which of you is the best in deeds. But if you were to say to unto them: 'You will indeed be raised up after death,' those who disbelieve would be sure to say: 'This is nothing but obvious magic.'"

The goal is regarded to be Divine Graciousness³⁸:

"Except him on whom your Lord has bestowed His Graciousness and for that He created them. And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled: 'Surely, I will fill Hell with jinn and men all together.'"

The goal is considered in the blessed Verse in question to be aware of Divine Attributes:

"It is Allah Who has created the seven heavens and the earth and from the later the like thereof. His Command descends between them at all times that you may know that Allah is Omnipotent over all things and His Omniscience encompasses surrounds all things."

Reflection upon the blessed Qur'anic Verses reflects that some of them serve as preludes to others. In like manner, awareness and knowledge serve as preludes to worshipping God Almighty which in turn is a prelude to the trial and spiritual growth of mankind which in turn serve as a prelude to being granted Divine Graciousness.

O Lord! Now that you made us aware of the goal behind Your Great Creation, bear us Assistance so that we may attain to such Great Goal.

O Lord! You revealed the Holy Qur'an and sent the Messenger (S) to deliver the believing from the shadows to the light. Deliver us from the shadows of sins and concupiscent desires and lighten our hearts by the light of faith and fearing You. Amen! O Lord of the Worlds!

-
1. Majma' al-Bayan and other exegetic works.
 2. Mizan al-Hikma, tradition 5103.
 3. 2:228
 4. Muslim's Sahih, vol. 2, p. 1903, the chapter on divorce.
 5. Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 15, p. 348, the chapter on the manner of giving divorce following the waiting period.
 6. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, pp. 350–351.
 7. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 352, tradition 24.
 8. Mizan al-Hikma, tradition 7884.
 9. Ibid, tradition 5103.
 10. 4:35
 11. Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 15, p. 266, tradition 1.
 12. Ibid, p. 268.
 13. Ibid, vol. 15.
 14. Majmu'a Warram, vol. 2, p. 121.
 15. Usul Kafi, vol. 5, p. 567.
 16. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 352.
 17. Usul Kafi, vol. 5, p. 559.
 18. Shaykh Saduq's Amali, p. 238.
 19. Makarim al-Akhlaq, pp. 91, 107.
 20. Kafi; Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 354.
 21. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 69, p. 373, tradition 19.
 22. Ibid.
 23. Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 683, s.v. w-k-l.
 24. 57:28
 25. 8:29
 26. 65:2
 27. Jawahir, vol. 32, p. 249; Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 15, chapter 4, tradition 7.
 28. Further details are to be found in jurisprudential sources, e.g. Jawahir al-Kalam, vol. 32, p. 232.
 29. Kanz al-'Irfan, vol. 2, p. 26.
 30. Tabarsi, Majma' al-Bayan.
 31. Tafsir al-Mizan.
 32. e.g.5:71
 33. 37:6
 34. Tafsir Maraghi, vol. 28, p. 151.
 35. Tafsir Burhan, vol. 4, p. 15.
 36. 32:5
 37. 11:7
 38. 11:119

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-18/surah-al-talaq-chapter-65>