

Tafseer Al-Baqarah (2: 187)

From the book, Introduction to the Tafseer of the Quran,

by the Ameer of Hizb ut Tahrir, the eminent jurist and statesman, Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah:

﴿أَحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ فَالآنَ بَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَابْتَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتُمُوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ﴾

“It has been made permissible for you the night of fasting to go to your wives for sexual relations. They are garments for you and you are garments for them. Allah knows that you used to betray yourselves, so He forgave you and excused you. So now, have sexual relations with them and seek that which Allah has decreed for you. And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night]. Then complete the fast until the night (sunset). And do not have sexual relations with them as long as you are in a state of I'tikaf in the mosques. These are the limits of Allah, so do not get closer to them. Thus does Allah make clear His ordinances to the people that they may become righteous.” [Surah Al-Baqara 2:187]

Allah (swt) clarified the following in this ayah:

1) Allah (swt) has made the sexual relationship of the (married) couple permissible during the nights of fasting (Ramadan). Allah (swt) has made both of them as a cover to each other, so that the man reveals himself to her and she reveals herself to him, as if they are garments to each other. The word Ar-Raffath (الرَّفَثُ) in origin refers to the one who is obscene in his talk. Tarfath (ترفت) refers to the most obscene. Here the word means sexual intercourse.

2) Allah (swt) has known that you are deceiving and falling into injustice by having sexual relations with wives in the nights of Ramadan. Allah (swt) has forgiven and excused you and He (swt) will not account and punish you for what you have done. Rather, He (swt) overlooks what you have done and He (swt) has now made it permissible for you. Hence, there is no sin in having sexual relations with wives in the night of Fasting (Ramadan).

Abu Huraira (rali) narrated that, "كان المسلمون إذا صلوا العشاء الآخرة حرم عليهم الطعام والشراب والنساء حتى يفطروا، وإن عمر بن الخطاب أصاب أهله بعد صلاة العشاء وأن صرمة بن قيس غلبته عينه بعد صلاة المغرب فنام ولم يستيقظ حتى صلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم العشاء فقام فأكل وشرب، فلما أصبح أتى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فأخبره بذلك الآية "فأنزل الله: ﴿أَحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ﴾ الآية "When the Muslims prayed their last Isha, it was forbidden for them to eat, drink and (having sexual relationship with) women until they break their fast. Umar ibn Khattab (ra) descended upon his wife after Isha prayer and Sirmah ibn Qais was overwhelmed by sleep after Maghrib prayer and so he slept. And he did not wake up until Rasool (saw) prayed Isha and then he woke up, ate and drank. On the next morning he came to Rasool (saw) and informed him that. Then Allah (swt) revealed, ﴿أَحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ﴾ "It has been made permissible for you the night of fasting to go to your wives [for sexual relations]" (Dur Al-Matur: 2/457, Tabari: 2/194).

﴿تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ﴾ **“betray yourselves,”** the word Ikhthiyān (إختيان) is from the word Khiyāna (خيانة betrayal), just as Iktisāb (اكتساب gaining) is from the word Kasb (كسب gain). Here it means betraying and oppressing yourselves with intercourse in the night of Fasting during Ramadan.

The word *Baashiroohunna* ﴿بَاشِرُوهُنَّ﴾ means intercourse with them during the nights of Fasting. It is an Order of Permissibility (أمر إباحة Amr Ibaha). The word Mubashara (مباشرة Direct without intermediary) appears as a Kinayah (كناية Metaphor) for intercourse. The Qareena (قرينة Indication / Concatenation) for the Permissibility is the coming of an Order after Prohibition. Hence the verb reverts to its origin i.e. Permissibility, which is explained in the chapters of Qareena in the books of Usool (Foundations of Jurisprudence).

﴿وَابْتَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ﴾ **“seek that which Allah has decreed for you”** means seek what Allah has apportioned for you as children. Hence, intercourse is not for the fulfillment of lust alone, rather it is to seek what is the purpose of marriage, which is to produce offspring. RasulAllah (saw) said, «تَنَاجَوْا تَنَاسَلُوا فَإِنِّي مُفَاجِرٌ بِكُمْ الْأُمَّمَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ» **“Marry and have children because I will vie the nations in number by you on the Day of Resurrection”** (Abu Dawud: 2/220, An-Nasai: 3227, Ibn Majah: 1846, Ahmed: 3/158, Ibn Hibban: 9/338). Here it is Mandub. The indication of Mandub is the praising of Rasool (saaw) to seek children, Procreation (تناسل Tanaasal) as indicated in the Hadith.

3) Allah (swt) clarifies the time until when we should abstain from food, drink and having sexual relations with wives, by saying ﴿حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ﴾ **“until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread”**. i.e. until the rise of Al-Fajr as-Sadiq (الفجر الصادق The True Dawn), which is the whiteness of the horizon, in the form of a horizontal thread, that differentiates the day and night. Before the appearance of the whiteness of the horizon, in the form of a horizontal thread, there is an appearance of whiteness in the form of a vertical line at the horizon, which is called Al-Fajr Al-Kadhib (الفجر الكاذب The False Dawn). Food, drink and intercourse are not stopped at the time of False Fajr, instead they are stopped at the rise of the True Fajr as we have explained before.

Adi ibn Hatim reported that ﴿وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ﴾ لما نزلت هذه الآية عمدت إلى عقالين أحدهما أسود والآخر أبيض فجعلتهما تحت وسادتي، قال فجعلت أنظر إليهما فلما تبين لي الأبيض من الأسود أمسكت فلما أصبحت غدوت إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فأخبرته بالذي صنعت فقال إن وسادك إذن لعريض إنما ذلك بياض ﴿وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ﴾ **“When the following verses were revealed, ‘And eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct to you from the black thread’, I took two strings, one black and the other white, and kept them under my pillow and went on looking at them (throughout the night) and when the white and black thread was clear to me, I abstained (from food, drink and intercourse). The next morning I went to RasulAllah (saw) and told him what I have done. He (saw) said to me, ‘إِنَّ وَسَادَكَ إِذْنٌ لَعَرِيضٌ إِنَّمَا ذَلِكَ بَيَاضُ النَّهَارِ مِنْ سَوَادِ اللَّيْلِ’** **“Your pillow is large because it (the word thread) implies the blackness of the night from the whiteness of the dawn.”** (Bukhari:4149, 4150, Muslim: 1824, Abu Dawood: 2002, Dharmi: 1632).

And as Bukhari added to this narration, ﴿ثُمَّ انْمُوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ﴾ **“Then Allah (swt) revealed, ‘of Dawn,’ as reported by Bukhari in his Saheeh hadith from Sahl bin Sa’d (Bukhari: 1874). This is the comprehensive explanation of ﴿الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ﴾** **“until the white thread becomes distinct to you from the black thread.”**

4) ﴿ثُمَّ انْمُوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ﴾ **“Then complete the fasting until the night.”** Allah (swt) requests us to complete the fasting until the night, which means entering the part of night even if it exceeds the day. This is because the day is connected with the night, so the completion of Fasting of the day must be in contact with the day and night. This means the

start of the night to break the fasting correctly. RasulAllah (saw) said, «إِذَا أَدْبَرَ النَّهَارُ مِنْ هُنَا وَأَقْبَلَ» «When the day retreats from that side and the night approaches from that side, then the fasting person should break the Fast” (Bukhari: 1818, Muslim: 1841).

As for the Qaa'idah (قاعدة Principle) ما لا يتم الواجب إلا به فهو واجب “Whatsoever a Wajib cannot be completed without is in itself Wajib,” the day cannot be completed without entering a part into the night, even it exceeds the day, as it is connected with the night. Thus, the Arabs say that, الغاية تدخل في المغيبا “the goal is interposed with the end,” as in the saying of Allah (swt), «فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ» “wash your faces and your arms until the elbows” (Surah al-Maida 5:6). It is not possible to wash the arm until elbow, except by entering into a part of the elbow in ablution, even if it exceeds the arm.

5) Then Allah (swt) clarifies another Ruling (حكم Hukm), which is the exception of intercourse in the night of fasting, for the one who makes I'tikaf (اعتكاف Seclusion in the Mosque). After Allah (swt) mentioned the permissibility of intercourse with the wives in the night of fasting, He (swt) clarifies that it does not include the one who makes I'tikaf. Hence, it is Forbidden for the one who is in the state of I'tikaf to have sexual relationships until he finishes his I'tikaf. Some of the Muslims, when they were in the state of I'tikaf in the Masjid, used to go to their homes and one of them had intercourse with his wife, made Ghusl (غسل Full Ablution) and then returned to the Masjid to complete his I'tikaf. Hence, this Ayah was revealed to prohibit that, as long as he has not completed the duration of I'tikaf.

«وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ» “While you are Secluded in the Masjids” i.e. while you are in the state of I'tikaf. I'tikaf linguistically means confinement in the necessary place and its Shar'i meaning is that it is necessarily the Masjid, for particular actions.

I'tikaf is restricted to the Masjid as it is indicated in the above verse that says I'tikaf is possible only in the Masjid. However, this condition is not applicable for the women, since it is addressed to men alone and the women are excluded, most likely. This is because there is a Qareena (قرينة Indication/ Concatenation) that specifies the men alone, in the verse, «وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ» “And do not have sexual relationship with them (wives)” which means, «وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ” Addressing the men in reality excludes the women. Hence it is not a condition for women to do I'tikaf in the Masjid, rather the woman does I'tikaf in her home.

RasulAllah (saw) made I'tikaf in the last ten days of the month of Ramadhan, until Allah (swt) took his soul. After that his wives continued to make I'tikaf. Hence, I'tikaf in the month of Ramadan is one of the Sunnah that has great reward.

6) Then Allah (swt) completes the verse by clarifying that the Rulings of Fasting mentioned above are the Limits (Hudood) of Allah i.e. it is as if they were barriers between the truth and falsehood. So whoever transgresses the barriers, will enter the region of Falsehood.

His saying, «فَلَا تَقْرَبُوهَا» “Do not approach them” indicates the severity of the Prohibition from falling into what Allah (swt) has made Prohibited. Hence, the Prohibition of even approaching the sin is a more severe Prohibition than a Prohibition of the occurrence of the sin alone.

As Allah (swt) clarifies the Ahkaam of Fasting and its limits, it is not correct to transgress them. Similarly, Allah (swt) clarifies all the Ahkaam related to affairs of the people. Following them will give protection from the Wrath of Allah (swt) and His Punishment and it will pave the way to the Pleasure of Allah and His Blessings. Allah (swt) said, «كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ» “Thus does Allah make clear His ordinances to the people that they may become righteous.”