

Forbidden Things Are Not Left Obscure in the Qur'an

In looking at the fanatic mindset that produces the idea that “even a woman's nail clippings are forbidden,” it is important to clarify one important point: God has revealed what is forbidden with very clear and unequivocal descriptions in the Qur'an. For example, Muslims learn that it is forbidden to eat pork in the verse “**He has only forbidden you carrion, blood and pork and what has been consecrated to other than God...**” (Qur'an, 2:173). There is no question of a Muslim being unsure, of two minds or in need of interpretation and comment regarding the commandment “He has forbidden you...” Another example concerns interest. This is definitely forbidden for Muslims in the verse, “**... God has permitted trade and He has forbidden usury...**” (Qur'an, 2:275). Nobody can enter into a debate on the subject in the face of the verse or try to claim that “interest is indistinguishable from business.”

Therefore, we learn what is forbidden directly from the verse itself, not from the deductions of various commentators, comments added in parenthesis or fabricated hadiths. Verse 31 of Surat an-Nur is crystal clear in that sense. Yet the commentators' error of adding interpretations in parenthesis to verses has been made many times, particularly with regard to this verse. For example, some commentators, influenced by the imams of schools and making up their own provisions, add the words “... apart from such visible areas as the face and hands” to this verse in parenthesis. Yet in Islam, if all areas “... apart from the hands and face” had to be covered up, there is no doubt that such an important subject would have appeared in the Qur'an in the most unequivocal of terms and our Almighty Lord would have made it abundantly clear and in no uncertain terms. In the same way that we have no doubt that pork, usury or adultery are forbidden, so we would also have seen this in the Qur'an; yet no such way of dressing is described in the Qur'an. It appears only in the accounts of some commentators.

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