

*all you need to  
know about the  
hijab, zihar, and  
zina.*

*marham mansur*

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## INTRODUCTION

As part of the expiation of the sin of zihar, which in essence is to ‘deprioritize’ one’s spouse; Allah, in Q58 V4, asks that the husband that wants to be able to go back to their spouse should fast for 60 consecutive days.

And I thought, what kind of man will be willing to fast for 60 consecutive days to be able to have his wife back, especially if he can get another wife without starving? A man in love, a man totally and absolutely smitten by love, right?

So, what if we apply that condition to love itself? What if that should be the starting point of knowing that one truly is in love. It’s obvious here that Allah is telling us, albeit indirectly, that the natural and basic commitment of someone in love is if that person will be willing to fast for 60 consecutive days just so they can be in the presence of their beloved. How many ‘relationships’ will remain today if every spouse has to honestly answer this question with respect to their spouse?

It is this quest of love that ‘All you need to know about the veil, zihar and zina’ commits itself to. It explores deeply, all of the possible iterations of the controversial subject of the veil in islam, and how committing to it is basically an expression of one’s love of Allah; to the more hopelessly romantic subject of zihar and its atonements, and how that is an expression of one’s love of one’s spouse; to the more ubiquitous matter of zina, and how avoiding it is actually an expression of one’s love of one’s self.

Hopefully, you enjoy reading this book more than I enjoyed writing it, and I thoroughly enjoyed writing it.

## THE VEIL IN ISLAM.

To start with, my intention was to title this piece ‘uv rays, viruses, vicissitudes, virtues and privacies: a classical arabic exegesis of the verses on the veil’, but I thought that would be a mouthful, and frankly, too academic, despite how academic this piece is. Hehe!

So, we’ll start with the Q33 V59, wherein Allah says:

“O Nnabiyy (Prophet), tell your Azwajik (wives) and your Banatik (daughters) and the Nisai (women) of the Mumin (believers) to Yudneen (bring down) over A’leyHinna (themselves) Min JalabeebiHinna ([part] of their outer garments). That is Adnaa (more suitable) that they will be Yu’rafna (known) and not be Yudhayna (abused). And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful.”

The first insight one can draw from Q33 V59 above is the question of why Allah added the ‘Prophet’ and the ‘male believers’ to the mix; He could have spoken to the women directly as in Q33 V35, but by calling on the prophet to tell his wives, daughters and women of the believers to cover up; He is putting the prophet and the male believers on alert, so that they know that if after they’ve covered up, or if they don’t; if anyone tries to cause them harm still, they must be at the forefront of defending these categories of women.

And here, part of the women added to the category that it applies to are ‘women of the believers’, not ‘muslim women of the believers’; thereby making the categories of the women that the men must defend open, welcoming and endless. And by

particularly adding the prophet to the mix, Gę is making sure that muslim men in whatever era know that by defending women's rights, they are upholding Allah's words, and following in the footsteps of the prophet pbuh.

It is important to start this piece with that theme in mind, because as we will see, part of the spirit in which Q33 V59 was revealed, was so as to be able to defend women from attacks; and one can argue that men are included in those that should be defended too.

It is also important to note that V59 is a continuation of V58, it cannot be read in isolation. V58 starts with, 'those who yudhuwna (harm) believing men and believing women...', and V59 after mentioning what should be done, ends with '... so they will be recognized and not yudhayna (harassed)...'. So, as we can see, these verses are about some of the things that can be done that will bring one close to not being harmed or harassed.

Let's start with the name choice Allah decided to call the prophet pbuh with; Nnabiyy. Its root alphabets are nun, ba and alif, and 10 forms of it occurred 160 times in the Quran. And it means news, to give someone news as seen in Q49 V4, Q15 V49, Q26 V69 and the likes. And from it comes the idea of prophecy, to predict, to foretell, to prophesy and the likes. The idea that also flows from giving news is the fact that someone that wants to give a piece of information finds a high place to stand on so that the information can be heard by all, a podium, stage, hill top etc, and so he mounts a high place; and so Nnabiyy also means to be elevated, to rise, to overpower and the likes.

When the prophet pbuh was going to announce his prophethood to the Quraish, he ascended on a high place, and asked the people if they would believe him if he told them that an army was marching towards them right now from the other side of the hill, and they said they would; and that was because he is known to be trustworthy, and also because he has a vantage point of seeing what's on the other side.

So, if one is being given news on how to defend one's self, it would be best if it were coming from someone whose position is high enough that his vantage point will be accurate; thus, a Nnabiyy. So, right out of the bat, we are made aware of the fact that the information that is about to be given is one from one that has the best spot to give a perfect defense tactic. It will be best to listen to his words, and to not listen to his words – as with all wars that its soldiers desert, or do not listen to their commander's orders – the result harms not just the soldiers, but the entirety of the people they had intended to defend, their civilization, their traditions, and their well-beings.

So, Allah tells the Nnabiyy to tell his wives, his daughters and the women of the believers to 'yudneena a'leyHina min jalabeebiHinna'. Yudneena's root alphabets are dal, nun and wa. 6 forms of the word has been used a total of 133 times in the Quran, and in fact, 2 of those forms were used in this verse.

Dana means for something to be near, to come close, to approach, to bring close; to approximate; this life (as opposed to the next); the world, the earth; to become bare, to behave despicably, a vile person. Of this root, six forms occur 133 times in the Qur'an: dana once; yudni once; dani once; daniyatun three

times: adna 12 times; al-dunya 115 times.

So, classically, how did dana come to mean all of these things? Let's start with this, you see, dana is said of the fruit that is low, and because it is low, it is near one. Q55 V54 is an example of the 'low and near' definition of dana. There, Allah talks about the fruits in paradise, that they will be dani, hanging low and close to one, no need to be throwing stones at them, or trying to pluck them with long sticks. Dani is also said of some fruits here on earth as seen in Q6 V99.

Q53 V8 buttress this point even further where it states that Jubril 'thumma dana fatadala', which then means that Jibril came down and was close to the prophet pbuh, and fatadala means that Jibril hovered in this state of close proximity to the prophet pbuh. So, with dana, we aren't just looking at something coming down, it's a 'coming' that must also come 'close' or 'near' one.

One more example of that before we move on.

Q30 V3 states about the defeat that the Romans will suffer to be one that they'd be 'fi adnal ard', which has been translated to 'in the nearest land', or some say 'nearby land' taking into its close 'proximity' to Persia, but the miracle of Allah through the Quran was confirmed over a thousand years after, as if the miracle that that same verse produced back wasn't enough, over a thousand years later, it has now been confirmed that the same spot just happens to be the place with the **lowest altitude on earth**. 

So that we now know that dana means for something to be low and close, and it is from this idea that this life, or our existence has

come to be called duniya, as opposed to the akhira, get it? It is here, and it is low, unlike the akhira that's still far out, and there are talks of high levels of jannah. The earth is also said to be duniya, because it's close to us, we stand on it, eat from it, ride on it, it is right below us. Someone behaving badly is also said to be duniya because they are behaving lowly. Someone who humbles themselves, brings themselves down, doesn't make show of themselves, their beauty, state or position, can also fall in the realm of dana.

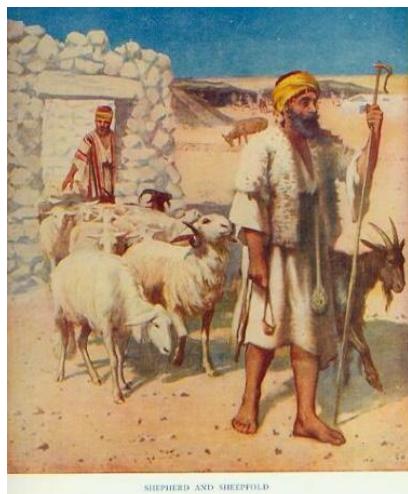
It is important that this definition is looked deeply into especially because as we will see, two forms of the world was used in this verse, and another word, yadrib, which is popularly translated to mean 'bring down' was also used twice in one of the verses on the veil that we will be looking into. InshaAllah, we will refer back to these definitions when we get to them.

So, Allah is saying here, that these categories of women should bring low and close 'aleyHina' upon themselves their 'jalabeebiHinna'. So, what is Jalab? The root alphabets of the word are jim, lam and ba. And this word occurred once in the Quran; and another word which is also a variant of it occurred once too.

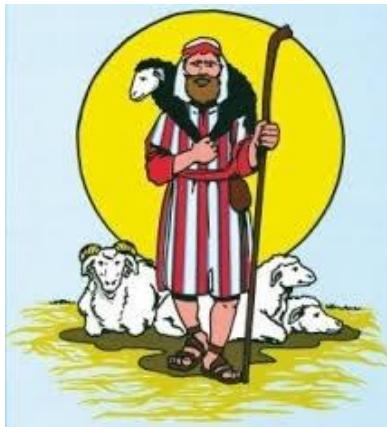
Jalab means that he drove, brought, conveyed a thing like a horse, sheep, or camels, goats or any of such animals from one place to another. And because in doing this, one has to chide, rally, urge the animals in the process, jalab is also said to mean that, as in Q17 V64 which says, 'And entice whomever of them you can with your voice, and ajlib (rally) against them your cavalry and your infantry...', and so from this comes the idea of shepherding,

working, strategizing, assaulting, attacking, fighting and the likes.

And because Jalab is said of the cloth one wears when one is herding animals from place to place, that labor intensive journey that may need one to scare off wolves or any other wild animals that may try to attack one's flock, the shepherd needs his knees free, and his sleeves short, and a top to bottom slit in the cloth so as to give way for the legs to stretch as far as it can go, and of course, a rope around the waist to hold the cloth together when one isn't running.



SHEPHERD AND SHEEPFOLD



Above are pictures of what shepherds wore in classical times, be it women or men. And because that was predominantly the work done by a huge part of the community; from it they get food to eat, and milk to drink; from it they get leather to make tents to live in, shoes that they wear, mats to lay on, and fur to make cloths and the likes; and because of all of that and more, the cloth one wore to work generally came to be known as Jalab.

To make sense of this really, one has to think of a woman in this slitted short dress running around the fields, or going to work and the likes. It is this cloth, this jalab, that's still very much being worn today with or without the slit in the Arabian or muslim dominated countries that's being said to be brought 'low and near'.

Low, because, it is around the knees, so it should be brought low to the feet, and near or close to one because when the slits open, the cloth moves far from one, and when one puts all these together one has what is now referred to as Jalabiya today. Some scholars are of the opinion that the jalab is the head covering, and

so this is the verse about Niqab because if one brought the headscarf down, it would cover the face and all, but I think that honor should be reserved for Q24 V31 which we will get to later, InshaAllah.

But if I may say a little of it here; there, we find that Allah used Khumur in Q24 V31, Khamr is derived from the same word, which is translated as intoxicants. And the headscarf is referred to as Khumur, while alcohol is referred to as Khamr, and what they both have in common is that they cover the head, the former physically, while the later metaphysically, or biologically. When one is drunk, their mind is veiled, so you see the connection?

A-ha! 

Another reason why I believe jalab cannot be the headscarf (niqab) is because Q24 V31 calls out specifically to the muminat, it doesn't include 'women of the mumin' who may or may not be Muslims.

Allah, here, is basically instructing us on how to go about workplace fashion that not just muslim women should imbibe, but 'women of the believers' should too and Allah went further to give its benefits, which we will get to in a bit.

As we've seen, the classical jalab is basically a short dress with some massive slit on it. And now, Allah is stating that it should be long, and unslitted. And this takes us to the benefits of wearing this long dress that has no slits on it.

Q33 V59 states that this is more 'adnaa', a form of 'dana' that we discussed extensively above. So, now, let's insert our 'low and

nearer' formula into this sentence. Low here means to humble one's self, don't forget this verse is about cloths for women; the first benefit we derive from wearing the jalab the proper way other than of course, obeying Allah is that it's a means of humbling one's self in the land. And what does it bring one closer or nearer to? As the verse says, to being known, recognized (yu'rafna), and not harassed or harmed (yudhayna).

The root alphabets of yu'rafna are ain, ra and faf, and 10 forms of the word were used 70 times. Part of its meaning is to recognize, to know, as in Q49 V13 which says 'O people! We created you from a male and a female, and made you races and tribes, that you may know (a'rafu) one another...', because if all seven billion plus of us were of the same exact color, height, gender, the same look and the likes, it will be a great hassle for us to be able to 'recognize' or 'know' one another, wouldn't you agree?

I think there are levels to the recognition benefit in this verse, and the first of which is that they are recognized as either being muslim women, or being women of those that submit to the most High. And this recognition can be done by both men or women alike. The second recognition is that from just men. I mean, if one were to think back, it's easy for one to see that men were definitely if not outrightly physically harassing them, but checking them out and the likes. So these men will recognize them as muslim women and not ultimately harass them, this is especially true because this was a time when in-house restrooms weren't a thing, women had to go pee and poo as far away in the desert as possible from the prying eyes of the men. A time that they'd go round the Kaaba naked as an act of worship, a time where infant girls were buried alive just because they were female,

a time where women could prostitute themselves to men and decide later who to give the pregnancy to; in a nutshell, morals were loose, still is. 😐

I think the third recognition has to do with the benefit of covering one's skin generally from the elements. Ultraviolet rays from the sun and from other artificial sources can cause sunburn, skin cancer and the likes. The ultraviolet rays, by touching the cloths and not the body, is taking cognizance of not one's skin, but of one's cloths; it's not *yu'rafna-ing* one's skin, but one's cloths. And by doing so, one is prevented from premature aging of the skin and other signs of sun damage such as wrinkles, leathery skin, liver spots, actinic keratosis, solar elastosis and the likes. The less skin one shows, the lesser the damage the ultraviolet rays will do to one's skin.

Now, let's go into the other benefit one derives from wearing one's *jalabiya* the way Allah wants us to wear it, which is '*yudhayna*'; harmed, harassed and the likes. We've already looked at some of the harm that can come from not covering one's skin both from men and the sun.

The root alphabets of *yudhayna* are *alif*, *dhal* and *ya*, and 3 forms of the word occurred a total of 24 times in the Quran. And it is said to mean to harm, to injure, to damage, to persecute, as in Q6 V34 that says 'Other messengers before you were rejected, but they endured rejection and *udhu* (persecution) until Our help came to them...'. Q2 V263 and parts of V264 states that "Kind speech and forgiveness are better than charity followed by *adha* (injury)... O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders or injury (*adha*)..."

From these three verses, we see that the ‘harm’ can be physically violent, verbal, or of any other harmful nature that can invalidate one’s charities. So, when they are fully clad in their newly fashioned work cloths, they are “dana (closer)” to men not harassing them with their eyes, mouth or their hands. They are left alone to walk humbly by, except of course, from the troublemakers.

And just as it means physical injury, harm or visible harassment, it also means an unseen harm, like infections and the likes, as in Q2 V196 that says ‘...so if any of you is mmariddan (ill), or has an adhan (ailment) of the scalp...’.

It is important to note that in the verse above Allah made sure to differentiate between marid and adhan, and the implication of it is that while adha is an infection, it can become marid if left untreated, and then one becomes ill. That’s one of the benefits of wearing a dress that covers all of one’s body, the jalab, the fact that a mere cloth can prevent infections is just phenomenal, especially now that we are living through a pandemic that’s viral in nature.

Now, we are told to put on masks, most of which are made from fabric, so that somehow if the virus comes to one’s face area one doesn’t ingest it through one of one’s face openings. What then happens to the ones that don’t make it to the face? Whether viral, bacteria, fungi (oh, those fungi) and the likes? They stick on one’s cloths for as long as they can, and that’s why even now, we are advised to take off our cloths as soon as we get into the house, and if able to, take a bath, before changing to house cloths. Talking of ‘house cloths’, the Quran mentioned it in Q24 V58 and V60 as

Thiyab, but we'll get there in a bit. InshaAllah.

Anyway, see where I'm going with this? Adha also means infections, and part of the benefits of wearing the jalabeeb as mentioned in Q33 V59 is so that it is likely to guard one against infections. Allahu Akbar! Having been studying the Quran for a while now, I have found that this seems to be the only time Allah told the prophet to 'instruct', not just 'say' or 'tell' after just referring to him as 'Nnabiyy'; and it seems that the reason is because Allah is about give us something only a Specialist should know, a Specialist in the next one thousand years nonetheless.

Let me digress a little bit.

If you consider the Classical Arabic definition of Nnabiyy that we looked into at the beginning of this piece, one of the words that summarizes the idea other than Prophet (prophecy), is 'Specialist'. It's only a Specialist's vantage point on a matter that really matters, right? And here, Allah uses Nnabiyy, and it comes full circle, right? We see how profound the usage was; Allah didn't use Rasul, A'bd, or any other word, but Ge used Nnabiyy. It's even more remarkable when you realize that Allah also refers to him as Nnabiyyal Ummiyy, the unlettered prophet, the unlettered specialist. Quite an oxymoron, wouldn't you agree? We only believe the Expert because of their knowledge of the subject matter, but Allah, here, is letting us know that the revelation is true. He is unlettered, there's no way he'd know something that if implemented, would have saved millions of lives over the centuries. Communicable diseases, airborne diseases, et al, and yet, here, he is relating them to us, easily, without the technicalities or expenses of scientific methodologies.

This Nnabiyy told us to wear the jalabeeb, to wash our hands, mouth, nose, and most of our body at least five times a day, to change our cloths when we get home, to be clean always, he was basically the World Health Organization of his time, and of all times. Anyway, you get the point, let's move on.

So, now, now that one has seen the benefits of wearing a cloth that goes low and close, and not opening and revealing what's in, one might ask, does this protective attire, in whatever form they appear, only apply to women? And I will reply with this; that V58 starts with 'those who yudhuwna (harm) believing men and believing women...', and that V59 after prescribing the jalabeeb ends with '... so they will be recognized and not yudhayna (harmed)...'. The fact that the word was used again hints at the fact that anyone that doesn't want to be 'harmed', and we now know the variations of such harm – the seen and the unseen – needs to don the jalabeeb. And fortunately, as we see today, men and women wear the jalabeeb, popularly called the jalabiya.

As I have written above, I don't think this verse was the one about the headscarf, I think this was just about the 'dress', and now that we are on the subject of long dresses that covers the skin; I should mention that I use 'dress' loosely here. I think the purpose of the verse was that the skin is covered, so if one expresses jalab in a pant and shirt that covers all the skin but the head, hands and feet, I think it will qualify as jalab too; my thoughts, and Allah knows best. Don't forget that I'd mentioned that this verse mentions 'women of the believers', who may not be Muslims, and didn't mention muminat specifically like Q24 V31 did – there, Allah adds more to this regalia of the muminat, and those

aspiring to be muminats.

And as with dresses, especially when women wear them, mere walking in them may turn out to be a sashay, albeit unintentional, and Q24 V31 talks about that. One finds quickly, that while the purport of Q33 V59 is to protect the physical health of the woman (and man 😊), and so the jalab can be said to be an armor, or battle gear; Q24 V31 is more concerned about the spiritual health of the umma, and umma here includes the non-Muslims. And because this is more of a spiritual commitment, Allah starts the verse by calling on the ‘Muminat’.

As we’ve seen, Q33 V59 doesn’t address the issue of whether the dress can be transparent – ummm, did you notice what I did there? Dress? Address? 😊 – and it even says to bring the dress closer to one; one might interpret that to be skin tight, hip contouring dresses and all. And while a non-muslim woman may wear that, and still be protected from the unseen ills out there, it may not protect them from being harrassed, so, despite being ‘close’, it shouldn’t be skin-tight close; close there just means that it shouldn’t have slits. With what Q24 V31 does though, it wouldn’t matter whether the woman’s jalbab is skin-tight or not, and it is with this in mind, that Allah addresses the Muminat and those that aspire to be Muminat by saying:

‘And tell the believing women (muminat) to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose (yubdeena) their adornment (zeenat) except that which [necessarily] appears (zoHar) thereof and to wrap (yadribna) [a portion of] their headcovers (khumur) over their chests (juyuw) and not expose (yubdeena) their adornment (zeenat) except to

their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their women, that which their right hands possess, or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp (yadribna) their feet (arjul) to make known (liyulam) what they conceal (yukhfeena) of their adornment (zeenat). And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed.'

The excerpt that we need from the verse for now is this, that Allah tells the Muminat to not yubdina (expose) their zeenat (beauty) except what is zoHar (apparent) thereof, and to yadrib (draw) their khumur (coverings) over their juyuw (breasts).

The first word we will look at is Khumur, because it puts the verse in a lot of perspective, and shows why it had to be revealed, in relation to Q33 V59 above. The root alphabets are kha, mim and ra, and 2 forms of the word occurred 7 times in the Quran.

Khamr and Khumur; the former occurring 6 times and the latter occurring just this once. Khamr is said to be intoxicants, as in Q2 V219 that says 'They ask you about intoxicants and gambling...', and it is so called because it clouds, distorts, blocks, 'veils' the mind when ingested by drinking, injecting or any other way intoxicants like alcohol, cocaine and the likes are administered.

The idea of Khamr being used to refer to a cloth, right off the bat, means that the cloth must be one that veils the head, because you know, a drunk person's head is biologically veiled while they are in their drunken state. Even they, despite their efforts, are not able to access their 'head' – brain, mind – at the time they are in their

drunken state. That's why they aren't allowed to drive, work, or do any life changing activity whilst they are drunk. And this is the idea of Khumur, from Khamr, veiling the head, head-scarf; just that in this case, it is the physical veiling of the head, not the biological-intoxicant-induced veiling.

With Khumur, one cannot see through; and so, khumur, is the headscarf, since that's what's used to cover the hair from being viewed by the public. Women have to cover their hair for different reasons. I should also mention here the hadith reported by Bilal and recorded in *Tirmidhi* and *Nasa'i* wherein the turban of the prophet pbuh was referred to as Khimar, making it obvious that the men's head covering was also called khimar.

Arabian women would use the Khumur to cover their hair, and drape it backwards, that was the prevalent practice, so that they are able to expose their cleavage or some or all of their chest as the situation requires. And from the wordings of the Quran, we see that it was assumed that the women were already putting on Khumur anyway, and so Allah tells them to 'extend' it downwards and forward. Anyway, one of the major differences between the Khumur and the Jalab is that the Khumur veils whatever it covers totally, whereas a jalabeeb 'may' be transparent, a Khumur must not be, it must be opaque. And that is why the verse continues by mentioning 12 categories of people one need not don one's Khumur in the presence of, get it?

You see, Allah, despite what have been lost in translation, used different words at specific places intentionally; Allah said what Ge meant, and meant what Ge said. We can't just call everything 'headscarf', and move on with our lives, no.

Let's digress a bit.

You see, classically, Niqab means to pierce or cut something, or for something to be worn out from constant piercing, or for one to be injured, and so the covering one puts on the said cut or injury like bandaid is called a Niqab. What is being covered here is not an injury, far from it, no? And yet, Niqab is a popular term for the full covering, that includes the face.

Niqab, as a word was only used three times in the Quran, none related to an attire; its root alphabets are nun, qaf and ba, and three forms of the word was used once – naqba, naqqabu, and naqeeba.

In Q18 V97 Allah says 'So Gog and Magog were unable to pass over it, nor were they able [to effect] in it any naqba (penetration).' Q50 V36 states that 'And how many a generation before them did We destroy who were greater than them in [striking] power and had naqqabu (explored) throughout the lands. Is there any place of escape?' And lastly, Q5 V12, wherein Allah states that 'And Allah had already taken a covenant from the Children of Israel, and We delegated from among them twelve naqeeba (leaders)...'

As for the naqeeba, they were twelve spies who were supposed to penetrate a city to gather facts about it, and report back to the group of Israelites, who were supposed to consider whether to conquer it or not. A spy was chosen from each tribe to make twelve. I mean, the spies probably had to break a part of the city's walls to gain entrance into the city, so even though some

translations have it as chieftain, leaders and all, we now know that the character of their leadership was one that meant that they had to penetrate a city, perhaps, homes too, farms, markets, government halls, war rooms, city's food reserve, manpower etc, without being found out, and then report back.

So what we see with respect to the three mentions of Niqab is that they all have this sense of penetrating, breaking through something, breaking, exploring, openings, cracking, tearing apart, spying and the likes. If Allah had mentioned it as a cloth in the Quran, it would have been as a cloth that penetrated, or pierced something, or a cloth used to cover a cut or something of that sort, or a cloth that has cuts on it; now we are moving away from how it is colloquially being used, so that, in fact, technically, all these cloths with scanty coverings can be said to be Niqab, because it has cuts every which way, you get how classical arabic works now? 😊👍

In the name of technicality and fairness, I should mention the fact that it may be that it is the tearing apart or openings in the khumur for the eyes, face and hands that made them refer to it as Niqab in the first place? So that a khumur with space for the face and hands will then be called a Niqab.

But we are getting ahead of ourselves, let's hold that thought for a minute while we journey through the next word that will help us make sense of this, yadrib.

Allah says, tell the muminat '...to wrap (yadribna) [a portion of] their headcovers (khumur) over their chests (juyuwb)...', but does yadrib mean 'wrap'?

The root alphabets of the word yadrib are dod, ro and ba, and 3 forms occurred 58 times in the Quran. It's the word Allah uses whenever He wants to give us a parable. Q14 V24 says 'Have you not considered how Allah doroba (presents) an example...', and we find it being used this way in Q29 V43, Q17 V48 and a host of other verses, wherein some use expressions like 'set forth', 'coin', 'presents' and the likes.

But classically, doroba is said of bringing something down. Unlike dana that we looked into in Q33 V59 that we concluded means bringing the jalab low and without slits (close); doroba, as we will see, at its core, means to bring something down. And Allah didn't use dana here because slits for the eyes, face, and hands were expected, as the prophet pbuh was reported in Sunan Abī Dāwūd 4104 to have said, “O Asma, when a woman reaches the age of maturity, it is not proper for her to show anything but this and this,’ and the Prophet pointed to his face and hands.”

All that said, doroba is also said to mean beating, striking, to battle, and I will like for us to go deeper into the word because it appeared twice in this verse, and its meaning is consequential to understanding this verse.

Q2 V60 states that “And [recall] when Moses prayed for water for his people, so We said, ‘drib (strike) with your a’sok (staff) the stone.’ And there gushed forth from it twelve springs, and every people knew its watering place...”

Q20 V77 provides that “And We had inspired to Moses, “Travel by night with My servants and fadrib (strike) for them a dry path

through the sea; you will not fear being overtaken [by Pharaoh] nor be afraid [of drowning].”

What we see in these two examples is that to ‘strike’, the ‘instrument’ has to ‘come down’, so that in the 2 instances mentioned above, we see that Moses must have raised his staff, and brought it down on the rock and on the sea for the miracles to happen. It is these 2 tests that I have found that helps define doroba in any form it comes in. With respect to the khumur, the khumur is the instrument that’s being brought down; and with respect to the parables above, the parables are the instruments that are being brought down.

So that when Allah said in Q47 V4 “So when you meet those who disbelieve [in battle], fadorba (strike) [their] necks...”, the instrument will be any weapon one is holding, and of course, to bring it to their necks, it has to come down on the neck. I’m of the opinion that the ‘bringing down’ here may refer to ‘threat’, and not necessarily ‘death’, even though death may occur in the process, because the rest of the verse suggests that they’d still be alive to be bound, ransomed or freed. The verse continues thus ‘until, when you have athkhanTUHum (inflicted slaughter) upon them, then secure their bonds, and either [confer] favor afterwards or ransom [them] until the war lays down its burdens...’ AthkhanTum also means to ‘subdue’ someone.

Anyway, we get the point, ‘bringing down, an instrument’. Q8 V12 is where it can be translated to see that the bringing down of an instrument may cause ‘death’, wherein Allah says, “[Remember] when your Lord inspired to the angels, ‘I am with you, so strengthen those who have believed. I will cast terror into

the hearts of those who disbelieved, so fadrib (strike) [them] upon the necks and wadrib (strike) from them every fingertip.”

Now, you will agree with me that doroba itself doesn't mean death, cut, strike, split the sea, split the rock et al, but that those are just the consequences of having done doroba, and that doroba is to bring down an instrument, which can be a staff, weapons of any kind, parable, khumur, and as we will soon see, the feet too.

Now, to where I was going with all these, since we've already defined doroba to mean 'bringing down an instrument' couple of paragraphs ago, you must have been wondering where I'm going with all of these, hehe! Sorry, it will be worth it InshaAllah. It is none other than Q4 V34 and V35, I will InshaAllah still write an entire piece on it in future, but I figured since it's intrinsically one that's related to a woman's wellbeing and protection, that I'd venture into it a little bit here.

A translator translated Q4 V34 and V35 as, “...But those [wives] from whom you fear nushuza (arrogance) – [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], wadrib (strike) them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand. 35. And if you fear dissension between the two, send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, Allah will cause it between them. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Acquainted [with all things].”

There, our dear 'doroba' was translated to mean 'strike', to strike, beat or slap the woman. 😞 Isn't this one of the reasons she started wearing the jalab in the first place? So that she won't be

harmed? Remember the benefit Allah stated in Q33 V59?  Anyway, let's input our keywords of what doroba means into this, and see where it takes us:

“The instrument, and it being brought down”.

We see that whether it is with the Staff of Moses or the Weapons of the Believers, the person holds it, and brings it down on or to something, takes it down somewhere; and so the ‘instrument’ in this verse is the ‘spouse’, not the ‘hand’, if the hand was intended, it would have been mentioned just as the staff of Moses was mentioned above, but the ‘spouse’ was mentioned, and so it is the spouse, not the hand, fist, belt or whatever weapon a spouse might seek to harm their spouse with; and the said spouse is expected to be ‘brought down’ to ‘you’, as seen in V35 that says, ‘And if YOU fear dissension between the two, send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people...’, now, who is ‘you’?

Allah could have mentioned ‘Judge’, ‘Therapist’, ‘Counsellor’, ‘Mutually Trusted Friend or Relative’, et al, but Allah decided to leave it open, so that whomever the husband or wife decides to take their spouse to to get rid of whatever nushuz either party is showing is not limited, and restrictive, and it’s able to adapt to cultures around the world, or the particular character or choice of the spouses in question, so that the parties need not expose themselves on a matter that may be settled amicably without the world being made aware.

We see with V34 that after wadrib was mentioned, Allah said ‘But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them.’, the

assumption of obedience cannot be from violence, for one, if the said spouse was 20% upset about whatever was going on in their lives, slapping the said spouse can only exacerbate the matter, not eradicate it, so that the said spouse will then be 101% enraged, no? So, violence couldn't have been the purport of that word in that verse.

Obedience may only come from the intervention of a mutual counselor, who they trust, something private, perhaps, their therapist, it may be a judge too, in a private setting, and if that solves the problem, then, 'seek no means against them'. But if not, Allah then turns the responsibility squarely on this counselor, and says, "And if you fear dissension between the two, send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people.", it is only then that the matter may go public.

To assume that V35 is not a continuation of V34, or that even V34 if read in isolation means to harm one's wife cannot be the truth. The prophet pbuh is not recorded to have harmed any of his wives, and the idea that doroba in Q4 V34 means to strike one's wife or spouse, with due respect, is a lack of understanding of Classical Arabic nuances, and really, submission to the linguistic expressions of the Quran. And Allah knows best. I guess here is the perfect place to insert the saying of the prophet pbuh that was reported by **Abu Hurayrah** that says, 'The believers who show the most perfect Faith are those who have the best behaviour, and the best of you are those who are the best to their wives'. Perfect faith being made akin to being good to one's wife. Enough said, especially because, as we know in Islam, the wife can also divorce her husband, so, violence is perilous to the relationship, not advantageous.

So that the progression of intervention is Advise, Abstinence, Private Consultation, and Public Arbitration, and Allah ends the verse by saying, ‘If they BOTH desire reconciliation, Allah will cause it between them. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Acquainted [with all things].’

Anyway, we’ve gotten what we wanted from this exercise, which is ‘instrument’, and to ‘bring down’, as the keywords that explains doroba. In applying it to Khumur, the headscarf, it means to bring it down the body, and the part of the body that Allah mentions right away that this khumur must cover as it comes down is the ‘juyuwb (chest)’.

Juyuwb, its root alphabets are jim, ya and ba, and 2 forms of it occurred 3 times in the Quran; jayb twice, and juyuwb once. Jayb was said with respect to Musa. In Q27 V13, and Q28 V33, Moses was instructed to put his hand in his jayb, and remove it, and it will turn pure white, and that will be one of the signs that Musa was expected to go and show Pharaoh, and his people.

Classically it is said to be the neckline of a garment; to cut out, to hollow; breast, bosom; entry point et al. Basically, any hole in a garment is said to be Juyuwb, but primarily the hole that lets the head in is mainly seen as the juyuwb, because it’s the one that lets the body in. So the juyuwb includes the neck, the chest, the hole or space between the breast – the cleavage that is, and any such holes that’s around the neck that may reveal what’s within.

In essence, the chest, cleavage, and that area around the neck downwards will be regarded as juyuwb. Now, the question is,

does the khumur end when it is past the chest area or does it have to continue down? I don't know, I think it should continue as far as it continues to cover what may be considered as zeenat, which Allah stated twice in this verse should not be displayed.

Allah says, "And tell the believing women (muminat) to... not expose (yubdeena) their adornment (zeenat) except that which [necessarily] appears (zoHar)... and not expose (yubdeena) their adornment (zeenat) except to their husbands..."

As for yubdeena, the root alphabets are ba, dal and waw, and 7 forms of it occurred 31 times in the Quran. It means for something to appear, to be apparent, to be open, to be displayed, to manifest, to be plain, to be evident, to be disclosed, to show, and because the desert has this quality of being an open space, that one can see everything; the desert is also said to be 'baduw', and so is the desert dwellers – in fact, 'bedouin', that english word, is derived from it. So that someone that lives in an open space, vast land where all can be seen is called a bedouin.

So, don't bare your zeenat, like the desert does of itself. What then is zeenat? Its root alphabets are zain, ya and nun, and 4 forms of the word appeared 46 times in the Quran. And zeenat is said of the things one uses to adorn something; the thing one uses to decorate, beautify, ornament, embellish something, as in Q37 V6 that says of the skies that 'We have zayyanna (adorned) the lower heaven with the zeenatin (beauty) of the stars'. Also, Q18 V7 says that 'We made what is upon the earth an ornament (zeenat) for it...'. And Q20 V87 says '...but we were made to carry loads of people's zeenat (ornament)...'

With Q20 V87, we see that zeenat can be jewelry, some beautification one adds on, while with Q18 V7, we see that zeenat can be something beautiful that grows from a thing just as flowers would be considered beautification for the earth. With Q37 V6, we see that the stars, and some translators have it as planets, are not attached to the skies, and so it need not be something attached to one's body, while something attached to or that grows on one's body can also be referred to as zeenat.

So, if we feel that the jalab is not concealing some parts enough, we can make sure that the khumur covers it all up, '...except that which [necessarily] appears (zoHar) thereof...'

And as we've seen in the hadith above, the easy answer to that which necessarily appears is the face and hands; and of course, the cloth itself.

The addition of zoHar however, when one looks deeper into it, what one finds is that it opens and closes the categories of what can be displayed, so that the categories of what can be zoHar are not closed, and it may depend on the society one finds one's self, but one must still uphold the basic requirements enshrined in the verses about the veil.

To understand this point, we have to look into the word zoHar. Its root alphabets are zo, Hao, and ra. 12 forms of the word occurred 59 times in the Quran. ZiHar, classically, is said of a camel or any other beast of burden that one carries along with one on a journey in case one might need it. So it's not really necessary, but one carries it along anyway. And that's why the act of saying to one's wife that they are to one like one's mother's

back as seen in Q58 V2 is addressed as being despicable, because what one is saying is that one really can not be with one's wife the way one ought to, thereby de-prioritizing the spouse, and their relationship with the said spouse.

And Q58 was revealed to address the issue of ziHar, which I still think applies till today, even if people don't say those words verbatim anymore, it suffices that they are treating their spouses in such manner; and that is that they aren't prioritized, as if they are just being carried along, not really needed et al.

Translators tend to interpret ziHar as merely saying that one's spouse has become to one like one's mother's back without noting the fact that the Quran wasn't only talking about the mere utterance or pronouncement of that sentence, but it actually says 'zoHir'.

In Q33 V4, tuzoHiruwna was translated as 'equate', or 'to declare unlawful'; Q58 V2 and V3 says yuzoHiruwna, which is translated as estrange, and some just write 'pronounce zihar'.

Really, the Quran mentioned ziHar, as the thing that shouldn't be done on one's spouse, whether with words, actions or otherwise; and I have devised a way to make the punishment of pronouncing ziHar on one's wife apply even today, as you'll see in a later post. InshaAllah.

Now, back to zoHar as it relates to the veil, what does this mean to the yubdeena (display) of one's zeenat (beauty)? It means that the prophet pbuh only mentioned the face and hands as zoHar, and they may fail to be zoHar if in themselves one feels that they

are extremely beautiful, or if one chooses to veil them because one considers them so; and so they will fall under Zeenat. And it could also be that one doesn't consider them to be, and neither does society consider them to be ziHar, and so they can be displayed. And Allah and Ges messenger knows best.

So far, what we should have noticed is that with Q24 V31, Allah is plugging all the holes that one may puncture into the jalabeeb injunction in Q33 V59. See what I did there? Hehe! One of such holes is that one may still try to display one's Zeenat whilst wearing the jilbab since that wasn't mentioned with respect to it, and that has been taken care of. And Allah gave way for a subjective exception of what may be shown or not shown with Allah's use of zoHar after all of the other conditions must have been met.

Allah then foresaw that, perhaps, someone might think the neck, area around the neck, below the neck area and down to the cleavage, could be considered an exception; so the next sentence took care of that by saying, to yadrib (bring down) their khumur (headscarf) over their juyuw (breasts).

Then the verse proceeds by listing 12 categories of people that she can display her Zeenat to. After which the word yadrib appears again; but this time, it is said of the feet. Allah said, "...And let them not stamp (yadribna) their feet (arjul) to make known (liyulam) what they conceal (yukhfeena) of their adornment (zeenat)..."

Here, again, Allah is covering another hole. One may say they are fully covered, and yet, sashay, sway from side to side, or even

twerk, so that what is covered is made apparent even if it is not bare. One doesn't have to be naked for a twerk, for instance, to be done; it can be done by one that's fully clothed, even one in khumur or jalabeeb.

Yadrib, being that we have our master's in doroba by now, we know that the 'feet' is the 'instrument', and bringing it down can be construed to mean that, of course, one can walk, but not to do so briskly, that one's ankle chains or waist beads starts being audible to those that shouldn't be party to it.

And as we've seen with zeenat, what grows on something can also be termed as zeenat, so while yadrib applies to the hidden jewelries, it also applies to the zeenat that grows on one just as the flowers grow from the earth. One shouldn't bring one's feet down in a way that will make the hidden biological zeenat visible in the form of frontal jiggles, back twerks and the likes.

Remember I said Q24 V31 is about public morality, while Q33 V57 is about personal safety? 

Now, we have looked into what the quality of the khumur must be like, which is that it ought to be opaque, so that one cannot see through it.

Another question that gets asked also is that of the hue of the khumur. Can the khumur be any other color, or must it be black? Was black even mandated? Some have argued that the saying of the wife of the prophet pbuh, Ummu Salamah RA, that when the verse about the veil was revealed that the women of the ansar came out as if they had crows over their heads means that the early Muslim women must have been wearing black veils. 

The question then is, is color the object of that saying, or is its object that of the aesthetic appearance of their veil? Well, if color is what we want to take from that saying, then let's be reminded that crows come in colors other than black, just as swans come in colors other than white. A quick online dive will reveal that crows actually have dozens of colors in their plumage; and there also, one will find pictures of crows that are fully white.

In fact, if we look into the tradition, we will find that there's at least one instance where the color of the veil of one of the early Muslim women was mentioned. In Bukhari's hadith number 5825, wherein Aisha RA tendered the case of a lady who came to her wearing a green veil, and showed Aisha RA a green spot on her skin to buttress her point that she was being domestically abused, to which Aisha RA said to the prophet pbuh that '... Look! Her skin is greener than her clothes!...'. That in itself shows that the early Muslim women were definitely wearing more colors than black, that is if they were even wearing black at all.

The hadith goes thus: "Rifa'a divorced his wife whereupon 'AbdurRahman bin Az-Zubair Al-Qurazi married her. 'Aisha said that the lady (came), wearing a green khimar [veil] (and complained to her (Aisha) of her husband and showed her a green spot on her skin caused by beating). It was the habit of ladies to support each other, so when Allah's Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) came, 'Aisha said, "I have not seen any woman suffering as much as the believing women. Look! Her skin is greener than her thawb [clothes]!..."

We see that the narrator mentioned khimar, while Aisha actually

mentioned thawb, and that is important, as we will see later, since thawb is also a piece of clothing, of the many pieces of clothings we will be talking about in this piece.

Anyway, there is the case of the legend of how an Iraqi merchant arrived in Madina sometime in the 8th century era with veils of different colors. He eventually sold out on all the colors, and no one would buy his black veils, obviously because no one wore black veils back then, except maybe for funerals?  And so the merchant complained to one Darimi. This monk, Darimi, is then said to have composed a poem about how a black veil looked beautiful on a mysterious lady who is the object of the poem. And so it spread that black is the new hue, and so it became a trend. And so the idea that black is a somber color that will not attract attention cannot be farther from the truth.

In fact, as an artist myself, one that specializes in colorfield abstract expressionism, an area of the art that explores colors and the emotions attached to them; I know for sure that the color that will make a fair pigment pronounced and easily noticeable is black, just as the color that will make black quickly noticeable is yellow, or white. That's why you find that the 'emo lady', emo being short for 'emotional', is compulsively wearing black, because that's the color that brings forth all of the emotions she wants noticed. And that's why you see that the lines on tarred roads are either yellow or white. Or some road signs are a mix of yellow and black.

And of course, we can go into the question of black being a color. Is black really a color? Does black even exist? Is true black possible? If we go by the scientific definition of black, we know

that it is the absence of light; so how truly black is it then if it exists in the realm of light? Isn't all these attention alarming enough for a color that's aimed at allegedly making one discreet?

Before we move on, I should mention that [hadith 1618 by Bukhari](#) actually mentioned that Aisha had a pink hijab.

Anyway, whether black, gray, pink, green, or a mix of all of them; if it is not transparent, thereby satisfying the khumur test, then one may express one's style in whatever hue one pleases.

And Allah ends this verse by saying, '...And turn to Allah in repentance, ALL OF YOU, O believers, that you might succeed.' Emphasis are mine, and that's making sure that the men mentioned in V30 know that that also applies to them.

Of the 12 categories of people mentioned in Q24 V31 that the woman can expose her zeenat to are 'the ttifl lladhina lam yazHaru a'la a'wrati nnisai' – children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women.

The terms we need to define here are tifl, zHaru and a'wrat, those 3 because they help us understand the next verses we will be looking into. The root alphabets of tifl are tor, faf and lam, and 2 forms of the word occurred a total of 4 times in the Quran, tifl 3 times, and atfal once.

And it means for something to be soft, delicate, tender, and from that comes the idea of an infant, baby, child, to be of a tender age – it is a child of this mental state that's being referred to as tifl. V59 contrasted tifl with halim, which as we will see means to 'wet

dream', which means that a child that has started wet dreaming cannot be said to be a tifl, except if to the best of one's knowledge, one knows for sure that such a child isn't able to make sense of the opposite sex's nudity; that would be a very rare occasion, but maybe a child that is developmentally challenged can fall into such a category.

Back to the verse at hand; the second condition that was given to further explain who will be considered a tifl for the purpose of this verse zHaru (ziHar), a word we have defined above, and concluded that its crux is to not prioritize something, to deprioritize; de-prioritization. So, now, we have two negatives – lam, which means 'do not', and de-prioritization, which means we then get a positive, and the way to express that would be 'children that prioritize the a'wrat (private aspect) of women'.

So, it is immaterial that the child hasn't started wet dreaming, if they are able to 'prioritize' the a'wrat of women, because for instance, the culture the child is in is one that such exposure and understanding happens very quickly, then they can be excluded from those one can expose one's zeenat to. And the converse is true, which is that if they belong to a culture that such exposure and understanding doesn't happen early in life, then one may expose one's zeenat, except if one has reasons to believe that a particular child has such exposure and understanding that can lead them to prioritize viewing a woman's a'wrat in a sensual way.

Now then, this leads us to the question of what a'wrat is. Its root alphabets are ain, waw, and ra, a'wrat, 2 forms of the word appeared a total of 4 times in the Quran; a'wratun twice, and a'wrat twice.

As we've seen in Q24 V31 that we are looking into, the a'wrat was used in reference to the human body; in V58 of the same Q24, it was used to qualify time; and in Q33 V13, it was used twice to reference a house.

As for Q24 V58, Allah said, 'O you who have believed, let those whom your right hands possess and those who have not [yet] reached puberty among you ask permission of you [before entering] at three times: before the dawn prayer and when you put aside your clothing [for rest] at noon and after the night prayer. [These are] three times of a'wratin (privacy) for you...' And in Q33 V13, the instance was told of "...when a faction of them said, 'O people of Yathrib, there is no stability for you [here], so return [home].' And a party of them asked permission of the Prophet, saying, 'Indeed, our houses are a'wratun (unprotected),' while they were not a'wratin (exposed). They did not intend except to flee."

So, now, we see that the same word has been translated to 'private aspects', 'privacy', 'unprotected', and 'exposed'. Classically, a'wrat is said of the loss of an eye, to be one-eyed, to be vulnerable, bad word, bad deed, defect, shame, something to be kept from the eyes, infamous person; difficult, uncharted road; to fall prey; to borrow. The idea of losing one's eye is the crux of a'wrat. The fact that one naturally wants to cover it maybe because it is not pleasant to look at, or you just don't want to make others uncomfortable by it, and so it is covered, with an eye patch.

In Islam, what constitutes a'wrat in a man is said to be what is between the navel and the knees, and in a woman, some are of the

view that a'wrat is all of her person, except from her face and hands, but I think that that honor goes to zeenat, not a'wrat as we've seen in our understanding of zeenat above. As we see in Q24 V58 above, wherein Allah stipulated 3 times that should be a'wrat (private) times, and for even prepubescent children, they'd have to ask permission to come in on one at those times, and at other times, they don't have to; which presupposes that what one is able to expose at the 'private times' are more 'private', unlike with zeenat which we've said can also include jewelries and the likes.

So, even though all of one's a'wrat is part of one's zeenat, not all of one's zeenat is one's a'wrat. So, while one's bare genital organs is an a'wrat, one's neck or arm, though zeenat, wouldn't necessarily be a'wrat. And these are the general rules with respect to clothings. When it comes to hospital visits and the likes, the jurisprudence of that is more lax depending on the circumstances one finds themselves.

Going back to what got us on this a'wrat journey, which is the child that can prioritize a'wrat. So, it is not enough that they are children, if they know what they are looking at, and can prioritize what they want to stare at, you know, prioritization – you have the whatever it is at the top of the list; so that if they are able to treat whatever they want to stare at in this manner, then, they won't qualify to be in the group of those that can see one's zeenat irrespective of whether they are prepubescent or not.

This takes us to Q24 V58, wherein the next category of children mentioned with respect to the veil are looked into, Allah says, 'O you who have believed, let those whom your right hands possess

and those who have not [yet] reached hulum (puberty) among you ask permission of you [before entering] at three times: before the dawn prayer and when you put aside your thiyab (clothing) [for rest] at noon and after the night prayer. [These are] three times of privacy for you. There is no blame upon you nor upon them beyond these [periods], for they continually circulate among you – some of you, among others. Thus does Allah make clear to you the verses; and Allah is Knowing and Wise.

As we've alluded to above, hulum is said of dream, to wet dream, its root alphabets are ha, lam and mim, and 3 forms of the word occurred 24 times in the Quran, and that being hulum twice, ahlam 4 times, and halim 18 times.

And it is said to mean to dream, to have wet dreams, and because only children that have attained puberty wet dream, those that haven't, the prepubescents, are the ones being asked to seek permission before entering on one of those 3 times of privacy. V59 stipulates that 'And when the tifl (children) among you reach hulum (puberty), let them ask permission [at all times] as those before them have done. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses; and Allah is Knowing and Wise', so we see that those that have reached puberty have to ask permission at all times before encroaching on the space of those that they would hitherto wouldn't have been asking, except on 3 occasions.

We understand the first and the third privacy times, but the second one furthers our conversation on the veil, wherein Allah says '...and when you put aside your thiyab (clothing) [for rest] at noon...'. You see, the whole noon-time garment toss away in V58 as a time of privacy is referencing Siesta. In some parts of the

world, it's still observed. The Muslims introduced it to the Spanish folks during their Andalusian reign that lasted for centuries, hence the Spanish-ness of the word.

And what happens is that at noon, when they go home, because the sun is baking hot, they take off their jilbab (work cloths), and or khumur (hair veil); take a bath, put on their thiyab (home cloths), eat, and go to bed, and wake up at a'sr when the sun is not as hot to continue attending to their affairs, good deal, if you ask me.

And in case you haven't noticed, the 'garment' that's being referred to here is thiyab, not khumur, not jilbab, the thiyab. All of these words are important, because if Allah didn't want them to convey something, Allah would have used the same word everywhere, but Allah chose to use each word at its appropriate time.

As for thiyab, its root alphabets are tha, waw and ba, and 6 forms of the word occurred a total of 35 times in the Quran. Thawba in its classical sense means for someone or something to return or to go back to. And so from this idea; stones stacked upon each other as a sign for returning travelers to know the way to their resting place or hotel is also called thawba. And so is their resting place that they are returning to; and so everything that carries the idea of being continuously returned to is called thawba. Thus, the cloths one puts on when one 'returns' home from work or wherever, is called thiyab, aka 'home cloths'.

And so, in Q11 V5, the word used for 'cloths' is thiyab, because first of all, Allah, in V4 that comes before it, talked about how to

Gem is our ‘return’, and so Ge uses the word for cloths that connotes being ‘returned’ to. Perfect every time. Glory to Gem. Another argument for why Thiyab was used in that verse is because one returns to one’s cloths repeatedly, which means that those folks trying to hide from Allah by covering themselves up do this practice ‘repeatedly’.

Now that we understand thiyab in this new light, it helps us make sense of what it is, what it may be covering, and not covering; and when one can put it aside or don it. Considering our quick “master’s” in all things thiyab, let’s take a look at V60, which states that ‘...women of qawai’d (post-menstrual age) who have no desire for marriage – there is no blame upon them for putting aside their thiyab (outer garments) [but] not mutabarijat (displaying) zeenat (adornment). But to modestly refrain [from that] is better for them. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.’

We start with qawai’d, translated here as women of ‘post-menstrual age’. Its root alphabets are qaf, ain and dal, and 8 forms of the word were used 31 times in the Quran. And it means to sit down, to take a seat, in fact a horse’s saddle, or home cushions are called qa-a’d too. And so when women get to the age where they are immobile, or perhaps, in today’s parlance ‘retired, and home living’, they are referred to as qawai’d. You see how understanding Classical Arabic helps clarify V60, if not, one would have been thrown into another tangent, but glory be to God, that uses the perfect wordings every time. And since we know thiyab to also be the cloths you wear at home, 2 plus 2 equals 4, it’s perfect. If Allah had used jilbab here again, the syntax wouldn’t have been right, but Allah used thiyab, here, and when one is about to have one’s siesta. Perfect. 😊👍

Q72 V9 states that 'And we used to naqu'd (sit) on some of its maqa'd (seats) to listen. But whoso listens now, finds a shooting star in ambush for him'. Q9 V83 also buttresses the idea of seat and sitting as the meaning of qa-a'da wherein Allah says '...Indeed, you were satisfied with qu-u'd (sitting) [at home] the first time, so q-u'd (sit) [now] with those who stay behind.' And so does Q9 V90, Q85 V6, Q50 V17 et al.

Part of the implications of understanding this verse this way is that, it means that the putting aside their thiyab only applies for when they are being qawai'd, when, for whatever reason – good health, party peddling and the likes – they leave the house, I think they would be required to don the khumur like every other muslim woman. Does this verse apply to wheelchair ridden muslim women? I think one can argue for that too, when they are at home, and if they also have no desire to get married; they can do away with their thiyab as is needed. Jilbab and khumur applies for when one leaves the house. I should state here that generally, the thiyab is the cloth now referred to as the thawb, and folks wear them outside the home, in fact, that is the norm now, but our exercise here is being true to its classical origin, so that if tomorrow, the thawb becomes the work cloth, it still wouldn't change how we were meant to have understood the words of Allah.

This then takes us to what may seem like a complex issue, but when one takes a double look, with Classical Arabic as a tool, one realizes that it isn't complex at all. V60 continues by saying that '...there is no blame upon them for putting aside their thiyab (outer garments) [but] not mutabarrijat (displaying) zeenat

(adornment). But to modestly refrain [from that] is better for them...’.

So, how do you put your thiyyab aside and yet not display your adornment, right? By translating mutabarrijat to ‘display’ here, as opposed to ‘yubdeena’ which was used twice in V31 above, and continuously translated as ‘display’ also, one is unsure how to understand the verse. We’ve looked at the word yubdeena above, but let’s take a look at it here again, so that we are able to contrast it with mutabarrijat. The root alphabets of yubdeena are ba, dal and wa, and 7 forms of it occurred 31 times in the Quran.

It means for something to appear, to be apparent, to be open, to be displayed, to manifest, to be plain, to be evident, to be disclosed, to show, and because the desert has this quality of being an open space, that one can see everything; the desert is also said to be ‘baduw’, and so is the desert dwellers – in fact, ‘bedouin’, that English word, is derived from it. So, someone that lives in an open space, vast land where all can be seen is called a bedouin.

As for mutabarrijat, its root alphabets are ba, ra and jim, and 3 forms of the word occurred 7 times in the Quran, and even as the name of Q85 (Suratul Buruj); tabarrajna twice, mutabarrijat once, and buruj 4 times. So, what does buruj mean? Buruj is said of something being high, prominent, elevated, and that’s why you find that it is used for castles as seen in Q4 V78; and also why it is translated to constellations in the skies as seen in Q15 V16. And so what is being prohibited here is not mere ‘display’, but the eye-catching, elevated, prominent, high end beautification of one’s zeenat, which, as we have seen can be parts of the body, or ornaments added on parts of the body.

Q33 V33 furthers this conversation where it says to the wives of the prophet pbuh to ‘...abide in your houses and do not tabarrajna (display) yourselves as [was] the tabarruj (display) of the former times of ignorance...’, before V53 of Q33 then instructed the hijab. What used to happen with respect to the women that stayed in their houses because of age, or for whatever reason was that they beautified themselves in a high end manner, buruj. It is said that they’d wear shirts of pearls, which aren’t sewn by the sides, and really, not covering anything. For context, below are some images of shirt of pearls I was able to find:



As you can see, some eye popping high end stuff. This was what Allah was referring to when Gę said to the wives of the prophet pbuh to ‘...not tabarrajna (display) yourselves as [was] the tabarruj (display) of the former times of ignorance...’, the times of ignorance indeed. I guess we are back to those times.

Now, when we read ‘...there is no blame upon them for putting aside their outer garments [but] not mutabarrijat (displaying)

zeenat (adornment)...’ we know that her zeenat, not necessarily her a’wrat will be on display, but it mustn’t be on display in a manner that will qualify as buruj. And Allah continued in that verse by saying ‘...But to modestly refrain [from that] is better for them...’.

I think she may be able to display her expensive jewelries though, hear me out. It’s the use of mim prefix to tabarrijat that’s giving me that idea; it’s a conjunctive pronoun, just as with the mim that prefixes Ahmad that gives us Muhammad, what it does is that it communicates a form of repetitive stance. So that Ahmad means the praised one, but Muhammad is not only praised, but will continue to be praised, and that he is also someone that continuously praises, it just gives any word that it comes as prefix to that excessive, extreme vibe.

Another example is Yunus, Allah referred to him in Q37 V143 as musabbiheen, from subh, as in SUBHanaLlah, but by adding the prefix mim to make musabbiheen, we know that he kept on doing the tasbih, I mean, what else will he be doing, in a fish? No time to be thinking of breakfast, lunch, dinner or when to do the dishes or run out for groceries; one will be in constant fear of what’s happening, what’s going to happen and the likes, and so he is musabbiheen, the only human so referred to in the Quran. The other time a form of that expression was used was with respect to the angels, and we know that those do the tasbih of Allah nonstop, Q37 V166 records the angels calling themselves musabbihun, and Q2 V30 records them saying that they declare the subh of Allah.

Anyway, back to mutabarrijat, it could be that they are allowed to

don their expensive apparels, but they shouldn't do it all the time. And of course, it shouldn't be provocative, or intend to excite lustfully, remember part of the condition of this seat-ridden woman is that she is not interested in marriage. Anyway, as for the 'ta' after mim and before barrijat, in simple terms, it serves as an exclamation mark, just as with taqrabu in wa la taqrabu zina; by adding the ta to qarib – which means to come close, Allah is adding emphasis on the distance we have to maintain from zina, that we shouldn't move close to it at all. If the ta wasn't added, it would still be a prohibition, but we won't get the alarming vibe, but with the ta, we know how serious of a prohibition it is.

And so adding that to buruj means that though buruj in itself is high end fashion or display, the ta adds another level to the display and fashion, and the mim emphasis not being one that does it constantly, and again, Allah continues the verse by saying '...But to modestly refrain [from that] is better for them...'.

So, obviously, because society doesn't consider what this aged woman may display beyond her hands and face as zoHar, is why Allah has made it permissible for her to do away with her thiyyab, albeit in a manner that doesn't flaunt extravagantly her Zeenat (finery, beauty, ornament), or in a manner that's immodest.

Whether the part that this menopausal woman can display may include her arm, legs up to her knee, neck – wrinkled or not, will depend on the person and in what society they live in. And Allah knows best.

It may be that she is having a great grandchild, and folks are coming over for the naming ceremony, and of course, she wants to look her best, so this one time, she does buruj, and maybe 2

more times before the year runs out, so that someone that's counting won't consider it excessive; but the moment it becomes an everyday affair, then one is entering the realm of mutabarrijat. And Allah knows best.

By the way, did you guys notice how V59 of Q33 says to put on Jalabeeb, V58 of Q24 talks about taking off Thiyab at particular times, and V60 of Q24 says to take off Thiyab? Does 58, 59 and 60 mean something? A pointer to the age that one may qualify to take off, maybe? 

Talking of buruj, remember the verse I quoted above about the wives of the prophet pbuh and buruj? '...abide in your houses and do not tabarrajna (display) yourselves as [was] the tabarruj (display) of the former times of ignorance...', one sees that this Q33 V33 didn't use the word hijab, this was just a don't tabarruj, even while in the house, and as we've come to see, the use of ta in both use conveys how strongly they are being told not to tabarruj. You little scholar you. 

As for the hijab, Q33 V53 must have been revealed after Q33 V33 because as we will see, hijab is actually a screen, a partition, not necessarily something you put on. Q33 V53 states, '...And when you ask [his wives] for something, ask them from behind a hijab (partition). That is purer for your hearts and their hearts...'. 2 forms of the word were used 8 times in the Quran; hijab 7 times, and mahjubun once.

Q7 V46 states that 'And between the two there shall be a hijab (partition)...', and Q17 V45 says that, 'And when you recite the Qur'an, We put between you and those who do not believe in the

Hereafter a concealed hijab (partition).’ From these, we see that the hijab is actually more of a structure, a partition, a barrier, screen, so that a curtain can constitute an hijab, and so can a fence, or any other material that makes sure that the form that is on its other side is not seen at all, not its shape, not its form. Even when the wives of the prophet pbuh would travel, they’d have to be in a carriage on or attached to the animal that’s being used to travel.

And as we see in V53 of Q33, the hijab was mandated for the wives of the prophet pbuh, not all Muslim women. The verse continues with more stipulations about the wives of the prophet pbuh with ‘...And it is not [conceivable or lawful] for you to harm the Messenger of Allah or to marry his wives after him, ever. Indeed, that would be in the sight of Allah an enormity.’, and we know that muslim women are allowed to remarry after their husbands die, or if they divorce. So, the ‘hijab’ only applies to the wives of the prophet pbuh, while the jilbab, thiyab and khumur applies to all muslim women.

If it wasn’t important, Allah could have used hijab for all of the instances where the woman’s veil was mentioned in all of these verses, but it is important. Allah is meticulous, the perfect grammarian, and uses the perfect words every time. Whether it be with the jilbab, khumur, thiyab, or the hijab, each of them were perfectly used, carefully placed to convey the message clearly and effectively. May Allah make us understand Ges words. Amin. 

Another reason why making a distinction between the hijab, and the khumur, and the other words we will be looking at is important is because it was a practice of some early Muslims in

the yoruba tribe of Nigeria, perhaps, they still exist in some remote parts in the yoruba-sphere or around the world, wherein wives, once married, are not seen again! Not in the market, not at family gatherings, not by other women, not anywhere, they are even shielded from their relatives too in the name of the ‘hijab’; whereas hijab, as we’ve seen, was only mentioned with respect to the wives of the prophet pbuh. And in the verse, we see that Allah expressly stated that they should not remarry after the prophet pbuh, but a muslim woman can remarry if she divorces her husband or if the husband dies, so the same rules doesn’t and shouldn’t apply, sorry.

So, now, you see how precise God is in Gęs wordings. You’ll also notice that Q33 V53 which has the word ‘Hijab’ in it is just a couple of verses before V59 which has the ‘Jalabeeb’ in it; so Allah could have totally repeated Hijab again in V59, but Gę chose to use the word Jalabeeb.

In fact, since we are here, we might as well, right? So, other than Jalabeeb, Khumur, Hijab, and Thiyab that were used as cloths in the Quran, I have found 6 more words that were used to refer to cloth, and they are libas, sarabeel, mudathir, sabaga, kiswa, and qamees, and as you must have guessed, each has its own nuance. So, briefly, so as not to make this extremely cumbersome, let’s delve into them too, shall we? 😊

Libas’s root alphabets are lam, ba and sin, it is said of something that mixes with the other, so perfectly mixed, that you cannot differentiate it from the other; blends perfectly; becomes one with it; hides the other; and so people that look at it are in doubt as to which is which, this is libas.

Q2 V42 says not to ‘...talbisu (mix) truth with falsehood...’. Q6 V9 says ‘if We had made him [the Messenger] an angel, We would still have made him [in the shape of] a human being, and labasna (confused) for them the thing which they are now yalbisu (confusing) for themselves’. Q50 V15 says ‘...they are in labsin (doubt) concerning a new creation.’

And so when Q2 V187 says about husbands and wives being libas for each other when Gę said ‘...They are libas (clothing) for you and you are libas (clothing) for them...’, which some have translated to ‘blanket’; in whatever form one finds it as a piece of cloth; we know now that it is used when having one or all that have been written above in mind, and more. As part of what it can mean here is that a couple should be one, so much so that people aren’t able to split them apart. They should hide their ‘bearable’ faults from the world just as cloths hide one’s bodily faults, and so on and so forth. And the peace of mind from trusting the other to protect you, and not slander you, or tell your secrets, is also part of its meaning.

So when we see in Q21 V80 that ‘And We taught him the fashioning of labus (coats of armor) to protect you from your enemy in battle...’, you now know why Allah chose to use libas here rather than thiyab or julub, right? Since libas means to hide also, one is able to hide one’s self behind the armor as a means of protection, one is able to use it to camouflage. Hehe! I love the Quran.  Allah ends that verse with ‘...So will you then be grateful?’

Now let’s move to Sarabeel, its root alphabets are sin, ra, ba, and

lam, one of the very few words that have 4 root alphabets, all others have 3 alphabets. But it made up for its lack of 3-ness in the Quran, where it appeared only 3 times; Q16 V81 twice, and in Q14 V50 once.

As for its meaning, let's look into those verses; Q16 V81 says 'And Allah has made for you, from that which He has created, shadows and has made for you from the mountains, shelters and has made for you sarabeel (garments) which protect you from the heat and sarabeel (garments) which protect you from your [enemy in] battle. Thus does He complete His favor upon you that you might submit [to Him].'

Before quoting Q14 V50, what you'll realize from Q16 V81 right away is that it also 'protects in battle', and if you remember, I quoted Q21 V80 that says about libas that it 'protect you from your enemy in battle...', so how do we reconcile these translations? The answer is in the nature of their being; while libas is able to make one evade attack with its blending qualities, sarabeel aims at actual protection from harm, and so a better translation would be 'coats of mail' or 'armor' as some other translators have translated it. So, whether it's the cloths that protects you from heat (I didn't know those exists, but apparently, some reduce up to 95% of radiant heat), or the body armors that actually protects one's physical body, they both have that quality of protecting the body from harm, unlike libas in our example that's more of camouflaging, helping one evade attackers and the likes.

As for Q14 V50, it says about the people of hell that 'Their sarabeel (garments) of qatira (liquid pitch) and their faces covered

by the Fire'; qatira has been translated to mean tar, trickling tar, molten pitch, liquid pitch, and from what we know of sarabeel being 'protecting from harm', that tells us that their 'armor' will be harmful in itself, but in a way, will be keeping the body from being engulfed in fire as their faces will be engulfed. May Allah protect us, our loved ones, and the entire muslim ummah from the first to the last, from being an inmate of hell. Amin. Tar, mehn, that's the stuff used to 'tar' roads, that stuff absorbs heat, enough heat to burn one's sole on a hot day, and that's what the cloths of the inhabitants of hell will be made from. May Allah protect us. Amin. 

Now, let's move to mudathir, its root alphabets are dal, tha and ra, and it is said of something being enormous, enormous wealth, unbounded riches. A tree is said to be dathir when the tree brings out new leaves and branches. Dathir is also said of when things accumulate, layer upon layer; and that's why you find that it is translated to 'wrap' in some translations of Q74 V1, the only place that it appears in the Quran. And from what we understand of the word now, we can tell that it must have been a lot of cloths that the prophet pbuh wrapped himself in, layers upon layers, trying to shield himself from what had 'attacked' him. And from the Mim prefixing it, we know that he pbuh must have been so covering continuously and repeatedly.

Sabaga, its root alphabets are sin, ba and gain, and 2 forms occurred once each, asbaga, and sabigat. And with respect to garments, it means to be long and overflowing; ease of living, otherwise it means to be abundant, as we see in Q31 V20 that says that '...and He has asbaga (lavished) on you His bounties, apparent and hidden...', and with respect to cloths, Q34 V11 says

that “[saying, to him] ‘Make sabigat (full-length coats of mail), and measure well the links...’, and knowing that it also means to be long, overflowing, put together with full-length, we see how it contrasts with dathir that its abundance is one that’s built on being ‘layered’ unlike sabag that its abundance has to do with its ‘overflowing length’ qualities.

As for Kiswa, its root alphabets are kef, sin and waw, and kiswa is said of clothing, like the verb, the idea of being clothed. Q4 V5 talks about not giving your money to someone you think won’t know how to spend it, but that one should still ‘clothe them and speak to them words of appropriate kindness.’ Q5 V89 talks about clothing 10 people as a means of expiation for an unfulfilled oath. And in Q23 V14, Allah talks about clothing the bones with flesh, so that our skin is a kind of kiswa too. Anyway, those are just some few examples of how kiswa was used in the Quran, and we see that it has that verb vibe, rather than a noun nuance; no specifics as to what it should cover, when it should be worn, and the likes.

Lastly now, let’s move on to Qamees, it only appeared in this one form 6 times in the Quran, and all 6 times was with respect to Yusuf. Qamees is said to mean a shirt, garment, inner garment, dress, gown, to wear a shirt, to quake, to be jumpy, to be agile, to gallop, to jump, to hop, to move. Qamees is said when the waves rock the boat, it is also said of a horse when it raises its forelegs together and then hits them together on the ground, it is also said of the animal which starts jumping with the rider on its back, and of an animal that jumps too much, and lastly, it is said of a camel disease which makes the camel restless and it can not stand still.

I hope that paints a picture of something not being still, something that moves back and forth, up and down and the likes. It is interesting to note that, somehow, the 6 times that the qamees was mentioned in the Quran, they seem to be on the move in one form or another; Q12 V18 talks about when Yusuf's siblings brought his qamees to their father with the wolf's blood; V25 talks about the wife of the chief tearing his qamees; V26 talks about if the qamees was torn from the front, and V27 talks about it being torn from the back; V28 talks about the husband examining the qamees with his eyes, and V93 talks about Yusuf giving his qamees out.

So we see that it was in the hands of his siblings, and then in the hands of the woman that tore it, and then in the hands of the husband, and then in his hands. We don't know for sure in whose hands it was in V26 and V27, but Allah gave it that back and forth quality by mentioning the front of the shirt in V26, and its back in V27; thereby emphasizing why qamees was used to refer to the shirt, because the shirt kept moving, like the waves to the boat, like the horse to its rider, the restless animal, and so on and so forth. None of the other words we've looked at would have been appropriately fitting.

In fact, the theme of restlessness, back and forth-ness, and up and down-ness wasn't limited to the physical touch of the cloth, but also in how it was being referred to in the Quran. V18 has it as QameesiHi, V25 has it as QameesoHu, V26 and V27 has it as QameesuHu, V28 has it as QameesoHu and V93 has it as QameesiY. So that it appeared differently when it was with his siblings in V18; it appeared the same way when it was with the husband and the wife in V25 and V28, differently, but the same

way when it was being adjudicated upon in V26 and V27; and ultimately, differently, when he was giving it out. Now, we see the words too hopping, jumping, moving, just as the shirt has been moving, hopping and jumping. Allahu Akbar! Did I mention how much I love Allah's words already? Hehe! 😊😊

In fact, with the way Classical Arabic works, words that can mean cloths can be endless; for instance, a form of 'Salam' can be created to mean a shirt, and what we will deduce from that is that the cloth gives peace, or it's a cloth that's meant to signify peace. I hope you understand how these deductions work now, and we are able to appreciate how specific Allah meant for the words Ge used to refer to the veil in the Quran. If we don't take the actual words into consideration, we'll have to resort to saying one verse abrogated the other, as some scholars have said, or start applying what was meant for the wives of the prophet pbuh to all muslim women, as pretty much most of the muslim world is doing now. I pray Allah makes you understand this deeper than I have understood it, and make it sow a seed of love for Allah's words in your heart. Amin. 🌸

And I will end this with what Allah ended 24 V31 with when Ge said to all believers, 'And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed.', because Ge knows that from V30 that tells the men to lower their gaze, to V31 that says the same to women, and adds how the woman should dress; we will falter in carrying out these injunctions, so Ge tells us to repent, and that we should always remember to repent to Allah SWT. May Allah accept our repentance, and grant us all we need to follow Ges injunctions. Amin. 🌸

I intend to end this piece by highlighting the fact that I am a male, and I cannot begin to understand the complexities surrounding the veil; each person has a unique situation, and they should pace themselves as they deem best in accordance to their sincerity to Allah, and not the pressure society puts on them. You alone will stand before Allah, let your sincerity come from within. 

What Allah asks of us is *tqā'*, right? As in Q47 V33 wherein Allah says, *athee u'llaha wa athee u'r rasul*, which is popularly translated to 'obey Allah and obey the Messenger'. What this translation fails to convey is the Classical Arabic understanding of the word *tqā'*, which is translated to 'obey' or 'obedience'. That phrase was reiterated in the Quran tens of times, and so let's take a quick look at it before we draw the curtain on this, shall we?  See what I did there? Curtain, because Hijab means curtain, and we are talking about the veil, get it? 

Anyway, the root alphabets are *to*, *waw* and *ain*, and 10 forms of it occurred a total of 128 times in the Quran. And *tqā'* is said of when a fruit falls from a tree by itself after having been ripe, this is *tqā'*, and it is this falling that is regarded as obedience.

When we apply that to a human following instructions, what it means is that we have to be 'ripe' to follow the said instructions. The opposite to *tqā'* is *kiraHa*, which classically means to pluck a fruit either by using a stick, stone, pulling or just twisting the hell out of it till it falls; that's why *la ikraHa fi deen* in Q2 V256 is translated to 'no compulsion in religion'. So that *kiraHa* is said to be compulsion, forcing, unwillingness and the likes. Q41 V11, Q3 V83, Q9 V53 et al, are some of the examples of the places Allah used both words side by side to be word and opposite.

So, unlike what is happening in the world today where people and governments are forcing women to wear the khimar, what Allah expects from us is to willingly, out of the heaviness of one's heart as in the heaviness of the fruit, one obeys, one falls, in submission. When one is deprived of the conviction that comes before one falling willfully, one is bereft of the wisdom, and perhaps, the rewards that'll come with willful submission; and ultimately, one is bereft of the will to continue the practice when eyes are not looking.

Talking of willful submission; Muslim, is translated to submission to the will of almighty Allah, right? Knowing that the root of the word is Salam, peace, and the mim is a prefix; the crux of the submission must be a peaceful one, not forced. We cannot force Islam on people, what they have won't be Islam, and what we have won't be reward.

Allah was clear with Ges mandate to the prophet pbuh when Ge said in Q4 V80 that, "He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah; but those who turn away - We have not sent you over them as a guardian." And in Q64 V12, wherein Allah said "And obey Allah and obey the Messenger. But if you turn away, then Our Messenger is responsible only for the clear conveying of the Message." So, the prophet cannot guide, and his only mandate is to convey the message, how much more we, not being communicated to by Jibril.

i.

i have killed my ego for you,

i have killed my ego for you,  
i have killed my ego for you,  
not for god, not him, not for the creator  
of the heavens, the planets, and all  
that's between them, but for you,  
only for you have i killed my ego.

ii.

now that i have done that,  
now that i have done all that you command,  
all i ask for is that you do not sully the dead;

do not pour dirt  
on the grieving soul of a dead ego

here, i lay, dead,  
and at peace with my death.

This, this poem, is for the women forced to wear the khimar in afghanistan, iran and everywhere around the world; their souls probably articulating those words without saying them. Allah is the One that guides, and forcing guidance on anyone isn't guidance, Q28 V56 was clear when it said, "Indeed, [O Muhammad], you do not guide whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He is most knowing of the [rightly] guided." Thus, the best anyone can do is to communicate these values, and pray that the best happens.

May Allah ease our affairs, and the affairs of Muslims around the world. Amin. May Allah make us part of those that will do willful obedience to Ges commands. Amin.

I was inspired to write this exegesis after reading a book of fiction by Muti'ah Badruddeen titled [Rekiya and Z](#). The author is a fully veiled medical doctor that practices in Saudi Arabia. And I couldn't help but notice the dynamics of the veil in the said book.

The theme of the veil ranged from when it is worn, how it is worn, why it is worn, where it is worn, what it constitutes, and the list goes on. In fact, the book in one instance looked into how the architecture of home fencing can actually aid adherence to veiling even in one's home. I thought that was interesting. 😊

And so I thought to delve into what the verses on the subject says in light of the classical arabic that was spoken at the time as opposed to standard modern arabic as it is spoken and understood today. And hopefully, the conversation continues with this.

Each society can use this as a framework to create its own khumur, for instance. Just as a Nigerian can create a khumur from ankara material, an American can create khumur from suit material, a Ghanian can create khumur from kente material, and cultures around the world can create their khumurs in a way that satisfies the terms of the verses, and yet, autochthonous in its entirety.

Assallamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

### **ZIHAR:**

### **Q58 V1 ON THE PRESTIGIOUS PLACE OF WOMEN IN ISLAM.**

Q58 V1 starts by stating that ‘Allah has heard the speech of the one that argued (tujadiluka) with you concerning her husband and directs her complaints to Allah’, and so continues the verse.

The word we will be looking at in this piece is jadil; we will be

looking at what it means, and why Allah decided to not only tolerate jadil when it happened with the prophet, but went ahead to levy punishment on husbands or spouses that do such acts as the one that brought the woman to disputing with the prophet.

Tujadiluka, the ta before it is more or less a preposition, and it is for emphasis. As in when one adds ta to Allah when one says wa Llahi! ta Llahi! thuma bi Llahi! Saying wa Llahi is enough to swear by Allah, but perhaps the swearer feels that the person isn't moved then he adds ta to Allah's name to show that he is serious. I often say one should just go ahead and believe anyone that decides to add ta Llahi to their swear even before they add 'thuma bi Llahi' out of reverence to Allah even if one thinks they aren't saying the truth. That would be between the person and Allah that they've brought into the conviction twice.

Anyway, how does this tally with jadil? It was added to jadil so that a picture of how fierce the argument between this woman and the prophet pbuh must have been. So that we know the weight of the said argument between the woman and the prophet pbuh, and in the sight of Allah.

As for the word jadil, its root alphabets are jim, dal and lam, and 3 forms of the word occurred a total of 29 times in the Quran; jadala, jadal and jidal. And it means to braid, to twist, to twist tightly, and so a rope is called jadil. And it is from this imagery that it has come to mean to be well built, to knock down, to dispute, to argue in a contentious manner, to debate.

It is important to note this meaning because firstly, in Q49 V2, Allah said to the Mumin not to raise their voices above that of the

Prophet or be loud with him in speech or else all of their good deeds could be wiped out without them perceiving it, and in V1 of the same Surah, Allah says not to put ourselves or our desires before that of the prophet pbuh.

And here, we have a woman arguing with the prophet pbuh, and no, she wasn't reprimanded in the slightest, in fact, her debate was made eternal. The debate was one that Allah even referred to as tahawur, which was translated to dialogue. The root alphabets of hawar are ha, waw and ra, and 5 forms of the word occurred 13 times in the Quran. Though the word is translated to 'dialogue', it classically means a circle, to encircle, to return to, the roundness of anything; and any conversation, debate, dialogue, that keeps going round and round in circles without the other budging is called hawar.

And so we are made to realize the nature of the said dialogue, that it was one that both parties weren't letting go of their stands. Going back to Jadil now, I'm reminded of another place the word jadil was used.

In Q11 V74, Allah said Ibrahim argued (jadil) with the angels on behalf of the people of Lut, and he would not back off until the angels then told him that this was Allah's command. Though his request in the argument was not granted, Allah praised him in V75 that followed.

Secondly, this jadil that she did is important because almost every other mention of jadil in the Quran that involves a prophet and the people they've been sent to; those people were eventually destroyed. That is true of the people of Noah in Q11 V32, and

they were eventually drowned. And in Q40 V5, Allah says ‘the people of Noah and other groups after them denied Our signs before these people, and every nation strove to seize their messenger, and disputed (jadil) by means of false arguments that they might rebut the truth thereby. Then I seized them, and how terrible was my retribution!’

So it seems that what this woman did was pretty brave. I’m also reminded of that one time that Umar ra when he was the leader of the Muslims said when he saw this woman that argued with the prophet pbuh. She advised him on and on until one of his companions asked why he would leave so and so to come to her, to which Umar answered, “Woe to you! Do you not know who this is?” and he said, “This is a woman whose complaint Allah listened to from above the seven heavens: this is Khawla bint Tha’labah. By Allah, if she did not leave me until night fell, I would not tell her to leave until she had got what she came for, unless the time for prayer came, in which case I would pray, and then come back to her until she had got what she came for.”

I’m writing all these not just to praise the woman, but to try to paint a picture of how important Allah deemed the matter she brought forth that Allah would rather answer her complaints than ignore or reprimand her.

Now that we are here, I will try to narrate the incident that brought about the situation in this surah. This was an incident that happened between Khuwaylah bint Tha’labah and her husband ‘Aws bin Somit. ‘Aws, the husband came in one day and argued with her about something, and out of anger said, ‘you are like my mother’s back to me’.

He then left the house, sat with some of his people, and then came back in and wanted to have sexual intercourse with her. To which she refused and said 'No, by the One in Whose Hand is the soul of Khuwaylah! You will not have your way with me after you said what you said, until Allah and His messenger issue judgment about our case'.

He wanted to have his way regardless of what she said, and so she pushed him away from herself, went to one of the neighbors' and borrowed a garment from her and went to the Messenger pbuh. And she told him of what happened to which the prophet said that her husband was an old man, and so she should have taqwa of Allah regarding him. She and the prophet would go back and forth, and when she saw that the prophet won't yield, and won't pronounce any punishment on 'Aws, she faced the skies and made her complaints to Allah.

And before she left, she said she saw the prophet feel the heaviness and hardship he usually feels when revelation was being revealed to him, and then said to her, 'O Khuwaylah! Allah has revealed something about you and your spouse'. And then he recited the verses of suratul mujadilah.

'Aws was an old man at this point, and Khuwaylah was relatively old too. In the narration of A'ishah ra about the incident, she said Khuwaylah said 'O Allah's messenger! He spent my wealth, exhausted my youth and my womb bore abundantly for him. When I became old, unable to bear children, he pronounced the zihar on me! O Allah! I complain to you.' Soon after, revelation came down.

You see, in the time before Islam, to say to one's spouse that they are like one's mother's back to one is a means of divorcing the said spouse. This, coupled with the content of the argument that the wife and husband had was what convinced Khuwaylah that there is no way that something won't be said of this by Allah and the Messenger. I'm reminded of the latin maxim *ubi jus ibi remedium*, which means whenever there is a wrong, there must be a remedy.

Anyway, the saying that one's spouse is like one's mother's back is what is now called Zihar. I won't be going into Zihar here, but should be doing that in the next works that will come after this. Here, I want to focus on the prestige that Allah has placed on this woman, and by extension all women, by the revelation of this surah.

This surah, in the entire Quran happens to be the only surah that Allah's name is mentioned in each verse. Allah could have chosen any other surah to bestow this honor, but it is in showing the esteem that Ḡe puts the women folk, that Ḡe decides to bestow this honor in a surah dedicated to the woman that argued.

This 'Name of Allah and Woman' theme reminds me of an Hadith Quds by Allah where Ḡe said, 'I am God, Allah, and I am the Merciful. I created the womb (rahm), and I have [given] it a name derived from My own name.' So, again, we see how Allah intertwines Ḡe's name and the Women by way of her womb. The same sentiment was expressed in Q4 V1, and in Q47 V22; in the latter, cutting off with the womb was even likened to disbelief.

The Prophet pbuh said, “The word ‘Ar-Rahm (womb) derives its name from Ar-Rahman (i.e., one of the names of Allah) and Allah said: ‘I will keep good relation with the one who will keep good relation with you, and sever the relation with him who will sever the relation with you’.

To maintain good relations with one’s spouse is definitely a plus, and to sever such relations can be a devastating one as we will soon see when we start exploring zihar and the punishments that comes with it. To sever relations to what issues forth from the womb can only start by one’s demeanor towards the one that carries the womb in the first place, hence why one must treat women with such honor, and why Allah honors them. In Surahs like Nisaa, Maryam, Mumtahanah, Mujadilah and the likes, where surahs were named after women, they continue to be honored in the Islamic traditions.

I have written about how Q33 V59 basically commands Muslim men to protect women’s rights in the first piece in this book. And with the emphasis Allah is placing on women here, and in other verses and even surahs in the Quran, it is obvious that Allah wishes to entrench this value of respect to women.

Instead, what we find is that people get sad when they are given news of a female child, a slight that Allah condemned when Ge said in Q16 V58 and V59 that, ‘And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. He hides himself from the people because of the ill of which he has been informed. Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Unquestionably, evil is what they decide.’

And Allah in Q42 V49 and V50 would mention the female child first in mentioning the order Gẹ gives children; that in a way states the importance of the female child, and the prestige they must occupy in our hearts where Gẹ said ‘To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; He creates what He wills. He gives to whom He wills female [children], and He gives to whom He wills males. Or He makes them [both] males and females, and He renders whom He wills barren. Indeed, He is Knowing and Competent.’

But what shayton does is to make sure that we dislike what Allah likes, and by so doing, he seeks ways to belittle, destroy and decimate what Allah expects us to treasure. We see that in the way the Arabs used to bury their daughters before Islam, a practice still prevalent in some parts of Asia especially in India today. It is present in the way the world now tries to make sure women are paid less for doing the same work, in the way they make sure they are uneducated, in the way they are made properties in their own homes, in the way they are basically enslaved, and made to suffer for no other reason other than the fact that they’ve come to this world as females.

This disrespect for women permeates all cultures of the world. It is alive in the way the f word is accompanied with mother. It is alive in the genre of comedy dubbed ‘mama jokes’. Even in the Yoruba culture that I am familiar with, the mere mention of mother (Iya) is termed an abusive word. If one were to say to someone Iya ẹ (your mother), that’s enough for the victim to well up if she or he can’t fight the abuser, or start a fight if they can. Iyalaya ẹ or just the opening of one’s palm and facing it to

someone else is another way of abusing the victim's mother.

All of these acts that belittle women by way of discrimination, stereotyping and the likes, are acts that shouldn't become of a Muslim.

The prophet pbuh is reported to have said 'whoever has three daughters and he accommodates them, show mercy toward them, and supports them, Paradise is definitely guaranteed for him', someone then asked 'what if they are two daughters only', and he said the reward applies to one with two daughters too. And some of those present while this was happening said had someone asked if one had a daughter too, he would have told them that the reward would apply to them too.

So, here, with mujadila, we realize that the reason she was able to get away with what she did was not only because of how heinous the act committed on her was, but was perhaps mainly because of the honor and prestige Allah has placed on women, so that He even names a part of her after Himself. And it is in being a believer that one honors what Allah has honored, and dislike what Allah has disliked.

It is only important that the vessel that births the continuation of the tradition should not only be protected, but must be respected by all means.

It is with this introduction that we go into Zihar proper in the next piece inshaAllah.

## **THE MEANING OF ZIHAR VIS-À-VIS Q58 V2.**

Now to V2 of Q58, in it, Allah shows disdain for doing Zihar, and states how much of a vice it is. Zihar, also known as the practice of saying you are like my mother's back to me, has its root alphabets as zo, Hao, and ra. And 12 forms of the word were used 59 times in the Quran.

ZiHar is said of the extra camel that is taken along in case it is needed, and so its purpose is not primary or germane, it is a secondary and unimportant one if at all.

Where and when one knows that a camel is enough to bring along for the task at hand, but brings along two camels; the second camel is ziHar. It would get nothing, it's just tagged along, perhaps just for show off, perhaps just for unforeseen circumstance if such need arises, perhaps just to punish the said camel, she is carried along without use or purpose. For whatever reason that the herder decides to bring along the second behind the 'back' of the first, she is brought along and she is known as ziHar.

And so from that idea flows the meaning of ziHar to mean back, rear, backer, to back up, to neglect, to turn one's back on, to carry on one's back, outside, exterior, external, and the list goes on and on depending on the context the word is used.

So in pre-Islamic Arabia, when one said to his spouse that she is now like his mother's back to him, it means that she has basically become forbidden for him just as his mother's back is forbidden for him. For context; if we remember in the piece before this, Khuwaylah spoke of how he said because she cannot bear children anymore, so 'no point' in having sexual intercourse with her; she's gotten old, and so she's not as beautiful, and she's not as strong to trade as she used to in her youth and all. And so, to him, or any of the bedouin that declared ziHar on their women, there is no point in remaining married to the woman; and so going back to the classical meaning of the word; they aren't important,

germane, or priority. No need to prioritize their needs, they are just a tag along if anything.

And so from this understanding, one realizes the place Khuwaylah was coming from in a cultural and ethical front. She wasn't working from an established fiqh perspective, but she was sure that this was a wrong, and if no law has been made about it, one must be made; and she was right.

Now, in most translations, they say 'pronounce' even though no word is added to 'ziHar' to suggest the limitation of ziHar to 'pronouncements', because as we have seen through understanding how ziHar came to be, it need not be pronounced for it to be exemplified. One need not pronounce ziHar for one to be guilty of ziHar. The voice from our mouth is as loud as that from our actions; action speaks louder than words as they say.

The use of the word 'ziHar' is also important in that Allah could have stated expressly that "the 'saying' that your woman is like your mother's back to you is wrong", but Allah knows that that would be culture and era restrictive. So Allah used the word ziHar so that no matter the place and time, if a husband expresses to his woman what will qualify as ziHar as we've classically described above, it will be ziHar.

But of course, vocalizing ziHar in whatever way one does can be said to be one of the ways one expresses ziHar, and can be easily proven than acting ziHar towards one's woman.

So it is enough that one treats one's spouse in a manner that they feel that they are not prioritized. The Prioritization Test can be

fulfilled whether or not the husband or man has another woman in mind, or just decrying the situation that he is in.

This is evident in the fact that though 'Aws at the time he was saying all that he was saying did not mean it to divorce her, the punishment for making such pronouncement was still revealed, and he was expected to carry them out. If mere pronouncement was enough to run foul of ziHar, how much more when one acts it out in the way one treats their spouse.

I mean, she tried to leave the house, but he tried to stop her, so that she had to push him, him being old and all, and she had to go to a neighbor's house to get cloths to wear so that she could go report the situation to the prophet pbuh. So his vocal declaration wasn't based on conviction, he was just frustrated at the time of the speech.

Perhaps, you've not noticed my use of 'woman' so far, but I will make it plain. So, on studying these verses on ziHar, I was faced with the question of can a wife do ziHar on or to her husband? And I feel that the answers are in the first and second verses of this surah. In that when Allah talked about the husband in V1, Allah referred to him as *zawj* (spouse), but when Allah talked about the wife in V2 and subsequently, Allah used the word *Nisaa* (woman) instead of *zawj*.

To refer to the husband as *zawj*, a spouse is true because as we will see when the prophet started stating the punishments, from freeing a slave to fasting 60 days consecutively, she was in her husband's corner and pleading on his behalf; so all she did was not because she wasn't in love with him anymore, but she knew it

can't be right to treat one's spouse the way he treated her. So to call him a spouse is true.

But in mentioning Nisaa instead of zawj for the woman, Allah is making it obvious that to the husband, at least during the time he was saying what he said, and having said what he said; she is now just a woman to him and not necessarily a spouse. And this breath was carried along in the verses that comes after it in that Allah said before the husband can touch her again, he would have to carry out the atonement, so in essence saying though she's not been divorced, she's not your spouse either – she is in a State of ZiHar.

But from a fiqh stand point, one can say that the choice of words was so expressed because of the circumstance of the case, and so if the man is on the receiving end, he'd be the man, and the woman would be the spouse. Perhaps there can even be a man and woman dynamic in which both parties have to execute the atonement to be able to leave the State of ZiHar. 

For I think to limit ziHar to just when the husband declares it on his woman, may not only be unjust, but will also go against some rulings that were revealed with male pronouns, but still applies to both genders, and of all ages. And Allah knows best.

But we'll leave that for the Judges and the scholars to decide, but here, now, let's deal with the dynamic of husband and woman, which will then be the framework that can be used for every other dynamic that may come forth whether wife and man, or man and woman.

So, irrespective of language, literary expression, time, era, action, demeanor or state a husband expresses ziHar towards his woman, it will hold as such. And that is when she ‘rightfully’ feels, whether through the husband’s tongue or action, that she is being reduced to nothing, to being useless, to being ignored; in a manner that is tantamount to being divorced, then this is ziHar.

I wrote ‘rightfully’ above because, especially with actions, which can be ambiguous and equivocal, it has to be one that no other meaning can be derived from it other than ziHar. For instance, a poor husband cannot be expected to afford something beyond his means, and the wife cannot decide that she is being ziHar-d, hence my use of ‘rightfully’.

Anyway, if she feels that she is just being carried along as cosmetic, and reduced to nothing, in a way that is tantamount to divorce; if the said husband then decides to want to have his way with the said woman, the said husband must carry out one of the atonements outlined in the verses that follows.

If we go by the sabab (historical context) in which these verses were revealed, the said woman can even leave the house pending the time the matter is decided, and when it is decided, she may return to the house depending on the circumstances of the case, and pending the time he administers the atonement, he won’t be able to ‘touch’ her. We will get into details of what ‘touch’ means and entails in later works inshaAllah.

So, husbands, be careful, the ziHar-d woman’s voice is being heard by Allah. May Allah save us from declaring ziHar on our spouses knowingly or unknowingly. Amin. And may Allah make

us loving and caring to our spouses. Amin.

Can a husband conclude that he has done ziHar on his spouse even if the spouse doesn't know or agree that the said husband has done ziHar on her? Thus, must the wife be the one that declares ziHar has been done on her, or can someone else who has witnessed the ziHar being done declare ziHar? Answers to these questions and more are questions that will depend on the circumstances of the case.

## **MEANING OF MUNKAR.**

Having dealt with ziHar, Allah then proceeded to call it a munkar and a zuwra. Munkar is what we will be able to work on here, zuwra should be next after that.

Munkara mminal qawl, though translated as ‘objectionable statement’, is more closer in meaning to ‘particularly hurtful thing to say’ than mere ‘objectionable’ as we will see when we dive deep into what it means.

The root alphabets of the word are nun, kef and ra. The mim before it is a conjunctive pronoun which gives the nakara a character of continuity that persists in the person ziHar is being done to.

11 forms of nakr occurred a total of 37 times in the Quran, and it means to be discerning, cunning, denial, disown, to be ignorant of something, to fail to recognize. We find this expression particularly rich when we take a look at Q27 V41 wherein Sulaimon told the Jinns to ‘disguise (nakir) for her her throne...’. So there is a sense of alteration, for something to not be easily recognizable. And that is particularly crucial when one realizes that munkar is actually used as an opposite to ma’ruf.

As in Q3 V110 where Allah said ‘...tamaruna bil ma’rufi wa tanHawna a’nil munkar...’ which is colloquially translated as ‘enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong’. Ma’ruf’s mim is also a conjunctive pronoun, and so the root alphabets are ain, ra, and faf. Without going deep into a’rf, I will relate one instance to show how it is a perfect opposite to nakr, since, as we’ve seen, it means for something to be disguised, or altered in a way that the discerning mind should not be able to recognize.

Prophet Yusuf, in Q12 V58 when his brothers went to him for their supplies unbeknownst to them that he is Yusuf that they

threw down a well years ago, Allah said, ‘and the brothers of Joseph came [seeking food], and they entered upon him; and he recognized (a’rafa) them, but he was to them unknown (nkir)’.

So we see both words being used as opposites again in the story of Yusuf, a’raf and nkir. Though ma’ruf means ‘good’, so does a handful of words in the Arabic literature, part of which includes hasan, khayr and the list goes on. But classically, a good act is said to be ma’ruf if the said good act is done based on one’s ‘recognition’ that the receiver likes the act done. In other words, giving someone a gift is good, but giving them a gift that you know, recognize, based on prior knowledge, that they particularly like, that would be ma’ruf.

Before going into munkar, it will be amiss of me not to mention that in Q4 V19 and other verses on the subject of marriage and divorce like Q65 V4 and V6; Q2 V228, V229, V231, V232, and V233; Allah commanded that husbands must do ma’ruf to their wives within their marriage, and even when they are in the waiting period and about to be divorced. Ma’ruf here and there, sprinkled enough for everyone to see. In fact, of the 41 times that ma’ruf was mentioned in the Quran, 21 of them were with respect to spousal relations, that’s a whooping 51 percent. Though a difficult thing to do at that time – in the case of someone awaiting divorce – it may be that it is in doing this ‘particularly good thing’ that your spouse likes that your heart and her heart will soften towards each other and you two decide to stay married. As Allah said in Q41 V34 that ‘...repel evil by that which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.’

That written, I digress, now let's use the knowledge of what we know now to understand what is meant when Allah called ziHar a munkar. Did you see what I did there? 'Using the knowledge of what we know', recognize? A'rf? #PunRich

Anyway, this means that it is not just an objectionable thing to say, it is to say something that you know that they won't like. Custommade for them to be hurtful. So the flavor that munkar adds to the despicable nature of the act is that it is one that the husband knows will hurt the woman. And as Q3 V110 says, we should 'forbid munkar', we shouldn't be doing munkar, whether to one's spouse – whom we've been enjoined to do ma'ruf to – or to anyone.

Though not every objectionable thing one says will qualify as munkar, every munkar will be objectionable. And though not all munkar will qualify as ziHar, all ziHar will qualify as munkar. In the Q4 V19 that I quoted above, Allah said '...and live with them with ma'ruf...'.

May Allah make it easy for spouses to live with one another with ma'ruf. Amin. And may Allah make it easy for spouses to stay away from munkar. Amin.

## **MEANING OF ZUWR, AND ITS DUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH QARD.**

So, Allah said what they have said is munkar, and Zuwr. Having looked into what munkar means, it's time to look into what zuwr means also. Zain, waw and ra are the root alphabets, and it's one of those words that didn't occur much in the Quran. 3 forms of

the word appeared a total of 6 times in the Quran; zurtum once, ttazowar once and zuwr 4 times.

Zuwr is said to mean the center or upper part of the chest where the bone confluence, it's also said to mean cleavage, to twist, to lean toward something, to lean to one side, paying a visit, visitor, to meet, to sight, perjuring etc. So how does one make a wholesome sense of all of these definitions? Let's start with what we know of the word from the Quran.

Of the 6 verses that talks about zuwr, 4 of them are used in the sense that it is used here, as in the name of a vice, and so character isn't given to the word per se. And those are Q58 V2, Q22 V30, Q25 V4 and V72. And hopefully, by the end of this piece, we will be able to attach an imagery to what it means, and how it is different from every other word translated to 'falsehood' in the Quran.

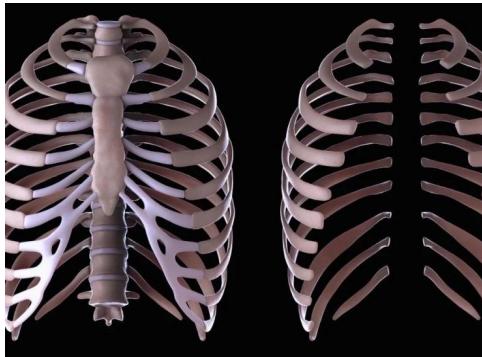
As for the next 2 verses, Q18 V17 and Q102 V2; by the way, you've probably noticed that Q18 V17 is the only citation that doesn't have the number 2 in it, and I think I know why, hopefully, I will get back to what may seem to be the reason at the end of this piece.

So, Q18 V17 uses it to mean 'inclining away' from the cave, and Q102 V2 uses it to mean 'visit' the grave. It is in this verbal usage that we are now able to go back to the list of expressions that zuwr is said to mean. By the way, did you notice that while the former is doing what it is doing to make sure some folks stay in a dead-but-not-dead state, the latter is warning of death; a duality already?

So, zuwr, classically, is said to be the center or upper part of the chest where the bone confluence, which in human anatomy is called the sternum. And what do we now know about the sternum? Without getting too physiologically technical, simply put, it is where the ribs converge. So, the ribs start from the spinal cord, makes a turn by our sides, and then meets up at the sternum, the flatness in the middle of our chest. And that's why part of the meaning of zuwr is cleavage, and why part of its meaning is 'twist'. Following so far? Cool.

And because all of the ribs meet up at the sternum with the help of the costal cartilages whether the ribs are at the upper or lower part of the torso; zuwr also came to mean to lean, to lean towards, to meet, to visit, visitor, to sight and such other expressions that means that.

But how does all of these help us to understand why it is also used to express falsehood, perjury, and the likes? We'll have to go back to the human anatomy again for that.



You see, the ribs start from the spine, right? The spine's way is straight, but while on its straight path, some un-ossified cartilages decide to 'branch out'; some parts of it will then become ossified, and some won't be ossified. Talk about 'mo gbo, mo branch' in Yoruba parlance for 'visiting'.

It is this diversion from the straight path that the idea of telling a lie, or giving false information comes from. So instead of someone telling the truth by heading to the truth of a matter (the spine in this case), they decide to branch out, towards the sternum, to converge. It is this turning away from the truth that is falsehood.

And, anatomically, why does it do this? Why are the ribs formed? It does this to protect our vital organs like our heart, lungs, liver, veins, arteries and so on. Allegorically too, why do we move away from the truth aka lie, aka falsify information, aka perjure, it is also because we want to protect what we think are important to us, no? Whether it be something personal like ego, or something impersonal like one's country or what have you.

Fascinating! It is remarkable how these imageries are able to personalize these words so that when next one wants to lie, right there are one's ribs, reminding one not to twist or incline away from the truth.

So you see in Q18 V17; the rays from the sun should be shining 'straight' on the cave, but the rays 'incline away'. You also see in Q102 V2 the imagery of the one obsessed with getting more and more, and whilst on this path head on, death derails him from it. So there is that sense of I'm going somewhere, and I should be heading somewhere; but something takes me away from it. By the way, did you notice 'head on' used allegorically for spine, and the 'head' is actually 'on' the spine in reality? Too dry? Oh well, I tried. Hehe!

So, in Q58 V2, and the other 3 verses that it is used, it is used as a noun, and not a verb; this helps us understand what Allah expects of those people that decide to go sideways, as they say in urban parlance.

Thus, Allah is saying in Q58 V2 that the saying of the husband that his wife is now as forbidden to him as the back of his mother is not only a 'particularly continuously' hurtful thing to say, it is also a false statement in that it swerves far away from the truth. Which confirms the words of the verse, rights? Wherein Allah says '...they are not consequently their mothers. Their mothers are none but those who gave birth to them...'.

So, by Allah saying Munkar and Zuwr, Allah summarizes the first path of V2 that deals with the declaration of ziHar on one's wife, that it is a particularly hurtful thing to say; and summarizes the

second part of the verse about what it means that the wife is now like the husband's mother – now, that's zuwr, a bend from the truth, said or done to protect whatever of ego, of self, the person wants to protect.

How perfect the words of Allah are. Allahu Akbar!

And Allah ends the verse by saying Gę is A'fuwun Ghafur. May Allah forgive our munkar, zuwr and all other shortcomings that we've committed knowingly or unknowingly. Amin.

2.

Lest I forget, on the issue of the number 2 appearing in all the verses I cited in trying to explain Zuwr; this conversation started with how 'qard' was mentioned 13 times in the Quran, and for every time it was mentioned, it was mentioned twice in each verse but in Q18 V17, it was only mentioned 1 time.

And just like zuwr was used in Q18 V17 to explain the way the sun rays 'inclined away' from the cave, qard was also used to explain how the sun rays 'passed away' from the cave; the former being when the sun was rising, and the latter being when the sun was setting. Also to be noted is the fact that the former happened from the east where the sun is rising from, and the latter from the west where the sun is setting to.

So, the mention of qard in this verse did not follow the pattern in which other qard was mentioned, and in that way, just like the sun ray cuts away from shining on the cave, qard cuts away from the other patterns in which the word was mentioned in the entire

Quran thereby making the count fall into the odd number 13.

And now, here, with zuwr, I am noticing that the mention of number 2 is present in all the verses that zuwr is mentioned in, all 6 of them, but not in Q18 V17. And, by the way, the double-mention of qard is in 6 verses, other than in Q18 V17. And so this mention also swerves away from the norm of its mention in the Quran, and it also happens to also mean to ‘swerve away’ from something.

Another layer to all of these is the fact that zuwr is mentioned 6 times in the Quran, and now it ‘swerves away’ from the norm with its mention with the number 2. Qard is mentioned 6 times also, doubly though, and the 7th time ‘swerves away’ from the norm. Seeing the parallels?

So, first of all, there is the fact that the use of zuwr and qard to refer to the sun swerving away from the cave; the words also swerve away from the pattern in which they were used, so that Allah’s word is true in its entirety. Literally, figuratively, allegorically, and metaphorically; no matter how much you ‘twist’ it, you’ll find that it lands swerving. Hehe! Oh, my dry humor. But you get the point. Allahu Akbar, Allah is the best Orator.

Secondly, there is also the consistency of 6s and 2s; 2 mentions of qards in 6 verses. 6 mentions of zuwr, and they all have number 2 in them other than in Q18 V17. Perhaps, the double mention of qard is completed here with the mention of zuwr? And the 2 that’s missing in the numbers 18 and 17 that house zuwr is gotten by the mention of qard and zuwr; this is especially so when one realizes one was mentioned for the sun rising from the east, and

the other for the sun setting in the west. The duality! No? An overstretch? Too many ‘twists’?

Oh well, Allah commanded us to contemplate deeply on the verses of the Quran – ‘this is a blessed book which we sent down to you’, Allah said in Q38 V29, ‘for people to contemplate its verses’, to ponder it deeply. And in Q47 V24, Allah said, ‘Will they not contemplate the Quran? Do they have locks on their hearts?’

That written, did you also notice that Q58 V2 has 8 in it just as Q18 V17 has 8 in it; and qard was mentioned in 7 different verses in the Quran, and Q18 V17 has 7 in it. And of course, if we go by the fact that there were 7 sleepers, and the 8 was their dog, we have another mention of 7 and 8.

Perhaps, another angle to these numbers could be that they are coordinates to the cave of the ashabul kahf, and or their burial site?  I await ideas on what these numbers could mean, for now, let’s stay safe, and keep on the straight path.

**BEFORE HE CAN ‘TOUCH’ HER.**

Now we are on V3 of Q58, and it says 'And those who declare ziHar from their wives, and then [wish to] go back on what they said – then [there must be] the freeing of a slave before they touch one another...'. So, those who after committing ziHar and basically want to go back to how things were will have to free a slave before they can touch their spouse.

Since with ziHar, the husband has likened his wife's back to that of his mother, basically saying they are the same, which is euphemism for he can't be intimate with her anymore amongst other things; for him to be able to go back to how things were, he would have to free a slave, before he can then *yatamaasa* (touch) her.

Now let's delve into what *yatamaasa* means. Its root alphabets are mim, sin and sin, and 8 forms of the word which includes massa, massat, yamassu, lamyamsas, tamassu, yamassan, misas, and *yatamaassa*; occurred a total of 62 times in the Quran.

Despite the fact that it is translated as 'touch', it is more of what can be known by the sense of touch. So, it includes physical touch, but not limited to that touch. For clarity, let's look at some verses in the Quran on how it is used.

In Q35 V35, it is used to qualify toil and weariness touching someone. In Q15 V48, it is used for fatigue touching one. In Q70 V21, it is used for good touching one. In Q6 V17, it is used for affliction and happiness touching one. In Q15 V54, it is used for old age touching one. In Q26 V156 it was used to qualify harm touching a she-camel, and the list goes on and on.

And what we get from these is the fact that, though physical touch is included in what it means, the sense of being ‘touched’ is also included. You know, one can be touched by someone else’s kindness even if the said kindness is not directed towards one. Happiness or any of the verbs used above doesn’t actually physically touch one, but one feels it, and it is that feeling that equates to touching.

Massa can be contrasted with masah (with ha), which is exclusively physical touch, and a quintessential example of that is in Q5 V6 where Allah was describing how to do ablution and tayammum, and saying we should ‘wipe’; in the case of the former, head and feet, and in the case of the latter, face and hands. So, with masah, one has to physically use their hands. But if we take massa as used in Q26 V156, where it was used to warn the people of thamud not to hurt the miraculous she-camel; the Quran says ‘...not to tamassu (touch) with harm...’, if masah had been used, it would have meant using one’s bare hands to hurt the animal, but with massa, whether one uses one’s hand, one’s knife, one’s mind or one’s bullet to touch the she-camel, one can be held guilty of the instruction not to massa the she-camel with harm.

And with this, what we realize is that the touch the husband is not allowed to do is not only a physical one, but any act or omission that will affect the wife in anyway which may include being in close proximity, gesturing in a seductive way, kiss, or any of such acts, will fall under the yatamassa touch. Pay your expiation first, and then you can contact her.

And this goes in line with what the prophet pbuh said to a man

who came to him to tell him that he had sex with his wife after having declared ziHar on her before paying the expiation because he saw the adornment she was wearing shining under the moon light to which the prophet pbuh said ‘fala taqrabHa hata tafa’la ma amaraka Llahu a’zzawajalla’; translated as ‘then do not touch her until you do what Allah the Exalted and the Most Honored has ordered you to do’. But we will notice that the word translated to ‘touch’ here is ‘taqrab’, which is derived from qarib, and the gist of it is that qarib means closeness, proximity and the likes.

So the yatamassu touch definitely includes proximity, and what that means will depend on the time one is living in. In today’s age, it can include letters, text messages, phone calls, social media updates or messages and the likes.

And if we go back to Khuwaylah’s incident, we see that she didn’t go and meet her husband until the verses were revealed, and the prophet and her first had donate what he would use to expiate or atone for the ziHar that he pronounced on his wife before she could go back to him.

So, again, to conclude, if he is feeling remorse, and wants to go back to how things were before equating her back to that of his mother which basically means making her forbidden for himself, before he is allowed to yatamassu (touch) her, he must free a slave.

## HE MUST FREE A SLAVE.

Now let's look into what he must do before touching her, which according to Q58 V3 is fatahriru raqabat, translated here as to 'free a slave'.

Let's start with harir, its root alphabets are ha, ra and ra, and 6 forms of the word occurred a total of 15 times in the Quran. And it means heat, thirst, to become hot, to intensify, free a person, liberate, to set free and such other words that derive from it.

So how do we understand all of these meanings? Let's start with fire. When a fire burns, it strives away, to be free, and so does the smoke that emanates from it. Hence, this is what heat and freedom have in common. When the heat is from the sun, it frees up sweat from one, and makes one dehydrated; and through that we have thirst, freedom, intensity, sweating etc.

And this is the word Allah has chosen to describe the kind of freedom the said slave must have. She or he must be as free as smoke in the skies, as free as the light from the sun et al. There mustn't be any encumbrances or conditions to his freedom, it must be one that is absolute, and well established that you can't be back to being bound again, just like the smoke can't be back to being fire.

You must be wondering why I'm spending so much time explaining the character of freedom this slave must have when there aren't really any legal slave markets out there where one can go and free a slave, right? Well, bear with me. The word translated

to ‘slave’ actually means ‘neck’, and when we are done with it, you’ll see how one, even today, can do tahriru raqabat.

Raqabat’s origin alphabets are ra, qaf and ba, and 7 forms of the word occurred a total of 24 times in the Quran. And it means neck, responsibility, slave, war prisoner, an elevated place, a watch post, to watch, to observe, to guard, to pay attention, and the likes.

So how did raqib come to mean slave as against ‘abd that we are used to? You see, during slavery, some slaves had cuffs around their necks, some do have around their ankle, wrist and the likes, but to have iron collars around a slave’s neck is to have really made that slave subservient, broken and truly enslaved. While anyone can put cuffs anywhere, it is the master that puts chains around a slave’s neck, and pulls him with it. Kind of like a dog leash today. To really have control of a dog or any other animal for that matter, once the leash goes around its neck, no matter how hard it fights, it is being controlled now. Same goes for the cowboy and his rope when he throws it around the beast’s neck, it is now being controlled. This is especially true of the rope around the neck of a horse, which is then used to control it.

And so from that comes the idea of being enslaved. And since with slavery, one is needed for work; with it comes responsibilities one has to attend to, keep watch over, guard, inspect and the likes. And that’s how the word for ‘neck’ has come to mean ‘slave’, responsibilities and the likes.

In Yorubas, ‘rogbodiyon yẹn ti wọ lọrun’ which means ‘the troubles have sunk his neck’, is said of one that has been

overwhelmed with troubles. Ḷorun being the word for Neck. And the word for peace of mind is ‘irorun’ which is basically ‘ease of the neck’. And the yorubas actually say ‘tu okun Ḷorun eru’ which means ‘remove the rope around the slave’s neck’ when they are talking about liberating a slave.

What we get from all of these is that the particular use of *raqib* instead of ‘abd makes sure that the idea of responsibilities placed on one’s neck, since it is eternal, the verse is able to apply anytime, and anywhere. Allahu Akbar!

So, the question then is, what was the worth of a slave back then? For it is only in knowing this, that one is able to measure what the worth of freeing a slave today would be. And it is in so finding, that one is then able to seek people that life has dealt so much blows to them that o ti wọ wọn Ḷorun, it has sunk their necks, and made it stiff.

The average amount for a slave back in the 18th and 19th centuries was about \$400, which in today’s money would be \$12,000. So if there were necks to be freed today aka slaves, it would be that of a slave that’s worth \$12,000. And since we don’t have necks to be freed from iron shackles today, there are necks to be freed from financial shackles, and the likes, and the amount one must give is \$12,000.

Today, maybe one can give it to a mosque, bail bonds, or an NGO – there should be a Tahriru Raqabat NGO by the way, for those that want to administer the freeing of necks in distress. Their job will be to assemble and vet people with financial debts and burdens of up to \$12,000 – or one can seek someone out by one’s

self if need be. I mean, in today's world, that shouldn't be hard, especially in America, where people have crippling student loans that range between \$50,000 to \$300,000. Now, that's neck crushing.

I'm reminded of the slavery scheme called PayDay Loan in America. Where if one were to borrow \$3,000 now, and pay a charge fee of \$300; if one isn't able to pay the \$3,000 next pay day, one only has to pay a renewal charge fee of \$300 again. And of course, in most cases, the victims aren't able to pay the amount they borrowed, so that even in 10 months when they would have collected \$3,000 worth of charge fee, the victim is still expected to continue paying the said \$300 until that day that they are able to bring in the original \$3,000 that they borrowed before their next renewal charge fee kicks in, and pay off their debt, which in most cases; that day never comes. And you might say why do people still patronize the payday loaners? It's because desperate times call for desperate measures. No one with abundance will go and seek them out for sure. The woes of unbridled capitalism, right? Anyway, my point is, seeking folks that have financial leash around their necks today, and are overwhelmed, shouldn't be too difficult to find.

So, before one is able to 'touch' one's spouse after having declared ziHar on her, this is the first hurdle, to emancipate the neck of someone drowning in life's troubles. And if one is unable to do that because one doesn't have employees that have \$12,000 worth of debt, or find someone that has \$12,000 worth of bills, or one isn't even rich enough to afford such an amount, then the next atonement should be doable; fasting for two consecutive months. And it is only if he were too old to fast, or he is exempted from

fasting for whatever reason that he can then move to the next atonement.

I shouldn't forget to highlight the fact that here, Allah didn't state that the 'slave' must be a muslim, unlike with murder in Q4 V92. So, beneficiaries of one's emancipation crusade can include non-muslims.

May Allah make it easy for Muslim spouses to live in ma'ruf.  
Amin.

## **OR FAST 60 CONSECUTIVE DAYS IF YOU WANT TO HAVE HER.**

Q58 V4 proceeds to say, 'And he who does not find [a slave] – then a fast for two months consecutively before they touch one another; and he who is unable – then the feeding of sixty poor persons...'

Simply put, the next atonements are fasting for two months or feeding 60 poor people; but the question is on what conditions do those penalties apply? When can one move from one to the other? And the answers are in *yajid* that's translated to 'find' above, and *yastati*' that's translated to 'unable'; the task here is to be able to paint a picture that makes it easy to grasp when to choose one or the other.

Let's start with *yajid*; its root alphabets are waw, jim and dal, and 3 forms of the word occurred a total of 106 times in the Quran. And I find that Q24 V33, a place where *yajid* was also used, but with more character, can help shed light on what *yajid* means.

There, Allah says 'But let them who find not [the means for] marriage abstain until Allah enriches them from His bounty...'. The word translated to 'abstain' is *yasta'fif*, 'find' is *yajid*, 'enrich' is *yugniy* from *ganiy*, and 'bounty' is *fadli*.

To make sense of all these, we'll look into *A'fif*. *A'fif* is the root word of *yasta'fif* and it is said of the small amount of milk which remains in the udder of a female animal after feeding her young, like the cow for instance. When her calf starts suckling, its

sucking pattern tells the brain to release oxytocin which squeezes the sacs from within as the calf continues to suckle. And to buttress that point, dairy farmers inject the cow with oxytocin when the milk production stops and there is still milk in the udder.

But how does this help to define ‘find’? What this means is that the milk only remains in the udder because it is lacking the required oxytocin that it needs to facilitate its production. And that’s why Allah, the a’limul khabir, continues that verse by saying that the bachelor should be like the milk in the udder, and stay put, abstain, ‘...until Allah enriches them from His bounty...’ which will be synonymous with the milk in the udder that awaits oxytocin before it is then released. Allahu Akbar! How perfect Allah’s words are, every. single. time.

And so if we apply this to Q58 V4, what we get is that when Allah said ‘And he who does not find...’, should actually be ‘and he who is not enriched’, fortified, empowered, are those that can move to the next penalty of fasting for 2 months consecutively.

And what that means is that even if one is able to find a slave, if one is not enriched to afford freeing the said slave, then one can move to the next penalty. But if one can find, and one is enriched, just like the milk enriched with oxytocin, one must free the slave, and not stay back, or in this case, move to fasting for 2 consecutive months.

Let me segue a little bit on the issue of ‘abstaining’ from marriage until one is enriched by Allah; I just want to say that this ‘enrichment’ can take different forms. There is no particular

amount required; I think what's required, and may make one so 'enriched' is not necessarily the wherewithal being at hand, but that there is a plan in place that will take care of the couple when they get married.

And an example of such said circumstance is the way Moses got married to his wife as we see in Q28 V28 where he agreed to work for his father-in-law for 8 to 10 years as his pay of dowry. And through that, he was able to secure a job, wife and a new life. So, whatever the dynamic of couples out there seeking to be married; if there is a working or workable plan in place, I think that should suffice as being enriched, whether it is from one's father-in-law, mother-in-law, wife etc.

Back to Q58 V4, if the husband that declares ziHar on his wife isn't so enriched as to be able to find, and or free a slave, then and only then can he move to fasting for 2 months consecutively, which is give or take, 60 days. Consecutively bro, successively, and that means that if one, for whatever reason didn't fast on day 49, one has to start all over. Bro!

I think the 60 consecutive days of fasting should totally be a thing even outside ziHar. For one, when he is faced with that decision; he has to decide whether to let her go or fast for 60 days consecutively. The only thing that will make him choose to fast for 60 days back to back will be his love for her.

And so I think when making a decision to marry someone, perhaps one of the questions one should ask one's self to be sure that one is really in love with the other person is if one would be willing to fast 60 days consecutively for the to-be if push comes to

shove. And what that also means is that bachelors and spinsters should be of so good a character that someone will think them worthy of fasting 60 consecutive days on their behalf, and or work for 10 years just to be able to marry them. I mean, Moses is definitely a romantic guy, no?

By the way, do you know that the only other place that one's atonement demands fasting for 2 months consecutively in the Quran? That would be Q4 V92. And do you know the act that must have been done? Murder! And if one looks deeply at what ziHar means, one can see a parallel line between ziHar and Murder; both erases one (tries to at least), whilst the former erases one in marriage, the latter erases one in life. And in the case of Murder too, it was mentioned as a substitute for freeing a slave. So, that's a second issue that the Tahriru Raqabat NGO will be helping to collect data for, for those wanting to expiate for their sin of murder.

So as not to make this piece cumbersome, I will delve into the feeding of 60 poor people in the next piece inshaAllah. Amin.

## **OR FEED 60 MISKEEN.**

Now that we've looked into the fasting for 2 consecutive months, it's time to look into the feeding of 60 miskin, and to that effect, Q58 V4 says, '...and he who is unable – then the feeding of sixty poor persons...'

But, just as we did in the last post where we looked into yajid, since that was the condition that must be fulfilled before being able to move into fasting 60 days; here also, there is a condition, and that is yastati'. So, if you are not yastati' to fast for 2 months back to back, then you can move to the last bit.

Now, what is yastati'? Its root alphabets are to, alif or waw, and ain, and 10 forms of it occurred a total of 128 times. And it is said to mean to obey, to be obedient, to be amenable, to be subservient, to submit to, to be able to do.

Toa' is classically said of a ripe fruit that readily gives itself up, and falls. When one has to pluck the fruit, force it down, that is karHa. And we find that that's how Allah used it in the Quran too. In Q41 V11, Allah said, "Then He directed Himself to the heaven while it was smoke and said to it and to the earth, 'Come [into being], willingly or by compulsion.' They said, 'We have come willingly.'"

Toa' is the word translated to willingly; thus, the idea of being in obedience, spontaneous, willful is what toa' means. And since karHa is used as its opposite, let me digress a bit into how Allah

expects that Muslims should practice Islam, especially now that we are living in a time that some Muslims would rather others are forced to Islam, forced to practice Islam and the likes.

We find that Allah said in Q2 V256 that there is no compulsion in Islam, *la ikraHa fi din*. So, going by the ripe fruit imagery we have above, that would be similar to an instruction not to do *kirHa* with the fruits. To then believe that to force people to practice the *din* is the way to go is definitely wrong to say the least.

It is the willful obedience, and spontaneity that Allah asks of us, not one of coercion. Allah says in Q64 V12, 'And obey Allah and obey the Messenger...', and of course, *toa'* is the word translated to 'obey' here too, so what is expected is willful submission, not coerced submission.

Now that we understand what *toa'* means, it's time to relate it with its use in Q58 V4 at hand. So that '...and he who is unable...' then means, someone that's unwilling, maybe because of health concerns, or just because of the difficulties it will cost them, they cannot willfully submit to fasting.

It is in Allah's *Rahmah* that *Ge* has made this an option. *Ge*'s recognition of the difficulty of fasting for 60 days straight. And so the husband is given that option to willfully submit, or do the next thing; which is to feed 60 miskins.

*Miskin*, translated here as 'poor persons', has its origin in *sin*, *kef* and *nun*. The *mim* before it is a conjunctive pronoun which is meant to emphasize the continuous and persistent nature of the

sakin. 13 forms of the word was used 69 times in the Quran.

Miskin, like baais and faqir in Q22 V28, and qani' and mu'tara in Q22 V36 have all been translated to mean poor, or any of its variants. So the task here is to look deeper into miskin, so that we are able to distinguish it from other 'poor persons'.

Sakin means to be quiet, to be still, to be tranquil, to inhabit a place, to dwell, to be poor, knife. So what do they all have in common? It is the immobility, the seemingly peaceful immobility. The place where one lives is called sakin because that's where one is still from journey, and with sleep, when one gets to be 'still' all night. One stops 'moving' when they get home from a journey. Sakeena is also said of a knife because it can make something that is mobile be immobile, hence, kill something, and make it still.

In Q12 V31, sakeena is said of the knife that Yusuf's boss's wife gave the women that would later admire Yusuf and then cut their fingers. So, sakin is said of a knife. So how does this relate to being poor?

The type of poverty that is characterized as miskin is that which basically renders its subject immobile. They can't move around to fend for themselves because they wouldn't have the wherewithal to afford moving around, and so they are just in one place, hoping and praying that something good should come.

They don't have to beg, but they might beg. Most times, they are too ashamed to even beg, as part of the meaning of sakin is that their state has humbled them, made them still. These are the folks one must seek out, and feed 60 of them. 'Still', in all of these

doesn't literally mean being immobile, or physically paralyzed, even though someone that's immobile or physically paralyzed that needs help will qualify as miskin; but that their state has made them seem like one. I think anyone earning minimum wage or below in America will qualify as miskin. So, you see? They are able to move about, but their needs are not being met, and they keep it to themselves, quietly, still, despite their needs. That's what differentiates miskin from other words that have been translated to 'poor' in the Quran.

Allah then ends Q58 V4 with what is perhaps the strongest fusion of women's rights and belief in Allah, in the Quran. Allah says '...that is for you to believe [completely] in Allah and His Messenger; and those are the limits [set by] Allah. And for the disbelievers is a painful punishment.'

Thus, all the atonement stated above will only apply to those who believe in Allah and Ges Messenger; in essence saying whoever doesn't follow them can't be said to be believers in Allah and his messenger. So if someone goes ahead, declares ziHar on their spouse, and then proceeds to be with them like nothing happened, then it will be as if they are disbelievers. The last sentence in the verse also outrightly calls them 'disbelievers', and states that for such disbelievers is going to be a painful punishment.

This is a stern warning to husbands, about the rights of the women they marry; they are to be treated with ma'ruf, and when such hurtful things that would constitute ziHar is said to them, they must choose one of these atonement, or else, they may be regarded as disbelievers.

May Allah make it easy for all husbands to be able to treat their wives with ma'ruf. Amin.

## **THE MEANING OF ZINA.**

The root letters of the word Zina are zain, nun and ya. Of this root, four forms of the word occurred a total of 9 times in the entire Quran; Zina once, Yaznun twice, Zani thrice, and Zaniyatun thrice.

Zani and Zaniyatun occurred three times in Q24 verse 2 and 3; V2 was talking about the punishment for doing Zina, and V3 was talking about who they can marry.

In Q60 V12 and Q25 V68 that Yaznun was mentioned in; in both instances, it was mentioned as a condition of being a slave of Allah as in Q25 V68, or as a condition for pledging allegiance to the prophet pbuh.

In a nutshell, it is only in Q17 V32 that character and meaning was given to the word. Allah said; Wa la taqrabu zina, inahu kana fahishatan wa sa-a sabila – which is translated as ‘and do not come near adultery, it is immoral, and an evil way.’

But our task here is to dig deeper into this word that everyone seems to know but may not fully understand. And to do that, five words in the verse have to be looked into – Taqrabu, Zina, Fahishat, Sa-a and Sabila. Hopefully, we are able to have a full grasp of the word when we are done. InshaAllah.

The root word for Taqrabu is actually Qaf, Ra and Ba; Qarib, the Ta before it is for emphasis. Qarib means for something to be close by, or near, as was used in Q21 V109 where the prophet pbuh was told to reply those that won't believe that God is One that "...if they turn away, say, I have informed you sufficiently. Although I do not know whether what you are promised is Qarib (near) or Baiyd (far)".

And from this idea of closeness, it has come to be used for family relations, as seen in Q2 V83 where Allah says, "... and be good to parents, Qurba (relatives), and orphans, and the needy..."

Qarib can also mean to 'offer' something, the act of offering; and it can also mean the 'offering' itself, what is being offered; as in Q5 V27 wherein Allah says, "And relate to them the true story of Adam's two sons: when Qaraba (they offered) Qurbana (an offering), and it was accepted from one of them, but it was not accepted from the other..."

Also, what can be inferred from Q5 V27, is that the offering was made with the hope of getting closer to God, but of course, the proximity is not a physical one, but one can say one that is spiritual and psychological. So, Qarib need not be physical in proximity, but can include mental proximity.

Before we go into the next word which is Zina; let's do a recap of what we think Qarib means.

We've been able to deduce that Qarib means being Near, being a Relative, Offering something, and that it can also mean the

Offering itself. We've also been able to deduce that Qarib goes beyond physical proximity, but that it can manifest itself in different forms.

Now, Zina. The first thing to note before going into the word is the fact that the Quran used different words when referring to sex. Allah could have said 'do not go near illegal sex', but instead, in this verse, Ge decided to go with Zina.

In Q2 V187, rafath and bashir were used to connote sex. In Q2 V223, fatu was used in place of sex. And words such as Furuj in Q23 V5 has also been used to connote sex or chastity.

The three instances mentioned above paint different pictures in one's mind: bashir paints a picture of 'effect on skin', hopefully, I am able to write something elaborate on this in the future; how this in essence is talking about Cliteracy; I have written about cliteracy on our website, titled Cliteracy in Islam, and we are working on a more elaborate work on the subject, InshaAllah. Pending the time I delve into a tafsir on Q2 V187, let's bear in mind that Bashir connotes skin, and having an effect on the skin.

In Q2 V223, the picture painted is one that has to do with farming. And so we are to approach our spouse from any direction in so far as it is not against the way 'God has directed' us to as seen in V222 of Q2. The use of farming is also a deliberate one if one takes into consideration the fact that you need to wet the earth before and or after planting a seed if you catch my drift, but we should delve into that in the piece I said I will hopefully write in the future in furthering the conversation around Cliteracy in Islam. InshaAllah.

But, here, in Q17 V32, Allah used Zina.

So, now, what is Zina? Zina has been translated to mean fornication and adultery; but how did it come to mean that? You see, Zina in its classical sense means to be in a tight place, or of something to be narrow. In essence, to be in a narrow and tight path; a very narrow and tight alley for example, and it came to be used for illegal sexual intercourse because folks that perpetrated in it tend to choose such remote, narrow or secluded areas where people can't see them perform the act.

Why would someone who is meant to take a straight road from point A to point B decide to take a narrow and tight path? And what are the experiences of one that takes such a path? For the fellow, it may be that they aren't interested in getting to point B at all or anymore, or they lost their way due to forgetfulness or being unable to find their map, or that they think this narrow and tight alley might somehow lead them to point B faster, or they just decided to take a short break in the narrow and tight alley.

But little do they know that this path leads nowhere, and I say this because it is mentioned in the verse by Allah immediately; calling it a fahsha which in its classical sense means 'to cross the line'. So, however one tries to squeeze one's self through it with the hopes of light at the end, one will soon find that it is a dead end, and the only way to get to point B is to get back on 'Sabil', also a word used in the verse.

Another sense one derives from a Narrow And Tight Alley (NATA) is the fact that it is a hidden path. So that any hook up

spot no matter how large or small can pass as NATA aka Zina.

But we shouldn't jump the gun; the picture painted with Zina is that of Place. And it makes sense that it is a Place especially because Qarib means Near, Fahshah means crossing the line, and Sabil means path; we will hopefully get into these words later.

## **NEARNESS.**

So, wa la taqrabu zina is saying not to go near the narrow and tight path; yorubas will say koro – kilon wa lo koro? The injunction here isn't to not be in it, but not to go near it, because Ge knows that mere going near it is enough to cause one to slip into this narrow and tight place. Also, the sin here includes the 'going near', not just the 'being there'. So, going near sex in any way other than in marriage in whatever form the nearness takes is Zina. That changes everything, right? May Allah forgive us our sins. Amin. I shouldn't fail to mention that Q25 V68 made Zina itself a sin too.

## **RELATIVE.**

To the second meaning of Qarib which is relative, or those that are close to one. What that means is that; to relate with someone that one can marry in a way that others may think of them as relative – this can be seen as going near Zina. Of course, I'm not saying that we shouldn't be kind to those we may be able to marry; but in this day and age where there are phrases like 'friends with benefits', and everything in between and auxiliary to it, one has to be careful. Treating one that is not one's relative as relative has a more nuanced meaning; an example would be having sex

with someone other than one's wife will qualify as going Qarib to Zina.

## **OFFER AND OFFERING.**

To offer something one should only offer to one's spouse to someone who isn't one's spouse could be seen as Qarib. Here, emphasis on the act of Offering itself; it need not eventually be offered – so one bringing it forth either by words or action should suffice. And the subsequent side to this offering itself is that, it will qualify as going near the narrow and tight path, if one eventually executed the said Offer, which here, is the Offering.

Question then is, why will someone feel the need to make an offer or offering? One decides to make an offering if one wants Acceptance, if one wants to be Grateful, and or if one wants more of something that is being given, Gratification, being indebted and so on and so forth. One just has to be mindful of how one seeks acceptance, how one shows gratitude, where one seeks gratification and so on.

## **PROXIMITY.**

As we've seen with the story of the two sons of Adam, the nearness that they sought by offering the sacrifice that they offered wasn't necessarily to be by God's side at the moment; but it is one of seeking nearness of psychological and spiritual proximity. So we should be mindful of our intentions for they can build a bridge of proximity that might lead one close to the narrow and tight path.

So, wa la taqrabu zina is not just don't have sex outside of marriage as we might have been thinking; as we've seen, with Allah's deliberate use of Qarib and Zina; the destination is as unlawful as going near the path that leads to it.

Now to the next word; Fahishat aka Fahsha. Fahsha is generally translated as immorality, immoral conduct and so on; but at its core it means to cross the line, what yorubas will call ikoja'la. Going beyond the line that has been set for one. So that in Q2 V268 where Allah says 'Satan threatens you with poverty, and urges you to Fahsha...', understanding that it means crossing the line makes it more relatable. One then sees that all of Satan's plans is in one way or the other related to making one cross the line drawn by Allah in Gęs message.

But Allah also said, after having mentioned not to do Zina in Q25 V68, and V69 mentions the punishment, V70 says, 'except for those who repent, and believe, and do good deeds. These – God will replace their bad deeds with good deeds. God is ever Forgiving and Merciful'. Just an aside, one of the meanings of the word translated to 'believe' in V70 is 'trusts'; so when we repent, we must believe and trust that He has forgiven us, and then proceed to do good deeds. Another insight is the word translated to 'replace'; badil also means substitute or replace. So those bad deeds will not just disappear, they become good deeds. How Merciful Gę is, the most High, the most Merciful. But this promise comes with sincere repentance.

While we are on Fahsha and forgiveness; I would just like to mention the fact that in Q7 V80, prophet Lut pbuh referred to the act that his people were doing as Fahishat. It is sad that today,

despite our continuous and unending preaching of forgiveness today for those that commit Zina, and acceptance of their humanity, we do not extend the same gesture to those that commit homosexual acts because their ‘line crossing’ is an anathema to one’s culture, tradition or personal idiosyncratic beliefs even though in Q11 V74 Ibrahim pbuh argued and pleaded on behalf of those that commit homosexual acts, and Allah went ahead to praise him for it in the next verse by calling him Haleemun (gentle, forbearing), Awaun (kind, tender-hearted, imploring), and Muneeb (penitent, ever returning); but we are not ready for that conversation. Even Lot was said to have been ‘anxious’ and ‘concerned for them’ in V77 of Q11 when the angels showed up.

Anyway, back to Fahsha; crossing the line need not be morality; just as morality line exists, so can economic line exist, so can ibadah line exist, and so can all the lines and boundaries that Allah has set for us in the Quran and in the Sunnah of the prophet Muhammad pbuh exist.

Now, to the next word Sa-a.

Sa-a is generally translated as evil, bad, wicked, hurt, trouble and the likes, but in its classical sense, it actually means to be imbalanced, and because of the imbalance, there is chaos, deterioration. It is the chaos that erupts from there being an imbalanced environment or place that causes vices to come forth. So when someone does an evil thing or says something unpleasant, one is trying to tip the scale of balance and fairness.

When one takes into consideration the fact that it has been used

as an opposite to hasan in Q7 V131 and Q3 V119; hasan, which has ‘balance’ as part of its meaning, one is able to see how sa-a has imbalance at its core.

Now, couple imbalance with Sabil, which is translated as Way; one gets an ‘imbalanced way’. Being an imbalanced way doesn’t remove the vices that is derived from it, in fact, it reinforces it. For what that means is that if one goes on that road, one comes across all those vices and troubles, and depression and anxieties and the likes.

Allah’s words are perfect in their precision. It was amazing to me when I dug deep into Q17 V32 that the imagery of road, path, destination was consistent throughout that verse when understood in the classical arabic sense rather than what English has done to it with translations, and Modern Arabic has done to it with linguistic evolution.

So, now, we have an image of not going near a narrow, tight, bumpy, imbalanced road because it would be tantamount to crossing a line drawn by Allah. Isn’t it interesting also that for fornication or adultery to happen; both parties have to meet at a place – whether virtual, physical or mental etc. And I think that’s why the image of Place is embedded in Zina. So that one is reminded when one starts to physically or mentally move towards the destination, either by reaching for one’s mobile devices, car keys, etc, one is reminded not to stray.

Another observation is that in Q1 V6, Allah referred to Islam as siratol mustaqim, the ‘straight path’; it then makes sense why in all of the instances where Zina was mentioned in the Quran,

other than where its punishment and who to marry was mentioned; it was mentioned as one of the things someone who Believes should stay away from. With Zina being a narrow, tight and bumpy detour from the straight path. Q60 V12, Q25 V68, and Q17 V32 are three instances if you want to do a further reading on it.

I hope with this exercise, we can all now see Zina in a different light, and are able to subsequently hold ourselves accountable when we start to stray instead of pointing fingers at those we think have taken the detour even though they might have repented, and Allah may have converted their bad deeds to good deeds. May Allah guide and keep us on siratul mustaqim. Amin.

You know, just before we drop the curtain on this subject, perhaps, this is a good juncture to address the issue of Adam and Eve, and their ‘eating of the fruit’, as seen in Genesis 3 V6 that states that, “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.”

Knowing that qarib is the crux of the instructions given to him, just as qarib is the instruction given to us with respect to Zina. Not to put pressure on us, but pressure though...

So now that we know what we know of qarib, let’s look at the instruction that was given to Adam in Q7 V19, wherein Allah said, “And ‘O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and fakula (eat) from wherever you will but do not taqraba (approach) this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.’” And

V22 says “So he made them fall, through deception. And when they dhaqa (tasted) of the tree, their private parts became apparent to them...”

Indeed, fakula means to eat, or to chew; and its root alphabets are alif, kef and lam. 6 forms of the word appeared 110 times in the Quran, and it means to eat, to consume, to devour; food; yield; morsel; to erode; to waste away; to become engaged etc.

Akul is said of the chewed food before swallowing, so the food won’t be so called if it’s not chewed, or cut into small bits in one’s mouth, this is how akul is understood classically. Stone, milk, water and the likes, if swallowed cannot be said to have undergone akul.

So whether Allah is talking about the she-camel ‘grazing’ in Q7 V73; Q4 V6 where it is used with respect to not ‘consuming’ the property of the orphans wrongfully, and also used with respect to ‘charging a fee’ to managing the properties of orphans; or with respect to Q4 V4 where it was used to qualify ‘taking’ what one’s spouse gives up of their dowry to one — they all have the ‘cutting or chopping into pieces’ theme applied to them.

With respect to the camel; their chewing does that. With respect to the consuming or charging a fee pertaining to the property of an orphan; with what we know, we can see that it is taking into cognizance the installment nature of the ‘taking’ or the ‘charging’, because, ‘cutting into parts’, right? We see that in Q3 V130 wherein Allah said “do not takulu (consume) usury, doubled and multiplied”, and as is the nature of interest anyway, it’s an installment matter that’s doubled or multiplied through

an extended period of time. So that anytime akul is used to mean ‘to take’, the breaking down into parts nuance applies to it. I guess Q5 V3 drives home this point directly, wherein Allah adds that as part of the animals that we can’t eat are “...those from which a wild animal has akala (eaten)...”

And with respect to the wife that gives up part of her dowry, we can see that Allah didn’t mean that dowries should be paid in one take, even though it can be paid in one lump sum or cherished item - insert diamond ring there - but it can also be paid in parts too, and Musa in Q28 V27 is an example of that. So by Allah using akul in this verse, we see that if for instance, a husband had agreed with his wife to gift her a monthly payment of \$500 for 2 years, if she gives up \$200 of that in like the second month into it; then the right word to use in this context with respect to the taking is akul, see?

This is to drive home the point that the instruction was in 2 parts. Eat from wherever, and secondly, to la taqraba this tree. Allah could have said “eat (akul) from wherever, but do not eat (akul) from this tree”, thereby using the same akul, but Allah chose to use qarib for the second bit, thereby making going close to it also a transgression. And the use of dhaqa in Q7 V22 furthers that assumption, “So he made them fall, through deception. And when they dhaqa (tasted) of the tree, their private parts became apparent to them...”

Now, let’s look into dhaqa. Dhaqa is translated to ‘taste’, the word Allah used here is not ‘akul’, even though it is the word that would have been used had they ‘eaten’ from the tree. So, what does dhaqa mean? Its root alphabets are dhal, waw, and qaf, and 4

forms of the word were used 63 times in the Quran. And it is said to mean to taste, to cause to taste, to experience, experiences, learning. And with the use of ‘taste’, there’s that assumption that they ‘ate’ from the tree, that being an assumption I’m here to correct.

We find dhaqa used in Q78 V30 where Allah said, ‘dhuwquw (taste) ye therefore the punishment: We will give you no increase except in torment.’ And in Q11 V9 where Allah said, “And if We make man adhaqna (taste) of mercy from Us, and then take it away from him, verily, he is despairing, ungrateful.” And with these two examples, of which there are tens of them, where Allah used the word translated to ‘taste’ in the story of Adam and Eve to mean ‘experience’, we can see that ‘taste’ there doesn’t actually mean something on the tongue, or that has undergone chewing. The people of hell won’t just be experiencing the fire in their mouth, and neither are the people that are granted Allah’s mercy in this world only experiencing it on their tongues, right? Q37 V38, Q44 V49, Q38 V57, Q78 V24, Q37 V31, Q8 V14, Q51 V14, Q54 V39 and V48, are some of the verses that buttresses this point, and the list goes on and on.

So, even though to experience something, one has to be able to perceive it through one or more of one’s senses, one can’t just assume that tasting that involves the tongue is the only way one can experience everything. For instance, classically, dhaqa is said of when one pulls on a bow to know how tight or loose it is. So that it is through this act of pulling gently, that one is able to experience it enough to make proper assessment of the condition of the bow.

Therefore, a better translation of Q7 V22 should be 'And when they experienced the tree', not 'tasted' that assumes that they akul (ate) of the tree. Or it may be that, since akul involves chewing, and cutting things into bits in its process; akul wasn't used because that's not what they did. I mean, on a basic level, we know of the seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching as the 5 cardinal mediums we use to experience things, and make sense of our surroundings. Though, there are those that have argued that we have between 22 to 33 senses, but by even sticking with the classical 5, we know that the duo could have flouted the rule in more ways than just tasting it with their tongue since the use of the word dhaqa (experience) was used to qualify what they did.

The next question would be how can one experience a tree? And the answer lies in the instruction that was given to Adam to 'la taqrab' not go 'near' the tree. With our understanding of qarib; we know that we don't actually have to have had sexual intercourse with someone for one to flout the qarib rule of zina. We've seen how physical nearness can flout the rule 'not to go near'; how treating someone that one can marry as though they are relative thereby leading to acts like 'friends with benefits' can flout the rule; and we've also seen how an offering itself, and the act of offering can constitute going qarib, and lastly how psychological and spiritual proximity suffices as going qarib.

Now, we don't know exactly which of the 4 or 5 ways Adam and Eve got qarib to the tree thereby experiencing it, but the fact that Allah didn't use akul to qualify this experience even though that's the first part of the instructions negates that they ate from the tree.

On the other hand, we know that ‘experiencing’ can flout the ‘qarib’ rule thereby making it obvious that it was going qarib to the tree that made them experience the tree; whether it was physical nearness, psychological nearness, relational nearness, ‘generosity’ nearness, or in any other way they got near. Perhaps, the psychological nearness they got was one that involved technology? Looking at the tree on their devices? Now, we are back to Zina.

Avoidance of sin, as Umar is reported to have once said, is lighter than the pain of remorse. No matter how right it may seem at the moment to ‘go near’ zina, the weight of regret when one eventually realizes its folly can be physically and psychologically crushing.

For anyone struggling with such intense urge to commit zina, I’ll advise that this person does a lot of fasting and taHajjud. In the book before this one titled ‘you wanna pray taHajjud every night?’, I chronicled how I made praying taHajjud easy. The book is available for free on [themarhaminstitute.com](http://themarhaminstitute.com) website and on amazon for \$5.99.

We see from the careful use of words in the Quran that it’s best as Muslims that we lean towards the understanding that what Adam and Eve did was ‘experience the tree’ as seen in Q7 V22, instead of the Bible’s account that reiterates that they ‘ate’ from the tree. Had they eaten from the tree, as we’ve seen, akul would have been used, not dhaqa. And the Bible also expressly stated that they ate the ‘fruit’ from the tree, whereas the Quran stated that they “dhaqa shajarat (experienced the tree)”. And of course, the Bible also stated that it was Eve that first ate and then gave it to Adam,

an assertion that is not found anywhere in the Quran. May Allah make it easy for us to understand the Quran. Amin. May Ḡe heal our hearts of its diseases. Amin. And may Ḡe make it easy for us to stand for taHajjud every night, and may Ḡe accept them from us as acts of 'ibadah. Amin.

To conclude, I figured since we started this book with Love, I'll like to end it with Love, of Allah, of Allah's words, and of Allah's creations:

love like lovers love.

i.

who is this that claims  
to love his lover but  
refuses to read the  
love letters his lover sent  
to him; letters his lover sent  
through his lover's trusted hands;

who is this?

ii.

he shouts his love  
on mountains high,  
but refuses  
to lift his voice  
in recitation of the  
letters of his lover's letters.

what kind of lover is this?

iii.

i stayed with him all night,  
under the same roof,  
in the same room,  
to see if he wakes up  
at night to read the  
letters of his lover secretly,  
you know;

iv.

so that no one else  
but him knows of the  
letters from his lover;  
so that it's just between  
a lover and his beloved;

out of sight as they say,  
shouldn't be out of mind.

v.

so, i stayed with him,  
to see if he cries all night  
while reading the letters,  
just like lovers do  
when they hear or read  
the words of their beloved;

all night long, i waited.

vi.

but this one  
that claims to love,  
sleeps all night, and  
proclaims his love all day;

a scarf of a beloved is never far from touch,  
the home of a beloved is never far away, the  
presence of a beloved is all a beloved longs for.

vii.

the scarf of a beloved, i say,  
like her home, is memory,  
to be revisited, over, and over,  
and over again. the walls of the home  
that once housed her are touched with purpose;

perhaps with hopes of touching  
the same spot a beloved once touched.

viii.

now, how can you love one  
if you don't recite their words?

how can you claim to love,  
if their words doesn't make you  
cry at night when they'd be no one  
to wipe your tears as they mix slowly  
with the ink on your lover's love letters?

ix.

what kind of lip-love is this  
that doesn't let their lover's words  
race their heart, touch it even, and  
affect it in ways only lovers know?

what kind of lip-love is this,  
that keeps itself from being  
aware of the love of his lover?

x.

who is this that claims to love his lover  
but his lover's love letters lay on lecterns  
gathering dusts untouched, unopened,  
and unread? shouldn't reciting the words  
that once came through the lips of a beloved be  
something to yearn for? shouldn't the lips of

a beloved take solace in knowing that it now

xi.

moves like a beloved's lips once moved?

shouldn't just staring at the words of a  
beloved stir something in the heart of  
the one that proclaims their love?

the immortality of the time those  
words were said and written,  
now etched in letters.

xii.

i'd thought he'd at least  
stand an hour of the hours  
in the night to read his  
lover's love letters written  
in the language of love  
that only lovers know.

i'd thought he'd at least love

xiii.

but here he is now,  
spitting his claim of love on me,  
again, and again, and again, and yet,  
his lover's love letters lay lonely on lecterns

gathering dusts untouched, unopened,  
and unread. lovers, love! love like lily leaves on  
luscious lakes love its flowers, love, lovers, love.