

Deviance

The legitimisation of **UTTERING PROFANITIES**

Islam is free from the claims made by some Muslims that it is permissible to use indecent and offensive language. Their claim is based on a manipulation of Allah's saying: Allah does not like bad words to be made public unless someone has been wronged: Allah is all hearing and all knowing."

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, the Most Merciful, Most compassionate
All praise belongs to God, Lord of all the worlds, and greetings
and salutations be upon the most honorable of the Prophets and
the Messengers, our liege lord and Prophet, Muhammad ﷺ, the
truthful one, and all upon his household and companions.

The Religion of Beauty

A turbulent voice has been raised in our societies claiming
that obscene language, indecency, and swearing all have
evidences for their permissibility in the Quran and sunnah.

Islam summons Muslims to virtuous discourse and actions of
beauty. It encourages them to strive for excellence, noble character
and avoiding open and concealed indecencies.

Despite this, a person might ask: ‘Did Islam not permit the oppressed
to say bad words publicly towards an oppressor—as is indicated in
the Quranic verse: *Allah does not like bad words to be made public
unless someone has been wronged: Allah is all hearing and all knowing.*¹

We have to ask: is it rational to conclude that the teachings of Allah
and His messenger ﷺ might instruct an oppressed person to use
obscene language and indecent words when they are talking about
or replying to an oppressor? We will look at this question through
the lens of Islam’s knowledge tradition.

1 4:148



Severed transmission chains ➡ Distortion results

God ﷻ concluded His divine messages to mankind with the sending of our master Muhammad ﷺ. He preserved the religion after him through the scholars of the Muslim community who received the religion through unbroken chains of transmission. Thereafter, the understanding of Islam was communicated through this chain of transmission. A person will not unless deviate from the path of sound understanding except that they have tried to understand the religion from sources which do not possess sound chains of transmission.

What do some Muslims say about the verse “Allah does not like bad words to be made public unless someone has been wronged: Allah is all hearing and all knowing.”?

They say that the wronged person has the right to insult his/her wronger and launch a tirade of abuse at them.

They also say that swearing and insulting is the norm in return for any transgression that may be directed at a person.

The illusion that they have this right has led them to commit unethical and immoral actions.

Sanad Severance ➡➡➡ Distortion in understanding ➡➡➡ Abhorrent ideas

The proponents of the aforementioned claims ascribed the utterance of offensive language to Allah ﷻ and ascribed to the Prophet ﷺ its legitimization!



Why? And from where did this occur?

In truth, claims such as these result from self-centred, internal conflicts that exist inside the people making these claims. The lower self (*nafs*) invents what it thinks is a legitimate option—this provides the person with the basis to release their anger and frivolousness through bad manners and indecent language. Then they claim that this is not only permissible in Sharia but required!

The First Dubious Claim

The Verse in question: ﴿Do not yield to any contemptible swearer, ✽ to any backbiter, slander-monger, ✽ or hinderer of good, to anyone who is sinful, aggressive, ✽ **coarse, and on top of all that, an imposter.**﴾²

Their erroneous understanding of this verse:

that the use of profanities in an absolute sense is the default position and not an exception.

The correct understanding of this verse according to scholars:

The description in this verse is related to a particular circumstance in order to clarify the truth which was concealed from people. “Coarse imposter” (*utull zanīm*)³ refers to the pretender who is associated with a people but not actually from among them, and he is Walīd b. al-Mughīrah, or anyone known for evil.⁴

The Second Dubious Claim

The verse in question: ﴿Now had We so willed, We could indeed have exalted him by means of those [messages]: but he always clung to the earth and followed but his own desires. Thus, his parable is that of an [excited] dog: if thou approach him threateningly, he will pant with his tongue lolling; and, if thou leave him alone, he will pant with his tongue lolling. Such is the parable of those who are bent on giving the lie to Our signs﴾⁵

2 68:13

3 Mafāṭih al-Ghayb, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, the exegesis of surah al-Qalam (607/30).

4 Jāmi‘ al-Bayān, al-Ṭabarī, the exegesis of surah al-Qalam (164/23); tafsīr Ibn Kathīr (212/8), tafsīr Ibn ‘Aṭīyah (347/5), tafsīr al-Qurṭubī (231/18).

5 7:176

﴿The example of those who were given the Torah, then failed to uphold it, is like the donkey carrying great works of literature. Miserable indeed is the example of people who rejected God's revelations﴾⁶

Their erroneous understanding of this verse:

Allah mentions offensive and degrading descriptions of people in these verses. This view stems from a lack of understanding of the grammar rules in Arabic that pertain to the concept of allegorizing (*tashbih*), and the difference between it and an adjective.

The correct understanding of this according to scholars:

The Arabic language is what gives rule here since it is the language of expression for the thoughts of Arab people. In Arab literature there is a story of the poet who praised one of the rulers by saying: "you are like a dog in preserving amity and like a billy goat in facing calamities." The purpose of the poet was to describe a quality by way of parable and not to insult or defame the ruler.

Allah ﷻ has also used allegories for the people in these verses. in the case of the donkey who is carrying books on its back, it has no connection with these books except that it is carrying them. It has no knowledge and understanding.⁷ Were you to admonish it will stray and if you were to leave it be it will stray, just like a dog. If you were to evict a dog it will pant and if you leave it be it will pant. The similarity of this is found in the verse: ﴿and were you to call them to guidance they would not follow you regardless whether you were you to call them or remain quiet﴾⁸

From various commentators on the Quran we conclude the following: that the meaning here is to clarify the hideousness of this state, it's rebuke, deterring the people from it, and summoning them to goodness which is manifested in the adherence of the divine legal laws and obedience to God and His Messenger ﷺ.⁹

6 62:5

7 Tafsir al-Tabari.

8 Tafsir al-Baghawi.

9 See: Tafsir al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir, al-Tahir b. 'Ashur (213/28); Tafsir Zad al-Masir, Abu al-Faraj al-Jawzi (281/4); Tafsir al-Qurtubi (94/18).

The root of attributing **profanities** to Allah is not understanding the rules of the Arabic language regarding analogy (*tashbih*) and how it differs from an adjective (*na't*)

The Third Dubious Claim

The reports in question: the statement of Abū Bakr al-Siddīq: ‘suck the clitoris of Lāt’, and the statement of Hamza b. ‘Abd al-Muttalib: ‘you son of a circumciser’.

Their erroneous understanding of these reports:

As long as such expressions have been issued from one of the companions then they are permissible.

The correct understanding according to scholars:

The stances, opinions and views of someone who is not divinely protected from sin (Prophets) **do not suffice as evidence** when they are **contrary** to what the guidance of Prophets and Messengers.

It is wrong to neglect the reputation of a man who was known for his good character and beautiful traits and cast judgment on him on account of a single action which was never repeated. This does not provide a foundation and basis upon which one could build a justification. The statement of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (if the ascription to him is sound) was said at Hudaibiyah when he reprimanded ‘Urwah bin Mas‘ūd for saying ‘and indeed I see a mob of people apt to fleeing and abandoning you’ to the Prophet ﷺ.

The statement of Hamza was said to Sibā bin ‘Abd al-Uzzā during the battle of Uhud. Hamza used this statement to put Siba down when they dueled. It was a time at which the battle had become extremely intense and anger had reached its limit. The mother of Sibā was a circumciser in Makkah. The context in which this statement was uttered makes it clear that there is a difference between saying something in a moment of anger and using the sources of the Islamic tradition to legitimise the use of offensive and profane language, and then claiming it is a sunnah.



The Messenger of God ﷺ said:
**‘The believer is not a
defamer, curser, indecent
or obscene’**

Prophetic Guidance

The sunnah highlights the default position regarding the character of a Muslim concerning his interaction with a person who insults:

‘Āishah said that some Jews came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: ‘poison (*al-saam*) be upon you’. ‘Āishah said: ‘and unto to you, and may God curse and be angry with you!’. The Prophet ﷺ then said to her: ‘take it easy O ‘Āishah and be gentle, and beware of aggression and indecency.’ ‘Did you not here what they said?’ she replied. ‘Did you not hear what I said,’ he ﷺ answered, ‘I replied to them, and what I invoked will be answered and will happen to them, yet what they invoked will not be answered and not happen to me’.¹⁰

Abd Allah b. Masūd said: “the Messenger of God ﷺ said: ‘the believer is not a defamer, curser, indecent or obscene’”.¹¹

Jābir b. Samurah said: “I was in a gathering with the Prophet ﷺ and my father Samurah was sitting in front of me. The Messenger of God ﷺ said: ‘indeed indecency and speaking obscenely is not from Islam, and indeed the best of people in Islam are the best of them in good character.’”¹²

10 Al-Bukhārī, the chapter: The Prophet was neither indecent nor spoke indecencies, hadith number: 6030.

11 Al-Tirmidhī, the chapter about what has been mentioned about cursing, hadith number: 1977.

12 Reported by Aḥmad, Musnad al-Baṣriyyīn, the hadith of Jābir b. ‘Abd Allah: 20831.

Uninterrupted chains of transmission Lead to sound understanding

The scholars of Islam understood the verse ﴿Allah does not like bad words to be made public unless someone has been wronged: Allah is all hearing and all knowing﴾ correctly. They explained its meaning in a comprehensive manner. What follows is a collection of statements from the companions, their successors and the exegetes regarding this verse:

Abd Allah b. ‘Abbās (d. 17) said: ‘God does not like that anyone make supplication against another unless he is oppressed, for in this case He has granted him an license (*rukhsah*)¹³ to supplicate against the one who has wronged him, and this is due to the statement: ‘save for he who has been oppressed’. However, if he were to observe patience it would be better for him.’¹⁴

Imam al-Hasan al-Basrī (d. 110) said: ‘it is that a man oppresses another man and the latter does not supplicate against him, rather he should say: O God assist me against him, and bring forth my right from him.’ In another narration he said: ‘He has granted him an license to supplicate against the one who has wronged him without transgressing the bounds.’¹⁵

Imam Mujāhid b. Jabr (d. 104) said: [the verse concerns] a man who asks another to invite him to his abode yet the other refuses. In this case it has been permitted for him to mention the treatment of the former towards him, namely: he did not receive me or act hospitably.¹⁶

13 Rukhsah according to the scholars of legal theory means an expiation that is granted in mitigating circumstances that is contrary to the evidence and default position.

14 Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, 442/2.

15 Ibid.

16 Reported by Aḥmad, Musnad al-Baṣriyyīn, the hadith of Jābir b. ‘Abd Allah: 20831.

Uninterrupted chains of transmission ■■■→ Sound understanding ■■■→ Continuous chains of authority

The scholars have agreed upon this sound understanding of the verse. They have mentioned that to pardon is superior—in complete contrast to the usage of obscene language and indecent speech. This is the case in many commentaries on the Quran, including:



Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī (d.310)
Maʿānī al-Qurān waʾIʿrābuhu lil al-Zajjāji (d. 311)
Tafsīr al-Thaʿlabī (d. 427)
Tafsīr al-Baghawī (d. 510)
Tafsīr al-Bahr al-Muhīt(d. 745)
Tafsīr al-Rāzī (d. 606)
Tafsīr al-Nasafī (d. 710)
Tafsīr al-Qurtubī (d. 671)
Tafsīr Abu al-Saʿūd (d. 982)
Tafsīr al-Marāghī (d. 1371)
Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d.150)
Tafsīr ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Humām al-Sanʿāni (d. 211)
Tafsīr Ibn Abī Hātim (d. 327)
Tafsīr Abū Madthfar al-Samʿānī (d. 489)
Tafsīr al-Muharrar wa al-Wajīz by Ibn ʿAtiyyah (d. 532)
Tafsīr Zād al-Masīr by Abī al-Faraj al-Jawzī (d. 597)
Tafsīr al- Izz b. ʿAbd al-Salām (d. 660)
Tafsīr al-Khāzin (d. 741)
Tafsīr al-Jalālayn (d. 864)
Tafsīr Fath al-Bayān fī Maqāsīd al-Qurān (d. 1307)

An incomplete chain of transmission ■■■→ A distorted understanding ■■■→ A hideous interpretation ■■■→ A disaster

The distortion begins small and extends and expands if it is not corrected by returning back to the understanding of the scholars of Islam, the possessors of unbroken chains of transmission. As distortions expand and increase many calamitous errors occur as a result and this ends with harming both the religion and its followers.

What are the most clear signs of transgression against the Sacred Law resultant from the spread of misconceived understandings?

- The spread of indecent words on the grounds that it is the default position within the religion.
- It causes doubt to enter the hearts of Muslims regarding the exalted moral character traits that Islam encourages.
- It allows Islam's enemies, and even some Muslims, to describe Islam as a religion which permits the use of obscene and offensive language.
- It gives many young Muslims the idea that to insult an oppressor, curse him and to label him with improper and hideous words is Islamically fine, and that it is required!

Al-Hasan al-Basrī said:
'he should not supplicate against him,
rather he should say:
O God assist me against him, and bring forth
my right from him.'

O God burn his
house and...



O God make me
victorious



In Summary

- Islam commands to virtuous speech, encouraging its practice at all times between human beings.
- The default position is the prohibition of obscene language and foul-mouthed speech.
- There is an immense danger from what adherents to extreme factions are claiming— that to label an oppressor with obscene and offensive words is something stipulated within the Sharia,
- One must return back to the scholars of the religion, who are recognized for their understanding of the Islamic texts, in order for people not to fall into the clutches of those who follow their own objectives and caprice
- It is of utmost importance to protect Muslims from the frivolities of those who are striving to distort the religion by attempting to legitimize obscenity and offensiveness in the face of oppression. This is important so that Muslims do not become perturbed between a legacy that summons to the establishment of good character and religious imposters who practice its opposite.
- There is no inference from the noble verse: God does not like any evil to be mentioned openly, unless it be by him who has been wronged. And indeed God is all-hearing, all-knowing, that indecent and obscene language is acceptable for responding to an oppressor, or the permissibility of belittling his status by labeling him with hideous obscenities which Islam has prohibited from the outset, as previously demonstrated.

«Is it not because of the harvest of peoples tongues that they are placed upon their faces in the fire.»¹⁷



17 Reported by Ahmad and al-Tirmidhi, and stated that it is graded as fair-sound.

INTRODUCING THE DEVIANCE SERIES

The Messenger of God, ﷺ, said:

‘This knowledge will be transmitted from every generation by its upright; they negate from it the distortions of the extreme, the false claims of the falsifiers, and interpretations of the ignorant.’

Some of those that possess misapprehensions have understood the discourse of God in a manner which does not agree with the academic methodology inherited from the pious predecessors (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*), and does not harmonize with the objectives and greater values of the divine revelation...

They have taken some verses of the noble Qur’ān which were revealed in regard to the non-Muslims, and made them applicable to the Muslims... They have adopted verses which came as exceptions and applied to them general rulings...

They have distorted the meanings of the words of God in a manner that has led to the establishment or formation of grave erroneous concepts within the minds of the general Muslim populace, a result of which are mannerisms and actions that have no correlation with the true intrinsic religion of Islam...

We shall become acquainted through the parts of this continuous series about the distortions of the meanings of the verses of the Noble Qur’ān and the Prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*) which the adherents of these distorted ideas have fallen within, their misguidance concerning legal rulings, and their embracing of wrong conceptions. All of which distanced them from God’s intended meanings, as well as His Prophet’s ﷺ and the righteous predecessors (*salaf al-ṣāliḥ*) that followed.

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