

Women in Islam

& Refutation of some Common Misconceptions

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This book deals with the following questions and issues:

- *The state of women through the ages: women in the pre-Islamic Arab society; Indian society; Chinese society; Greek society; Roman society; traditional Jewish society; traditional Christian society; and modern secular society.*
- *Matters in which Men and Women are equal in Islam: in basic humanity; in application of obligations; in rewards and punishments in this worldly life and the hereafter; in ownership and the freedom of financial transaction; in preserving the honor and nobility; in mandatory education; and in bearing responsibility towards reforming the society.*
- *Women's status and rights in various stages of life in the Muslim society: as a baby, child and young girl; as a sister; as a wife; as a mother; as kinsfolk and neighbor, and as a woman in general.*
- *Misconceptions about women's rights and obligations in Islam and their refutation: on polygyny; on leadership and responsibility; on the marriage Contract and guardianship; on divorce; on testimony; on inheritance; on blood money; on employment; and on Hijab (covering head and face).*

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Preface

All praise is due to Allah the Exalted. May Allah exalt the mention of His Prophet and his household and render them safe from every derogatory thing

I believe that I cannot present any new information on the issues related to women's rights and the place of women in Islam. Therefore I have attempted to collect, arrange and summarize some of the relevant information on this subject and present it for the benefit of the reader. I hope and pray for guidance from Allah the Exalted that I am successful in reaching my goals.

It is a great injustice to accuse Islam of wrongdoing and oppression to women when there are many statements of the revealed book of Allah, the *Qur'an*, and of the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ) which negate and disprove this false slander. Allah, the Exalted, says:

“O Mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you in the Sight of Allah is the believer who has *Taqwa* (piety and righteousness). Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware”
[49:13]

Allah, the Exalted, also says:

“And among His Signs is that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find peace and repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for people who reflect”
[30:21]

The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Verily women are the twin halves of men.” [*Abu Dawood*
#234 , Tirmidhi #113 & others]

Introduction

Various calls for women's freedom, liberation and equal rights have been heard all over the world, and many slogans have been coined for the marches. In some societies women have indeed lived under oppression, cruelty and injustice, and have been denied basic rights of humanity. Nor is it denied that some Muslims have deviated from the Islamic principles and teachings. Islamic law, on the other hand, has collected women's rights in a comprehensive and balanced system of human rights and obligations. Close examination of the slogans propagated by the international women's liberation movements show that they revolve around three elements: women's liberation, equal rights with men and women's rights. We will examine them in the light of Islamic law and teachings, regardless of the practices of some of the ignorant and deviant Muslims.

Firstly, the word "liberation" indicates that there are shackles, bonds and restrictions in place, and secondly, that women are enslaved and must be liberated. This is ambiguous and misleading since absolute liberty is impossible, regardless of whether they are men or women. Mankind is naturally restricted by the limitations of innate limited abilities, and necessities of social organization. Both men and women must live in a social environment under certain laws, rules and regulations that govern and organize the various affairs of life. Does that mean that man is not free and independent in his actions, or that he is clear from the responsibility of his deeds? Can anyone be free of natural limits and legal restrictions? If they are slaves, then the question becomes, to whom? Any so called freedom and liberty has natural and legal limits, which, if exceeded, will lead to destructive activities that all recognize as indecent, uncivilized and criminal. Islamic law decreed that

both men and women seek freedom and liberation from idolatry, tyranny, exploitation and injustice. The divinely revealed principles and laws teach and advocate strict monotheism, justice and noble morality. Within this framework men and women have inter-dependent and complementary roles. Islamic law granted women the right to deal in many affairs within the society directly, rather than dealing via a guardian. Women in Islam are officially responsible and in charge of running all their affairs whether economical, social or otherwise, as in many societies. For her protection and maintenance, her father, brother, uncle and husband - the stronger sex - are obligated and legally bound to guard her honor and maintain her sustenance and proper living circumstances according to their abilities, throughout the stages of her life. Is this demeaning her position, or elevating it? Islam has forbidden men and women equally from being indecent publicly, and this translates differently for the two sexes for natural reasons. All must protect virtue in private, and guard themselves in public. Islamic law protects women from intimidation and molestation, and this demands that no one of either gender commit acts that are sexually provocative or enticing to the other. For this reason Islamic law requires modest clothing for her protection when going out of the home, and prohibits open ended free intermingling, and any type of physical touching of the other sex.

Islam illustrates the concept of freedom and liberty in such a way that individual behavior must not be harmful to the individual or destructive to the society at large, as graphically illustrated in the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when he said in an authentic tradition:

“The example of a person who observes the laws of Allah and the person who violates them are examples of two

groups of people who gathered on a ship and decided to divide their places. One group received the upper deck as their lot, while the other group received the lower part of the ship. Whenever the people in the lower part needed water they had to pass through the people on the upper deck. The people in the lower part thought to themselves: 'If we drill a hole in our portion of the ship, we can have access to the water without disturbing the party on the upper deck.' If the group on the upper deck allows them execute their plan, all the people will be destroyed, and if they forbid them from doing so, they all will be safe.”
[*Bukhari #2361 & others*]

A well-known German thinker and philosopher, **Schopenhauer** said:

"Grant woman total and absolute freedom and liberty for ONE YEAR ONLY, and check with me after that to see the results of such freedom. Do not forget that you (all), along with me, will inherit virtues, chastity and good morals. If I die (before then) you are free to say either: "He was wrong!" or "He hit the heart of the truth!"

An American female reporter, **Helesian Stansbery**, who is syndicated in over 250 newspapers, worked in the area of journalism and broadcasting for over 20 years, and visited numerous Muslim countries had this to say at the end of one of her visits to a Muslim country:

"The Arab-Islamic society is wholesome and healthy. This society must continue to protect its traditions that restrict both its males and females to a certain and reasonable degree. This society definitely differs from the European and American societies. The Arab-Islamic society has its own traditions that impose certain restrictions and limitations on women and give special respect and status to

parents... First and foremost, the most strict restrictions and limitations are on absolute sexual freedom that truly threatens both the society and the family in Europe and the United States of America. Therefore, the restrictions that are imposed by the Arab-Islamic society are valid and beneficial as well. I strongly recommend that you adhere to your traditions and code of ethics. Forbid coeducation. Restrict female freedom, or rather, return back to the full '*pardah*' (veiling) practices. Truly this is better for you than the sexual freedom of Europe and the United States of America. Forbid coeducation because we have suffered from it in the USA. The American society has become sophisticated, full of all forms and terms of sexual freedom. The victims of sexual freedom and coeducation are filling the prisons, sidewalks, bars, taverns and whorehouses. The (false) freedom that we have granted to our young females and daughters has turned them to drugs, crime and white slavery. Coeducation, sexual freedom and all other types of "freedom" in the European and American societies have threatened the family and shaken moral values and ethics."

The question that poses itself to women's liberation advocates is: What is the truly the best, most beneficial and most protective system for the preservation of the honor, dignity and protection of women?

Demands for Women's Rights

Women worldwide demand equal rights. There is not a system of law that preserves, maintains and protects what are truly women's rights, as much as Islamic law does, whether in the past or in modern times. This will be verified and substantiated in the following sections of the book.

Sir Hamilton, the well-known English thinker and philosopher, stated in his book on *Islam and Arab Civilization*:

"The rules, regulations and verdicts concerning women in Islam are clear, frank and open. Islam capitalizes on the complete care that should be given to the protection of a woman against anything that may harm her personally, or cause ill-fame to her reputation or character."

Gustave Le Bon, the well-known French thinker stated in his book "*The Arab Civilization*":

"Islamic virtuous deeds are not limited to honoring and respecting women, but rather, we can add that Islam is the first religion to honor and respect women. We can easily prove this by illustrating that all religions and nations, prior to the advent of Islam, caused much harm and insult to women." [p.488]

He also points out:

"Matrimonial rights which have been stated and illustrated in the Glorious Qur'an and by the interpreters of the meanings of the Glorious Qur'an are far better than European matrimonial rights for both husband and wife." [p.497]

Over fourteen hundred years ago, Islam began to spread to the known world from *Makkah*, and then *Madinah*, where the

Prophet of Allah, Muhammad bin Abd Allah (ﷺ) taught his message. Islam spread its light through the teachings of the revealed scriptures of the Glorious Book of Allah, the Qur'an, and the inspired traditions of the *Sunnah* (Way) of Prophet (ﷺ) which are the undisputed basis of the Islamic law. The Islamic teachings and system of law had a profound impact on the lives of the followers of Islam, and consequently, this impact affected the societies in the lands where Muslims traveled and settled. Islam spread very rapidly in an astounding manner in the known world and left a comprehensive system of life that addresses every human need. Islam does not contradict, clash with or reject any of the lawful, sound and meaningful requirements of the human being's existence, which are essential to his continuity in life.

In order to understand changes that Islam brought for women, we must examine briefly the status of women prior to the advent of Islam in the Arab society and other civilizations in the world.

Status of Women throughout the Ages:

Women in the Pre-Islamic Societies and Civilizations

Women suffered great injustices in the pagan Arab society and were exposed to diverse kinds of humiliation prior to the mission of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). They were treated like material property to be disposed of at the whim of the male guardian. They were not entitled to inherit from their parents or husbands. Arabs believed inheritance should only be granted to those who had martial abilities, like being able to ride a horse, fight, gain war booties and help protect the tribe and clan territory. Since women in the pagan Arab society did not generally have these qualities, they were themselves inherited like any moveable commodity after the death of an indebted husband. If the deceased husband had adult sons from other marriages, the oldest son amongst them had the right to add her to his household, just as a son inherits other chattels of his deceased father. She was unable to leave the house of her stepson unless she paid a ransom.

As a general practice, men had the freedom to acquire as many wives as they desired with no set limits. There was no system of law and justice that would forbid a man from committing any injustice towards his wives. Women had no right to choose, or even consent to being chosen as a partner for marriage; they were simply given away. Women were forbidden to remarry if a husband divorced them.

In the pre-Islamic era of Arabia, fathers commonly became extremely angry and disgraced with the birth of a female child

into their family. Some considered it an evil omen. Allah, the Exalted, describes the father's reception of the news about the birth of a daughter:

“When the news of (the birth of) a female is brought to any of them, his face becomes dark, and he is filled with inward grief! He hides himself from the people because of the evil (and shame) of that which he has been informed. Shall he keep her with dishonor, or bury her in the dirt? Certainly, evil is their decision...” [16:59]

Women were not even able to practice some of the most natural of rights. For instance eating certain types of foods was allowed only for males. Allah, the Exalted, records this in the Glorious Qur'an:

“And they say: What is in the bellies of such cattle (whether milk or fetus) is for the male alone, and forbidden from our females, however, if it was born dead, then all have shares therein...” [6:139]

The hatred of female babies prompted Arabs to bury them alive. Allah, the Exalted, states in the Glorious Qur'an with reference to the Day of Requit:

“And when the female buried alive shall be questioned: for what sin was she killed?” [81:8-9]

Some fathers used to bury their female children alive if the child was leprous, lame or with birth defect. Allah (ﷻ) states in the Glorious Qur'an:

“And kill not your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them and you. Surely, the killing of them is a great sin.” [17:31]

The one honor afforded to women during the pre-Islamic era was the protection of her person, family and tribe, and the

revenge against any who humiliated or dishonored her, but even this was more for male pride, dignity and tribal honor than a concern for the female gender.

This situation of women in the Arab society led **Umar ibn al-Khattab**, the second Caliph of the Muslims (ﷺ) to say, as reported by Muslim:

“By Allah, we didn’t use to think that women had anything until Allah revealed about them what He revealed in the Qur’an, and distributed to them what He distributed...”
[*Bukhari #4629 & Muslim #31*]

Women in Indian Society

In Indian society women were treated generally as maids or slaves as if they had no will or desire of their own. They had to follow their husbands in all matters. Women were given as payment for loss to a gambling opponent. To show devotion, they were forced to burn themselves alive by jumping onto the funeral pyre of their husbands after their death. This practice, called “*sutti*” continued until the end of the 17th century when this custom was outlawed in spite of the dismay it caused the Hindu religious leaders. Although outlawed formally, *sutti* was widely practiced until the end of 19th century and still continues in some of the remote areas of India. In certain regions of India, women are offered to the priests as concubines, or as prostitutes to be exploited. In others, they were sacrificed to the Hindu gods to please them or seek rain. Some Hindu laws even declare that:

“The predestined patience, the blowing wind or tornadoes, death, hellfire, poison, snakes and fire are no less evil than women”.

It is also stated in Hindu religious books, that

"When *Manna* [the Hindu god of creation] created women he imposed onto them the love of bed, seats, decoration [make-up], filthy lust (of all types and kinds), anger, rebellion against honor and dignity and evil attitudes, behavior and conduct."

In the teachings of **Manna Herma Sistra** concerning women, one can read:

"A woman may live without a choice regardless of whether she is a little girl, a young lady or a mature woman. A young girl is under the command and choice of her father. A married woman is under the command and choice of her husband. A widow is under the command and choice of her male children, and she may never become independent (after the death of her husband). A widow may never remarry after the death of her husband, but rather, she must neglect all that she likes in terms of food, clothes, and makeup until she dies. A woman may not own or possess anything, as whatever she may gain or acquire shall go straight and immediately to the ownership of her husband."

In some rare cases, a woman had several husbands at the same time.¹ No doubt this made her as a prostitute in society.

Women in Chinese Society

Women in Chinese society occupied a low and degraded status. They were customarily assigned the most despised and least important jobs and positions. The male child was looked upon

¹Refer to 'Hindu Inter-caste Marriage in India', Chapter 3 [Forms of Marriage] part 2 [Polyandry], by Haripada Chakraborti.

as a "gift" from the gods, and treated accordingly. As for the female child, she had to endure multiple hardships, like the binding of her feet in order to cripple her from running and other customs. A Chinese proverb says:

"Listen to your wife, but never believe what she says."

The status of women in the Chinese society was not much better than that of the pagan pre-Islamic Arab and the Indian societies.

Women in Greek Society

Among the Greeks, women were degraded to the extent that men claimed that women were nothing but the epitome of evil. There was no system to protect women in that society. They were deprived of the rights to education; bought and sold like any other commodity; deprived of the right of inheritance; and considered as minors with no rights to make any transactions regard to possessions and wealth. Women were subjected to the will of men throughout their lives. Divorce was an absolute right of men. The common situation of women in the society led some Greek thinkers to say:

"Woman's name must be locked up in the house, as it is the case with her body."

Gustave Le Bon, the French thinker, stated about the status of women in the Greek society in his book "*Arab Civilization*":

"Greeks, in general, considered women to be the lowest creatures of the low. They were useful for nothing other than reproduction and taking care of the household affairs. If a woman gave birth to an 'ugly, retarded or

handicapped' child, the man could take the liberty to kill the (unwanted or undesirable) child."

Demosthenes, the well-known Greek orator and thinker said:

"We Greek men enjoy the company of prostitutes for sexual pleasure; 'girl-friends' and 'sweet-hearts', to care of our daily needs, and we marry to get 'legitimate' children."

From this licentious double standard, and depraved morality, we can see what fortune women had in such a society based on the statement issued by one of their top rank, well-known thinkers.

Woman in Roman Society

A woman in Roman society was also looked upon as an inferior being that could not run her own affairs. All authority was in the hands of men who totally dominated all private and public affairs. Men even had the authority to sentence their wives to death in certain cases when accused of specific crimes. The authority of man over woman in the Roman society included the right to sell her, punish her with tortuous punishments, send her into exile or kill her. The woman in Roman society had to listen to and obey all commands given by the man. And they were deprived of the right of inheritance.

Woman in Jewish Society

Women in traditional Jewish society were not more fortunate than those previously described. In the Old Testament women were described as follows:

"I applied mine heart to know and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness: And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart snares and nets, and her hands as bands..." [Ecclesiastes (7:25-26)]

In the Septuagint, it says,

"And if a man sells his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as the menservants do. If she pleases not her master, who has betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he has dealt deceitfully with her. And if he had betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. If he takes him another wife, her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. If he does not do these three unto her, then shall she go out free without money." [Exodus (21:7-11)]

Thus, if a Jewish woman got married, her guardianship was transferred from her father to her husband and she became as one of his possessions such as his house, his slave, his maidservant or his money or wealth.

Jewish teachings and laws deprived the girl of her father's inheritance if the father had other male children. In the Old Testament, the Septuagint, it says:

"And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, 'If a man dies, and has no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughters'." [Numbers (27:8)]

Moreover, Jewish men never slept in the same bed with a menstruating woman, or ate with her or drank with her. Jewish men used to isolate themselves fully from a menstruating woman until she was completely free from her menses.

Woman in Christian Society

Christian priests went to the extreme of considering the woman as the cause of "original sin" and the source of all catastrophes from which the entire world has suffered. For this very reason, the physical relationship between man and woman has traditionally been labeled as "filthy" or "dirty" even if it were officially done and performed within a legitimate marriage contract.

Saint Trotolian says:

"Woman is the Satan's pathway to a man's heart. Woman pushes man to the "Cursed Tree." Woman violates God's laws and distorts his picture (i.e. man's picture)."

Wieth Knudesen, a Danish writer, illustrated the woman's status in the middle ages saying:

"According to the Catholic faith, which considered the woman as a second class citizen, very little care and attention was given to her."

In 1586 a conference was held in France to decide whether women should be considered as human beings or not. The conference came to a conclusion that:

"Woman is a human being, but she is created to serve man."

Thus, the conference approved the rights for women as human beings, a matter that was previously in doubt and undecided! Moreover, those who attended the conference did not decide on full rights for the woman, but rather; she was a follower of man and a maidservant to him with no personal rights. This decision was in effect until 1938, when, for the first time, a decree was issued to abrogate all the laws that forbid a woman from conducting her own financial affairs directly and opening a bank account in her own name.

Europeans continued to discriminate against women and deprive them of their rights throughout the Middle-Ages. It is also surprising to know that English laws turned a blind eye to the selling of one's wife! The rift between the sexes, men and women, continued to increase, so much so that women became fully under the control of men. Women were stripped completely of all their rights and whatever they owned. All that a woman owned belonged to her husband. For instance, until very recently women, according to the French law, were not considered capable of making their own financial decisions in their private ownership. We can read *article 217 of the French law* that states:

"A married woman has no right to grant, transfer, bond, own with or without payment, without her husband's participation in the sale contract, or his written consent to it, regardless of whether the marriage contract stipulated that there should be a complete separation between the husband's and wife's possessions and ownership of various items."

Despite all amendments and modifications, which occurred in these French laws, we can still see how these laws are affecting married French women. It is a form of civilized slavery.

Furthermore, a married woman loses her surname (family's name) as soon as she enters into a marriage contract. A married

woman shall carry the family name of her husband. This, of course, indicates that a married woman will only be a follower of her husband and she will even lose her personal identity.

Bernard Shaw, the well-known English writer says:

"The moment a woman marries; all her personal possessions become her husband's in accordance to the English law."

Lastly, there is one more injustice that has been imposed upon the woman in the Western society which is that a marriage bond is made to last forever, in accordance with legal and religious teachings. There is no right of divorce (according to Catholicism, at least). Husband and wife are only separated from each other physically. This separation may have contributed to all sorts of social decay and corruption, such as having affairs, mistresses, boyfriends, girlfriends, as well as possibly prostitution, and homosexual and lesbian relations. Moreover, a surviving widow is not given the chance to remarry and lead a normal married life after the death of her husband.

No doubt, what is called modern western civilization and which endeavors to dominate the globe, is indebted to the Greek and Roman traditions for its civil foundations, and to the Judaic-Christian traditions for its ideological and religious foundations. The abuses mentioned above collectively led, due to gradual and eventual effects of technological and social modernization, to the expected and natural reaction: movements demanding women's rights in the society, led by thinkers, educators, lobbyists, and human rights and women rights' activists. The pendulum was set to swing in the other direction, and they demanded absolute equal rights and liberation from male chauvinism and abuses. In many of the

modern secular societies, women are indeed given numerous equal rights, but at the same time, equality has exposed them to the molestation and double standards rampant in the immoral materialistic culture that markets her as an object of sexual desire, for sale, contract or rent. The ensuing breakdown of the family unit, and the widespread sexual immorality, abortion, homosexuality, and criminal deviancy from sexual liberation, has led to some counter reactions in the society, especially from the religious conservatives, but apparently, the trends are too strong to turn the tide back.

In this global context, and from this historical legacy, we will present the salient features of women's rights in Islam and shed light on some common misconceptions in order to show the superiority of following Allah's guidance rather than men and women guiding each other by whim and desire.

Women's Rights in Islam: in general; as children and daughters; sisters; wives; mothers, and as kinfolk and neighbors

Islam deals with women in a comprehensive way in the context of her relationship with Allah, her Creator and Lord, with herself as a part of humanity, and with man, her partner and natural spouse in the family. During the presentation below, keep in mind the rights that other societies grant them in comparison to the rights to which Islam has entitled women. It is noteworthy that Islamic teachings are attentive to the needs and rights of the weaker gender throughout her life: as a daughter, sister, wife, mother, and as a member of the Islamic society.

Equality of Men and Woman in Islam, and their complementary nature to one another

In one sense, equality between men and women is possible and reasonable because they are both human, with similar souls, brains, hearts, lungs, limbs, etc. In another sense, equality between men and women is impossible and an absurdity due to their natural differences in physical, mental, emotional and psychological qualities, inclinations and abilities. Between these two we must tread to illuminate how they are equal, and how they are complimentary.

If total equality between all members of the same gender is impossible due to natural differences in strengths and other qualities, regardless of whether the gender is masculine or feminine, then it is definitely impossible between the two

genders. Allah, the Exalted and Almighty, says in the Glorious Qur'an:

“And of everything We have created pairs, that you may remember (the Grace of Allah).” [51:49]

Even atoms exhibit this dual quality with inter-related and complementary roles played by the positive and negative particles and ions, yet each is an integral part of the whole system of the so called binary basis of all life. Most living beings have male and female sexes for reproduction. As the science of biology teaches us, all mammals have similar traits in their molecular and glandular structures that determine differences in gender. These basic physical, psychological and sexual traits have their definite effects on other spheres of life.

It is natural for a man to need and find fulfillment with a woman and for a woman with a man, since they are created one from the other and for one another. They both are inseparably bound to each other. Neither can they find fulfillment except when in the company of the other as legal and honorable mate and spouse, as Allah (ﷻ) says in His Majestic Book, the Qur'an, mentioned in the two verses cited in the preface:

“O Mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you in the Sight of Allah is the believer who has *Taqwa* (piety and righteousness). Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.” [49:13]

In many instances Islam treats women as equals to men. Some of them are given below. In the coming sections we will expand on these themes in various contexts throughout the book.

1) Both the male and the female are equal in terms of their humanity. Islam does not categorize women, for instance, as the source of evil in the world for some “original sin” that caused Adam (ﷺ) to be dismissed from Paradise, or to be the cause of evil in the world by setting loose a Pandora’s box of vices, as some other religious doctrines and fables teach.

Allah, the Exalted and Almighty, states in the Glorious Qur'an:

“O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife (Eve), and from them both He created many men and women...” [4:1]

Allah also states in the Glorious Qur'an:

“Does man think that he will be left neglected without being punished or rewarded for the obligatory duties enjoined by his Lord (Allah) on him? Was he not a mixed male and female discharge of semen pouring forth? Then he became a clot; then (Allah) shaped and fashioned (him) in due proportion, and made him into two sexes, male and female. Is He not able to raise to life those who are dead?” [75:36-40]

Allah illustrated in the verses that He created both sexes from one single source. There is no difference between the two sexes in terms of qualifications in humanity, and each complements the other as the two genders of the species. Islam has abolished and abrogated all the previous unjust laws that demoted women as inferior in quality and nature. The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Verily, women are the twin halves of men.” [Abu Dawood #234, Tirmidhi #113 & others]

2) Equal religious duties and rituals are required from both women and men. Testimony of Faith (*Shahaadah*), Prayer

(*Salah*), Obligatory Charity (*Zakah*), Fasting (*Saum*), and Pilgrimage (*Hajj*) are equally required of both genders. In some cases the requirements are a bit easier on women to alleviate their special cases of hardship. For instance, in consideration of her health and physical condition, menstruating women or a woman in the state of postnatal bleeding and recuperation are absolved from the duty of prayers and fasting. She is required to make up the days of fasting missed due to menses and postnatal bleeding, but not her prayers, as that would be too burdensome.

3) Both males and females have similar rewards for obedience and penalties for disobedience in this world and the Hereafter. As stated by Allah in the Glorious Qur'an:

“Whoever does righteous acts, whether male or female, while he is a believer, verily, to him We will give a good life, and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do.” [16:97]

And the Lord Most Majestic says:

“Surely for men who submit to Allah and for women who submit to Allah, for believing men and for believing women, for devout men and devout women, for truthful men and truthful women, for steadfast men and steadfast women, for humble men and humble women, for charitable men and charitable women, for fasting men and fasting women, for men who guard their chastity and women who guard their chastity, for men who remember Allah much and for women who remember Allah much, for all of them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a mighty reward.” [33:35]

4) Women have the same moral obligations and are entitled to the same general rights as men in guarding chastity, integrity and personal honor and respect, etc. No double standards are

allowed. For instance, those who falsely accuse a chaste woman of adultery or fornication are publicly punished, just as if a man is slandered. Allah, the Exalted, states in the Glorious Qur'an:

“And those who accuse chaste women, and produce not four witnesses, flog them with eighty lashes, and reject their testimony forever. Indeed, they are those who are disobedient to Allah.” [24:4]

5) Women are equally qualified and allowed to engage in financial dealings and property ownership. According to Islamic law women can own, buy, sell and undertake any financial transaction without the need for guardianship, and without any restrictions or limitations - a situation unheard of in many societies until modern times.

6) Islam indicates that a man who honors, respects and deals with women justly and integrally, possesses a healthy and righteous personality, whereas a man who mistreats them is an unrighteous and unrespectable man. The Prophet of Allah ﷺ said:

“The most complete believer in his faith among the believers is the best in character, and the best of you are those who are the best to their wives.” [Tirmidhi #1162 and verified]

7) Islam entitles women to the same rights as men in terms of education and cultivation. The Prophet of Allah ﷺ said, as reported and authenticated by the scholars of prophetic traditions:

“Seeking knowledge is compulsory for each and every Muslim (i.e. both male and female).” [Ibn Maajah #224 & al-Baihaqi and verified]

Muslim scholars collectively agreed that the word "Muslim" when used in revealed scriptures includes both male and female, as we indicated in parenthesis. Thus, Islam entitles women to the same right of education in order to understand the religious and social obligations, and obligated them both to raise their children in the best manner, in accordance with the right Islamic guidance. Of course women have certain obligations in bringing up their children that are commensurate to their abilities and men have complementary obligations to finance, protect and maintain according to their added responsibilities in the family unit.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever takes care of two girls until they attain maturity, he and I will come on the Day of Resurrection like this.” The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) then joined his fingers to illustrate this. [*Muslim #2631*]

About female slave girls, the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever has a female child with him (under his guardianship from slavery), whom he educates properly, teaches good manners, and then frees and marries her, will have a double reward.” [*Bukhari #97 & Muslim #154*]

8) Men and women have similar obligations and responsibilities to reform and correct the society to the best of their capability. Men and women shoulder the responsibility of enjoining good and forbidding evil equally, as Allah, the Exalted, states in the Qur'an:

“The believers, men and women, are helpers, supporters, friends and protectors of one another, they enjoin all that is good, and forbid all that is evil, they offer their prayers perfectly, and give *Zakah* (Obligatory Charity) and obey

Allah and His Messenger. Allah will bestow Mercy on them. Surely Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.” [9:71]

9) Men and women have set and determined rights to receive their fair share of wealth, just as they are obliged to give *Zakah* (Obligatory Charity) according to the set calculation. All Muslim scholars unanimously agree upon this. A woman has her set share of inheritance, as will be discussed in more detail later, which was a right unthinkable in many societies.

Allah (ﷻ) says:

“There is a share for men from what is left by parents and those closely related, and there is a share for women from what is left by parents and those closely related, whether the wealth be small or large: a legal mandatory share.” [4:7]

10) A woman, just like a man, can give someone the right of seeking refuge and security among the Muslims. Allah, the Exalted, says:

“And if one of the polytheists seeks refuge, give him until he hears the words of Allah, then take him to his place of security.” [9:71]

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“...And the asylum granted by any Muslim is to be secured by all the Muslims, even if it is granted by one of the lowest social status among them; and whoever betrays a Muslim, in this respect will incur the curse of Allah, the angels, and all the people, and none of his Compulsory or optional good deeds will be accepted on the Day of Resurrection.” [Bukhari #6755]

This is also proven by the famous story of **Um Hani'** (Mother of Hani') when she gave protection to a polytheist who sought refuge with her on the day of the conquest of *Makkah* after her relative threatened to kill that person (for some past enmity) so the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

“We protect and give asylum to whomever you give asylum O Um Hani'.” [*Bukhari #350*]

These are just some of the rights, mentioned here as examples in a summarized way to indicate the comprehensive nature of the Islamic jurisprudence.

Women as Infants, Children and Daughters

Allah, the Exalted, states in the Glorious Qur'an concerning the necessity and importance of the preservation and care of new born children, the very first right of the child:

“And kill not your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them and for you. Surely, such a killing is a great sin.”
[17:31]

Islam requires parents to give their children beautiful names, take proper care of them, take care of all their needs, provide for them reasonably in accordance with the parent's income, and ensure a decent, respected and honorable life for them.

And the authentic prophetic tradition says:

“Verily Allah has prohibited for you to be disobedient and ungrateful to your mothers ... or to bury your daughters alive...” [Bukhari #1407 & Muslim #593]

Thus they have the right of blood money if killed, as it is reported by **Aishah**:

“Two women from Huthail tribe fought and one threw a stone and killed the other and that which was in her womb, the relatives of the killer and the relatives of the victim submitted their case to the Prophet (ﷺ) who judged that the Diya (blood money) for the fetus was a male or female slave, and the Diya (blood money) of the woman (i.e. 100 she-camels) was to be paid by her clansmen.” [Bukhari #3512 & Muslim #1681]

Allah, the Exalted, states in the Glorious Qur'an:

“Mothers shall nurse their children for two whole years, for those parents who desire to complete the term of suckling, and the father of the child shall bear the cost of the mother's food and clothing on a reasonable basis.” [2:233]

Care and guardianship of children is the most important right after the right of (milk) nursing by the mother. The mother is entitled to the custody of the child, son or daughter at the early stage of life, between the ages of one and thirteen or fourteen. This applies particularly in cases of divorce due to essential differences between parents. Islam entitles the mother to her child's custody during early childhood because she, generally, is more caring and attentive to the child's needs. 'Abd Allah bin Amr related that a woman came to the Prophet (ﷺ) complaining about her husband saying:

“My womb held my baby as a fetus, my breast nursed the baby as an infant, and my lap carried the child for a long time. Now the father divorced me and he wants to rip the baby away from me!” He (ﷺ) said: “You deserve the child's custody more as long as you do not remarry.” [Abu Dawood #2276 & others]

Parents are obligated to treat all their children mercifully and with compassion. Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) reported:

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) kissed Hasan ibn Ali (his grandson) in the presence of Aqra' ibn Habis at-Tameemi who said, “I have ten children and I never kissed any of them.” Upon that he looked at him and replied: “Whoever does not have mercy will not receive mercy.” [Bukhari #5651]

Islamic law stipulates that parents must care and pay attention to their children, especially girls for their special needs.

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said:

“Whoever supports two girls till they attain maturity, he and I will come on the Day of Resurrection like this.” The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) then joined his fingers to illustrate this. [Muslim #2631]

Islamic laws and teachings mandate that parents raise their children with the best manners and offer them a sound, beneficial and healthy education. The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“It is enough sin for a person to neglect those for whose care he is responsible.” [Muslim #996]

Ibn Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Each one of you is a guardian and each one of you is responsible for those under his care. A ruler is a guardian and is responsible for his citizens. A man is a guardian of his family and is responsible for them. A woman is a guardian in her husband's home and is responsible for whatever is under her care. A servant is a guardian of his master's wealth and is responsible for whatever is under his care. Each one of you is a guardian and each one of you is responsible for whatever is under his care.” [Bukhari#853 & Muslim #1829]

Islam commands justice in all matters and this general ruling is applied to all children regardless of their sexes. Allah, the Exalted, states in the Glorious Qur'an:

“Verily Allah enjoins justice and the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, wickedness, and injustice and oppression. He admonishes you that you may take heed.” [16:90]

Aishah, the Prophet's wife and the mother of the believers (رضي الله عنها) said:

“A poor woman came to my door carrying two little girls. I offered them three dates (i.e. since I had nothing else). She gave each of her two girls a date, and lifted the third one to her mouth to eat. Both her daughters urged her to feed them more, so she split the last date into two pieces and gave one half to each of her two daughters. I admired what the woman had done and told the story to the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) who said upon hearing it: “Verily Allah obligated paradise for her due to this act of hers” or “liberated her from the Hellfire due to this act of hers”.” [Muslim #2630]

And in another authentic narration he said at the end:

“He who is involved (in the responsibility) of (bringing up) daughters, and he accords benevolent treatment towards them, there would be protection for him against Hell-Fire.” [Bukhari #1352 & Muslim #2629]

Islam calls for material and emotional justice and fair treatment from both parents to their children, regardless of their sexes. A male child is not to be given special preference over a female child, or vice versa.

The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said to one of his companions who had given a present to only one of his children:

“Did you give all your children like this?” He said: “No.” He said: “Fear Allah and be just with all of your children.” [Muslim #1623]

Islam emphasizes the importance of taking care of orphans. Being an orphan has a great negative impact on the mental, spiritual and emotional status of a child. This state may lead an orphan to deviation or corruption at times, especially if the

orphan exists in a society that does not give him due care, fulfill his needs and be kind and merciful to him.

Islam pays special attention to the welfare of orphans, males and females alike. Islam requires that the immediate relatives of that orphan take good care of him/her. If there are no relatives, then it becomes the responsibility of the Islamic State to take care of them, manage their affairs and provide them with care. Allah, the Exalted, states in the Glorious Qur'an:

“As for the orphans, do not treat them with harshness.” [93:9]

Allah, the Exalted, also states in the Glorious Qur'an:

“Verily, those who unjustly eat up the property of orphans, they eat up only a fire into their bellies, and they will be burnt in the Blazing fire!” [4:10]

The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“O Allah, I declare inviolable the rights of two weak ones: the orphans and women.” [Haakim #211 & Tabarani]

Here he indicates the great sin to perpetrate any harm or injustice to these two, who, according to their natural weakness in the society, often are neglected or denied their rights.

Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) also said:

“Avoid the seven cardinal sins that cause destruction.” The companions asked: “O Prophet of Allah! What are these sins?” He said: “To associate others in the worship of Allah, to practice sorcery, to kill a human soul for no just reason, to deal with interest, to devour the wealth of an orphan, to flee from the battlefield, and to accuse the innocent, chaste, believing women with adultery.” [Bukhari #2615 & Muslim #89]

Many other Prophetic statements have been reported as urging believing Muslims to sponsor orphans, take good care of them, be kind to them, and demonstrate love and affection for them. For instance he said (ﷺ):

"I and the guardian of an orphan are like these two in Paradise." He then indicated with his index and middle fingers. *[Bukhari #4998]*

Islam cares for the welfare of those illegitimate children who, through no fault of theirs, are left without any acknowledgement from their parents. The Islamic government is required to take care of such children, exactly as any other orphan so that they may become, by the will of Allah, normal and beneficial members of the society. As the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said as a general ruling of benevolence:

"...you have reward for (doing good to) every living being." *[Bukhari #2334]*

Islamic jurisprudence obligated the fathers (or guardians) to ask the opinion of the daughters when it comes to marriage, as her opinion is an essential condition for the validity of the marriage. She is free from any coercion, and may accept the person or reject a proposal.

The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said:

"A divorced or widow should not be married without her permission and a virgin girl must not enter wedlock until she approves." They asked: "And how does she approve O Messenger of Allah?" He said: "She stays quiet (i.e. out of shyness but doesn't indicate disapproval)." [Bukhari #4843]

Imam Ahmad and others report that 'Aishah (ﷺ) said:

A woman came to Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) and said:

“O, Prophet of Allah! My father offered me in marriage to his nephew to elevate his social status.” Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) returned the matter to her hands, to accept and approve the marriage or to reject. **The woman said: “I approve now of what my father has done, but I wanted to teach other women that their fathers have no right in this (to force them to marry whoever they want).”** [Ahmad #25027]

This is because daughters are precious, as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said in a verified tradition:

“Do not force the daughters and girls for they are precious and delightful companions.” [Ahmad #17411 and verified]

Women as Wives

Allah, the Exalted, says in the Glorious Qur'an:

“Among His signs is that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find tranquility in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy.” [30:21]

One of the great signs of the Benevolence, Mercy and Power of Allah, the Exalted, is that He created for mankind mates, one from the other, so that they are comforted, satisfied and assisted by one another.

The basic foundation of the society is the family, and the husband and the wife are co-partners in that family upon which a Muslim home is established. For the success of the family and the tranquility of the home, Islam grants each spouse certain rights and duties. We will only focus on the rights of the wives in the following section.

Dowry: A dowry is the right of every bride at the time of marriage. A marriage contract is not considered legal and complete unless and until a dowry has been specified. This right cannot be forfeited, even if the bride approves, until after the marriage contract is completed. The dowry belongs to the woman entering marriage, and she has the freedom to do whatever she wants with what she owns after the marriage contract is fulfilled. Allah, the Exalted, states in the Glorious Qur'an:

“Give the women whom you marry their dowry with a good heart. If they remit any part of it to you, of their own good pleasure, take it and enjoy it fully without fear of any harm.” [4:4]

The husband is not allowed to take anything back from the dowry if he decides later to divorce her; as Allah, the Exalted, states in the Glorious Qur'an:

“If you intend to replace a wife by another and you have given one of them a huge sum of gold as dowry, take not the least of it back; would you take it wrongfully without a right and with a manifest sin. And how can you take it back while you have entered with intimate relationship unto each other, and they (the wives) have taken from you a firm and strong covenant?” [4:20-1]

This verse indicates, significantly, the sacredness of the marriage vows and the intimacy of the marriage relationship, as well as the right of retaining the dowry gift in case of divorce. Allah, the Exalted, also states in the Glorious Qur'an:

“O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will, and you should not treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the dowry you have given them, unless they commit open illegal sexual intercourse. Live with them honorably; if you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings through it a great deal of good.” [4:19]

This verse ensures the wife's rights and complete justice even if the man dislikes her for any reason. This is also mentioned in an authentic prophetic tradition wherein **Abu Hurairah** (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“A believer must not hate a believing woman (i.e. his wife): if he dislikes one of her characteristics, he will be pleased with another.” [Muslim #1469]

Financial Support: The husband must give honorable and sufficient sustenance to his household according to his status and means. Allah, the Exalted, says:

“Let the rich man spend according to his means, and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. Allah will grant after hardship ease.” [65:7]

If a sufficiently rich man refuses to spend on his family in accordance with his level of means, and the wife was able to take a portion of his wealth, she may take that which satisfies her essential needs and that of her children, avoiding wastage and extravagance. **Hind bint 'Utbah** came to the Prophet (ﷺ) complaining about her husband, saying:

“My husband is a miser and does not spend enough on me and his children.” He replied: “Take whatever suffices you and your child within proper bounds.” [Bukhari #5049]

If a husband came under heavy financial strain and was incapable of fulfilling his family's financial needs, or if he left his wife for an extensive period of time, whereby the wife was harmed due to that absence, the wife is entitled to seek court intervention, if she desires to annul that marriage, as indicated by the verdicts of the jurists in Islamic jurisprudence.

The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) explained these rights when he said:

“Fear Allah in (the affairs of) women for you have taken them by the oath of Allah, and made their intimate relations legal by the sacred word of Allah: your right is that no one you dislike should (be allowed to enter) sit on your bed (or cushions), and if this happens then you may hit them lightly, and their right is that you feed and clothe them within proper bounds.” [Muslim #1218]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said to his companion Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqas (رضي الله عنه):

“No amount you spend on your family seeking reward from Allah but that He will reward you even if it is a bite of food that you put in your wife’s mouth.” [Bukhari #259]

Justice, Equality and Fairness: Men who are married to more than one wife are required to act with justice, fairness and equality in dealing with them. This includes provision, clothing, housing and sharing his time, concerns and intimate relations. Allah, the Beneficent, says:

“And if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphan-girls, then marry (other) women of your choice, two or three or four, but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one or (the captives and the slaves) that your right hands possess. That is better to prevent you from doing injustice.” [4:3]

The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“When a man has two wives and he is not just between them, he will come on the Day of Judgment with one of his sides fallen (drooping).” [Abu Dawood #2133, and verified]

This indicates that the husband must demonstrate justice, fairness and equality amongst all his wives. He is warned of this dire punishment of paralysis and deformity in the hereafter, just as he paralyzed and deformed the rights of one of his wives in this world.

It is unlawful for a man to mistreat his wife in any fashion with abuse, hardships, harassment, undue burdens, insults, beatings, abuse to her wealth and funds, forbidding her from lawful outings, etc in an attempt to force her to pay all that she possesses as ransom to her husband so that he may release her

through divorce. Islamic laws do permit the husband to impose certain restrictions upon the wife that displays some immoral and shameful conduct, dishonorable to him and his family, and harmful to the entire society and social order. The purpose of these restrictions is to seek her to return to proper behavior. Those who continue to act indiscreetly, leading to suspicion of actual infidelity may be offered divorce, just as she may seek “*Khul*” wherein she asks for dissolving the marriage contract due to his misbehavior.

Protection and Preservation: A husband must protect and prevent his wife and children from any possible harm or immorality to the best of his abilities. Allah, the Exalted, says:

“O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is Men and Stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who disobey not the Commands they receive from Allah, and do what they are commanded.” [66:6]

All that protects from unlawful and shameful deeds is commendable, but extremism is not. He (ﷺ) also said:

There is a kind of jealousy that Allah loves and a kind which He hates: the kind that he loves is in the doubtful acts, and the kind he hates is in the acts without any doubt.” [Abu Dawood #2659 & Nasa`e #2558]

Certain types of jealousy are acceptable and commendable, and others are not, as the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) explained above, and in a verified tradition he said:

“Verily Allah gets jealous and the believer gets jealous and the jealousy of Allah is to see a believer doing unlawful acts...” [Bukhari #4925, & Muslim #2761]

Companionship, care and intimate relationships: A husband must live with his wife honorably, kindly and with respect. He must maintain a decent, clean and acceptable appearance when he relaxes in his household, just as he likes his wife to do for him at home, since this is only mutual respect and decency to one another. The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said, encouraging and explaining the comprehensive principle about good character and behavior:

“The most complete believer in his faith among the believers is the best in character, and the best of you are those who are the best to their wives.” [Tirmidhi #1162 and verified]

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to mend his own clothes or shoes and help his wives with their daily chores. His wife **Aishah** (رضي الله عنها) was once asked:

“What did the Messenger of Allah use to do while at home?” She responded: **“He used to serve and assist his household, and when he would hear the call to prayer, he would leave to pray.”** [Bukhari #644]

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was always pleasant, kind and caring to all, and would occasionally play and joke politely with his family members. The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“All idle pastimes that the Muslim man engages in are falsehood, except for his shooting of his bow, his training of his horse, and his playing with his wife, for they are from truth.” [Nasa'e #8939 and verified]

This tradition indicates that most pastimes and amusements are built merely for play, a waste of time and are therefore without reward, except these mentioned above which are useful, lawful, and fulfill valid beneficial purposes. Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) is also

well known for being cheerful and decent in joking with his family and playing with them. An example of this fun pastime is when 'Aishah (رضي الله عنها) the mother of the believers was on a journey along with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and after she said:

“I had a race with him (the Prophet) and I won the race. When I became fleshy, (again) I had a race with him (the Prophet) and he won. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to me upon winning the race: “This (win of mine makes up) for that (win of yours).” [Ahmad #26320]

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is reported to have sat in the house for a short while with his family, talking to them, giving them company and showing kindness, before going to sleep, and after offering the late evening prayer. In the authentic traditions we find that **Ibn ‘Abbas (رضي الله عنه)** narrated:

“I slept at the house of Maymunah (his aunt and the Prophet's wife) one night to see the Prophet’s worship in night prayer. He talked with his wife for a period of time, and then slept. Later in the night he awakened and prayed what Allah had written for him.” [Bukhari #4293 & Muslim #763]

Allah, the Exalted, states in the Glorious Qur'an:

“Indeed in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example to follow for whoever has hope in (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much.” [33:21]

Hence, Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) is the best example to follow for all of us, the believing Muslims. Muslims ought to follow the pattern of Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) in all of their affairs, personal and public, throughout their lives.

All the secrets of the wife should be kept and preserved and her shortcomings hidden. No private affairs should be made public or shared as a conversation item, even among the closest friends. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“One of the worst people in the sight of Allah on the Day of Resurrection is a man who has intimate relation with his wife, and she has intimate relation with him, and then he divulges her secret (by describing that intimate relation to other people).” [Muslim #1437]

It is the right of the married woman to spend the night with her husband and have sexual fulfillment, satisfaction, and gratification. This right is one of the most emphasized rights in Islam, equal to the need of man to have his fulfillment. The husband is required and obliged by Islamic law to fulfill the sexual rights of his spouse, to ensure the satisfaction of the spouse so as to prevent her from being inclined towards shameful acts, may Allah forbid. A spouse, as any other female, has a great need for being loved and cherished, cared for, and fulfillment of her natural and physical rightful desires.

Islam forbids husbands from engaging themselves in matters of physical worship and devotions, like prayers and fasting, in a way that may detract them from attending to their spouses’ physical, sexual and social needs. In a famous incident **Salman Al-Farisi** (رضي الله عنه) reported:

"I went to visit my brother in faith, Abu-Darda (رضي الله عنه) and upon arrival, I was greeted by his spouse Um Darda (رضي الله عنها) who was in an unkempt state. Seeing that, I asked her, 'What is the matter with you; why are you in this state and not attentive to your husband?' She said: 'Your brother, Abu-Darda has no interest in this world and its affairs. He spends his nights praying and days fasting!' Upon the

arrival of Abu-Darda, who welcomed Salman and offered him some food, Salman said: 'Why do not you eat with me?' Abu-Darda said: 'I am fasting.' Salman said: 'By Allah you must break your fast and eat with me.' Abu-Darda broke his fast and ate with Salman. Salman spent that night with Abu-Darda, and Abu Darda got up during the night to offer some night prayers whereupon Salman stopped him from doing so, saying: 'Your body has certain rights upon you, your Lord has certain rights upon you, and your family has certain rights upon you. Fast some days and break the fast on others, approach your spouse (for marital relations). Grant everyone their due right.' Just before the break of dawn, Salman permitted Abu-Darda to get up and offer prayers. Both of them rose, performed ablution, offered prayers and then headed to the Masjid to offer Fajr (dawn) prayer. Upon finishing the prayer with the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) Abu-Darda reported to the Prophet about the incident. The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Salman has spoken the truth.'" [Bukhari #1867]

Considering the needs of his wife, a husband should not be away from home for an extended period of time. Caliph Umar ibn Al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) after consulting with his daughter Hafsa about the length of the period a woman can patiently bear her husband's absence, set this period six months.

Abdur-Razaq and others narrated a famous story that:

"Umar ibn al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) was making night rounds when he heard a woman lament:

*The night has grown long, and its end is dark and black,
I am sleepless since I have, with whom to play, no lover,
If there was not (the Lord) whose Throne is above the
Heavens,
The sides of this bed, would roll, shake and quiver!*

In the morning he went to her and asked her the reason for her poetry, and she answered that her husband had gone with the soldiers on a long campaign. Umar then conferred with his daughter Hafsa on how long a woman can be patient for her husband to return. After some moments of hesitation and embarrassment, in which he convinced her that this question was for the general good of the Muslims, she replied six months."

After this, Umar would close a campaign within six months so that they could return to their wives within that time.

This period is approximate since circumstances may allow it to be less, or force it to be more. She may tolerate the absence of her husband for more than six months, or she may demand him to come back before that time.

The husband may not refuse or deny his spouse's legitimate request unless he has a valid excuse. A husband must not make any financial decisions on behalf of his spouse unless she gives him such permission. The husband has no right to take any of his spouse's financial assets without her approval.

He should also consult his spouse in the major household decisions, children's affairs and other mutual affairs. It is not wise to dictate a man's opinion upon the other members of the family without listening to the spouse's opinion, as long as her opinion is wise and correct. Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) gave us a practical example in this matter. On the "Day of the Pact" with the Quraish tribe, the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded his companions to shave their heads and to exit the state of *Ihraam*², but they were slow and did not hasten to fulfill his command. *Um Salamah* (رضي الله عنها) his wife, recommended that he do so himself and then go out before his companions. Allah's Prophet acted upon

² **Ihraam:** A state in which certain things become forbidden for a pilgrim.

the recommendation of his wife, doing what she suggested, and when the companions saw his action they all hastened in obedience.

A husband must avoid counting every innocent mistake his spouse may make. For instance, the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“A husband should not come to his home from a journey late at night (i.e. without announcing his arrival in advance).” [Bukhari #4948 & Muslim#715]

Jabir said:

“The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade that a man should come to his family like (an unexpected) night visitor doubting their fidelity and spying into their lapses.” [Muslim#715]

This recommendation is given so that the wife may comb her hair or wash herself and that the husband may not find his spouse in an unprepared state, which might become a reason for his displeasure. Of course with the modern facilities, nowadays husbands have the ability to inform their wives well in advance, whether the arrival is during the daytime or late in the night.

It is the obligation of a husband to be kind, attentive, sharing and caring with his spouse. He must deal with her with honesty, decency, patience and care, and must take into consideration her human nature. Women appreciate being loved tenderly and well taken care of. A husband must demonstrate his affection, love, appreciation, caring, consideration and genuine keenness of his spouse.

The system of divorce in Islam is designed to protect the rights and interests of the women, and allow ample opportunity and time for reconciliation. We will discuss in more detail below,

but here we only mention that in divorce, as in marriage, one must act decent with civil behavior to assure the right of both parties, as Allah, the Most Wise, says:

“Divorce is two times: then one may retain with goodness (and reasonable terms), or let go with goodness (and reasonable terms).” [2:229]

Women as Mothers

Allah, the Most Beneficent, has repeatedly emphasized the right of parents in general and the mother in particular. Allah, the Exalted, states in the Qur'an:

“Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him; and that you be good to your parents. If one of them or both reach old age in your life, do not say to them a word of the faintest complaint or disrespect, nor shout at them; but address them in terms of honor.” [17:23]

In this verse the right of Allah to be worshiped is placed adjacent to the right of parents, and all scholars agree that the rights of parents in Islam are greater and placed before all others except Allah.

Obedience to parents must be given priority over all others including the wife. This does not mean that the wife is to be humiliated or insulted in any matter, but only that parents should be given priority in obedience over all others on the condition that they do not disobey Allah, the Exalted, and His Prophet (ﷺ).

Allah’s pleasure or displeasure with man is but an indication of the pleasure of the parents with their son or daughter, as the Prophet indicated (ﷺ) when he said:

“The pleasure of the Lord lies in the pleasure of the parent. The anger of the Lord lies in the anger of the parent.” [Ibn Hibban #429 & Tabrani and verified]

“*Birr ul-Walidain*” means being obedient, good and kind to them, pleasing them and taking care of their needs, especially in old age. Serving them is considered obligatory service and

preferred over participating in the various acts of volunteer service like in some form of *Jihad* (i.e., striving in the cause of Allah).

'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr said:

"A man came to the Prophet (ﷺ), wanting to do jihad. The Prophet asked, 'Are your parents alive?' 'Yes,' he replied. he said, 'Then make Jihad by struggling yourself in pleasing and obeying them.'" [Bukhari #2842 & Muslim#2549]

This is also confirmed in an authentic tradition that **Ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه)** narrated:

"I asked Allah's Prophet (ﷺ): 'O Prophet of Allah: What is the most beloved act in the sight of Allah?' He said: "Offering the prayer in its proper time." I asked: 'What comes next, O Prophet of Allah?' He said: "Being good, kind, respectful, obedient and caring to your parents." I further asked: 'What comes next, O Prophet of Allah?' He said: "Striving in the cause of Allah." [Bukhari #5625 & Muslim#139]

In another tradition **Abd Allah bin Amr bin al-Aas (رضي الله عنه)** narrated:

"A man came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and said to him: 'O Messenger of Allah! I shall give you my pledge of allegiance to migrate and strive in the cause of Allah seeking His reward only.' Upon hearing that the Prophet (ﷺ) asked the man: "Are your parents alive?" The man said: 'Yes, O Prophet of Allah, both of them are living.' He said: "Do you seek the reward from Allah?" He said: 'Yes.' He said: "Then go back to your parents and be the best and kindest companion for them." [Muslim #2549]

And in another authentic tradition **Mu'awiyah as-Sulami** said to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ):

'I want to go for Jihad in the way of Allah.' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) asked: "Is your mother alive?" He said: 'Yes.' He said: "Stay with her, for Jannah is under her feet."
[Ahmad#1557 & Nasa'e #3104 and verified]

This idiomatic expression shows the degree of deference, respect and obedience that the children should show to their mother to earn her pleasure by continuous care and service, which leads to attaining the pleasure of Allah and His Paradise, the promised reward for all rightly guided and devout believers.

Mothers have greater right and deserve more kindness, help service, good treatment and companionship than the fathers because the mother is the first one to care for the children and she suffers more directly with daily hardships in their upbringing. Bukhari and others report that **Abu-Hurairah** (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

"A man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked him: 'O Prophet of Allah! Who is the most deserving and worthy of my good company?' Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) answered: "Your mother." The man asked: 'Who comes next after her?' He said: "Your mother." The man asked again: 'Who comes next after her?' He said: "Your mother." The man asked again: 'Who comes next after her?' He said: "Your father."
[Bukhari #5625 & Muslim#2548]

This comprehensive lesson is a summary proving that the mothers deserve the utmost in obedience, benevolence and concern throughout their lives.

This tradition indicates that a mother has three times the rights of that of a father due to the sufferings she experiences during

the various stages of her child's life; in pregnancy, delivery, nursing, and raising the child.

Allah, the Exalted, states in the Glorious Qur'an:

“And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful and good to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship. The duration of carrying him (in the womb) and weaning is two years. So thank Me and to your parents; unto Me is the final destination.” [31:14]

Mothers are given priority over fathers in terms of special kindness, care, duty, help, and obedience. Both parents, in accordance with Islamic teachings and principles, are to be obeyed, respected and not differed with as long as they do not command or order their children to disobey their Creator. If they order their children to perform an act of disobedience to Allah then they are to be disobeyed in that particular matter only and a son or daughter must continue to fulfill their normal duties towards parents in other matters. They are expected to serve them, help them in their worldly affairs, and come to their rescue when they need them. Allah, the Exalted, states in the Glorious Qur'an:

“And if parents strive with you to make you join in worship with Me that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not, but behave with them in the worldly (affairs) kindly, and follow the path of him who turns to Me in repentance and obedience. Then to Me will be your return, and I shall tell you what you did throughout your life.” [31:15]

Parents must be respected, obeyed and offered financial assistance by their children, even if they have a different religion or faith, other than Islam, as long as they do not

demand that their son or daughter do any act of disobedience to Allah. **Asma' binte Abu-Bakr** (رضي الله عنها) said:

My mother, who was still a pagan, came to visit. I went to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) seeking his verdict. I said, "She has come to visit and she is interested in Islam, should I maintain my relationship with her?" The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Yes, indeed, stay connected to your mother." [Bukhari #2477 & Muslim#1003]

Islam's encouragement to sons and daughters to treat their mothers with kindness, obedience and care - and to beckon to give any possible assistance to their parents in their various daily household chores - is illustrated in the following lengthy tradition wherein **Abu-Hurairah** (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "None spoke in cradle but three: (The first was) Jesus, (the second was), there a man from Bani Israel called Juraij. While he was offering his prayers, his mother came and called him. He said (to himself), 'Shall I answer her or keep on praying?" (He went on praying) and did not answer her, his mother said, "O Allah! Do not let him die till he sees the faces of prostitutes." So while he was in his hermitage, a lady came and sought to seduce him, but he refused. So she went to a shepherd and presented herself to him to commit illegal sexual intercourse with her and then later she gave birth to a child and claimed that it belonged to Juraij. The people, therefore, came to him and dismantled his hermitage and expelled him out of it and abused him. Juraij performed the ablution and offered prayer, and then came to the child and said, 'O child! Who is your father?' The child replied, 'The shepherd.' (After hearing this) the people said, 'We shall rebuild your hermitage of gold,' but he said, 'No, of nothing but

mud.'(The third was the hero of the following story) A lady from Bani Israel was nursing her child at her breast when a handsome rider passed by her. She said, 'O Allah ! Make my child like him.' On that the child left her breast, and facing the rider said, 'O Allah! Do not make me like him.' The child then started to suck her breast again. (Abu Huraira further said, "As if I were now looking at the Prophet (ﷺ) sucking his finger (in way of demonstration.") After a while the people passed by, with a lady slave and she (i.e. the child's mother) said, 'O Allah! Do not make my child like this (slave girl)!', On that the child left her breast and said, 'O Allah! Make me like her.' When she asked why, the child replied, 'The rider is one of the tyrants while this slave girl is falsely accused of theft and illegal sexual intercourse!'" [Bukhari #3253]

Disobeying parents, disrespecting them and failing to fulfill their rights is the greatest of sins. The punishment from Allah of this sin is not only in the hereafter but in this life as well, as it is narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

"There is no wrong action more likely to bring punishment in this world in addition to what is stored up in the Next World than oppression and severing ties of kinship." [Tirmidhi #2511 & Ibn Maajah #4211 and verified]

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) also said:

"Allah has forbidden you: disobedience to your mothers, to withhold (what you should give), or demand (what you do not deserve), and to bury your daughters alive. And Allah dislikes idle talk, to ask too many questions (for things which will be of no benefit to one), and to waste your wealth." [Bukhari #5630]

The Prophet (ﷺ) illustrated that being good and kind to parents is essential in the fulfillment of the supplications and prayers of man throughout his life, as **Ibn Umar** (رضي الله عنه) reported the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying in a lengthy tradition:

“Three men of the previous times set out on a journey. When night approached they slept in a cave at the base of a mountain. Upon entering the cave, a boulder rolled down and completely closed the cave's entrance. They talked the situation over and concluded that there was no way out of this trouble except with prayers and supplications. 'We had better seek the help of Allah referring to the best and most righteous deed that we have done in our lives.'

The first man said: 'O Allah! I had two elderly parents and I never would offer my wife and children anything to eat or drink before I offered them. One day I had to go a long distance seeking food for my herd and I was late coming back. Upon arrival I found both of my parents asleep. I milked the sheep in order to offer my parents their dinner, but since I hated to wake them up for their drink, I remained standing next to them carrying the milk pot in my hand waiting for them to wake up. I did not offer my wife or children anything before I offered them. At the break of the Dawn, they woke up and by this time my children were at my feet crying for milk. When they woke up, I offered them their milk. O Allah! If you know that I have done that for Your sake, please rescue us from this trap.'

Upon that the rock was moved slightly away from the cave's entrance, but not enough to let them out.

The second man said: 'O Allah! I had a female cousin from my father's side who was the most beloved woman to me on the face of the Earth. I had an intense desire for her, but

she refused. At one point in time she came under financial stress due to famine. She came to me asking for help. I offered her a hundred and twenty golden Dinars so that she would let me have what I wanted from her. Under the duress of her pressing need and financial situation she agreed. When I was ready to begin relations with her, she said, 'O Cousin! Fear Allah! And do not remove the seal of virginity except in the rightful manner.' Upon hearing that, I got up and did not touch her, although she was the most beloved and desired woman to me. I did not take back the gold, which I gave her.'

Then he raised his hands to the heavens and said: 'O Allah! If You know I have done, what I did, for Your cause and pleasure, please remove the trap that we are in. Remove the rock from the cave's entrance so that we can get out!'

Upon which, the rock moved another small distance but still not enough to enable them to escape.

The third man said: 'O Allah! You know that I once employed some workers and at the end of the day I paid their wages except to the one who had left without collecting his pay. I invested his wages in my business and kept a special note and account for it. The money that belonged to this worker grew during the years, and after many years the worker came to me asking for the wage that he did not take on that day of his work. I pointed out to him large herds of sheep, cows, camels, and slaves and servants, and said to him: 'All that you see is yours! That is the wage that I owe you!' The poor worker was stunned and said: 'Please do not ridicule and make fun of me! I am only asking for my one-day wage. The employer said: 'I am neither ridiculing you nor making fun of you. This is all yours.' The worker took all that I pointed out for him and left.'

Then the man raised his hands to heavens and said: 'O Allah! If I have done what I did for Your cause and pleasure, remove the trap from which we are suffering.'

Upon that the rock rolled away from the cave's entrance and the three men left the cave, free once again.” [Bukhari #2152]

Islam teaches that seeking the pleasure of the parents, and being good, kind, helpful, considerate to them, respecting and caring for them throughout their life, is a major way to expiate and remove the burden of our sins in this world. **Abd Allah Ibn Umar** (ﷺ) said:

“A man came to Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) and said: 'O Prophet! I have committed a major sin. Do you think that I can atone for it?' He asked: "Do you have a mother living?" The man answered in the negative. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked the man: "Do you have a maternal aunt living?" The man answered in the positive. Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: "Be good and kind to her.” [Tirmidhi #1904 & Ibn Hibban #435 and verified]

This tradition indicates her right since the maternal aunt, in Islamic jurisprudence, has a similar status in some respects as of the mother, since the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“The sister of the mother has a status similar to the mother.” [Bukhari #2552]

These broad guidelines show the major rights of parents in general, and mothers in particular, and illustrate that mothers remain uniquely respected in Islamic teachings.

Women as kinfolks and neighbors

The same general rights are legislated in Islamic jurisprudence for women as are required for men. A concern for general public welfare and mutual support of one another is a trademark of the Islamic social system. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever.” [*Muslim #2586*]

And he (ﷺ) said:

“The believers, one to another, are like a firm structure, supporting one another.” He then intertwined his fingers.” [*Bukhari #467 & Muslim#2585*]

A woman as an aunt, niece, cousin, or any type of relative, regardless of the distance, is included in the kinfolk to whom Allah commanded to be good, kind and supportive. Allah, the Exalted, states in the Qur'an:

“Would you then, if you were given the authority, do mischief in the land, and sever your ties of kinship?” (47:22)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“A person who severs his kinship ties, will never enter Paradise.” [*Muslim #2556*]

And he (ﷺ) said:

“Charity to a poor person is charity, and to a (poor) relative is both charity and maintaining the ties (of kinship).” [*Tirmidhi #658 & Ibn Maaajah#1844* and verified]

If a woman is a neighbor and she is a Muslim, she is entitled to two rights: the right of Islam, and the right of a neighbor. Allah, the Exalted, states in the Qur'an:

“Worship Allah and join none with Him in worship, and do good to parents, kinfolk, orphans, the poor who beg, the neighbor who is related to you, the neighbor who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer you meet, and those slaves whom your right hand possesses. Verily, Allah does not like anyone who is proud and boastful” [4:36]

Islam obligates a Muslim to be good to all his or her neighbors. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Jibreel (Archangel Gabriel) continued to urge me to take care of the neighbor so much so that I thought the neighbor was going to be made a legal heir.” [Bukhari #5668]

He (ﷺ) also said:

“By Allah he is not a believer, by Allah he is not a believer, by Allah he is not a believer! They asked: “Who, O Messenger of Allah?” He said: “The one from whose harm the neighbor is not safe.” [Bukhari 5670]

It is also reported by **Asfahani** in *Hilyatul-Awliya* that **Talhah** (رضي الله عنه) said:

"Umar Ibn al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) went out of his home one night. I decided to follow him to see what he was doing during the night. I saw him entering a certain house and after a while I saw him come out and enter another house. In the morning I went to the first house and entered it to find out who lives there. To my surprise I found an old, blind and disabled woman. I asked her: **'What did the man, who came in your home last night, want from you?'** She said: **'This man has been taking care of me**

for a time now, serving my needs and helping me and supporting me.' Talha said to himself: 'Why should I investigate Umar's actions?'

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“The person caring for the widows and the poor is like the one who fights in the way of Allah.” The narrator said: I think that he (ﷺ) added also: **Like one who stands in the night prayer without any laziness and like the one who fasts every day (from sunrise until sunset).”** [*Bukhari #5038 & Muslim #2982*]

These are some distinguishing aspects of honoring, respecting, caring for, and supporting women according to Islamic teachings that summarize the rights of women. We believe that women never witnessed this extent of respect and honor throughout the history of mankind on earth. Some traditions show that the Islamic law never tolerated crimes or abuses against a woman during any stage of her life.

Misconceptions about Women in Islam

There are some misconceptions that have been widely propagated about women and their rights in Islam. These misconceptions are often repeated by some that maliciously seek to defame Islam and Muslims. Women throughout the past centuries of Islam have been honored, respected, and dignified. The crimes of some who deviate do not reflect upon the principles and laws on which Islam is based. We shall present some answers to these common misconceptions that have been publicized about women's rights in Islam and the position of women in Islam in general.

Polygyny in Islam

Marriage to more than one wife at the same time – polygyny³ – is a practice as old as the history of man, and is allowed in Islamic law. Among others, polygyny was well known to the Ancient Hebrews, Egyptians, Greeks, Persians, Assyrians, Japanese, Hindus, Russians and Germanic peoples.

All previous revealed religions practiced and condoned polygyny. The Old and New Testaments are at the foremost in the list of the religious Books that legalized and practiced it. Many of the Prophets of Allah before Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) entered into plural marriages. Prophet Abraham had two wives;

³ **Polygyny** is a practice of having two or more wives at the same time; whereas **polygamy** is the practice of having two *or* more wives or husbands at the same time.

Prophet Jacob had four wives; and Prophet David had ninety-nine wives (ﷺ). Prophet Solomon (ﷺ) had seven hundred wives who were free noble women, and three hundred other wives who were slave women. Nowhere does the law of the Prophet Moses (ﷺ) set or determine a specific number of wives to which a husband was entitled. The compilers of the Talmud, who lived around Jerusalem, decided upon a certain number of wives for a man, and some Jewish scholars only permitted a second wife or more if the first wife was permanently ill or barren. Still other Jewish scholars did not permit plural marriages at all.

In the New Testament of the Bible, Jesus is commissioned to comply with and complete the Laws of Moses (ﷺ) and we cannot find a single quote in the Bible that forbids plural marriage. The prohibition of plural marriages in Christianity came about only as a result of legislation set forth certain segments of the Christian church, and not by the original teachings of Christianity itself.

For this reason we find many examples of Christians taking multiple wives. The Irish king, Ditharmet, for instance, had two wives. King Frederick the Second had two wives with the church's approval. Thus, it must be noticed that prohibition was in the hands of the priests of the church, and not in accordance with any universally recognized original law of Jesus Christ himself (ﷺ). Martin Luther, the German priest who first established the Protestant sect, considered plural marriage acceptable and advocated it on many occasions.

Polygyny was well known amongst pagan Arab tribes prior to the advent of Islam but there was no limitation for the number of wives, like in the cases of some of the Prophets mentioned above. With the advent of Islam, the Islamic law condoned polygyny but a man was limited to only four wives, and

specific rules regulated these marriages. There are numerous examples in the authentic traditions wherein the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) obligated those who had more than four wives, when they accepted Islam, to choose four and divorce the rest honorably.

Allah, the Most Beneficent, said:

“And if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphan-girls, then marry (other) women of your choice, two or three, or four but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one or (the captives and the slaves) that your right hands possess. That is nearer to prevent you from doing injustice.” [4:3]

Thus we see that strict justice and fairness in treatment, and avoiding any injustice and wrong practices against all wives, is stipulated and conditional for those who wish to take more than one wife.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) warned against favoritism saying:

“He who has two wives and is not just between them, he will come on the Day of Resurrection with one of his sides fallen.” [Abu Dawood#2133 & Tirmidhi #1141 and verified]

Justice and fairness, in this context, applies to material things such as expenditure, fair division of wealth, gifts, time, etc. As for emotional matters, such as love and inclination of the heart towards one wife over the other, it is recognized that man has no control over his innermost heart and emotions, as they are involuntary. Allah, the Most Beneficent, said:

“You will never be able to do perfect justice between wives even if it is your ardent desire (i.e. emotions of the heart), so do not incline too much to one of them (by giving her more of your time and provision) so as to leave the other hanging

(i.e. neither divorced nor married). And if you do justice, and do all that is right and fear Allâh by keeping away from all that is wrong, then Allâh is Ever OftForgiving, Most Merciful.” [4:129]

'Aishah, the mother of the believers and the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ), narrated:

“The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) would distribute everything justly amongst his wives, then say: O Allah, this is my division concerning what I control, so do not blame me concerning what You control and I do not (i.e. emotions of the heart).” [Abu Da`wood]

A man who is impotent should not seek any marriage since he is unable to fulfill its basic requirement. He who knows for sure that he is financially incapable of supporting another wife and household, is not allowed to seek another marriage, just as the bachelor who seeks to marry must strive to earn the wherewithal and must be able to sustain his wife and future children. As Allah says, and which can be taken as a general rule:

“And let those who find not the financial means for marriage keep themselves chaste, until Allah enriches them with His Bounty.” [34:۲۴]

Let us take a look of some conditions that befall people of any society, and then assess whether polygyny is a good solution for the problems that occur, and also the practice of polygyny is in favor of a woman or against her! The following points prove that monogamy in many situations leads to promiscuity, prostitution or divorce:

1) If a woman is sterile and the husband is interested in having children, should he divorce the woman and marry a second

wife? Or, if she chooses to stay married to him, should he take a second wife giving them both equal rights as his lawful wives?

2) If a wife is chronically ill and cannot maintain her marital relations with her husband, should he keep her and take a second wife wherein she remains perfectly honored, cared for and provided for by her husband? Or should he divorce her?

3) Some men are financially strong, and sexually demanding and potent with higher levels of hormonal testosterone. One wife may not be able to fulfill his lawful and natural sexual desire. If the menstrual period or after-birth-confinement period is notably longer than normal, or if she has no natural sexual desire to match that of the husband, or other scenarios, what is better for both husband and wife in such a case? Is it better for the man to remain frustrated and pent up, or seek unlawful sexual satisfaction outside the marriage? Or to acquire other lawful wives who can help to keep him chaste and satisfied?

4) In various parts of the world international and civil wars and other catastrophes often take their toll on men more than women. Even naturally, the demographic number of females, for various reasons, is often more than males in most countries. The best example of this is the case of the First World War, and the Second World War, which claimed the lives of an astronomical number of men who had participated in the fighting, with tens of millions of them being killed. In other trouble spots the disproportionate death ratios are similar. In such a case, if every man had only one wife, what would be the necessary destiny of the women left without lawful marriage to satisfy their social, financial and sexual needs? Some women may be tempted to satisfy their sexual desires in unlawful ways through fornication, lesbian activities or prostitution, a destabilizing factor for any society. The abundance of women

without husbands, or male relatives to care and protect their interests, is one factor that helps spread corruption and illegitimate sexual activities in societies. What is better for a society and for such women in this case: to remain single and suffer all the consequences of life without marriage; or to accept to be a second wife with an honest, protective, honorable and chaste man?

Promiscuity unfortunately exists in all modern societies, but should it be legalized or condoned, as is the case under man-made laws, with all the social consequences? In most contemporary societies only monogamous marriage is legal, but extra martial relations are allowed as a socially acceptable substitute for the situations mentioned above, in the form of mistresses, girlfriends, escort services, prostitution and common law marriages. These types of relationships have no merits of their own to stand on, and if the couple does not eventually get legally married, the illicit relationship often leads to abuse and conflict. These illicit relationships are only meant to fulfill sexual interests of the two parties involved without the responsibilities, and abuse the rights of the women in general. Legally it imposes no financial, social, or emotional obligations, and if the woman becomes pregnant, it is her own problem, with the illegitimate children left without the support of a family and sometimes abandoned to the social service system. Men, generally, are not obliged to admit the paternity of the child, thus not obliged to take financial responsibility for the child. Abortions proliferate in this kind of society. In accordance with Islamic law, a second, third, or fourth wife enjoys all the rights and privileges of the first wife without an iota of injustice or dishonor to her.

Adultery, fornication and all extramarital sexual relations are strictly forbidden in Islam and the prophet took all measures to

protect the society from these social diseases which, if they become widespread, can only bring harm and destruction upon individuals, families, and the basic bond holding the society together as a whole. The following tradition shows the wisdom of the Prophet (ﷺ) and patience in convincing a young virile man, by eloquent analogies, the injustice of double standards and the evils of wanton desires leading to fornication and adultery. No one would want his own female relatives to be exploited, used and abused, so how, then, can they allow themselves to exploit others?

An authentic tradition narrates:

“A young man came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and asked: ‘O Messenger of Allah, permit me (with special license) to commit fornication (and adultery).’ The people started to rebuke him harshly, but the Prophet sat close to him and asked: ‘Would you like it for your mother?’ He replied ‘No, by Allah, may Allah make me a sacrifice for you!’ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘And thus the people do not like it for their mothers,’ and continued: ‘Would you like it for your daughter?’ ‘No’ he replied. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘And thus the people do not like it for their daughters,’ and continued: ‘Would you like it for your paternal aunt?’ ‘No’ he replied. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘And thus the people do not like it for their paternal aunts,’ and asked: ‘Would you like it for your maternal aunt?’ ‘No’ he replied. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘And thus the people do not like it for their maternal aunts.’ Then the Prophet (ﷺ) put his hand on the youth and said: ‘O Allah forgive his sin and purify his heart and make him chaste (fortify his abstinence from sexual sins)’.” [Ahmad#22265 and verified]

One might say that this tradition is a practical application of the golden rule as mentioned by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ):

“None of you [truly] believes until he loves for his brother that which he loves for himself.” [Bukhari #15 & Muslim #44]

Polygyny in the Islamic society is limited to four wives only; the marriages being performed lawfully with a proper marriage contract, witnesses, etc. The man must bear all financial burdens and responsibilities to his wives and children that arise from his marriages. All the children are legitimate and must be raised and cared for under the responsibility of both parents.

One might ask that, if we permit polygyny for men, why is not polyandry⁴ permitted for women? The answer to this question is simple since numerous natural and physical reasons, as indicated above, preclude this as a viable option. Men in almost all societies of the world have the position, domination and authority over the households due to their natural endowment and strength. Even if, for argument's sake, we forego the idea of their strength and suppose that a woman has two or more husbands, the question will arise: who will have the ultimate authority and leadership of the home - as this would create harmful competition, jealousy, anger and hatred among the husbands and result in great destruction in the society. Moreover, if a woman were allowed to be married to more than one man, who would be the legal father of the child she bears, and how would fatherhood be convincingly determined? What would happen to the demography of the society after some generations of this arrangement? Would the men be able to remain chaste within their marriage vows in such an

⁴ **Polyandry** is the state or practice of having more than one husband at one time.

arrangement with one wife, or would he be tempted into promiscuity? The answers to all these questions are obvious. Since a woman can only become pregnant approximately once a year and she can get pregnant by only one man at a time, while a man can naturally impregnate more than one woman on a continual basis, it follows that it is more logical and natural that the man has more than one wife and that she doesn't engage more than one husband.

Above all in polygyny, the man is responsible for the provision of all of his wives and children, which keeps everything in order, while this is not the case in polyandry, thus impractical from any conceivable angle whatsoever.

The following are statements of some Western thinkers who demanded polygyny and considered it the only solution for the problems they were confronted with in their societies.

Gustav Le Bon, the well-known French thinker, says in his book *Arabic Civilization*:

“Polygyny enables the society to reduce social crisis, prevents the mistress problem and cures the society from illegitimate children.”

Annie Besant, in her book on *Indian Religions* says:

“I read in the Old Testament that the closest friend to Allah, whose heart acts upon the Will of Allah, was polygynous. Moreover, the New Testament did not forbid polygyny except for priests or ministers of the church, who were required to keep and maintain one wife only. Old Indian religious books also permitted polygyny. It is easy, however, to criticize others in their religious practices. And that is what made people accuse Islam and attack it for its permission of polygyny. However, it is strange that Westerners are against the restricted and limited polygyny

of the Muslims, while they suffer from wide scale prostitution and promiscuity in their own societies. A close examining look at the Western society illustrates that only a few pure, chaste and honest men respect their clean marital relationships and honor their marriage to one single wife and have no other sexual relationship outside marriage. It is an incorrect and inaccurate statement, therefore, to describe a community as monogamous, in which the men maintain a single marriage, while they are indeed having mistresses, girlfriends and other means of sexual relationship outside the marriage to their legal and lawful wife. If we were to be fair and just, we could see that polygyny in Islam protects, honors, maintains and respects women in society. Polygyny is better than the Western prostitution that permits a man to have a mistress or a girl friend to fulfill his sexual desires with no respect to the feelings, emotions, needs and honor of the women. The man will disown that woman as soon as he gets his satisfaction. The man has no social commitment or obligation towards the mistress or the girl friend. She is only meant to fulfill his sexual needs of the moment and give him the company he needs temporarily. Even though some people declare both polygyny and fornication or prostitution as bad and unacceptable, yet it is unfair for the non-Muslims to blame a Muslim for doing the same thing that he does while his society accepts and condones it."

Jawad, a well-known English scholar, says:

"The stiff British system which prevents polygyny is an unfair and unacceptable system. It severely hurts approximately two million women who have become old maids. These women have lost their youth and were deprived of having children. Thus, these women were

forced to throw away the moral values as one throws away the pit of a date."

Mobenar, a member of the previous French Parliament noted:

"There are two and a half million French girls now who cannot find a husband, if we assume that every French young man will marry only one woman. I frankly declare what I truly believe is that 'a woman will not enjoy a healthy life unless she becomes a mother.' I believe that any law which passes a judgment that such a big number of the members of a society should live opposing, contradicting and neglecting to fulfill the natural laws of man on the Earth is but a cruel and savage law that contradicts the simplest meaning of justice and fairness."

In 1959, the United Nations published a special publication stating:

"This publication has proven, by numbers and statistics, that the entire world is now facing a growing problem of illegitimate children, as opposed to legitimate children. The number of illegitimate children has increased 60% in some countries. In Panama, for instance, the percentage of illegitimate births soared to 75% of the total number of births in the country. This means that three out of every four children are illegitimate, born outside of wedlock. The highest percentage of illegitimate births is stated to be in Latin America."

At the same time, the publication proves and indicates that the number of illegitimate births in the Islamic world is almost nil (in comparison with other countries). The editor of the publication goes on to say that Islamic countries are protected against such social problems and disease due to the fact that the people practice polygyny.

Power of Guardianship in the Marriage Contract

In Islamic jurisprudence one requirement for a sound marriage is the total agreement of the woman concerned.

The Prophet of Allah said (ﷺ):

“An ‘ayyim’ (a divorcee or a widow) must not be wedded unless she is asked, and gives her approval. And a virgin must not be wedded unless she gives her permission.” It was asked: “O messenger of Allah, how can we know her permission?” He said: “If she remains silent (from shyness).” [Bukhari #4843 & Muslim #1419]

If a woman is coerced into accepting an undesired marriage, she is entitled to present her case before a Muslim judge to seek annulment. A woman by the name of **al-Khansa bint Khadam**, who had been previously married (and was now divorced or widowed), came complaining to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that her father had forced her to marry a person she despised. He disapproved and invalidated it.⁵

Another requirement is that she does not give herself in marriage to anyone without guardianship. Her father, or in case he is not alive, her grandfather, paternal uncle, brother or even her mature son, or the ruler of the State, must act as her guardian in this affair to assure her rights are protected and to sign the marriage contract along with her signature. His role is to make sure that the groom is sincere and of standard, that she has a proper dowry, and that two witnesses testify to the

⁵ Reported by *Bukhari* #6546.

contract which she willfully accepts. All these measures are to protect her rights and the sanctity of marriage.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) made this perfectly clear when he said:

“There is no marriage except with a guardian.” [*Abu Dawood #2058* and verified]

And in another version:

“There is no marriage except with a guardian, and the ruler is the guardian for those who have no guardian.” [*Ahmad #2260 & Ibn Maajah #1889* and verified]

Therefore, if she elopes and marries herself, this marriage is considered unlawful, as the Prophet (ﷺ) declared:

“Any woman who marries without the consent of her guardian, then her marriage is invalid, then her marriage is invalid. If (the man) has had intercourse with her then she must keep the dowry (that she took from him) for his intimacy with her, and if they fall into dispute then the ruler is the guardian for those who have no guardian.” [*Abu Dawood #2083 & Tirmidhi #1102* and verified]

As mentioned above in the rights of daughters, whether a virgin or otherwise, the right of a woman is to accept or reject any marriage offer of her own free will. The institution of guardianship is only to protect her interests. The fact that the ruler or governor becomes her legal guardian to assure that all is in order and that no criminal injustice is perpetrated reinforces the sacredness of the marriage contract and the sanctity of her rights in Islam.

Since the woman remains in a position of natural weakness, Islamic jurisprudence lays down principles and laws to protect

her interests and welfare and preserve her rights. The father, the mother and other concerned relatives, if need be, help select the right and most suitable husband for her, since all seek her happiness and none wish her to be victim of a failed marriage. The goal of marriage is to establish an everlasting relationship between a male and a female and a loving and beneficial home for the children, not mere gratification of certain desires. Since women are, in general, more emotional than men and more easily affected and tempted with appearances rather than the deeper realities, Islamic jurisprudence gives the right to the guardian to refuse and reject proposals if the suitor is not deemed a sound and sincere match. Male guardianship in this case is only natural given their role of authority and responsibility. Moreover, it cannot be denied that men, being of the same gender, have a better ability to perceive qualities of other men in certain areas, and are more capable of finding those characteristics of a man that suit his daughter or the woman under his responsibility of guardianship. Of course he seeks counsel of the wife and other concerned females in the process of selection of the bridegroom. If an appropriate man proposed for marriage and the guardian refused for no valid reason, then the guardianship can be contested in the court of law. The guardianship is then given to the nearest responsible male relative of the woman, or, in case she has no responsible male relatives, the Muslim Judge assumes guardianship.

In the final analysis, the true measurement of a suitable match in marriage is the statement of the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ):

“If a person comes to you to propose a marriage and you are pleased with his religious commitment and morals, then marry (your daughter or female relative under your care) to him. For if you do not do that there will be Fitnah (great

affliction) on earth, and corruption will be widespread.” [Tirmidhi #1085 and verified]

A man with a sound and good understanding of his Islamic commitment, with good moral standards will honor his wife and dignify her, and treat her justly with decency even if he does not love her.

Financial and Moral Responsibilities of the Household

Allah, the Exalted, stated in the Glorious Qur'an:

“Men are protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend to support them from their means.” [4:34]

This verse emphasizes that the financial and moral responsibilities of a household is the husband's responsibility. The natural, physical and social qualities of men demand that they take charge of these responsibilities since they are of the stronger gender and physically fit to work being free from the burden of menses, pregnancy, nursing and early childrearing. The man is the “guardian” of his own household - a shepherd of his flock in the idiom mentioned earlier - and he will be asked and accounted about all his responsibilities. Women by their natural constituency are the weaker sex, built biologically, emotionally and socially for their role as child bearer and homemaker. They are more endowed with intuition and emotional intelligence. This is their natural feminine role that is fully honored and protected. Due to the pains and burdens of menses, pregnancy, delivery, nursing, and continual child-care, women often require various periods of confinement for rest, and they are not required to take on additional financial and vocational responsibilities for the sustenance and maintenance of the household. All these concerns affect the mental state of a woman and will be reflected in her life, attitude and behavior. This is a natural state prescribed in many civilizations, but often with many injustices, as mentioned earlier.

'Abbas Mahmoud al-'Akkad, the well-known Egyptian writer, notes:

"Women have a very special emotional make-up that does not resemble the emotional make-up of man. The companionship of a little infant or child requires a lot of similarity and resemblance between the child's mentality and his companion, the mother. She has to understand what he wants, what he needs and how he thinks and feels. Therefore, to fulfill this requirement, a woman is much more responsive to emotions. This makes it difficult for a woman, when compared with man, to be firm, fierce and determined when needed."

Dr. Alex Liberelle, a Nobel Prize winner, says while illustrating the natural organic differences between man and woman:

"Matters that differentiate between man and woman are not limited to sexual organs, the presence of the womb and pregnancy. These matters are also not limited to the difference of teaching methods of man and woman. In fact, these differences are of basic nature. The tissues of the body in both male and female are different. The chemistry of the bodies is also different in both. Certain glands excrete certain secretions that are only suitable for a specific gender. The woman is completely different from man in terms of the chemical material secreted from the ovary inside the woman's body."

Those who call for complete equality between men and women disregard basic facts and essential differences. Advocates of women's equal rights demand the same type of education to be given to both male and female, and same type of jobs, tasks, responsibilities, positions to be offered, etc. This absurdity neglects woman's nature and essential physical, mental,

emotional, and social traits. Every cell of the body of a woman has a feminine quality, nursed by female hormones, just as a man has his distinct qualities and hormones. Are they blind when they wish to be equal? They don't see that each organ of every man and woman are unique in and of themselves, and different from each other. The male and female central nervous systems function in exact precision to help their respective roles in human life. We must accept natural laws and movements as they are, without attempting to change them to seek unnatural obstruction or interference with them. For their own benefit, both men and women should build upon their natural talents and gifts, and never deviate into imitating those of the other sex, which only leads to abuse of themselves and others. Another factor is that it is a well-established fact that the bone structure and muscles of men are naturally heavier and more powerful than those of women. Men can perform more laborious and manual jobs, while women are not physically able to show comparable physical endurance. This is another proof that men are naturally equipped and qualified to assume the role of leadership over financial and vocational responsibilities of the household in consultation with their best second-halves (their wives), which is also a general rule in Islam, as mentioned previously.

On Honor Killings

In some traditional and tribal custom based societies, custom gives the male such a dominant role that if the honor of his womenfolk are perceived, even without proper verification, to have been violated by an action of promiscuity on her part, the man kills her to protect his honor. This situation has been hyped up in the media because some unscrupulous people who continue to do this and others who allow it to continue.

The answer to this is simple. To begin with, people are not allowed to take the law into their own hands and punish in this manner based on unverified accusations of promiscuity, as the rules of testimony in Islam are very strict. Therefore, this is a direct violation of the Islamic law. If the court assesses the case as an outright premeditated murder, after considering all circumstances and receiving proofs conclusively, it becomes punishable by the Islamic law of equity and retribution in cases of premeditated murder. The unfortunate reality is that because secular laws are in place in these countries, and because politicians appease tribal and other leaders for political advantages, these unjust customs are allowed to continue. If the Islamic laws were established and executed, the severe punishments for fornication, adultery, murder, etc, would satisfy the Muslim population; that justice has been done, and this would curtail the sense of vengeance that one needs to have recourse to.

Power to Divorce is with the Husband

In pre-Islamic times divorce was a weapon used against the woman solely in a man’s hands; when he wanted to harm the wife he would seek to divorce her and then take her back as he pleased. There were no set rules and the woman had no rights in the matter. So Allah (ﷻ) invalidated this injustice by revealing the verse which says:

“Divorce is two times: then one may retain with goodness (and reasonable terms), or let go with goodness (and reasonable terms).” [2:229]

As a way to help preserve the marriage even when some differences occur, a Muslim man following the *Sunnah* (way) of the Prophet (ﷺ) may only divorce his wife while she is clean from menses wherein he has not had sexual relations with her in that month. Since this requires some waiting period before the pronouncement of divorce, this allows time for any anger to subside or misunderstandings to be cleared up, and gives time to other family members or mediators to help in reconciliation. If they continue on the path towards divorce, then she must wait three menstrual periods. During this time, he may “take her back” honorably into marriage. This will be counted as the first divorce and return. If the time lapses and he lets her go her way, she will be fully divorced for the first time, and is free to marry another man. Her first husband may remarry her with a new contract, if they both choose that option. If he does, and he then again divorces her, he may “take her back” her within the three menstrual periods, and this will be two divorces and returns. After two divorces and returns, if he divorces her a third time this is called the final and separating divorce wherein they are not allowed to remarry unless she waits the specified

time of three menstrual cycles and then freely marries a different man with no intention of availing herself to this means in order to be able to lawfully marry her previous husband. If, for any reason, she becomes divorced from that man, only then, and on the condition that no shady pre-arranged dealings were made to circumvent this rule, can she re-marry her first husband. All these measures are designed to help protect the family and sanctity of the marriage bond, and the rights of the man and the woman. The waiting period is to determine that she is free from pregnancy. In case of pregnancy, the woman has to wait until after delivery before she marries a second husband.

Divorce is ultimately allowed in Islam to escape from any harm caused by the irreconcilable differences. It may become necessary in certain cases. There are strict rules about divorce to protect the interests and rights of the parties involved: the husband, wife and children. Some of them have been mentioned above.

Divorce might be forbidden in the case where it would not solve the problem and cause undue harm to one of the two marriage partners, without achieving a needed benefit.

Islamic jurisprudence obligates that in order to avoid divorce, solutions should be sought when critical disputes and differences occur between husband and wife; Allah, the Exalted, states in the Glorious Qur'an:

“And if a woman fears cruelty or desertion from her husband, there is no sin on both of them if they make terms of peace between themselves; and making peace is better.”
[4:128]

Allah, the Exalted, also says:

“If you fear a breach between them appoint two arbitrators, one from his family and the other from her family: if the two of them both wish for correction, Allah will cause their reconciliation. Indeed, Allah is Omniscient and Well-Acquainted with all things.” [4:35]

One of the most natural and logical ways to help maintain a successful marriage is to let the man have more control over the divorce process than the woman because it is the man who is financially obliged to take care of his wife, household and family, and has ultimate responsibility of their welfare. Therefore, he must rationally assess the situation, grave consequences, and huge financial and emotional loss that will result from a divorce. The husband will lose the dowry he spent for the marriage, and will have to pay the alimony and child support, as well as any newly acquired expenses from a new marriage on top of that. Thus, with all these considerations, he will not act just out of quick anger, fickleness or passing emotion.

A man is more capable - at least theoretically - of controlling his flitting emotions and personal reactions when upset about the smaller issues in life, especially in terms of disputes with his wife. Divorce should never be a quick reaction for some suffering, misunderstandings, or differences of viewpoints, but only as a last resort and final solution when life becomes dangerously problematic and intolerable, wherein both spouse are afraid that they will not be able to abide by the limits set by Allah and His Prophet about respectable behavior with one another.

Islamic jurisprudence permits the wife to have her marriage nullified upon her request if the husband abuses her physically or verbally. She is also entitled to have the marriage nullified for the following general reasons:

- a) if the husband is impotent and cannot perform his marital duties,
- b) or if the husband for any reason, refuses to have sexual relations with his wife and fulfill her lawful needs,
- c) or is afflicted with a disabling terminal illness after the marriage,
- d) or contracts any type of venereal or reproductive disease that may harm the wife or make her lose her desire to be with her husband. Thus, we see that the woman is given the right to seek separation from her husband for legitimate reasons in many situations, exactly as the man has the right to seek divorce. If a wife reaches the extreme limits of patience and abhors her husband, feeling that life is unbearable, then she has the right to divorce. This form of divorce is called annulment, or “*Khul’a*”, wherein she pays compensation by returning her dowry or some other property. A competent Muslim judge will look into the individual case if the husband refuses to accept the wife's request and if the request is considered sound and valid, will pass a judgment in favor of the woman.

Women's Right of Inheritance

Allah, the Exalted, stated in the Glorious Qur'an:

“Allah commands you as regards to your children's (inheritance); to the male, a portion equal to that of two females.” [4:11]

Those who misunderstand Islam claim that Islam does injustice to women in terms of inheritance. They opine that it is unfair to grant the male a double to that of the female even though they are children of the same parents. Allah, the Exalted, offered a full and detailed method of women's inheritance in the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, and if an unbiased student of knowledge reflects on the details, he or she will discover the fault of this opinion.

To begin with, Allah has determined all the shares of all the relatives in respect to their relationship to the deceased. As He the Most Wise said:

“There is a share for men and a share for women from what is left by parents and those nearest related, whether the property is small or large, an obligatory share.” [4:7]

Allah has stated three types of shares for a woman's inheritance as follows:

- a. A woman will have an equal share as that of the man.
- b. A woman will have an equal share to that of the man, or a little less.
- c. A woman will have half the share of a man.

This means that the minimum of her shares is half, and considering that a female has no continual financial responsibilities as a child, sister, wife or mother, and these

responsibilities are always on the men of the family, this is very generous indeed.

Those who are interested in the details about this subject should review the discussions in books about the special branch of Islamic knowledge called "The science of inheritance and division of the estate". These books deal with all the different ways of dividing an inheritance, and the proper share of all relatives according to the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. Prior to passing any judgment about "unfair treatment" of Islam to women in terms of inheritance", one must examine this subject closely.

In contrast to all the other societies, Islamic Jurisprudence stipulates the rules and regulations about all the affairs of a man, from big to small, to bring harmony to their lives. Just like a person has specific instructions for how to live and use his money in his lifetime, his wealth after his death is dealt with the same way. Unlike other social systems, a person can generally do with his wealth in his life however he wants but his will has certain restrictions according to the Islamic Law. Through his will he can only give 1/3 of his wealth to whoever he wants, all the rest is distributed according to the law of inheritance derived from the Qur'an.

In the famous tradition; the companion **Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas** was ill and requested to bequest the majority of his wealth as charity, or a half of it since he was wealthy and only had one daughter. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade him and only allowed him to give a third, and said :

“A third and a third is a lot, and it is better that you leave your heirs wealthy rather than leave them needy begging from the people. You will not spend anything seeking Allah’s countenance but you receive a reward for that

expenditure, even the morsel of food you put into your wife's mouth." [Bukhari #2591 & Muslim #1628]

An important point to note is that in many civilizations, man-made laws of inheritance are at the whim of a powerful individual; to give or deprive, as one will, however unjustly. Moreover, in these societies often there is no law that obligates a man with financial responsibilities and relieves the women from them. On the other hand, according to Islam, a male is required to take care of the entire financial needs of the female dependents of the family until they are married. From the time a female marries, her financial responsibilities are her husband's obligation. After the death of the husband, the son or other male relative is obliged to care for the widow.

Therefore, demanding a "fair", "just" or "equal" share of inheritance for both male and female Muslims, who do not have equal financial obligations and responsibilities, is an unfair and unjust demand. It is only fair and just to give preference to a male heir, in light of his financial responsibilities, over the female heir from the inheritance of the father, mother or others. Considering all this, the fact that a female is still entitled by the Islamic law to a half share of the portion of inheritance received by the male, and sometimes an equal share, is indeed fair, just, and generous.

Gustave Le Bon says in his book *Arab Civilization*:

“The principles of inheritance which have been determined in the Qur'an have a great deal of justice and fairness. The person who reads the Qur'an can perceive these concepts of justice and fairness in terms of inheritance through the verses I quoted. I should also point out the great level of efficiency in terms of general laws and rules derived from these verses. I have compared British, French and Islamic Laws of inheritance and found that Islam grants the wives

the right of inheritance, which our laws are lacking while Westerners consider them to be ill-treated by the Muslim men.”

Also, in accordance with Islam, the men of the family shoulder all expenses resulting from payment of “blood-money”, and this is another subject of concern that we will discuss now.

Testimony of Women

Allah, the Exalted, stated in the Glorious Qur'an:

“And get two witnesses out of your own men. And if there are not two men (available), then a man and two women, such as you agree for witnesses, so that if one of them (two women) errs, the other can remind her.” [2:282]

Allah clarifies to assure the rights of others that testimonies will not be valid unless two men, or one man and two women offer them.

Divine wisdom has granted women, in general, very sensitive emotions, tender feelings, and a predisposition towards care and love of other members of the family. This makes a woman capable of her natural task of childbearing, nursing, taking care of all the needs of the young child, etc. Based on these emotional characteristics of the woman, she might very well follow her emotional inclinations and swerve from harsh realities due to an emotional involvement in a case. A woman's loving and kind feelings might overcome what she has witnessed, and thus she may distort the story of her witness and testimony. At the same time the biological changes that occur in her body due to menses, pregnancy, child-birth and post-natal conditions reduce the sharpness of her memory and may make her forget the details of the issue. Therefore, a divine precautionary measure was established to eliminate any shortcoming on a woman's part in any case of testimony. We would like to point out here one of the essential principles of the legal and judicial system in Islam, which states that the case is not valid for proceedings if a doubt arises in the case. Therefore, the strength of two female witnesses is intended to eliminate this doubt.

Besides testimony that involves other people's rights, Islam has granted women full financial freedom in terms of independence and financial decision-making, and made her exactly equal to men in that regard. However, woman's natural role in life, in raising children and caring for the family requires her to stay in the home for longer and extended periods in comparison to men, thus limiting her knowledge and experience to the affairs she stays involved in most of her life.

It is a false accusation to say that making the testimonies and witnesses of two women equal to one man in certain cases is an insult to the woman's intelligence and a dishonor to her integrity. If that were the case, a single woman's testimony would, likewise, not be acceptable in the other affairs of women. Islamic jurisprudence accepts a woman's testimony in all affairs that are private like in confirming the virginity of a woman, delivery of a child, clarification of female sexual defects, and other matters that mandate examination due to a dispute. At the same time, it must be remembered that Islamic law rejects a man's lone testimony in the least significant financial matters such as lending or borrowing funds and other transactions, since there must be two. The critically serious cases, wherein a woman's testimony must be doubled, is established in order to preserve and prove the rights of individuals in the society based on the reliability and irrefutability of that testimony.

Note that testimony in the Islamic law in itself is not a privilege but a burden that many attempt to avoid, and for this reason Allah (ﷻ) commanded people to offer their testimonies and not to seek to escape or withhold it. Allah (ﷻ) stated in the Glorious Qur'an:

“And the witnesses should not refuse when they are called on (for evidence).” [2:28ʻ]

The address here is general for both male and female. Many people all over the world try to avoid becoming a witness, and attempt to escape involvement in offering testimonies, because one is required to go to the court, sit on the witness stand, take an oath to tell the truth, be cross-examined and many other burdens. Financial and physical burdens or threats may result from being a witness and offering testimony. Islam therefore aims at eliminating many of these burdens from the woman, unless she has a partner who witnesses as she does, in matters involving many forms of testimony.

A man's single testimony is not acceptable in financial matters, since there must be two male witnesses to prove the financial right of a claimant, or one man and two women. We have never heard that anyone considered this requirement an insult to man's intelligence or contrary to his rights. This proves that the requirement is for the protection against false accusations and mistakes.

There are some cases when the testimony of each is totally equal. For instance, the testimony of a wife is exactly equal to the testimony of her husband when a husband accuses his wife of committing adultery and he has no evidence to prove his claim. Allah (ﷻ) stated in the Glorious Qur'an:

“As for those who accuse their wives, but have no witnesses except themselves, let them present their testimony four times, that by Allah he is one of those who speak the truth. By the fifth (testimony, he invokes) the Curse of Allah on himself, if he is of those who tell a lie (against her). She will avert the punishment (of stoning to death) from her if she bears witness four times by Allah, that he (her husband) is telling a lie. And the fifth (testimony) should be that the Wrath of Allah be upon her if he (her husband) is speaking the truth.” [24:6-9]

Travel Without a Male Guardian

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“A woman must not travel alone without a *mahram* (her husband or a man with whom that woman cannot marry at all according to the Islamic Jurisprudence). No man may enter the house of a woman unless there is a *mahram* with her.” A man stood up and asked Allah's Prophet (ﷺ): “O Messenger of Allah! My wife is going on Hajj (pilgrimage), while I want to participate in a battle, what should I do?” The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Go out with her.” [*Bukhari* #1763]

For the protection of the person and honor of women, the Islamic rule encompassed in this tradition forbids any woman, whether she be young or old, single or married, to travel alone without (*mahram*) as a travel companion. This man must be of those to whom she is permanently prohibited to marry due to their close blood relationship, such as a father, a brother, an uncle, an elder son or nephew after he has reached puberty, or a husband, etc. Some people might say that this regulation restricts the freedom of the woman and her basic right of movement. The purpose of this rule is not to prevent her travel but to free her from harm and molestation, and thus to maintain and preserve her right of dignity. Traveling entails many hardships and dangers, and since women are physically weaker than men, and moreover she may have circumstances of pregnancy, menses, nursing and childcare, or some ailments, she is in more need of help and service. Also women are generally more emotional and impressionable; they are more susceptible to unscrupulous and characterless men in search of victims.

Anas said:

“The Prophet (ﷺ) was on a journey and a slave named Anjasha was chanting (singing) for the camels to let them go fast (while driving). The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "O Anjasha, drive slowly (the camels) with the glass vessels!" Abu Qilaba said, "By the glass vessels' he meant the women (riding the camels).” [Bukhari #5857]

The phrase “delicate glassware” describes the fragileness and softness of the women’s nature, who were the riders in that caravan, easily broken or disturbed.

There are, as we all know, wicked minded, evil and violent men who lurk about and seek to take advantage of women whom they find susceptible, gullible or traveling alone. Such wicked-minded men are of course either interested in robbery, trickery, seduction, or rape. Therefore, a woman is very much in need of someone to care for, protect and fulfill her special needs while traveling, providing her the needed security, service and attention to help her in the difficulties and ward off strangers and potential predators. The “*mahram*” of a woman in Islam protects and serves with utmost sincerity since this is a natural obligation on him, rewarded by Allah (ﷻ). We find that many civilizations have similar rules about escorting women in travel, but often they allow other than the “*mahram*” to escort her since they do not differentiate between a *mahram* and a *non-mahram* in their cultures, which results in terrible stories. Therefore, and upon this line of reasoning, forbidding a woman to travel alone, and mandating a male escort who must be a “*mahram*,” is not in any way a humiliating restriction or insult to her abilities, but, in fact, is an honor that she is served, protected and given companionship by a male escort who has to give her preference over his personal matters and needs.

Women's Right to Work

As mentioned above, Allah created all mankind from a single male and female, and placed natural love and affection for one another in order that they cooperate to build families and relationships of families. We see in nature that Allah bestowed the male of each species with superior power and endurance in order that he may dominate in certain spheres and seek provisions and protection for the species, while the female of each species is equipped to reproduce and multiply to maintain the continuity of that species. Only the female is equipped with the necessary apparatus to bear, deliver, nurse and care for the young. The female human has been endowed with love, kindness, sympathy, care and affection in order to carry out her duties to her children with dignity. Based on this natural predisposition and delegation of responsibilities, and based on the unique qualities of the male and the female, it is only natural for man to work outside the house and earn for the sustenance of the family and for the woman to work inside the house and take care of the children and the family in general.

Considering this basic fact, Islamic law does not deprive a woman from the right to work within the limits that protect her honor and dignity. Islam permits the woman to personally conduct her business contracts and financial transactions. All such contracts and transactions are sound and valid in the view of Islamic jurisprudence. There are certain set conditions which if violated, the permission given to the woman to practice this right will be rendered void and she can be restrained from the use of her right.

The work that the women engage outside the home must not conflict with her duties and responsibilities to her husband and children. Her work must be with other women and free of

intermingling in a male environment, where she comes into physical contact with men, or is confined and exposed to molestation and abuse. As the Messenger of Allah said (ﷺ):

“A man is not secluded with a woman, but that the Satan is the third party to them.” [*Tirmidhi #1171* and verified]

And in another tradition:

A man said: “O Messenger of Allah my wife has gone out to go for Pilgrimage and I have been written to go for a military campaign.” He said: “Go and make Pilgrimage with your wife.” [*Bukhari #4935 & Muslim #1341*]

Lady Cook, the well-known English writer says in *New Echo*:

“Men like (and prefer) the mixed environment. Thus, women are lured to something that conflicts with their human nature. The greater the co-ed. environment (between male and female), the more illegitimate children the society will have. There is the greatest disaster...”

The work that the woman performs outside her home must be, in the first place, a lawful employment or job that suits the nature and physique of the woman. She must not, for instance, be obliged to do heavy industrial jobs, and other jobs to which men are more suited to perform.

The question that poses itself here is: Why does the woman have to work in the first place? If a woman is working to earn her own living expenses, Islam has absolved her from this duty by obliging, as mentioned earlier, the male family members to take care of the entire financial needs and obligations. Thus from her birth to death, throughout the various stages of her entire life, she is not required to work to give utmost dignity and concentration to her paramount mission and duty of taking care of the home and raising the children. This honorable

mission requires great sacrifices and devotion, and has the highest status.

The well-known English scholar **Samuel Smiles**, one of the pillars of the English renaissance says:

"The system that has required women to work in factories and industrial areas, regardless of the national wealth it brings, has destroyed the family life. It has attacked, in fact, the basic structure and foundations of the home and destroyed the essential pillars of the family. It has cut and destroyed social ties as well. Stripping the wife from her husband, and depriving children of their rights of proper, tender and maternal care, has resulted in lower moral values for the women. The real job and profession of a woman is to raise a good, sound and moral family. She is mainly required to take care of household responsibilities, home economics and other domestic needs. Work in factories has stripped the woman, as we pointed earlier, of all these responsibilities which changed the looks and the realities of the inner home. Children, as well, were often neglected and raised with no sound standards. The love and affection between husband and wife were somewhat extinguished. The woman was no longer the sought, wanted, admired and loved by man, after he got used to seeing her in the factory next to him doing the same thing he does. Woman came under many influences and pressures that changed her mentality and thinking pattern on which moral values and virtues were established."

In fact, the First Lady of South Africa calls for the return of woman to the home saying:

"The most natural place for a woman is her own home. The main task and responsibility for a woman must be to care for her husband and attend to the needs of her children."

She also said in an address to a women's conference in the capital of South Africa:

"The main task and responsibility for a woman must be to care for her husband and attend to the needs of her children... This is our duty in the society. It is a duty in which we should take special pride as it produces successful men and sound generations."

On Hijab (covering head)

This issue has been sensationalized in the media, especially in some secular countries like France and Turkey which seek to make illegal the wearing of the Muslim headscarf or face veil in public places. We will not delve into all the details of the issue but, given the information above and some additional information below, we will let the readers judge for themselves whether or not the modest clothing and covering of the beauty and adornments of women, mandated in Islamic scriptures, is only for her own honor and protection, or not.

Allah (ﷻ) says:

“O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks (and/or veils) over their bodies. That is better that they should be known so as not to be annoyed and molested. Allah is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [33:59]

This verse clearly states that the reason the woman is obligated to cover herself is to distinguish her to be identified as a respectable Muslim lady, to avoid the annoying glances and glares of the men. As we all know, provocative clothing urges some men to make advances, and expose women to molestation. This may be encouraged and marketed in some societies, but not among the respectable faithful Muslims.

All protective measures should be taken to guard women from excess temptation, which are explained in Islamic jurisprudence. Some of them are related to the women’s attire like loose fitting body wrapping, head covering, and according to the authentic interpretations of the scriptures of the Qur’an and *Sunnah*, the face veil.

Allah (ﷻ) also said:

“And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their private parts and not display their adornment (and beauty), except that which appears thereof (ordinarily) and to draw their coverings over their chests and not display their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband’s fathers, their sons, their husband’s sons, their brothers, their brothers’ sons, their sisters’ sons, their women, that which their right hands possess (their slaves) 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 stomp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornments. And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers that you might succeed.”
[24:31]

This verse indicates those males who are categorized as “*mahram*,” as mentioned above, and designates that men and women should lower their gazes in modesty, which is the best self-protection from natural temptations and mutual attractions that occur between the opposite sexes.

And Allah (ﷻ) says, indicating the provocative manners with which the women of pre-Islamic era used to walk about, and calling the believers to appropriate behavior and repentance:

“And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance, and establish regular prayers and give obligatory charity and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah wishes only to remove impurity from you, O members of the family (of the Prophet), and to purify you with a thorough purification. And remember (O you the members of the Prophet's family, the Graces of your Lord), that which is recited in your houses of the Verses of Allah

and Wisdom (i.e. Prophet's *Sunnah*). Verily, Allah is Ever Most Courteous, Well-Acquainted with all things. Verily, the Muslims men and women, the believing men and women, the obedient men and women, the truthful men and women, the patient men and women, the humble men and women, the charitable men and women, the fasting men and the women, the chaste men and women, and the men and the women who remember Allah much with their hearts and tongues; Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward (i.e. Paradise). It is not for a believing man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter, that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a clear error.” [33:33-6]

We can see that Islamic regulations, although similar to many other cultures where modest dress and behavior is concerned, are yet unique to the highest standards of the Muslim identity of chastity, righteousness, and moral uprightness. Islam protects and safeguards the individuals and the society from awkward situations of unnecessary intermingling between marriageable males and females leading to natural temptations. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said in an authentic tradition:

“Verily for every religion there is a characteristic, and the characteristic of Islam is Haya`a (modesty, shyness, bashfulness).” [*Ibn Maajah* #4172 and verified]

Beating Women is Forbidden in Islam

* This chapter written by Ahmed Al-Amir & Tsekoura Vivian

Introduction

All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord all of the worlds, Who sent Muhammad ﷺ as a Messenger of glad tidings and as a warner, as well as to call the whole world to the Path of Allah, and as a bright light. May Allah's Blessings and peace be upon him, his family and his Companions.

This chapter was written as an answer to the claims of many people who are deceived and misled by Satan. The matter of beating women in Islam has been discussed in many gatherings and there are many websites addressing that matter, without understanding or having knowledge about this, and some of the enemies of Islam unjustly invent lies on that matter. They invent words that have neither roots nor branches, they are completely baseless. Therefore, I would like to put in the generous reader's hands the attitude of Islam on beating women and its differentiation with the attitudes of other religions, since Islam is the only religion that states the forbiddance of beating women, either young or older. So, I present for you the details of the matter, and then you can judge, after you have acquired knowledge and understanding on the matter.

The Author

Classification of actions based on the Islamic law (Shari'a)

All human actions are divided according to the Islamic law in the following categories, in order to clarify whether an action is considered permissible or prohibited:

1. Obligatory (Fard): It is what Islamic law imposes on people, without any doubt, such as the obligation of prayer, of fasting, of Zakah (annual obligatory charity that the rich gives to the poor). These actions are obligatory, and whoever does them will be rewarded, while whoever neglects them will be punished.

2. Preferable (Mustahab): They are the actions that the Islamic law encourages people to do without having made them obligatory. Whoever does them will be rewarded, but whoever neglects them is not considered to have sinned, so he is not punished. Such actions are to brush one's teeth with the Siwak (a small piece of wood with bristles, like a brush) before prayer.

3. Permissible (Mubah): They are the acts which neither whoever does is rewarded nor the one who neglects is punished, such as walking, using the car or an airplane and any other everyday actions.

4. Repugnant (Makrooh): They are acts abstinence from which is encouraged by the Islamic Law, but there is no prohibition on them. So whoever abstains from them is rewarded, but the one who does them is not considered to have sinned and he is not punished. It is preferred to abstain from these acts and whatever may lead to them, but he who does them has not sinned. But the repetition of such actions and the habit of them leads to the violation of the limits that have been set by Allah and to the commission of an act which Allah has forbidden. The reason behind the fact that such actions are not considered sins, even though they are repugnant, is that sometimes it may be necessary to commit them. For example, Allah, the Almighty, hates divorce, but has not banned it as a

mercy for His slaves, to release them if life circumstances require so.

5. Forbidden (Haram): They are the actions the Islamic Law forbids. So, whoever does them is considered to have sinned and is punished, while whoever abstains from them is rewarded. Such acts include the prohibition of alcohol consumption and adultery.

Distinction between the permissible and the forbidden

To know the permissible and distinguish it from the forbidden is the backbone of Islam and the proof of faith, and it is connected to the actions of the heart, as it is connected to the actions of the body. The basic rule is that every act is permitted, and there are no impermissible acts except those specifically mentioned in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as forbidden. The permissible acts are something pure, good, while the forbidden ones are something evil, obscene. And it is the Right of Allah, since He is the Creator, the Good-Doer and the Disposer of His slaves' affairs, to permit whatever He wants for His slaves and to forbid whatever He wants. But Allah, as a mercy from Him to His slaves, has made the legalization and the forbiddance of actions for logical causes, based on the benefit for people. Therefore, Allah has not permitted anything but good, and has not forbidden anything but evil.

Moving a deed from one category to another

1. Moving from the permissible to the forbidden and vice versa:

A permissible deed can be transferred to the category of the prohibited if there is a reason that makes this deed instead of pleasing and good for the soul a bad and vile act that harms the soul. For example, while walking on the streets is a permissible act, it may be forbidden if the president of a country has set a command of curfew for some time for the safety of the citizens. A forbidden deed may also be transferred to the category of the permissible if there is a reason that makes this deed necessary for a man's life to be preserved. For example, drinking alcohol is a forbidden action, but it may be permissible if a man is lost in the desert and is going to die of thirst while he has nothing available to drink but alcohol, in which case he may drink as much as needed in order to ensure his survival, without, however, transgressing this limit.

2. Moving from the obligatory to the forbidden and vice versa:

An obligatory deed may be moved to the category of the forbidden and a forbidden deed may be moved to the category of the obligatory. For example, prayer is an obligatory deed, but it may become forbidden if a man is praying inside his house during an earthquake and it is certain that he will die unless he gets out of the house quickly. On the other hand, to attack someone and cut his leg is forbidden, but if a doctor has to cut a patient's leg to save his life, then this action becomes obligatory to him and if he does not do it he is considered to have committed a sin and a crime, for which he must be punished.

3. Moving from the repugnant to the category of the preferable or from preferable to the category of the forbidden:

A repugnant deed may move to the category of the preferable, even to that of the obligatory. For example, divorce is in essence a repugnant deed, which Allah detests, but in some cases not to give one's wife a divorce can lead to forbidden deeds that the husband cannot prevent unless he gives a divorce, like when a wife is immoral and the husband cannot bring her back to the straight path. In this case it is preferable that the husband should give divorce to such a woman. Consequently, the repugnant action becomes preferable.

A preferable deed may also be moved to the category of the forbidden. For example, to clean one's teeth with As-Siwak is a preferable action. But it may become repugnant, or even forbidden, when, for example, one's teeth are about to fall and he knows that this will happen if he cleans them with As-Siwak. In this case to clean one's teeth with As-Siwak is opposing the Islamic rule **'not to harm, or cause any harm to anybody, not even yourself.'**

Conclusion:

Based on what we have explained above, we conclude that Islam is not a blind religion that does not see or assess the circumstances of the everyday affairs of people. The blindness is in fact in the hearts of the enemies of Islam, who have no other purpose with the lies they invent against Islam but to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, and verily, Allah will complete His Light, even if the disbelievers do not like that. Maybe, dear reader, you have understood that Islam is not a religion of injustice, but it is a religion of justice, and as one of the Names of Allah is "Al-'Adl - The Just", the estimation of whether an action is forbidden or permissible in Islam is based

on justice and not on blind judgement, while every form of injustice is forbidden in Islam.

The Treatment of Wives in Light of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah

In light of the Verses of the Qur'an we see that Allah, the Exalted, ordered excellent treatment of the wife, generosity towards her, and the best cohabitation with her, even if there is not love from the heart. Allah, the All-Wise, said:

“And live with them in the best way. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings through it a great deal of good.” (4:19)

The Prophet ﷺ said:

“A believer man must not hate (his wife) believing woman; if he dislikes one of her characteristics he will be pleased with another.” (*Muslim*)

Also, Allah clarifies that the woman has rights towards her husband, just as the husband has rights towards her. Allah, the Exalted, says:

“And they (women) have rights (over their husbands), similar (to those of their husbands) over them, to what is reasonable.” (2:228)

And the Prophet's ﷺ last will before he died was that men should take care of their wives and honour them, and never treat them unfairly or violate their rights. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Treat the women in the best way.” (*Muslim*)

And the Prophet ﷺ ordered men to behave well to their wives and be generous with them. He also clarified that the best of men is the one who treats his wife best. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“The most complete in faith is the best in character. And the best of you is the one who is best to his wife.” (At-Tirmidhi & Sahih Al-Gami‘ No. 1230)

The Prophet ﷺ also said:

“The best of you is the one who is best to his wife, and I am the best of you to my wives.” (Ibn Hibban & Sahih Al-Gami‘ No. 3314)

Also, the Prophet ordered his Companions to tolerate the mistakes of their women, clarifying the nature of the woman, in which Allah created her. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Treat the women in the best way. Verily, the woman was created from a rib and the most crooked portion of the rib is its upper part; if you try to straighten it, it will break, and if you leave it, it will remain crooked, so treat the women in the best way.” (Al-Bukhari)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also said:

“Verily, woman was created from a rib. It shall not be straightened to you in anyway (i.e. she shall not behave exactly as you wish her to). Thus, if you enjoy her, you will enjoy her bent. And if you tried to straighten her, you would break her. And to break her means a divorce.” (Muslim)

The Verses of the Holy Quran and Ahadith showing that the man should treat his wife in the best way are innumerable, and whoever wants to refer to them, he might as well do so.

Did Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) ever beat any of his wives?

The Prophet ﷺ is the good example which all Muslims should follow, as Allah the Exalted has ordered them to. Allah, the Exalted, says:

“Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad) you have a good example to follow, for whomever hopes for (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much.” (33:21)

Allah, the Exalted, also described the noble Messenger’s morals, saying in the Qur’an:

“And Verily, you (O Muhammad) are on an exalted (standard of) character.” (68:4)

The Prophet ﷺ applied his good morals in practice, from which people learned how to treat other people. The Prophet ﷺ said: **“Verily, I was not sent but to perfect and complete the best ethics.”** (*Malik in Al-Muata’ & Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad & in As-Silsilah As-Sahihah No. 45*)

Do we then read in the Prophet’s ﷺ biography or in his words (Ahadith) anything that shows that the Prophet ﷺ has ever beaten any woman or any child? Or do we even find in his enemies’ words who lived during his time and saw him and heard him, any claim that would blame him for such a thing?

And let us look upon Aisha, the Prophet’s wife, and what she said about him after his death, to see what kind of a husband he was:

“His character was the Qur’an.” (*Ahmad & Sahih Al-Gami’ No. 4811*)

“Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) never hit anything with his hand neither a servant nor a woman.” (*Muslim*)

And let us look at the words of the Prophet’s servant, Anas bin Malik ؓ:

“I remained in the service of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ for ten years. He never once told me 'Oof'. When I did something, he never asked me, why did you do so? When I did not do a certain task, he never asked me why I did not

do it. And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had the best character among all people. (and also possessed the most excellent features, so much so,) that I never felt a silk cloth, nor pure silk, nor any other thing softer than the palm (of the hand) of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Nor did I smell any musk or any other fragrance, more sweet smelling than the sweat of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.” (*Muslim & At-Tirmidhi*)

The thesis of Islam about beating women:

Is it allowed or forbidden in Islam?

The sources of the Islamic Law are the Verses of the Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ, and based on these two we will arrive at the judgment of Islam on beating women and in their light you, dear reader, can decide in which category of acts one should place beating women. That is, the category of the obligatory, the preferable, the permissible, the repugnant or the forbidden?

Iyas bin Abd Allah said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

“Do not beat women”, then (some other time, after the Prophet had forbidden beating women) ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab came to the Prophet ﷺ, saying to him: “Women overcame their men, disobeying them and treating them with arrogance and bad manner.” Then the Prophet ﷺ gave them permission to beat them (making an exception for such cases). After that many women came to the Prophet’s wives complaining about their husbands. And then the Prophet ﷺ said: “Many women have come to Muhammad’s wives complaining about their husbands, those men are not the best among you.” (*Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, Ad-Darmi & Al-Albani reported it as Sahih*)

From an analysis of this Hadith we can conclude the following:

This hadith (saying of the Prophet ﷺ) includes three different sayings of the Prophet ﷺ, which he said on three different occasions and not only on one, single occasion.

The first occasion:

The Prophet ﷺ said **“Do not beat women.”**, and here ends the first occasion. Therefore, whoever heard these words from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ learnt with certainty that the Islamic view on beating women was that it is forbidden and that whoever does it is a sinner, since he has violated the Prophet’s ﷺ command.

According to the above, I address my response to you, dear reader. If you were there during that time and heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, **“Do not beat women”** would you say that beating women, according to the Islamic Law, is obligatory, preferable, permissible, repugnant or forbidden? And would you consider that whoever did it would be rewarded or considered a sinner? And would you say that Islam oppresses women and allows beating them?

The second occasion:

Now, let us move on to the second part of the hadith, in which ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab came to the Prophet ﷺ, meaning that this happened on another occasion than when the Prophet ﷺ said: **“Do not beat women.”** ‘Umar came to complain about the women, saying: **“Women overcame their men, disobeying them and treating them with arrogance and a bad manner.”** Here and only here, as an exception, the Prophet ﷺ, taking into consideration the realistic circumstances of life, gave permission to beat one’s wife, but ONLY in such circumstances. But how should this beating be? This will be explained later on.

The third occasion:

Now, let us move on to the third part of the hadith, **(After that many women came to the wives of the Prophet ﷺ complaining about their husbands. And then the Prophet ﷺ said: “Many women have come to Muhammad’s wives complaining about their husbands, those men are not the best among you.”)**. Here lies the final judgment about beating women in Islam, that it is a repugnant or a forbidden deed if the husband transgresses the limits set by Allah, which will be explained later on.

Do you understand from this hadith that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ commended whosoever beats his wife? Or did he encourage that one beats his wife? Or did he reprove whosoever beats his wife?!!! The Prophet’s Companions rushed to receive the pleasure of Allah’s Messenger ﷺ. And that is why they knew with certainty that he who beats his wife is not the one to receive the Messenger’s pleasure, quite the opposite. That is, he who does not beat his wife and forgives her mistakes is the one who will receive the pleasure of the Messenger . And without any doubt, any deed that the Prophet ﷺ hated goes to the category of the repugnant acts, or even the forbidden ones.

Can beating women be moved from the category of the repugnant to that of the forbidden?

We saw that the basis for this subject in Islam and the first judgment of Islam about beating women makes the action forbidden. Then the action moved to the category of the permissible acts for some specific reasons, and finally it was moved to the category of the repugnant. But when does beating women become forbidden? It is a forbidden action if it is an unjust transgression, without any reason, since every form of

unjust transgression is forbidden in Islam. Allah, the Exalted, said in His Wise Book, warning against any form of injustice:

“And whoever among you commits injustice (i.e. sets up rivals to Allah), We shall make him taste a great torment.” (25: 19)

Allah also said:

“And the unjust will have neither any *Wali* (Protector, Guardian), nor any Supporter.” (42:8)

Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said:

“Fear and abstain from injustice (and oppression). Verily, injustice will turn into excessive darkness in the Day of Judgment.” (*Muslim*)

Allah’s Messenger ﷺ also said:

“Fear the supplication of the oppressed, as there is no screen between it and Allah.” (*Al-Bukhari*)

The Prophet ﷺ also said:

“Fear the supplication of the oppressed, even if he is a disbeliever, as there is no screen for it (between itself and Allah).” (*Ahmad & Al-Albani reported it as Sahih*)

In addition, Islam did not only forbid hurting one’s wife physically, but even verbally. Allah, the Exalted, says:

“Verily, those who accuse chaste women, who never even think of anything touching their chastity and are good believers – are cursed in this life and in the Hereafter, and for them will be a great torment.” (24:23)

Allah, the Exalted, also says:

“And those who annoy believing men and women undeservedly, they bear (on themselves) the crime of slander and plain sin.” (33:58)

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ also said:

“The Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the people are safe, and the believer is the one from whom the people’s lives and wealth are safe.” (*An-Nasa’i*)

And notice that in the previous hadith the Prophet ﷺ said that **people** are safe from the hand and the tongue of a Muslim. He did not say that **Muslims** are safe.

Therefore, the one who claims that Islam encourages injustice or beating women invents a great slander and an enormous lie.

The judgment of an Islamic court concerning the beating of women

Now, it is best to move on to the practical implementation of the subject to the everyday life by an Islamic court, namely to see the judgment of an Islamic court in a case of beating women. Islamic courts address this issue with much seriousness, protecting the rights of women and judging against the men who beat their wives. Here is an example.

The newspaper *Riyadh* published the following news item on its website on December 12th, 2012:

“The court of the town Al-Katif in Saudi Arabia sentenced a husband who had beaten his wife to 30 lashes in public view, so as for him to be an example for anyone else who may do the same act in the future. The judge also ordered the man to attend a ten-day seminar at an institute specialized in the art of treating women and family issues and finally to pass a written examination, the results of which would be attached to the case file.”

Similarly, all the courts in all the Islamic countries convict any man who beats his wife. The funny thing is that some women take advantage of this and intimidate or threaten their husbands. When they want to take revenge for something, they lightly hurt themselves and then falsely report to the authorities that their husbands did that, although the men are innocent!

The conclusion from the above case is that no sensible Muslim, who follows the teachings of Islam, does accept any injustice towards his wife, and that Islam, our religion, neither taught us, nor ordered us to do anything like this. On the contrary, Islam has prohibited all forms of injustice and has ordered forgiveness, patience, tolerance and confrontation of evil with goodness. And we should know that Islam has not made the beating of women a permissible act but made it an exception for some individual cases in which there is nothing else to be done. Moreover, it surrounded it with specific conditions in order for this to happen very rarely and only to achieve a specific purpose, which is the protection of the home and morality in the society in general.

The Islamic solution for the problem of the immoral wife

One may ask:

Isn't it better for the man to admonish his wife, instead of beating her?

Of course! And verily, this is the Judgment of Allah, the All-Wise, Who said in His Book:

“As to those women on whose part you fear disobeying with arrogance, ill-conduct and rebellion, admonish them (first), (then if they persist), forsake them in bed (i.e. turn them your back), and (last) beat them (lightly, as a last solution if you have to, and nothing from the previous two steps has any result); but if they obey you, seek not against them means (of annoyance). Surely, Allah is Ever Most High, Most Great.” (4:34)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also said in his farewell pilgrimage: **‘Treat your wives in the best manner, they are (weak and need careness) like captives in your hands; you have no right to treat them otherwise, unless they are guilty of open indecency, and if they do so, then turn your back at them in bed, and beat them lightly, imperceptibly, but if they obey you, then do not wrong them in any way. Verily, you have rights over your wives and they have their rights over you.’** *(At-Tirmidhi & Al-Albani reported it as Hasan)*

So, as we have seen, Allah, the All-Wise, the All-Knowing concerning the issues of His slaves, decreed the solution to the problem of an immoral wife to be in three stages, in the following way:

The first stage: admonition and guidance:

It is obligatory upon a man to follow the path of admonition and guidance to solve the problem with his wife if he saw signs of immorality in her behaviour, before he follows the path of turning his back at her in bed. This sequence is obligatory according to most scholars. Thus, the man should try to touch his wife’s heart with nice words by which he will gain and soften her heart, making her feel how important she is in his heart and that he admonishes her just because he wishes the good for her and the whole family.

Namely, the man should do everything he can, trying to admonish his wife in order to correct her behaviour. And we should take into account that admonition does not come from a cold heart or with a cruel manner, but verily, admonition means kindness in conversation in an effort to touch the heart of the person you admonish, and kindness in behaviour, for example a man giving a present to his wife, so that she accepts his words with a pleased heart and an open mind. It is also obligatory upon the intelligent wives, who are generally moral, to receive admonition from their husband’s words, taking into

consideration the future of their home and children. If, though, the woman is immoral and stubborn and neither admonition nor guidance seems to be effective, then the husband can resort to the second measure, as Allah (ﷻ) ordered us.

The second stage: turning the back in bed:

As we have already explained, if the admonition has no result and the woman does not accept admonition or guidance, then it is allowed to her husband to turn his back to her in bed, refusing to have sexual intercourse with her for three days maximum, since if he continues for more than three days, he is emotionally abusing, not correcting her. The Prophet ﷺ said:

‘It is not lawful for a Muslim to desert (stop talking to) his brother beyond three nights, the one turning one way and the other turning to the other way when they meet, the better of the two is one who is the first to greet the other.’
(*Bukhari*)

The purpose of turning his back at his wife is for her to feel that her husband is really sad due to her behaviour. This solution also functions as a second chance for the wife so she can think the subject through in all its aspects.

But if the wife thought it over and decided to abandon her immoral behaviour and return to good manners, then it is obligatory for the husband to stop turning his back, forgive her and treat her nicely. But if she insists on her obstinacy and arrogance, not caring about guidance, and her husband finds no other solution, then he is allowed to take this final measure.

The third stage: the imperceptible beating with a Siwak:

If a man tried and strived to correct the immoral behaviour of his wife through admonition, nice words and presents, but none of these had any effect on his wife, and then he tried turning his back in bed, and this again had no effect, then it is allowed for the husband to beat her imperceptibly using the Siwak.

‘Ataa’ said: ‘I asked Ibn ‘Abas what an imperceptible beating is like. He said: ‘With Siwak and anything similar to it.’ Furthermore, Al-Hasan Al-Basri said: ‘To be imperceptible.’ By Allah, what pain can the Siwak cause, dear reader?! And can you call beating one’s wife with As-Siwak domestic violence?! Here is a photo of Siwak (its size is that of a pencil), so as for the meaning of the word beating in Islam to be understood.



If, dear reader, you consider beating one’s wife imperceptibly with the Siwak domestic violence, come see how many Hollywood movies depict quarrels between men, or between a man and a woman, or between an employer and employees, in which quarrels one put his index finger on the chest of the other, threatening him or even beating him on the chest with his finger or with a pencil which he holds in his hand. And in many other cases a man slaps another. Furthermore, in many movies the wife reaches during her conversation with her husband the point of slapping him harshly on the face, or the conversation leads the man to slap his wife on the face and then he leaves the place. And Westerners do not consider any of those incidences domestic violence, they think instead that intense emotions led the man to beat his wife or vice versa. They still think that the husband and wife are civilized people. And here we should take

into account that even slapping someone's face is forbidden in Islam. But they attack Islam and falsely accuse it of encouraging violence. Please note that the stages of admonition, turning a husband's back at his wife, and finally beating her are not a solution for everyday marital problems, but they apply only to the problem of immoral and arrogant behaviour of the wife.

For example, if a man tells his wife to cook rice and fish for him, but she forgets and cooks rice and chicken instead, then may we say that the three stages mentioned above, namely admonition, turning his back and light beating should be applied in this case?!!!

Of course not! These are small things which should pass peacefully, without even admonition. But if the wife is an immoral, stubborn woman and her husband starts noticing symptoms of immorality, disobedience and arrogance, which are very serious issues, then we are before a woman who needs correction in behaviour and guidance and a solution to this problem has to be found. Imagine, dear reader, this woman insisting on her obstinacy, arrogance and immoral behaviour that, in the end, will surely result in the destruction of her home and lead to divorce, while her husband did everything he could for a long time using the stage of admonition and guidance and that of turning his back, but she responded to none of it. Which is better and lesser harming in this case, divorce or light beating?!!

If to beat her is the one-eyed and divorce the blind, then the one-eyed is better than the blind! And verily, leaving a wife in such a behaviour would surely lead to the destruction of the whole family and certainly, as a consequence, to the destruction of the whole society.

The Meaning of the Word 'Beating' in Islam

Before organizations defending human rights in the world condemned domestic violence, Islam had preceded them in condemning domestic violence, promising to the one who commits it punishment in the worldly life and in the Hereafter. Furthermore, the prohibition of that crime is not limited in physical violence only, but also involves verbal abuse. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“The Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the people are safe, and the believer is the one from whom the people's lives and wealth are safe.” (*An-Nasa'i*)

The Prophet also ﷺ said:

‘The true believer is not a sycophant, nor one who curses others, nor an immoral, nor one who speaks shameful words.’ (*Al-Bukhari & Al-Albani reported it as Sahih*)

One may ask, ‘how can Islam condemn violence when it permits the man, even as the final solution, to beat his wife if he sees that she is immoral?’

In order to answer that question we should firstly explain the difference between the meaning of the word ‘beating’ in our everyday life and the meaning of the word ‘beating’ in Islam. For example, today when one hears that a man has beaten his wife, an awful picture of this unjust violent man that beats his wife comes directly to one's mind; the picture depicts him beating his wife like a tornado with punches and kicks. Except for that picture, there is another one emerging on one's mind related to the poor abused woman, whose body is full of wounds, bruises and multiple fractures. This is the meaning of the word ‘beating’ nowadays, which we acquired through our daily experience and the many examples of barbaric men who beat their wives.

But if I told you that ‘I beat the eggs’, or ‘I beat a drum’, would you understand that I beat the eggs with punches and kicks? Or would you understand that I beat a drum with punches and kicks?! As a result, the meaning of the word ‘beating’ changes entirely depending on its linguistic context and according to the purpose of the speaker, his character, his morals. From all this we understand what he means when uttering the word ‘beating’. That’s why the meaning of the word ‘beating’ in Islam is entirely different from the meaning of the word as we perceive it today, since beating in the meaning as it is used today is strictly prohibited in Islam.

Thus, there is absolutely no chance that these two meanings could overlap, since each one of them contradicts the other. If we want to be unbiased we should say that there is no beating of women in Islam and Islam has not allowed anything like that. On the contrary, Islam has forbidden it, as it has forbidden a man to dishonour or offend his wife, or even to speak to her with shameful words. Verily, the meaning of the word ‘beating’ in Islam means nudges, whose aim is to turn a woman’s attention towards her husband and make her understand that she is erring towards the right of her husband and that her husband has the right to correct her behaviour. Islam has also set certain stages which precede the final stage of beating for the husband to solve the problem of his wife if he sees immoral conduct from her. It has made the stage of beating the last resort when the previous stages had no effect on her. Islam has imposed many limitations on the man and if he violates them he becomes a sinner who has transgressed the limits set by Allah, deserving punishment in the worldly life and the Hereafter. These limitations are the following:

1. To try to solve the problem gradually:

The man should strive to solve the problem at the stage of admonition, and if that was fruitless, then he should resort to

the second stage of turning his back, and if that was fruitless too, then he can resort to the last stage of the imperceptible beating.

2. The beating should be with a Siwak and be imperceptible:

The Siwak is in the size of a pencil, as you can see in the picture above.

3. He should never touch the face and the sensitive parts of her body:

If the husband does not find any other solution, except for resorting to beating his wife, then he should be careful not to transgress Allah's limits. Allah has prohibited beating someone's face in all cases. Furthermore, it is prohibited to beat the sensitive parts of the body, and whoever does it is a sinner. A man being permitted to beat his wife with As-Siwak means that the beating does not take place with the aim of causing pain or harm, so even with the Siwak it is prohibited to beat the face and other sensitive parts.

4. He should neither offend, nor dishonour his wife:

The Prophet ﷺ said:

'The true believer is not a sycophant, nor one who curses others, nor an immoral, nor one who speaks shameful words.' (*Al-Haithami*)

And as we have said many times, the aim of the three stages that we have mentioned before is to correct the behavior of the wife and not to offend her. Offending never had a correcting function; on the contrary, it may escalate the problem instead of solving it.

5. It should not be performed in any case before the children or other people:

It is not allowed for the man to beat his wife or correct her before anyone else, especially before the children, as this concerns only the two spouses and no one else. If this took

place before the children, it would firstly offend the wife and secondly harm the children's upbringing. What kind of example would a man give to his children if he beat their mother before them?

6. Not leaving marks on her body:

The husband is considered to have sinned if he violates Allah's limits and beats his wife leaving marks on her body, or making her bleed, or causing her a fracture. Whoever does that is a barbaric, violent man, who does not want to correct his wife's problem but only wants to take revenge by leaving marks on her body. Such a man should be convicted and legally punished for his crime.

The Issue of Beating Women in Other Religions

The issue of beating women is not restricted to a specific time or place. That is why it is not connected with a specific era or a specific society, but it exists in all societies and eras without any exception. And whoever wants to study the place of women in ancient societies, there are many books that treat this subject and the place of women in ancient Roman, Greek, Chinese, Indian and other societies.

How did Judaism and Christianity deal with the phenomenon of beating women, which was widespread in ancient societies, even in the society of Jesus Christ ﷺ? Did Jesus Christ ﷺ ever speak about the prohibition of beating women? Are there texts in the Bible, either Old or New Testament, that prohibit the beating of women or even refer to it as a repugnant act? From specialized studies it seems that there is no reference to this subject.

As a result, does a Jew or a Christian man sin if he beats his wife, according to his religion? And what is his punishment

according to the verses of the Bible? Obviously he does not sin as there is no verse in the Bible, neither in the New nor in the Old Testament, stating something like that.

Furthermore, the husband is not even condemned according to the state law, nor is he punished, except if there are marks of violence in his wife's body, such as fractures, bruises or wounds. But without manifest marks in her body, how can she prove that she was a victim of violence? In other words, an imperceptible beating is not condemned neither religiously nor legally by the Jews or Christians.

Let us also look into Buddhism and other religions of the Far East. Is there any reference in their holy texts that condemns the beating of women?

Of course there is no religious text in any religion that prohibits the beating of women, except in Islam! Even after moving the judgment of beating women from the category of the prohibited to the category of the repugnant, Islam still remains the only religion that clearly states that the beating of women is a repugnant act! But all the other religions do not refer to this subject, neither as something prohibited, nor repugnant.

Furthermore, there is no religion that sets limits for the man as to whether he can beat his wife, except Islam. In other words, if a Jew or a Christian or a Buddhist loses his temper and self-control in the heat of the moment and beats his wife, what are the limits that he must not transgress? Has Judaism, Christianity or Buddhism set limits for the man who lost his self-control and beat his wife, such as not to leave marks on her body, hit her face etc.? Of course not.

Someone who observes the reality of our everyday life will find a huge percentage of Jew, Christian or Buddhist men who beat their wives. Take a look, dear reader, at the lawsuits that are lodged at the police stations and courts in Europe and America,

and you shall see an enormous number of men who have committed domestic violence against their wives and children. Even in the Arab society before Islam, men used to beat their wives with lashes as though they were slaves, and this was something common; neither prohibited, nor illegal. But when the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ came, he condemned that practice with austerity. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

‘Some of you lash their wives as a slave, and may wish to have sexual intercourse with them at the end of the day.’
[Bukhari]

In this hadith the Prophet ﷺ condemns and reprimands the man who beats his wife in the morning and wishes to have sexual intercourse with her in the night!! In other words, how can you be rude and harsh with her in the morning and then expect and wish her tenderness and company at night?!!!

Quotes from the Bible on the Status of Women

Some Christians constantly claim that Jesus Christ ﷺ was the first defender of the rights of women, that he gave them rights unlike any other religion and that the Bible treats women impartially and raises their status! But do those words correspond to the reality?

We all know that the Bible forbids women to enter the Holy Sanctuary of the Church, which contains the Holy Altar, whether the woman is a child, a teenager, or an elderly. This is not related to age, but it is related to gender. And the Bible, either Old or New Testament, does not include any mention that a woman is allowed to enter the Holy Sanctuary. Ordination is also forbidden for women. A woman is also not allowed to speak inside the church or teach anyone inside the church. She is not allowed to receive ecclesiastical office, she

can only receive the office of the deacon, which is actually a servant, not a priest! The Bible presents all kinds of ecclesiastical offices which are all restricted to men only, like the Priesthood of the first Patriarchs, such as Noah, Job, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or the Aaronic Priesthood, the Priesthood of Melchizedek, the Priesthood of the Apostles and their bishop successors. All these are reserved for men and if a woman were to receive an ecclesiastical office, that would have been the Virgin Mary. But according to the teachings of Christianity a woman is deprived of all these.

Let us look at some quotes from the Bible in order to see the status of a woman:

1. A woman is punished for her husband's sin:

{And as for the prophet, and the priest, and the people, that shall say: The burden of the LORD, I will even punish that man and **his house** (i.e. his wife and children).} (Jeremiah 23:34)

2. The burning of the adulteress:

{And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire.} (Leviticus 21:9)

3. Cutting the hand of a woman for irrational reasons:

{¹¹When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draweth near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the secrets: ¹²Then thou shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall not pity her. } (Deuteronomy 25:11-12)

4. The divorced, the widow and the adulteress are equal:

{¹⁰And he that is the high priest...¹³shall take a wife in her virginity.

¹⁴A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or a harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife. ¹⁵Neither shall he profane his seed among his people: for I the Lord do sanctify him.} (Leviticus 21:10-13-14-15)

5. Total submission of a woman to her husband:

{²²Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. ²⁴Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.} (Ephesians 5:22-24)

6. Silence of women in the church:

{Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.} (1 Corinthians 14:34-35)

7. The woman is the cause of temptation:

{Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.} (1 Timothy 2:11-15)

8. Men rule over women:

{Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands...

Whose (women) adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.} (1 Peter 3:1-6)

{Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.} (Genesis 3:16)

9. Death of adulteresses by stoning:

{¹³ If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her,
¹⁴ And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: ¹⁵ Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate: ¹⁶ And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; ¹⁷ And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. ¹⁸ And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him; ¹⁹ And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the

damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days. ²⁰ But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: ²¹ Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die.} (Deuteronomy 22:13-21)

{If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.} (Deuteronomy 22:22)

{If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die} (Deuteronomy 22:23-24)

10. Women are inferior to men:

{ ³ But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. ⁴ Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. ⁵ But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. ⁶ For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. ⁷ For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. ⁸ For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. ⁹ Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. ¹⁰ For this cause ought the woman to

have power on her head because of the angels.) (1 Corinthians 11:3-10)

11. Didascalía Apostolorum about women:

Didascalía Apostolorum, chapter 3 with the title ‘Women should be subjected to their husbands.’

{And a woman should be subjected to her husband, because the head of the woman is her husband...Fear, o woman, your husband. And be shy before him. And thank only him after God. And as we have said, offer him comforts with your service, so as for your husband to encompass you...If you want to be a believer and God to be pleased with you, do not put on ornaments so as to please strangers and do not wish to wear light clothes which only fit to the adulteresses, so that you are not followed by those who chase such women. If you don’t wear them in order to commit adultery, you will again be condemned for your ornaments alone, because in this way you force whomever sees you to follow you and lust you. Why you are not conservative, so as not to fall in sin and not to leave one fall in doubt (or jealousy) for your sake?! And if you sin just for that, you will fall too, as you will have become the reason of destroying the soul of that man. If you lead one to sin, he will be the cause for you to sin in many, as it is written in the Holy Bible: {When the wicked cometh, then cometh also contempt, and with ignominy reproach.} (Proverbs 18:3). Anyone who does that will be destroyed through sin and will go after the souls of the ignorant with impiety. Let her know what the Holy Bible says about whomever attributes lies to such (men). {The evil woman is more hateful than death, which is a trap for the ignorant.} {As the worm eats the wood, so a wicked woman destroys her husband} {It is better to live in a roof, than in a house with a contentious

woman.} Do not be, o Christian women, like those women, if you wish to be believers. Take care of your husband in order to please him alone. **And when you walk on the street, cover your head with your garment**, because if you are covered with respect you will be safe from the eyes of the malignant. Do not decorate your face, which God created, because it lacks no ornament. Since whatever God created is very beautiful and needs no ornaments. And what is more from beauty changes the grace of the Creator. **Walk with your face looking to the ground and be entirely covered.** Stay away from any bath with men, as the traps of the malignant are many. A believing woman does not have bath with men. **And when she covers her face**, let her cover it with the fear of the eyes of strangers...And if you are a believer run away from any form of curiosity and from the many glances...{To live on the desert is better than living with a woman with a long tongue.}}

The Beating of Women in Western Christian Societies

Many fanatics tried to raise some misconceptions about Islam, one of which is the beating of one's wife, using their usual magic scissors, with which they 'cut' from the Verses of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's sayings all the words that are before the word 'beat' and all the words that are after it, leaving just the word 'beat'. Namely, they cut the words that contradict their misconceptions and leave only those that seem to support them, thus trying with their dirty tricks to raise false misconceptions about Islam, entirely departing from the real truth and objectivity. In this way they do not present the subject in its complete form, but chopped, in order to raise

misunderstanding and confuse other people. They also claim that they are the civilized ones who treat their wives in the best manner, but in fact they turn a blind eye to and ignore the following:

1. Most of those who loudly claim that they treat their wives in the best manner are in fact demonstrably lying and pretending.

2. Islam is the only religion that has mentioned the affectionate and merciful relationship between the spouses, and also prevents one from hurting his wife, either verbally or physically. Allah, the Exalted, says:

“And among His Signs is that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect.” (30:21)

3. Islam is the only religion that condemned whoever insults and beats his wife, or looks at her down arrogantly as though her position were degraded in relation to his, 1400 years ago. This is considered a defect in the man who does it.

4. Islam encourages the best behavior towards one’s wife, since all the Verses of the Qur’an and all the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ regarding the relation of the two spouses encourage the best behavior between them. Allah, the Exalted, says:

“And they (women) have rights (over their husbands), similar (to those of their husbands) over them, to what is reasonable.” (2:228)

5. Islam has set rewards for the good behaviour amongst people and especially between the spouses. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Allah will reward you for whatever you spend with the intention of gaining Allah's Pleasure even if it were a mouthful of food you put into your wife’s mouth.” (*Al-Bukhari*)

6. Islam has made the beating of women an exception, not a rule, only under certain circumstances that prevent the husband

from resorting to beating her as a solution, except for very special cases, and only as a final solution, so as to prevent more serious calamities. That is because women are not the same in all eras, societies and families. What may work in one society may not work in another. On the contrary, it may escalate the situation instead of correcting it. And a behavior that may fit a woman may not fit another from a different society or era, no matter how hard one tries to make it fit.

7. The phenomenon of domestic violence is rampant in the most civilized countries of our century. How many Westerners attack their wives in front of other people, at airports, restaurants, in bars or even in the streets before the passersby? This is no secret, you may see it in the mass media. Additionally, how many Western women in America, Canada, Europe or Australia go to the police in order to sue their husbands because they were subjected to violence? These lawsuits are taken into no consideration if there are no manifest proofs, as we have mentioned before, such as fractures, bruises, bleeding etc. And whoever takes a look at the official statistics of police stations in America, Europe or Australia, will be convinced about that.

The spreading of beating women in Westerns societies

We will submit the following comments to clarify the spreading of the phenomenon of domestic violence in the West:

1. The existence of numerous governmental and non-governmental organizations fighting the phenomenon of domestic violence against women and children, which have so far failed to curb it.

2. The existence of recurrent and ongoing media campaigns which encourage the direct call to the relevant authorities in case of observing the phenomenon of domestic violence from a neighbor.

3. We address the following questions to Western citizens:

Has it never happened to you to beat your wife, not even once?

Have you ever seen or heard your father beat your mother?

Have you heard that anyone of your relatives has ever beaten his wife?

Have you heard that anyone of your neighbours has ever beaten his wife?

The aim of these questions is only to prove the existence of the phenomenon of domestic violence from husbands towards their wives in Europe, America, Canada, Australia etc.

Finally, it can be clear to any unbiased person that Islam honours the woman, exalts her place from anything that can harm her dignity and has strictly warned against her being wronged. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“O Allah, bear witness that I declare inviolable the rights of two weak ones: the orphans and the women.” (*An-Nasa’i & Ahmed & Ibn Maja & in As-Silsilah As-Sahihah No. 1015*)

Conclusion

Islam is the eternal divine message of Allah, the Almighty and Exalted, to all mankind, delivered by the Prophet and Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Some have believed in the Message of Islam and followed it, while others disbelieved in it or refuse to follow. Allah (ﷻ) declared that all human beings are dignified and honored more than other creatures of Allah, as He stated in the Glorious Qur'an:

“And indeed We have honored the children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with lawful good things, and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preference.” [17:70]

Allah (ﷻ) also declared another major principle: that all men are created equal in terms of original creation. He stated in the Glorious Qur'an:

“O mankind! Be dutiful to Your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created many men and women; and fear Allah through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (i.e. kinship). Surely, Allah is Ever an All-Watcher over you.” [4:1]

Based on the previous principles, all men and women are equal in terms of humanity and basic values, obligations and responsibilities. All men and women are created equal in the sight of Allah. Their differences in race, language, livelihood and geography etc have no relationship to increase or decrease this honor. True distinction among them is based on their God-consciousness, commitment to Islam, the revealed religion of Allah, and their level of practice and application of its principles in their own daily lives. Allah (ﷻ) stated this in the Glorious Qur'an when He said:

“O Mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you in the Sight of Allah is the one who is most pious and righteous. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.” [49:13]

Therefore true honor of any person in the Sight of Allah is not on the basis of color, social status, sex, race, strength, health,

dignity or wealth. The only measure of distinction in the Sight of Allah is strictly on the basis of piety, faith and the performance of good deeds.

Similarly, Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) was also reported as saying:

“O people, your Lord is one and your father is one. There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, or non-Arab over an Arab, nor of a red person over a black, or a black person over a red, except by piety.” [Ahmad #23536 and verified]

The teachings of Islam remove all artificial differences between men, and place them all on equal footing. One of the essential teachings of Islam, often misconstrued, abused or poorly explained, is that **“a female is equal to a male in everything except where there is a distinct reality and exception.”** The equalities and exceptions were the subject of this book attempted to clarify some of these misconceptions about the reality of women in Islam.

Allah (ﷻ) stated in the Glorious Qur'an:

“The believers, men and women, are helpers, supporters, friends and protectors of one another; they enjoin (on the people) Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do; and they forbid (people) from all forms of evil (i.e. polytheism and disbelief of all kinds, and all that Islam has forbidden); they offer their prayers perfectly, and give their charity and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah will shower His Mercy upon them. Surely Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.” [9:71]

Allah (ﷻ) stated in the Glorious Qur'an:

“So their Lord accepted (their supplications and answered them), Never will I allow to be lost the work of any one of

you, be he male or female. You are (members) one of another...” [3:195]

Allah (ﷻ) stated in the Glorious Qur'an:

“There is a share for men and a share for women from what is left by parents and those closely related, whether the property be small or large, a legal share.” [4:7]

Based upon what has been said and elaborated upon throughout this book, one can comfortably and confidently say that a woman will never enjoy her natural honor and full rights and freedoms except under the protection of the divine and just laws of Islam. Islam designates certain duties and obligations that necessarily go hand in hand with the rights. Islam is a divine religion revealed by the Beneficent and Omniscient, as opposed to man-made laws that dictate artificial boundaries, privileges, and monopolies. Islam is everlasting and universal, for the whole of mankind, male and female, rich and poor, the ruler and ruled, and strong and weak, whether white, black, red or yellow. They are all equal in the Sight of their Creator, Allah (ﷻ), who knows best what is of benefit in both this world and the hereafter.

I beseech the reader not to pass hasty judgment on Islam on the basis of what is observed in the behavior and attitude of some groups of Muslims who, unfortunately, use Islam to cover up their personal or party crimes. There are many individuals who are Muslims since they declare by their lips that **“There is no god worthy of worship except Allah Alone, and Muhammad is the slave and Messenger of Allah”** but, regretfully, do not perform their Islamic duties or demonstrate sincere commitment to Islam by good moral conduct. Islam is a complete, pure religion, simple to apply in all the various

circumstances. Many Muslims strive throughout their lifetime to be good and upright, seeking the pleasure of Allah in all that they do or refrain from doing. On the other hand, there are individuals who deserve to be punished in this world and in the hereafter, for their crimes. These crimes may be so heinous that they are of the level of disbelief and apostasy from Islam, or they may be of a lesser level of disobedience and neglectfulness of the wise commands and beneficial teachings of Allah (ﷻ), and His Prophet (ﷺ). It is understood that if someone lacks something himself, whether it is wealth or morals, he will not enable someone else to have it. This principle applies to Islam as well. For those who are keen to learn more about Islam, our advice is that they seek knowledge from those who are well known for their knowledge, understanding and practice of Islam in their own lives, whereas “*non-practicing*” Muslims will definitely mislead them.

Superficial knowledge of Islam is dangerous, harmful and detrimental since merely reading a few books about Islam, very possibly with unreliable sources, will not qualify a person to pass verdicts and disseminate sound knowledge about Islam. Following opinions blindly is also very dangerous and harmful. It is compulsory to seek sound knowledge about Islam, and not be tricked by those who spread false worship and practice. Allah stated in the Glorious Qur'an:

“There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in the 'Taghoot' (what is worshipped other than Allah and pleased with the false worship) and believes in Allah, has grasped the trustworthy handhold that will never break; Allah is the All-Hearer, All-Knower.” [2:256]

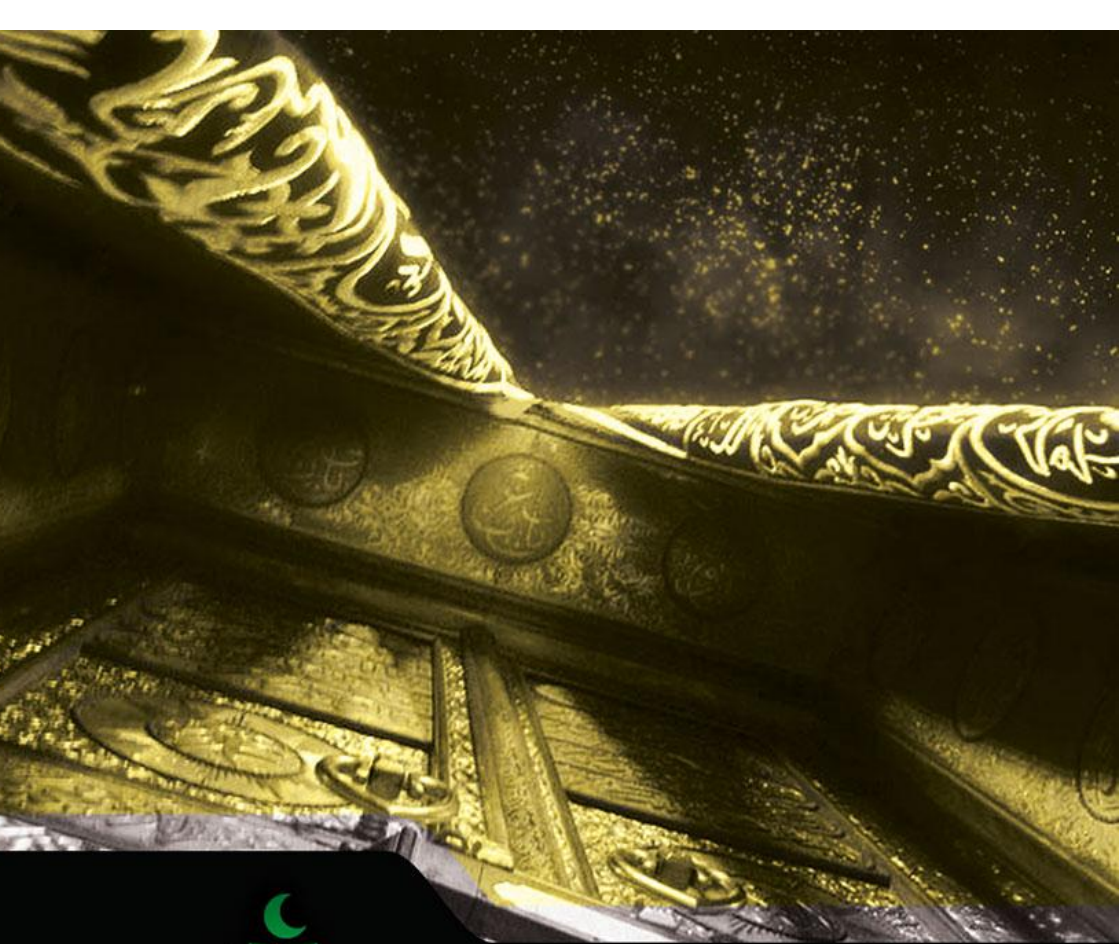
والحمد لله رب العالمين

وصلى اللهم على نبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم

All Praise is due to Allah alone, the Lord of the Worlds
And may Allah exalt the mention of His Prophet and his
household and render him safe from every derogatory thing



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