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09

WOMEN
IN ISLAM

English

Abd Ar-Rahman bin
Abd Al-Kareem Ash-Sheha



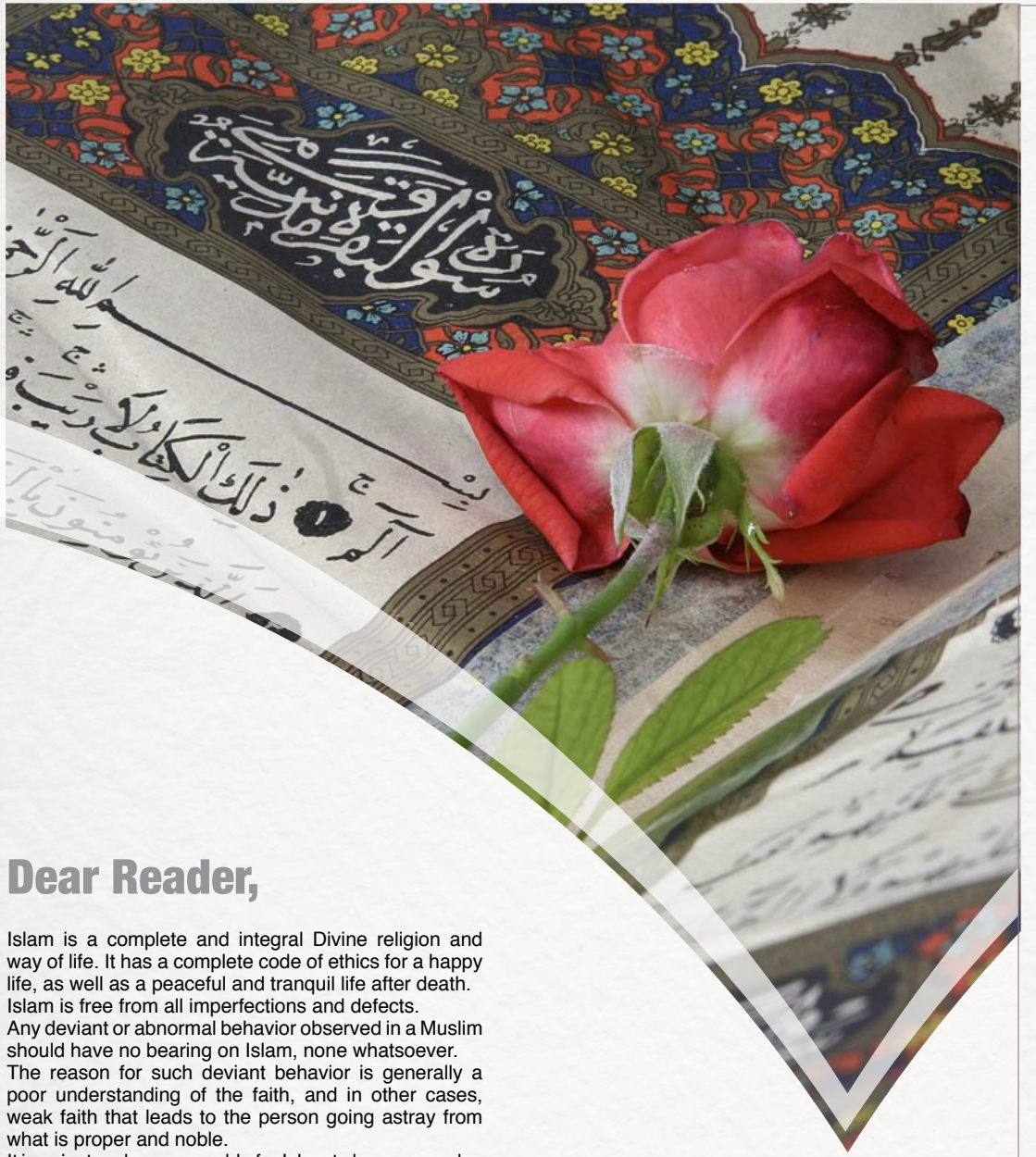
WOMEN
IN ISLAM

Abd Ar-Rahman bin
Abd Al-Kareem Ash-Sheha

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In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.



Dear Reader,

Islam is a complete and integral Divine religion and way of life. It has a complete code of ethics for a happy life, as well as a peaceful and tranquil life after death.
Islam is free from all imperfections and defects.
Any deviant or abnormal behavior observed in a Muslim should have no bearing on Islam, none whatsoever.
The reason for such deviant behavior is generally a poor understanding of the faith, and in other cases, weak faith that leads to the person going astray from what is proper and noble.
It is unjust and unreasonable for Islam to be assessed or evaluated based on any individuals' behavior or attitudes, with the exception of the Prophet Muhammad, who is the best example and role model for all humans.

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INTRODUCTION

Osoul Center

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All praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds, the Creator of the heavens and earth and all creatures living in them. May God grant peace and blessings to Prophet Muhammad, God's final Messenger, whose message brought mercy to all mankind. May He also give His blessings to all the prophets and messengers whom He sent to guide mankind out of darkness and into light.

At the Osoul Centre for Islamic Advocacy, every new release that we produce gives us a great opportunity to interact with our readers. All our releases have the same overall objective; to present Islam to mankind, as it truly is. We aim to make people aware of Islam's fine aspects and profound teachings and to show clearly that it is the only faith that provides practical and effective solutions to all the problems faced by humanity. Islam gives clear and solid answers to all of the questions that have troubled people over many generations, such as: How did we come into existence and why do we exist? Where do we go from here? Furthermore, Islam is the only religion that requires its followers to love and respect all the prophets God sent, particularly Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them both).

We take great care to provide solid and rational proofs for our arguments, so as to give our readers the reassurance they need, and our releases also refute the accusations levelled against Islam and provide clarification to people's misunderstandings of Islamic teachings.

By God's grace, Islam is the fastest growing religion in our time, as confirmed by a study undertaken by the Pew Research Center(1), and our motive is to make this great divine faith known to all people.

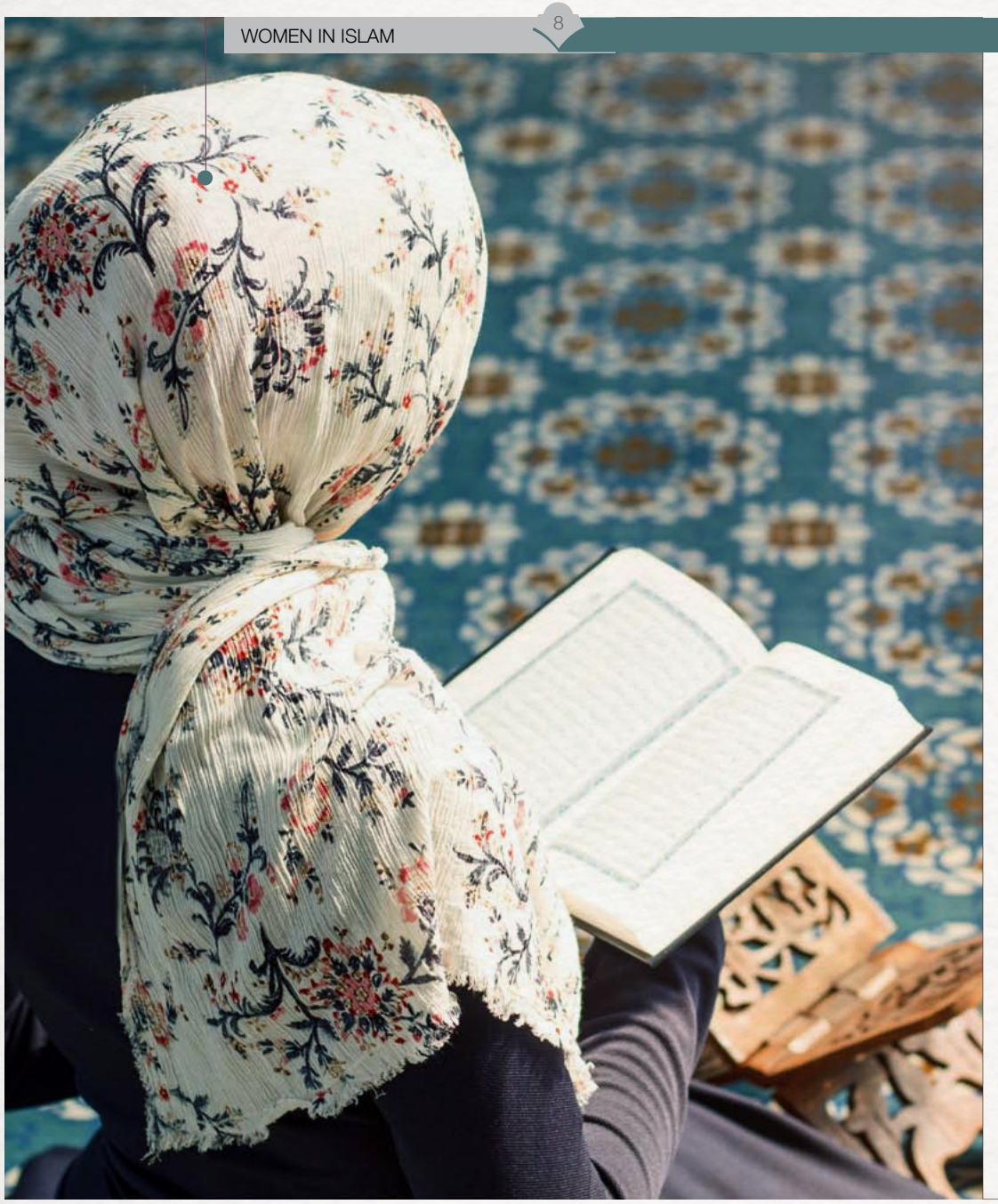
This book, ***Women in Islam,*** begins by shedding light on the status of women prior to Islam. It explains that women were ill-treated and humiliated in many cultures. Indeed, in some societies, women were considered the property of men and could be bought, sold and inherited. Women were generally treated as inferior to men and some communities even blamed women for the misfortune and shame that might befall their families. In pre-Islamic Arabian society, young girls were buried alive. Hence, before Islam, women suffered great injustice in many communities.

Islam put an end to all this, established women's rights and gave women their rightful status in society. Islam considers that men and women have two different but mutually complementary roles in the family and in society. The relationship between them must be one of love and compassion and men and women are accountable to God for their deeds.

We hope that readers will find this book useful in adding to their knowledge and understanding of Islam.

Basil ibn Abdullah Al-Fawzan
Executive Director

(1) "The Future of the Global Muslim Population", Pew Research Center, 27 January 2011, Available at http://goo.gl/uk8y1i



FOREWORD OF TRANSLATOR

All praise is due to Allah the Exalted and may Allah exalt the mention of His Prophet and render him and his household, his Companions, and all those who follow their way safe from every evil, and grant them security on the Day of Resurrection.

This book discusses the special place women have in the religion of Islam and seeks to address some of the many misconceptions and false propaganda published by those who are ignorant of this religion or harbor a malicious intent to purposely misrepresent this religion.

Islam states that men and women are totally equal in their humanity, basic human responsibilities and rights. This was a concept that was radically new to the world, as compared to the other civilizations at the time of the inception of the Islamic Message through the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and remains so for many people of the globe until today. Islam also states that men and women have complimentary roles and obligations in society, which are commensurate with their natural physical, psychological and social differences.

Islam states that men and women have complimentary roles and obligations in society, which are commensurate with their natural physical, psychological and social differences.

The feminine qualities of women can only find fulfillment when they are taken into account in relation to men, just as the masculine qualities of men are not complete without the complimentary role of women in society. A great injustice is done by seeking to force upon them genderless equality, or by forcing them to be unequal, and thus demeaning them, where they are truly equal. Only Allah, the Almighty and Omniscient Creator, is the Perfect Guide to the correct path, devoid of extremism and deficiencies.

Since rights are always in relation to abilities, obligations and duties, the unique perspective of Islam on women's rights needs to be put into the context of the complete moral and

legal code of Islamic belief, morality and law. Humanity can only survive and prosper when the family unit survives and prospers. Each member of the family should fulfill his or her obligations in order to receive his or her rights fully.

In the Islamic scriptures, there are many eloquent expressions of not only the woman's equality with man, but even her superiority at times, and the special relationship and bond between man and woman. For instance, Allah states in the Qur'an:

The male and female are in need of each other in a way similar to how the naked body of the human stands in need of clothes to face his natural and social environment.

"Surely the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so - for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward." [33:35]

And Allah, the Exalted, says:

"…they are garments for you, and you are garments for them…" [2:187]

In the Islamic scriptures, there are many eloquent expressions of not only the woman's equality with man, but even her superiority at times, and the special relationship and bond between man and woman.

Clothes and garments are a necessity for warmth, protection, covering, and adornment. In our clothes we find comfort, security, satisfaction and identity. The male and female are in need of each other in a way similar to how the naked body of the human stands in need of clothes to face his natural and social environment. And what more eloquent way to describe the complementary and dependent relationship between a man and a woman than as Allah described them above?

Islamic civilization has its own view to present; a view that we believe expresses the highest of possible human values achievable because it is based on the divine revelation and guidance from the One and only Creator, the God of all that exists, Allah. He sent His last and final Prophet and

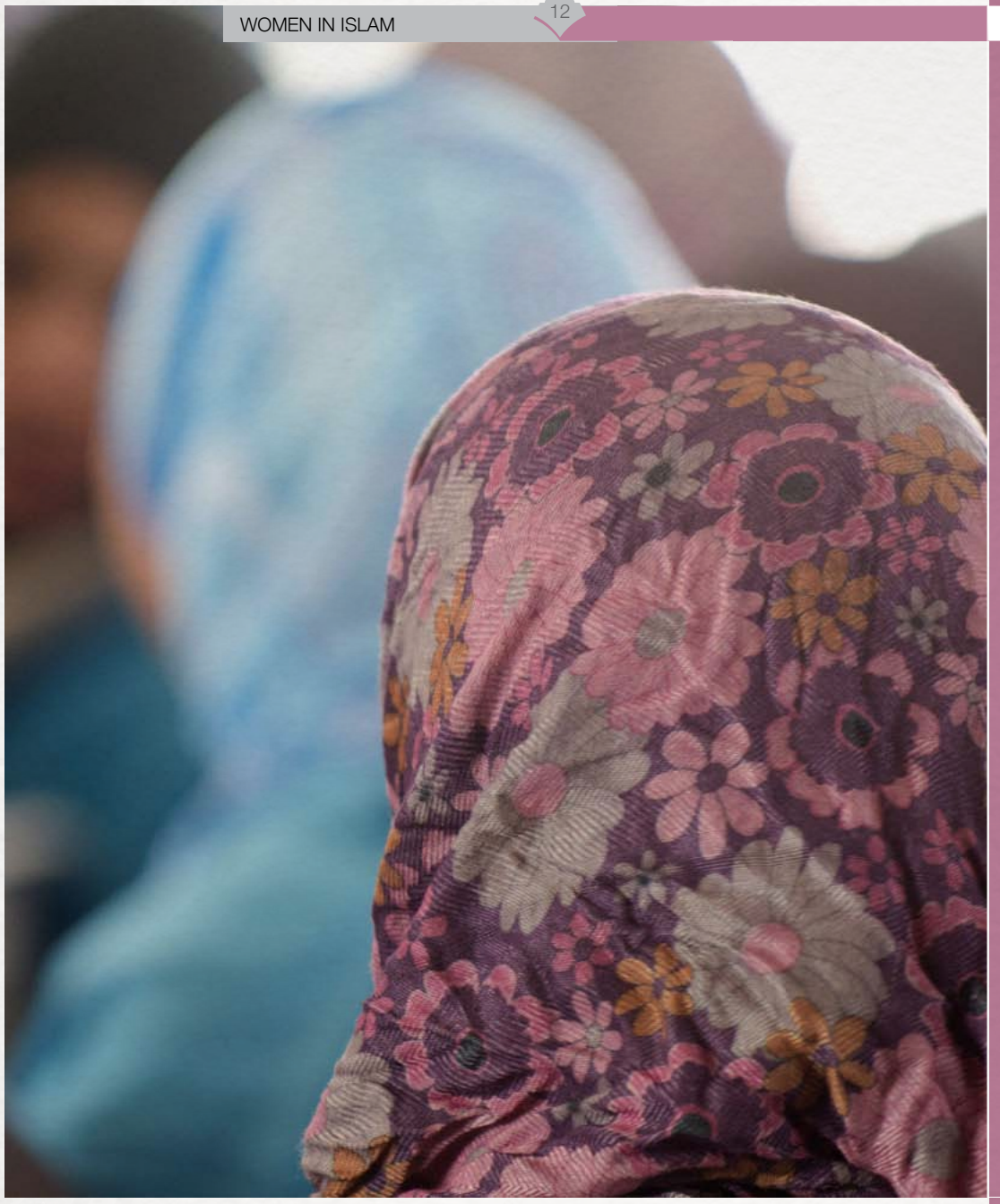
Messenger to mankind; Muhammad ﷺ. He inspired him with the revelation and teachings that were to be a perfect guide and example to the sincere worshipper, the servant of Allah in righteousness and obedience, in all the various circumstances and spheres of life. With humility and humble service, Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, delivered the message and fulfilled the great responsibility of his mission of mercy.



His family and followers, although humans with the imperfections that are the mark of human frailty, followed his example of righteousness, patience and selfless virtue. After the examples of all the Prophets of Allah, which include Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus (may Allah exalt their mention), it is they who present for us the best examples. Successive generations of Muslims have exhibited mixed behavior, and some have unfortunately deviated horrendously to the lowest grades of misguidance, wickedness and criminal behavior. Nevertheless, Muslims remain encouraged and optimistic because there will never be an era without some glowing lights of knowledgeable, upright, and virtuous Muslim men and women, who exhibit the virtues by which the Islamic message and mission is characterized.

Successive generations of Muslims have exhibited mixed behavior, and some have unfortunately deviated horrendously to the lowest grades of misguidance.

We ask Allah, the Exalted, to accept our humble efforts and forgive our lapses and mistakes in the preparation of this book. He indeed answers prayers and accepts good deeds.



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.

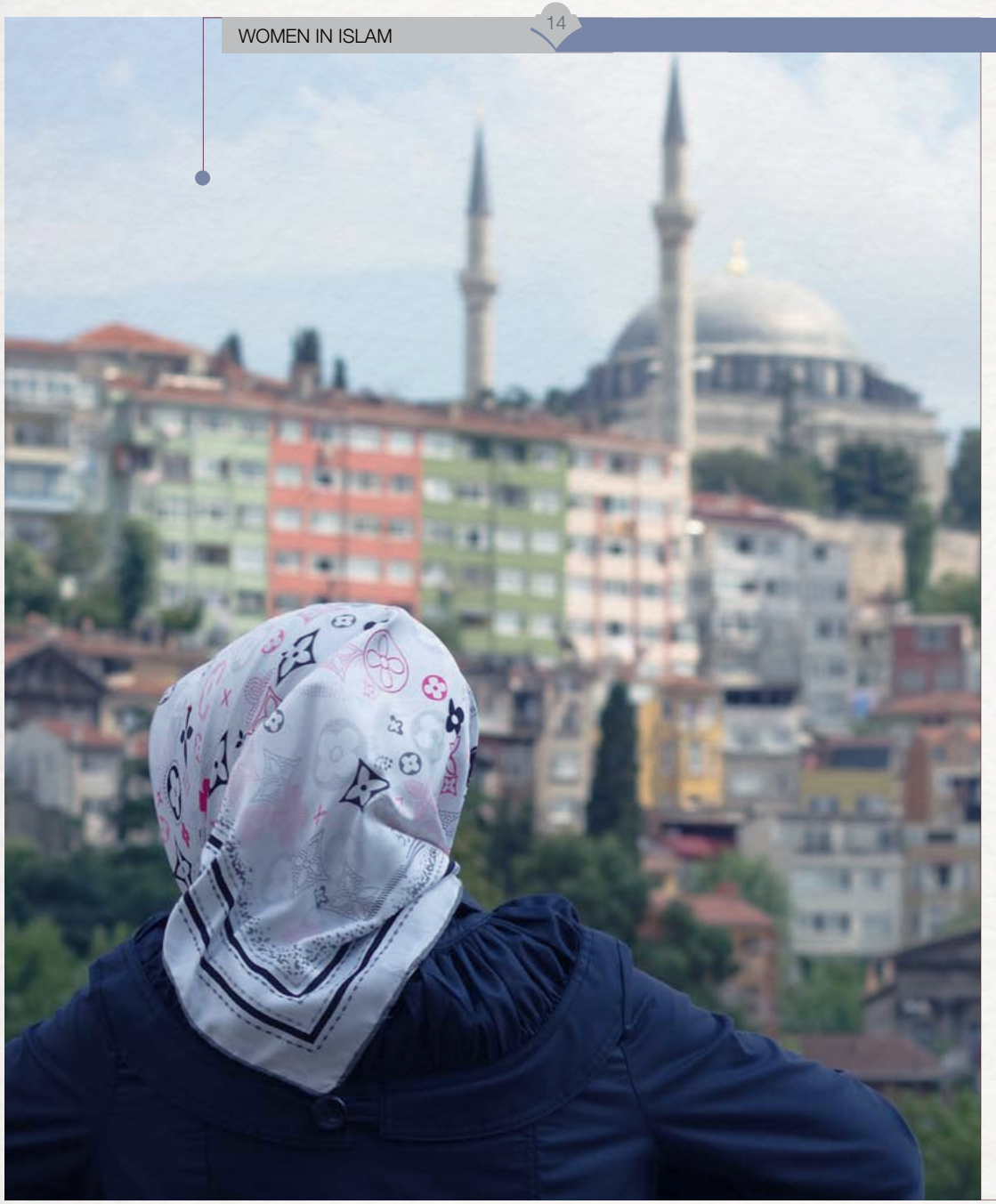
It is a great injustice to accuse Islam of wrongdoing and oppression to women when there are many statements of the revealed book of Allah, the Qur'an, and of the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ which negate and disprove this false slander. Allah, the Exalted, says:
"O Mankind! We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted." [49:13]

وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُم مَّوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً

- "And He has put between you affection and mercy."

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:
"Truly, women are the complementary halves of men." [Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi]



INTRODUCTION

Various calls for women's freedom, liberation and equal rights have been heard all over the world. In many societies women have indeed lived under oppression, cruelty and injustice, and have been denied even the basic rights of humanity. Nor is it denied that some Muslims have deviated from the Islamic principles and teachings and have been a part of this oppression.

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 each 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

In many societies women have indeed lived under oppression, cruelty and injustice, and have been denied even the basic rights of humanity.

men and women have interdependent 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 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 genders 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.

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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.

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 & others]

An American female reporter, Helesian Stansbery, syndicated in over 250 newspapers, worked in the area of journalism and broadcasting for over 20 years. In that time, she visited numerous Muslim countries and 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 ….

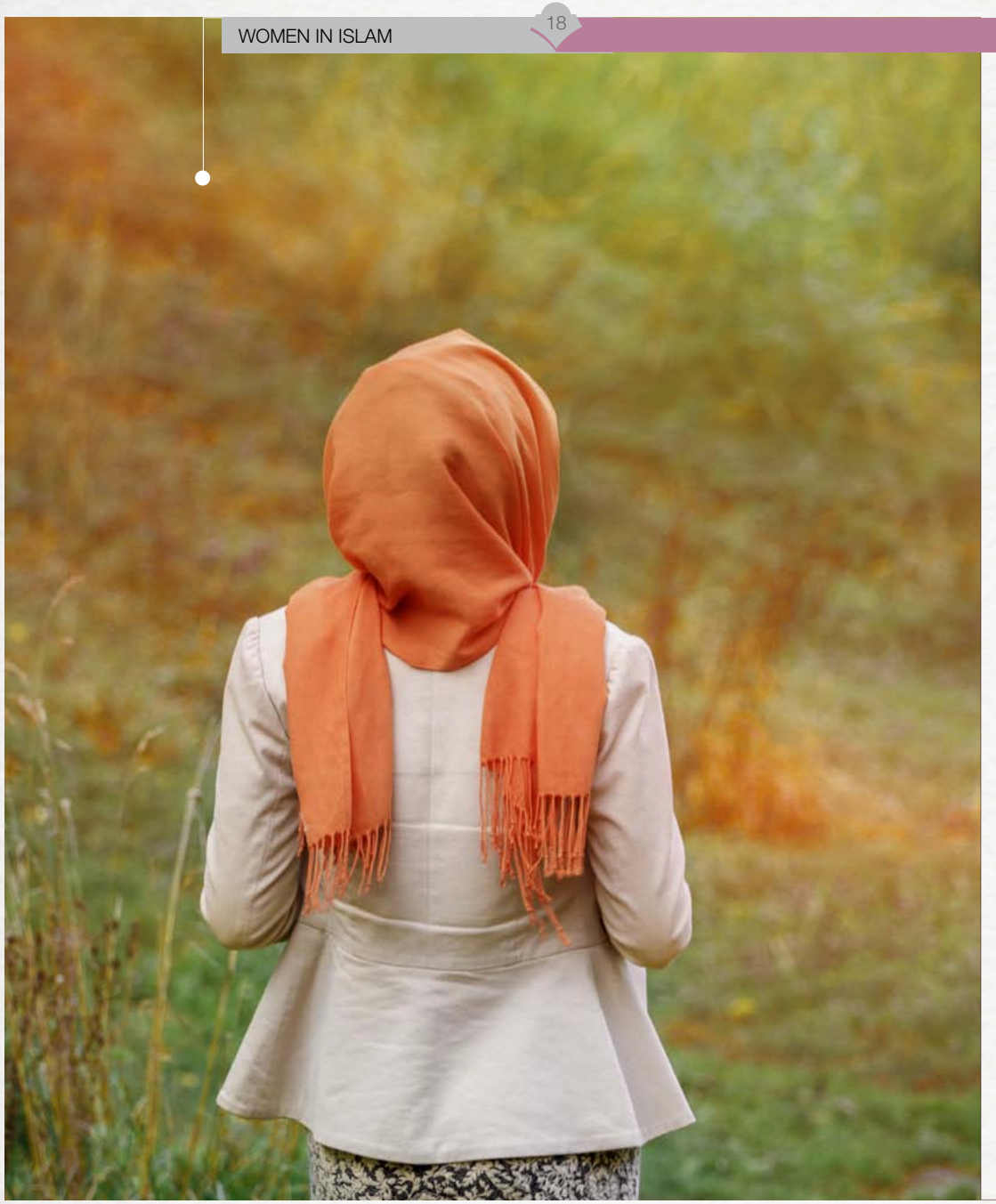
the restrictions that are imposed by the Arab-Islamic society are valid and beneficial as well. I strongly recommend that you adhere to your traditions and code of ethics. Forbid coeducation.



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?

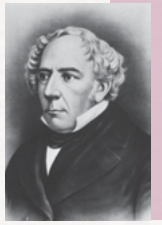
First and foremost, the most strict restrictions and limitations are on absolute sexual freedom that truly threatens both the society and the family in Europe and the United States of America. Therefore, the restrictions that are imposed by the Arab-Islamic society are valid and beneficial as well. I strongly recommend that you adhere to your traditions and code of ethics. Forbid coeducation. Restrict female freedom, or rather, return back to the full 'purdah' (veiling) practices. Truly this is better for you than the sexual freedom of Europe and the United States of America. Forbid co-education 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 co-education are filling the prisons, sidewalks, bars, taverns and brothels. The [false] freedom that we have granted to our young females and daughters has turned them to drugs, crime and white slavery. Co-education, 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

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

Gustave Le Bon, the famous 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 ﷺ taught his message.

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.



Islam spread very rapidly in an astounding manner in the known world and left a comprehensive system of life that addresses every human need.

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.

Islam spread its light through the revealed scriptures of the Book of Allah, the Qur'an, and the inspired traditions of the Sunnah (Way) of the Prophet ﷺ Muhammad 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 spoils of war 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 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.

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.

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 one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. He hides himself from the people because of the ill of which he has been informed. Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Unquestionably, evil is what they decide." [16:58-59]

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

Women were not given even the most natural of rights. For instance, eating certain types of foods was allowed only for males.

"And they say: 'What is in the bellies of these animals is exclusively for our males and forbidden to our females. But if it is [born] dead, then all of them have shares therein.' He will punish them for their description..." [6:139]

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

"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 a birth defect. Allah states in the Glorious Qur'an:

Some fathers used to bury their female children alive if the child was leprous, lame or with a birth defect.

"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 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 & Muslim]

01 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 his 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".

In Indian society, women were treated generally as maids or slaves as if they had no will or desire of their own.

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.

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."

Women in Chinese society occupied a low and degraded status. They were customarily assigned the most despised and least important jobs and positions.

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

02 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 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.

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

03 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

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

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 in 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."

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.

Demosthenes, the Greek orator and thinker said:
"We Greek men enjoy the company of prostitutes for sexual pleasure, 'girl-friends' and 'sweethearts' to care for 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.

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.

04 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.

05 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 directed my mind to know, to investigate and to seek wisdom and an explanation, and to know the evil of folly and the foolishness of madness. And I discovered more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are chains. One who is pleasing to God will escape from her, but the sinner will be captured by her." [Ecclesiastes (7:25-26)]

Women in traditional Jewish society were not more fortunate than those previously described.

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)]

Jewish teachings and laws deprived the girl of her father's inheritance if the father had other male children.

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 even ate and drank with her. Jewish men used to isolate themselves fully from a menstruating woman until she was completely free from her menses.

06 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.

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.

Saint Thomas Aquinas says:
"The male sex is more noble than the female, and for this reason he [Jesus] took human nature in the male sex." (Summa Theologiae III:31:4 ad 1)

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.

Their history of misogyny is fact that the Catholic Church has tried, unsuccessfully, to hide. Tertullian, commonly known as the "father of Latin Christianity" and "the founder of Western theology", is recorded to have said:
"In pain shall you bring forth children, woman, and you shall turn to your husband and he shall rule over you. And do you not know that you are Eve? God's sentence hangs still over all your sex and His punishment weighs down upon you. You are the devil's gateway; you are she who first violated the forbidden tree and broke the law of God. It was you who coaxed your way around him whom the devil had not the force to attack. With what ease you shattered that image of God: Man! Because of the death you merited, even the Son of God had to die… Woman, you are the gate to hell."

One would think that the Protestant movement would have distanced itself from such views, but the historical record

shows them to be equally misogynistic. The reformer Martin Luther is well known for his chauvinistic statements about the female gender:
"The word and works of God is quite clear, that women were made either to be wives or prostitutes."

John Calvin, another pivotal Protestant thought leader, said:
"Thus the woman, who had perversely exceeded her proper bounds, is forced back to her own position. She had, indeed, previously been subject to her husband, but that was a liberal and gentle subjection; now, however, she is cast into servitude."

Europeans continued to discriminate against women and deprive them of their rights throughout the Middle-Ages.

These views and related laws which subverted and restricted women remained in effect until 1938, when in Europe, 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. One particularly shocking practice was that of "wife selling" - where a husband would publicly auction his wife to the highest bidder - that surfaced in England in the late 17th century. This practice was accepted as a way of ending an unsuccessful, or even inconvenient, marriage. The financial challenges of getting a legal divorce certainly played into the evolution of this practice, but at the heart of it was the miserable status of women. Although "wife-selling" had no legal basis, there are numerous instances where authorities "looked the other way", with some even saying that they did not have the right to prevent wife sales.

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."

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. Until very recently, women, according to the French law, were not considered capable of making their own financial decisions in their private ownership. The two basic provisions of the French law dealing with status of the wife are articles 213 and 217. Article 213 reads as follows:
"The husband owes protection to his wife; the wife owes obedience to her husband."

Article 217 states:
"The wife, even when she is separate in estate from her husband, cannot grant, alienate, mortgage, acquire, either by gratuitous or incumbered title, unless her husband concurs in the act, or yields his consent in writing."

Women, according to the French law, were not considered capable of making their own financial decisions in their private ownership.

Many provisions follow from these principles. For example, in Article 214:
"The wife is bound to live with her husband and to follow him wherever he chooses to reside …"

And Article 215 which states:
"The wife cannot appear in court without the authorization of her husband, although she may be a public merchant, or possess her property separate from her husband."

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.

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 so forth. Moreover, a surviving widow was not given the chance to remarry and lead a normal married life after the death of her husband.

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,

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.

These practices have only recently changed in the last century in much of the Western world, with some just in the past fifty years. Take, for example, Canada's divorce laws. Canada did not have a federal divorce law until 1968. Before that time, the process for getting a divorce varied from province to province. In Newfoundland and Quebec, it was necessary to get a private Act of Parliament in order to end a marriage. Most other provinces incorporated the English Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 which allowed a husband to get a divorce on the grounds of his wife's adultery and a wife to get one only if she established that her husband committed any of a list of particular sexual behaviours but not simply adultery. Some provinces had legislation allowing either spouse to get a divorce on the basis of adultery.(2)

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

(2) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divorce_law_by_country.

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, 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 that of men and women guiding each other by whim and desire.

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.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN ISLAM IN GENERAL: AS CHILDREN, 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.

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. While reading further, keep in mind the rights that other societies grant them in comparison to the rights to which Islam has entitled women, dating back approximately to the year 625CE. It is noteworthy that Islamic teachings are attentive to the needs and rights of the woman throughout her life: as a daughter, sister, wife, mother, and as a member of the 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 equal souls, brains, hearts, etc. In another sense, equality between men and women is less reasonable due to their natural differences in physical and emotional abilities and inclinations. Between these two we must tread to illuminate how they are equal, and how they are complimentary.

Equality between men and women is possible and reasonable because they are both human, with equal souls, brains, hearts, etc.

If total equality between all members of the same gender is illogical 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 Qur'an: "And of all things We created two mates; perhaps you will remember." [51:49]



Even atoms exhibit this dual quality with inter-related and complementary roles played by the positive and negative components, yet each is an integral part of the whole system of the 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.

Equality between men and women is less reasonable due to their natural differences in physical and emotional abilities and inclinations.

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 says in His Majestic Book, the Qur'an, mentioned in the two verses cited in the preface:

"O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted." [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 further on these themes.

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 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 Qur'an:
   "O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women..." [4:1]

   Allah also states in the Qur'an:
   "Does man think that he will be left neglected? Was he not a mixed male and female discharge pouring forth? Then he was a clinging clot, and [Allah] created [his form] and proportioned [him] and made him into two genders, male and female. Is not that [Creator] Able to give life to the dead?" [75:36-40]

   Allah illustrated in these verses that He created both sexes from one single source. There is no difference between the two sexes in terms of 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:

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Islam has abolished and abrogated all the previous unjust laws that demoted women as inferior in quality and nature.

"Verily, women are the complementary halves of men." [Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi & others]

2. Equal religious duties and rituals are required from both women and men. Testimony of Faith (Shahadah), Prayer (Salah), Obligatory Charity (Zakah), Fasting (Saum), and Pilgrimage (Hajj) are equally required of both genders. In some cases the requirements are a degree 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.

Both males and females have similar rewards for obedience, as well as penalties for disobedience, in this world and the Hereafter.

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 Qur'an:
"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do." [16:97]



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And He 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 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.

According to Islamic law, women can own, buy, sell and undertake any financial transaction without the need for guardianship.

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 is the best in character, and the best of you is the best to his womenfolk." [Tirmidhi and verified]



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

7. Islam entitled 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." [Ibn Maajah & al-Baihaqi and verified]

Muslim scholars collectively agreed that the word "Muslim" when used in revealed scriptures includes both male and

female. 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.

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.

The Prophet ﷺ said:
"Whoever takes care of two girls until they reach puberty, 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]

About female slave girls, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ said:
"Whoever has a female child under his guardianship, and trains her in the best behavior, and teaches her well, and then frees and marries her, will have a double reward." [Bukhari & Muslim]

Men and women have similar obligations and responsibilities to reform and correct the society to the best of their capability.

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 believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those - Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and 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 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]

A woman has her set share of inheritance, which was a right unthinkable in many societies.

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 any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allah. Then deliver him to his place of safety." [9:6]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:
"…and the protection of Muslims is one, and the least among them can give protection; and whoever usurps the right of a Muslim then the curse of Allah and His angels and all the people is upon him, and no repentance or ransom will be accepted from him…" [Bukhari]

A woman, just like a man, can give someone the right of seeking refuge and security among the Muslims.

This is also proven by the famous story of Um 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 crime), so the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:
"We protect and give asylum to whomever you give asylum O' Um Hani'." [Bukhari]

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 Qur'an concerning the necessity and importance of the preservation and care of newborn 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 & Muslim]

Thus they have the right of blood money (financial restitution) 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, so the Prophet ﷺ judged that the blood money is the emancipation of a slave boy or girl, and the blood money of the woman was to be paid by her clansmen." [Bukhari & Muslim]

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

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.

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. 'Abdullah bin Amr related that a woman came to the Prophet ﷺ complaining about her husband saying:

Parents are obligated to treat all their children mercifully and with compassion.

"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 take the baby away from me!" He ﷺ said: "You deserve the child's custody more as long as you do not remarry." [Abu Dawood & others]



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

Parents are obligated to treat all their children mercifully and with compassion. Abu Hurairah 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 have I never kissed any of them." Upon that he looked at him and replied: "Whoever does not have mercy will not receive mercy." [Bukhari]

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

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]

Ibn Umar reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:
"Each one of you is a shepherd and each one of you is responsible for those under his care. A leader is a shepherd and is responsible for his citizens. A man is a shepherd of his family and is responsible for them. A woman is a shepherd of the home and is responsible for whatever is under her care. A servant is a shepherd of his master's wealth and is responsible for whatever is under his care. Each one of you is a shepherd and each one of you is responsible for whatever is under his care." [Bukhari & Muslim]

Islam commands justice in all matters and this general ruling is applied to all children regardless of their genders.

Islam commands justice in all matters and this general ruling is applied to all children regardless of their genders. Allah, the Exalted, states in the Qur'an:
"Verily Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that you may take heed." [16:90]



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

Aishah, the Prophet's wife and the mother of the believers said:
A poor woman came to my door carrying two little girls. I offered them three dates [as 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]

And in another authentic narration he said at the end:
"Whoever is tested by trials in caring for these daughters, they will be a cover for him from Hellfire." [Bukhari & Muslim]

Islam calls for material and emotional justice and fair

treatment from both parents to their children, regardless of their genders. 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]

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 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.

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 Muslim government to take care of them, manage their affairs and provide them with care. Allah, the Exalted, states in the Qur'an:
"And as for the orphan, do not treat them with harshness." [93:9]

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.

Allah, the Exalted, also states in the 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 to a man who complained of hardness of the heart:
"Would you like that your heart becomes soft and that you acquire what you need? Be merciful with the orphan, pat his head and feed him from what you eat. This will soften your heart, and enable you to get what you need." [At-Tabaraanee & As-Silsilah as-Saheehah]

Allah's Prophet ﷺ also said:
"Avoid the seven major 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 & Muslim]

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]

Many 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.

Islam cares for the welfare of those illegitimate children who, through no fault of theirs, are left without any acknowledgement from their parents. The Muslim government is required to take care of such children, exactly as any other orphan so that they may become, by the will of Allah, successful and beneficial members of the society. As the Prophet of Allah ﷺ said as a general ruling of benevolence:
"…you have reward for showing kindness to every living being." [Bukhari]

Islam cares for the welfare of those illegitimate children who, through no fault of theirs, are left without any acknowledgement from their parents.

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 divorcee or widow should not be married without her



The Muslim government is required to take care of such children, exactly as any other orphan so that they may become, by the will of Allah, successful and beneficial members of the society.

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 (out of shyness but doesn't indicate disapproval)." [Bukhari]

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.

Imam Ahmad and others report that 'Aishah 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]

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 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.

01 DOWRY:

A dowry is the right of every bride at the time of marriage. A marriage contract is not considered legal and complete unless 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 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]

A dowry is the right of every bride at the time of marriage. A marriage contract is not considered legal and complete unless a dowry has been specified.

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 Qur'an:
"If you want to replace one wife with another and you have given one of them a great amount [in gifts], do not take [back] from it anything. Would you take it in injustice and manifest sin? And how could you take it while you have gone in unto each other and they have taken from you a solemn covenant?" [4:20-21]

This verse indicates 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 Qur'an:
"O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will, and do not make difficulties for them in order to take [back] part of what you gave them unless they commit a clear immorality. And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them - perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein much good." [4:19]

The husband must give honorable and sufficient sustenance to his household according to his status and means.

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 reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:
"A believer must not hate a believing woman (his wife). If he dislikes one of her characteristics, he will be pleased with another." [Muslim]

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.

02 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]

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 regards to women for you have taken them by the oath of Allah, and made intimate relations with them legal by the sacred word of Allah. Your right is that no one you dislike should be allowed to enter your home … and their right is that you feed and clothe them within your limits." [Muslim]

The Prophet ﷺ said to his companion Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas:
"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 place in your wife's mouth." [Bukhari & Muslim]

Men who are married to more than one wife are required to act with justice, fairness and equality in dealing with them.

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.

03 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 will not deal justly with the orphan

girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then marry only one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable that you may not incline to injustice." [4:3]

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ said:
"Whoever has two wives and favors one of them over the other, will come on the Day of Resurrection with one of his sides leaning." [Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi, & others and verified]

Islamic laws do permit the husband to impose certain restrictions upon the wife that displays some immoral and shameful conduct that is reasonably deemed to be harmful to the entire society.

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, and so forth 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 that is reasonably deemed to be harmful to the entire society and social order. The purpose of these restrictions is to encourage 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'a'" wherein she asks for dissolving the marriage contract due to his misbehavior.



A husband must protect and prevent his wife and children from any possible harm or immorality to the best of his abilities.

04 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 have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are [appointed] angels, harsh and severe; they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but 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 & Nasa`e]

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ also said:
"Verily Allah gets jealous and the believer gets jealous and the jealousy of Allah is to see a believer doing unlawful acts …" [Bukhari, & Muslim]

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.



The Messenger of Allah used to mend his own clothes and shoes and help his wives with their daily chores.

05 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 believers are those with the best characters, and the best of you are those who are best to their womenfolk." [Tirmidhi & Ibn Hibbaan, and verified]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to mend his own clothes and shoes and help his wives with their daily chores. His wife Aishah 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]

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:
"Everything devoid of the remembrance of Allah is just vanity except four: to joke and play with one's wife, to train one's horse, to travel between two destinations, and to learn swimming." [Nasa'ee and verified]

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

This tradition indicates that most pastimes and amusements are 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 the mother of the believers, said:
Allah's Prophet ﷺ raced with me and I won the race before I grew and gained weight. After I became a bit older and put on weight he raced with me again and he won. The Prophet of Allah ﷺ said to me upon winning the race:
"This (win of mine makes up) for that (win of yours)." [Ahmad & Abu Dawood]

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 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 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 & Muslim]

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. 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 relations with his wife, or a wife who has the same with her husband, then one of them discloses that privacy to others." [Muslim & others]

The husband is required and obliged by Islamic law to fulfill the sexual rights of his spouse.

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 reported:
"I went to visit my brother in faith, Abu-Darda and upon arrival, I was greeted by his spouse Um Darda 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

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praying and his 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[1] 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]

Caliph Umar ibn Al-Khattab, after consulting with his daughter Hafsa about the length of the period a woman can patiently bear her husband's absence, set this period at six months.



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.

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, after consulting with his daughter Hafsa about the length of the period a woman can patiently bear her husband's absence, set this period at six months.

Abdur-Razaq and others narrated a famous story that:
"Umar ibn al-Khattab 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!'

(1) Masjid - the Arabic word for mosque.

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.

The husband may not refuse or deny his spouse's legitimate request unless he has a valid excuse.

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.



A husband must avoid counting every innocent mistake his spouse may make. For instance, the Prophet of Allah said: "A husband should not come to his home from a journey late at night.

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, the Prophet's

(2) Ihraam: A state, during the pilgrimage, in which certain things become forbidden for a pilgrim.

wife, recommended that he do so himself and then go out before his companions. Allah's Prophet acted upon 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 (without announcing his arrival in advance)." [Bukhari & Muslim]

In divorce, as in marriage, one must act decent with civil behavior to assure the right of both parties

This recommendation is given so that the wife may have time to 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.

The system of divorce in Islam is designed to protect the rights and interests of the woman, and allow ample opportunity and time for reconciliation.

It is the obligation of a husband to be kind, attentive, sharing and caring with his spouse. He must demonstrate honesty, decency, patience and care, and must take into consideration her human nature. Women appreciate being loved tenderly and being 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 woman, 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, either keep [her] in an acceptable manner or release [her] with good treatment." [2:229]

WOMEN AS KINFOLKS AND NEIGHBORS

The same general rights are legislated in Islamic jurisprudence for women as are required for men. A concern for the general public welfare and mutual support of one another is a trademark of the Islamic social system. The Prophet ﷺ said:
"The similitude of the believers in their mutual care, love and kindness to one another is like one human body. If one organ aches, this prompts the entire body to be feverish and remain awake." [Muslim]

And he ﷺ said:
"The believers, one to another, are like a firm structure, supporting one another." He then intertwined his fingers. [Bukhari & Muslim]

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 the believers to be good, kind and supportive towards. 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]

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.

The Prophet ﷺ said:
"A person who severs his kinship ties, will never enter Paradise." [Muslim]

And he ﷺ said:
"Charity to a poor person is one charity, and to a poor relative two charities: a charity as well as the joining of ties of a relative." [Tirmidhi & Ibn Maajah 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 of his or her neighbors. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

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

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]

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It is also reported by Asfahani in *Hilyatul-Awliya* that Talhah said:
"Umar Ibn al-Khattab 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 some time now, serving my needs and helping me and supporting me.'"

Some traditions show that the Islamic law never tolerated crimes or abuses against a woman during any stage of her life.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:
"The person caring for the widows and the poor is like the one who is on the path of Allah", and as if he said, "like one who stands in prayer without sitting down and like the one who fasts without breaking the fast." [Bukhari & Muslim]

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 upon 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.

01 POLYGYNY IN ISLAM

Marriage to more than one wife at the same time - polygyny(1)- 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.



Marriage to more than one wife at the same time – polygyny - is a practice as old as the history of man, and is allowed in Islamic law.

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 the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ entered into plural marriages. The Prophet Abraham had three wives(2); the Prophet Jacob had four

(1) 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.

(2) Most people are familiar with Abraham's marriage to Sarah, and then to her servant Hagar. But in Genesis 25:1 it says: Now Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah.

wives; and the Prophet David had ninety-nine wives. Prophet Solomon had seven hundred wives who were free noble women, and three hundred other wives who were slave women (concubines). Nowhere does the law of the Prophet Moses 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 and there is not 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 in certain segments of the Christian church, and not by the original teachings of Christianity itself.

In the New Testament of the Bible, Jesus is commissioned to comply with and complete the Laws of Moses and there is not 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 in 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. Martin Luther, the German priest who first established the Protestant sect, considered plural marriage acceptable and advocated it on many occasions(3).

Polygyny was well known amongst pagan Arab tribes prior

(3) M. Luther: "I confess that I cannot forbid a person to marry several wives, for it does not contradict the Scripture. If a man wishes to marry more than one wife he should be asked whether he is satisfied in his conscience that he may do so in accordance with the word of God. In such a case the civil authority has nothing to do in the matter." (De Wette II, 459, pp. 329-330.)

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 a maximum of 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 will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable that you may not incline [to 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: "Whoever has two wives and favors one of them over the other, will come on the Day of Resurrection with one of his sides leaning." [Abu Dawood & Tirmidhi 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 be equal [in feeling] between wives, even if you should strive [to do so]. So do not incline completely [toward one] and leave another hanging. And if

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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.

you amend [your affairs] and fear Allah - then indeed, Allah is ever Forgiving and 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, and then say:
'O Allah! This is my division for what I possess, O Allah! Do not blame me for what You alone possess while I do not (i.e. emotions of the heart).'" [Abu Da`wood, Tirmidhi & others, but with a weak chain]

A man who is impotent should not seek any marriage since he is unable to fulfill its basic requirement.

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." [34:33]



If a woman is infertile and the husband is interested in having children, should he divorce the woman and marry another wife? Or, if she chooses to stay married to him, should he take a second wife giving them both equal rights?

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 to see if 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 infertile and the husband is interested in having children, should he divorce the woman and marry another 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 also possess higher levels of sex drive. One wife may not be able to fulfill his lawful and natural sexual desire. 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 more than males in a number of countries. The best examples would be the cases of the First and Second World Wars, 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 or prostitution, a destabilizing factor for any society. The abundance of women without husbands 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?

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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 more than males in a number of countries.

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. Yet, 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 so forth. 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.

In most contemporary societies, only monogamous marriage is legal. Yet, extra martial relations are allowed as a socially acceptable substitute for the situations mentioned above.



These illicit relationships are only meant to fulfill the sexual interests of one or both of the parties involved without the responsibilities and obligations that go with the marital relationship.

These illicit relationships are only meant to fulfill the sexual interests of one or both of the parties involved without the responsibilities and obligations that go with the marital relationship. In most cases, this results in abuse of the rights of the women as they please the man and are discarded when the relationship becomes inconvenient. 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 father 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 ﷺ 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 said: 'O Messenger of Allah, permit me to commit fornication.' 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!' 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 he 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.'" [Ahmad and verified]

Polygyny in the Islamic society is limited to a maximum of four wives; 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 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 &Muslim]

Polygyny in the Islamic society is limited to a maximum of four wives; 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.

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."

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Annie Besant, in her book on Indian Religions says:
"I read in the Old Testament that the closest friend to [God], whose heart acts upon the Will of [God], 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 girlfriend 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 girlfriend. 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."

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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."

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."

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."

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.

Lastly, it is important to ask the question, who benefits from a polygynous marriage? It seems that people naturally jump to the conclusion that men are the beneficiaries of such a social arrangement, despite the heavy obligations it places upon them.

Interestingly though, the social scientists, Kanazawa and Still, in their Social Forces journal article - "Why Monogamy in 1999" - argued for a "female choice" theory of marriage practices. In this theory, women are seen to be in the position of demanding a particular marriage system based on the availability and status of potential male partners. Where resource inequalities are great among men (less men are available to marry), women will choose to enter into a plural marriage. But when such inequalities are small or even non-existent, women will then chose to enter into a monogamous relationship. This theory is intriguing as it is female-empowering while also functional. It recognizes polygamy or monogamy as rational choices to be made in accordance with social circumstances.

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



If a woman is coerced into accepting an undesired marriage, she is entitled to present her case before a Muslim judge to seek annulment.

02 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 ﷺ:
"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 is consulted." It was asked: "O' Messenger of Allah, how can she give her permission?" He said: "If she remains silent." [Bukhari & Muslim]

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.(4)

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 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 without a guardian." [Abu Dawood & Tirmidhi and verified]

The Messenger of Allah said: "There is no marriage without a guardian."



And in another version:
"There is no marriage without a guardian, and the ruler is the guardian for those who have no guardian." [Ahmad & Ibn Maajah and verified]

And in another version: "There is no marriage without a guardian, and the ruler is the guardian for those who have no guardian."

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 nullified, then her marriage is nullified, then her marriage is nullified, and if he has consummated the marriage then she must receive a dowry from him for what he has made lawful of her private parts, and if they fall into dispute then the ruler is the guardian for those who have no guardian." [Abu Dawood & Tirmidhi and verified]

(4) Reported by Bukhari #6546.

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.

Islamic jurisprudence lays down principles and laws to protect the woman's 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.

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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.

Islamic jurisprudence, though, 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 a proper man proposes marriage and the guardian refuses 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 religion and morals, then marry him. If you fail to do so, great affliction will take place on earth, and corruption will be widespread." [Tirmidhi 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 and with decency even if he does not love her.

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03 FINANCIAL AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HOUSEHOLD

Allah, the Exalted, stated in the Qur'an:
"Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for their maintenance] from their wealth." [4:34]



The man is the "guardian" of his own household– and he will be held accountable for all his responsibilities.

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 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 held accountable for all his responsibilities.

Women by their natural constituency 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 are not required to take on additional financial and vocational responsibilities for the sustenance and maintenance of the household. Yet,

this does not restrict her to household activities. Women are free to work and even encouraged to work in certain fields where they are specifically needed or better suited such as in medicine and teaching. If a woman chooses to work outside of the home, her income is hers and she is not responsible or held accountable for supporting the family expenses. Job or no job, the man is the party responsible for the care and maintenance of the family.

If a woman chooses to work outside of the home, her income is hers and she is not responsible or held accountable for supporting the family expenses.

While the issue has become quite controversial in more recent times, the question of who, the mother or the father, is better suited for early child-care has traditionally been more of a rhetorical question. But, if we take a moment to consider the research into this matter, it seems to support the traditional idea.

For example, in a recent University of Virginia study, researchers asked 181 heterosexual college professors who had children 2 or younger to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, the pleasure they experienced from child care. On 16 out of 25 child - care tasks - like changing diapers, taking a child to the doctor or getting up in the middle of a night to attend to a child - women reported statistically significant higher levels of enjoyment than men. There was only one parenting issue that gave women less pleasure than it gave men; having to manage who does what for the child. Over all, women's scores were 10% higher than that of men.



Women enjoy the child-care role far more than men as can be seen from which gender is more likely to take advantage of family-leave benefits to care for children.

Furthermore, it seems that women also enjoy the child-care role far more than men as can be seen from which gender is more likely to take advantage of family-leave benefits to care for children. In the same study above, all the universities offered paid family leave, and 69% of the women took it, compared with only 12% of the men who did. In Sweden, where family leave for both parents is famously extensive, men use about 20% of the 480-day benefit, while women use nearly all of it.[5]

(5) Rhoads, et al. Gender Roles and Infant/Toddler Care: Male and Female Professors on the Tenure Track, Journal of Social, Evolutionary, and Cultural Psychology, 2012

Let us take it a step further, and ask why women are so much more dedicated parents than men? According to the 1992 March/April Current Population Survey in the United States, conducted by the US Census Bureau on a nationally representative sample, 86% of custodial parents are mothers. Moreover, many of the noncustodial fathers who have agreed to pay child support either voluntarily, or via court order, default on their obligation and are classified as "deadbeat dads." The first national survey of the receipt of child support, conducted in 1978, reveals that 49% of women awarded child support actually received the full amount due to them, and that 28% of them received no money at all. The percentages have, sadly, remained almost the same since then. In 1991, 52% of custodial parents awarded child support received the full amount and 25% of them received nothing. Most people can likely agree that there is something uniquely special about the mother whatever your theory might be.

According to the 1992 March/April Population Survey in the United States, conducted by the US Census Bureau on a nationally representative sample, 86% of custodial parents are mothers.

Returning to our theme, what of those who call for complete equality between men and women? Such people blatantly 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 the same type of jobs, tasks, responsibilities, and positions to be offered. This absurdity neglects woman's nature and essential physical, mental, emotional, and social traits.



In Sweden, where family leave for both parents is famously extensive, men use about 20% of the 480-day benefit, while women use nearly all of it.

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.

04 RESOLVING MARITAL DISPUTES

Allah, the Exalted, stated in the Glorious Qur'an:
"… So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand." [4:34]

Islam forbids beating women and warns strictly against it. The Prophet ﷺ never beat any of his wives or servants, as his wife Aishah reported in an authentic tradition[6]. Women are often unable to defend themselves against violence. Although beating of women is generally forbidden, Islam permits the beating of wives in a highly restricted and limited, "symbolic" sense only as a final solution and acceptable valid reason when all else fails.

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In the verse we quoted, Allah deals with the case of a wife who behaves immorally towards her husband's rights. The treatment of this extremely sensitive issue comes in gradual stages, as we have noticed from the verse. Medicine, or treatment of any ailment, can be very bitter at times. But an ill person will take the remedy gladly and bear the bitterness of the medicine in order to be cured from his illness. The remedy to treat a wife blameworthy of immoral behavior, as we have noticed, comes in three gradual stages:

First stage: The stage of advice, counseling and warning against Allah's punishment. A husband must remind his wife of the importance of protecting his rights in Islam. This stage is a very kind and easy one. But, if this

(6) Bukahri #2328.

treatment does not work and proves to be ineffective, then the husband may resort to the next stage.

Second stage: To leave the wife's bed. Or, if one sleeps in the same bed with her, he will turn his back to her, not touch her, talk to her or have intercourse with her. This stage, as noticed, combines both strictness and kindness, although it is a very harsh practice on both. But, if this treatment does not work, then the husband may resort, if he feels confident that it will bring about a solution, to the final stage of discipline explained below. It is very important to understand that if the husband feels that the situation is hopeless, that he should proceed to divorce and not apply a physical solution.

A husband must remind his wife of the importance of protecting his rights in Islam. This stage is a very kind and easy one.

Third and final stage: The light beating that is referred to in the Qur'an means: without hurting, breaking a bone, leaving black or blue marks on the body, and not hitting the face or especially sensitive places at any cost. The purpose of beating her is only symbolic and must never be done as retaliation or with a desire to hurt by any means. In fact, when we review the commentary of the Qur'an (tafseer) we find:

'Ata' said: I said to Ibn 'Abbas, "What is the kind of hitting that is not harsh?" He said, "Hitting with a siwaak and the like". [A siwaak is a small twig used for cleaning the teeth - Translator]

Islam forbids severe beating as punishment. The Prophet ﷺ said:
"None of you should beat his wife like a slave-beating and then have intercourse with her at the end of the day". [Bukhari]

Beating, according to the Islamic teachings, is listed as the last and final stage of disciplining methods. Islam does not permit, allow or even condone beating unless the first two stages are proven to be ineffective.



Beating, according to the Islamic teachings, is listed as the last and final stage of disciplining methods. Islam does not permit, allow or even condone beating unless the first two stages are proven to be ineffective.

Moreover, beating must not be employed as a remedy, if a wife prefers to be divorced.

The three stages of discipline stated in the verse of the Qur'an are only meant to be a means of discipline for the protection of the family unit. One form of destruction of a family is when the wife becomes a victim of divorce. Islam aims to relieve unnecessary pains, problems and conflicts.

One form of destruction of a family is when the wife becomes a victim of divorce. Islam aims to relieve unnecessary pains, problems and conflicts.

Yet, some people find the concept of physical disciplining of the wife to be abhorrent and unsuitable for a religious text. Is Islam unique in this idea? If we look to Judaism and Christianity, we will find that Islam is unique in limiting the extent of this discipline; for in Judeo-Christian tradition, there appears to be little limitation on the extent of the beating.



If we look to Judaism and Christianity, we will find that Islam is unique in limiting the extent of this discipline; for in Judeo-Christian tradition, there appears to be little limitation on the extent of the beating.

In Judaism, a number of the early rabbis mentioned the concept of wife disciplining. A notable example is from the well-known, and often praised, Rabbi Maimonides (1135-1204) who recommended in his Code, the *Mishneh Torah*, that beating a "bad wife" is an acceptable form of discipline: "A wife who refuses to perform any kind of work that she is obligated to do, may be compelled to perform it, even by scourging her with a rod" (Isshut 21:10).

A number of Christians have for some centuries used Ephesians 5:22 - "Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord." - as their validation for beating their wives. One article[7] summarizes the concept best:
"The custom that a man is the head of his household and has the right to beat his wife 'to keep in line' is found in the medieval theory and practice that the loving Christian husband's duty and responsibility is to maintain order. The pronouncements on husbandly entitlements cited in

(7) Cynthia Ho, Spare the Rod, Spoil the Bride, University of North Carolina-Asherville

Gratian's twelfth century canon law text Decretum formed generations of opinions: 'a man may chastise his wife and beat her for her own correction; for she is of his household, and therefore the lord may chastise his own...so likewise the husband is bound to chastise his wife in moderation... unless he be a clerk, in which case he may chastise her more severely (as cited in Coulton 1II.234).'"

Legal documents from a variety of regions witness that wife-beating was legally allowed under one or more pretexts, most especially the husband's need to maintain social order in the family. "Men must control, support, instruct and correct." (Vecchio 121)

The practice of beating wives is unfortunately too frequent around the world. Wife beatings in many societies are often done with intent to inflict pain and to harm the wife.

Interestingly, in some cases it appeared that the two religions even influenced one another. For example, it appears that the Rabbi Perez b. Elijah of Corbeil of the thirteenth century was influenced to some degree by the ideas of the Dominican, Nicolaus de Byard (French friar, famous preacher and moral theologian, d. 1261), who said:
"A man may chastise his wife and beat her for her correction; for she is of his household, and therefore the Lord may chastise his own, as it is written in Gratian's Decretum" (Bologna, 1140 c.e.)



Statistics show incidents of domestic abuse continue to increase world-wide, irrespective of ethnicity, religion or politics.

At any rate, the practice of beating wives is unfortunately too frequent around the world. Wife beatings in many societies are often done with intent to inflict pain and to harm the wife; something strictly prohibited in Islam as mentioned previously. Statistics show incidents of domestic abuse continue to increase world-wide, irrespective of ethnicity, religion or politics. These statistics are certainly an understatement as there are numerous unreported cases of wife beating, and the beating of women in general. It is the position of Islam that such cases are crimes and cannot be justified by religion or logic.

05 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 evidence, 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 more recently as some sort of Islamic practice, but this is nothing but slander and a lie.

This situation has been hyped up in the media more recently as some sort of Islamic practice, but this is nothing but slander and a lie.

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 in some Muslim countries. If the Islamic laws were established and executed, the severe punishments for fornication, adultery, murder, and so forth would satisfy the Muslim population that justice has been done, and this would curtail the sense of vengeance that exists.



Honor killings are found throughout the world and not tied specifically to Muslim majority countries; though the latter often get the sensationalized press.

In truth, honor killings are found throughout the world and not tied specifically to Muslim majority countries; though the latter often get the sensationalized press. For example, throughout the twentieth century, husbands in Brazil have used in court cases the “legitimate defense of their honor” (*legitima defesa da honra*) as justification for adultery-related killings. This defense was only recently legal rejected by their Supreme Court in 1991.

06 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 invalidated this injustice by revealing the verse which says:
“Divorce is two times. Then, either keep [her] in an acceptable manner or release [her] with good treatment.” [2:229]

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.

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.



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 freely marries a different man and then becomes divorced from him.

If they continue on the path towards divorce though, 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” 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 freely marries a different man

and then becomes divorced from him. 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 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 is ultimately allowed in Islam to escape from any harm caused by irreconcilable differences. It may become necessary in certain cases.

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 a husband and wife. Allah, the Exalted, states in the Qur'an:

There are strict rules about divorce to protect the interests and rights of the parties involved: the husband, wife and children.

"And if a woman fears from her husband contempt or evasion, there is no sin upon them if they make terms of settlement between them - and settlement is best." [4:128]

Allah, the Exalted, also says:
"If you fear dissension between the two, send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, Allah will cause it between them. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Acquainted [with all things]." [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 for 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 spouses are afraid that they will not be able to abide by the limits set by Allah and His Prophet as regards respectable behavior with one another.

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.

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.

Islamic jurisprudence permits the wife to have her marriage nullified upon her request if the husband abuses her physically or verbally.

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 also 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, the judge will pass a judgment in favor of the woman.

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.

07 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]



If a wife reaches the extreme limits of patience and abhors her husband, feeling that life is unbearable, then she also has the right to divorce.

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 portion 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 the "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.



Unlike other social systems, a person can generally deal with his wealth in his life however he wants, but his will has certain restrictions according to the Islamic Law.

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 in the same way. Unlike other social systems, a person can generally deal 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'ad 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 quite generous, for 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 & Muslim]

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 another male relative is obliged to care for the widow.

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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.

08 BLOOD MONEY

In the case of murder, capital punishment is an option for both male and female since they are equal in the sight of the Islamic law. However, in the case of accidental death, Islam stipulates that the blood money to be paid for a woman's accidental death is half of that which is paid for a man. The reason that the blood money paid to the heirs of the female victim is half of that paid for a man's killing in the case of accidental killing is because the damage done to the family by the man's death is more of a financial loss. The family has lost a breadwinner who, as we explained above, is financially responsible for the entire family.

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No one denies the remorse of loss of life, but the financial loss to the family by the demise of a male provider is greater compared to the loss of the female member.

No one denies the remorse of loss of life, but the financial loss to the family by the demise of a male provider is greater compared to the loss of the female member. The family members, whose mother is killed accidentally, for instance, miss their mother's love, care and affection, matters that most men cannot provide as well as the mother, but the financial situation would not be affected as much as when the father is killed. It must be remembered that blood money is not a price or value of the person, but only an approximate compensation for the killed to alleviate the emotional and financial hardship caused to the family by the loss of that person.

09 TESTIMONY OF WOMEN

Allah, the Exalted, stated in the Glorious Qur'an:
"And bring to testify two witnesses from among your men. And if there are not two men [available], then a man and two women from those whom you accept as witnesses - so that if one of the women errs, then the other can remind her." [2:282]

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In the normal case, two men are required as witnesses. But in the case you do not find two men, then one man and two women.

While some people see this verse as stating that women are in some way weaker as regards memory, this is not at all the case. The verse in question is referring very specifically to financial transactions and debts; a serious issue requiring precise decisions. In the normal case, two men are required as witnesses. But in the case you do not find two men, then one man and two women - two women so that the one supports the other in a typically male dominated arena. In Islam, a woman is not allowed to be alone with strange men (men who are not close relatives or her husband). Thus it would be very uncomfortable in such a tense setting to witness alone; hence, a second woman to support her. The same applies to the man - another man as co-witness.

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.

In other types of cases though, for example cases of adultery and fornication, divorce and bequests, the witness of a woman is equal to that of a male as the Qur'an doesn't specify a gender - only that it should be two witnesses.

There are also 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 stated in the 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. She will avert the punishment from her if she bears witness four times by Allah, that [her husband] is telling a lie. And the fifth [testimony] should be that the Wrath of Allah be upon her if [her husband] is speaking the truth." [24:6-9]

In cases of adultery and fornication, divorce and bequests, the witness of a woman is equal to that of a male as the Qur'an doesn't specify a gender – only that it should be two witnesses.



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.

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, a woman's natural role in life, in raising children and caring for the family, gives her special knowledge and expertise in that area and thus only women are permitted to be the sole witness in legal matters pertaining to breastfeeding and matters related to menstruation. A male witness in such legal cases is not permitted.

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 commanded people to offer their testimonies and not to seek to escape or withhold it. Allah stated in the Qur'an:
"And the witnesses should not refuse when they are called on [for evidence]." [2:281]

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 in general.

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10 TRAVEL WITHOUT A MALE GUARDIAN

The Prophet ﷺ said:
"A woman must not travel alone without a mahram. 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 with her." [Bukhari]

For the protection of the person and the honor of the woman, the Islamic rule encompassed in this tradition forbids any woman, whether she be young or old, single or married, to travel alone without a 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.

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 generally

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.

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 her difficulties and ward off strangers and potential predators.

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.

The "mahram" of a woman in Islam protects and serves with utmost sincerity since this is a natural obligation on him, rewarded by Allah. 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 close relative or husband 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.



The "mahram" of a woman in Islam protects and serves with utmost sincerity since this is a natural obligation on him, rewarded by Allah.

It should also be noted, that this stipulation not to travel alone is specifically for lengthy travel and not day trips.

11 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. We see in nature that Allah bestowed the male of each species with certain traits 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 understandable why men have generally gone to work outside the house to earn for the sustenance of the family and why women typically work inside the house and take care of the children and the family.

Islamic law does not deprive a woman from the right to work within the limits that protect her honor and dignity.

In light of this, 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 restricted from the use of her right.

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.

The work that the women engage in outside the home must not conflict with her duties and responsibilities to her husband and children. Her work must be free of intermingling in a male dominated 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 Satan is the third party to them." [Tirmidhi 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 deployed to go for a military campaign." He said: "Go and make Pilgrimage with your wife." [Bukhari & Muslim]

Lady Cook, an English writer says in *New Echo*:
"Men like the mixed environment. Thus, women are lured to something that conflicts with their human nature. The greater the co-ed environment, 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 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.

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 her financial needs and any obligations. Thus from her birth to death, throughout the various stages of her entire life, she is not required to work to give her the utmost dignity and to allow her to concentrate on 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.

If a woman is working to earn her own living expenses, Islam has absolved her from this duty by obliging the male family members to take care of her financial needs and any obligations.

The well-known Scottish author Samuel Smiles, who wrote *Self-Help*, widely considered "the bible of mid-Victorian liberalism":

"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."

The First Lady of South Africa calls for the return of women to the home saying: "The most natural place for a woman is her own home."

In fact, the First Lady of South Africa calls for the return of women 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."

In the end, it is important to understand that these principles are not meant to be controlling or restricting. For both men and women, the purpose of this life is to worship God and attain His pleasure so as to succeed in the Hereafter.

In the end, it is important to understand that these principles are not meant to be controlling or restricting. For both men and women, the purpose of this life is to worship God and attain His pleasure so as to succeed in the Hereafter. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Before the Hour comes, there will be a special greeting for the people of distinction; trade will become so widespread that a woman will help her husband in business; family ties will be cut; the giving of false witness will be common, while truthful witness will be rare; and writing will be widespread." [Ahmad - verified]

When we consider this statement, what is wrong with the woman helping her husband in business? We are thinking from the perspective of what is allowed and prohibited, but we should be seeing this from the perspective of what is most rewarding.

The Prophet ﷺ mentioned this as a sign of decay because women will go out into the working world in order to gain more money, not because there is a need. In other words, they prefer the glitter of this temporary life to the excellence of the Hereafter and as such they trade their time for money instead of using that time to worship. The same has become of men in these days - they are trying only to amass more wealth and disregarding those acts that will bring them benefit after their death.

We are thinking from the perspective of what is allowed and prohibited, but we should be seeing this from the perspective of what is most rewarding.

This is among the reasons that women are encouraged to take the higher road - it is both more rewarding for their life, in that they enjoy security and they raise a righteous next generation, but also the reward of the Hereafter by avoiding much that opens the door to sin.



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12 ON HIJAB (COVERING HEAD AND FACE)

This issue has been sensationalized in the media, especially in some secular countries 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 says:
"O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the

women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful." [33:59]

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

The Hijab: This issue has been sensationalized in the media, especially in some secular countries which seek to make illegal the wearing of the Muslim headscarf or face veil in public places.



This verse clearly states that the reason the woman is obligated to cover herself is to distinguish her as a respectable Muslim lady, and to avoid the annoying glances and glares of men.

Allah also said:
"And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their head-covers over their chests and not expose their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their women, that which their right hands possess, or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. 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 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 abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance. And establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O people of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you with [extensive] purification.

And remember what is recited in your houses of the verses of Allah and wisdom. Indeed, Allah is ever Subtle and 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. 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." [33:33-36]

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:
"Truly for every religion there is a characteristic, and the characteristic of Islam is modesty/shyness." [Ibn Maajah and verified]

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.



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 GOD MUHAMMAD

An account of the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The book introduces us to the Prophet's noble character, his humble life and his conduct with his family at home, his companions and all people in society. It tells us how he strove to fulfil the task God assigned to him and contemplates how he dealt with his enemies, the exceptional magnanimity he showed to all and his simple, but highly effective, method of advocating his message.



THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING ISLAM

This book explains how Islam is a code of living that covers all aspects of life. It comprises a set of acts of worship which play important roles in placing morality on a solid foundation and strengthening good qualities in people so that they are keen to follow the right path. The book cites many examples and speaks about the importance Islam attaches to knowledge. It mentions a number of recent scientific discoveries that the Qur'an has referred to 14 centuries ago.



MESSAGE OF ISLAM

The Message of Islam begins by reminding the reader that Islam, its worship, the rules governing people's transactions and all its teachings have always remained the same as they were taught by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). No change or alteration has been introduced into the religion, though some Muslims have changed. The book discusses and sheds light on a number of rights to which Islam attaches great importance.



ROMANCE IN ISLAM

This book highlights the great importance Islam attaches to love. It shows that the love of God is the best and the most noble love. When it is rooted in a person's heart, it sets that person's behaviour on the right footing, elevates his emotions and feelings and removes selfishness. A person who truly loves God extends feelings of love and compassion to all creatures.



ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE ON SEX

This book discusses the Islamic approach to sex and how to satisfy the sexual desire in the proper and beneficial way. The proper way to satisfy sexual desire is within marriage and according to Islam, marriage is a necessity for the individual to achieve personal fulfilment. For society, marriage is the way to progress, development and stability.



JESUS IN THE QURAN

After first discussing people's need to receive the divine message through prophets, this book relates the story of Jesus, son of Mary (peace be upon him). It starts well before his birth, then goes on to discuss his message and the opposition he had to endure. The book also discusses the Qur'anic account of Jesus, which makes clear that he enjoys a very high position with God Almighty.



ISLAM IS THE RELIGION OF PEACE

Islam is the Religion of Peace, shows with perfect clarity that Islam is the religion of peace and that the spread of Islam means the spread of peace throughout the world. Muslims must always be true to their promises and covenants and treat others with justice and compassion.



EASE AND TOLERANCE IN ISLAM

This book explains that Islam admits no rigidity and making things easy is a general feature of all aspects of the Islamic faith. It is a religion God revealed that can be implemented by people with different failings, feelings and abilities. Islamic law takes all this into account and addresses human nature and appeals to it. God says: "He has laid no hardship on you in anything that pertains to religion." (22: 78)



HUMAN RIGHTS IN ISLAM

Human rights in Islam are outlined in the Qur'an and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). They aim to make man lead a life of compassion and dignity, so that he acquires all good qualities and deals with others in the best manner. The book clarifies the misconceptions that are often expressed regarding the different aspects of freedom and responds to criticism in a calm and objective way.



GLAD TIDINGS

Glad Tidings explains the nature of Islam and clarifies the error of people who rely for information on suspect sources. The book highlights the main features of Islam and tells everyone who embraces Islam that God erases all their past sins and errors. As the Prophet makes clear: "Islam wipes away all past sins."



MY FIRST STEPS IN ISLAM

This book explains for non-Muslim readers how to embrace Islam and shows that this does not require much effort. To new Muslims, the book explains the essential elements of Islam and outlines the character of Prophet Muhammad, his qualities and the message he delivered to mankind. It goes on to discuss the various acts of worship Muslims are required to offer, as well as their purposes and significance.



THE PURITY

Under Islam, the concept of purification is not limited to personal and physical purity; it includes purifying oneself of sin and all disobedience of God. This book discusses the detailed rules of physical purification, including ablution, grand ablution, the removal of impurity, dry ablution, etc.



BILAL THE ABYSSINIAN

This book tells the history of Bilal ibn Rabah, a former slave who became a companion of the Prophet. The book expounds Islam's attitude to racial discrimination, highlighting significant events that show the Prophet took care of many of those who were persecuted, protected them and gave them their rightful status in the Muslim community.



THE PATH TO HAPPINESS

The Path to Happiness explains that the way of life Islam provides for its followers is divine and intended to ensure that people enjoy real happiness in this present life and in the life to come. Islam establishes the concept of true and everlasting happiness, which makes Muslims aspire to the sublime through obedience of God and earning His pleasure.



WOMEN IN ISLAM

This book discusses the status of women prior to Islam and how women were ill-treated and humiliated in many cultures. It explains how Islam put an end to all this injustice, established women's rights and gave women their rightful status.



HISN AI-MU'MIN

Hisn Al-Mu'min speaks of the causes of reversals and misfortunes that people encounter. It highlights how one can ensure the protection and preservation of God's favours and blessings, as well as preventing harm and reducing the effects of personal tragedies and calamities. The book teaches the ways and means to fortify oneself against the effect of such tragedies, the most important being remembrance of God and glorifying Him at all times. This book explains the best forms of such remembrance and glorification.



THE BEGINNING AND THE END

Questions of the creation, existence and progress of the universe have been raised by communities throughout the ages. Yet from its earliest days, Islam addressed these questions in a most direct and clear way. This book explains that the ultimate objective of creation is for all creatures to submit themselves to God and worship Him alone. All aspects of life in the universe inevitably end in death then will be brought back to life on the Day of Resurrection when they receive due recompense for their actions.



EVERY RELIGIOUS INNOVATION

This book defines and explains the various types of deviation from the essence of Islam and its true teachings. It reveals the negative consequences of deviation on Muslims and their life and how deviation is bound to give non-Muslims a distorted view of Islam. Finally, the book describes the role of Muslims in discarding all deviation, according to their abilities.



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WOMEN
IN ISLAM

Shedding light on the status of women prior to Islam, this book explains that women were ill-treated and humiliated in many cultures and how Islam put an end to all this injustice, gave women their proper status and established their rights. Islam considers that men and women have two different, but mutually complementary, roles in the family and in society and the relationship between them must be one of love and compassion. Both men and women are accountable to God for their deeds.

We trust that you will enjoy reading this book and we will be happy to receive your comments and observations.

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