

WOMEN IN ISLAM

A companion book

Compiled by

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In the Name of Allah the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

*“And We have sent you [O’ Muhammad] not but as a mercy for the ‘Alamin
[Mankind, jinn and all that exists].”*

[Surat Al ‘Anbya’ 21: 107]

The customary and most respectful salutation on the Prophet, “Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him” which is made after each mention of his name within this work has been omitted for ease of reading; however, the reader is kindly requested to observe this Muslim tradition.

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PREFACE

Praise be to the Lord of the universe, Who gives the best reward to the Allah-fearing and a great loss to the transgressors. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah; He has no partner and possesses true sovereignty. I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger: the seal of the prophets and the leader of the Allah-fearing. May Allah blesses him, his family, his companions, and those who follow them until the Day of Judgement.

It has been said that Islam, as a social system, is a total failure because "It has misunderstood the relations between the sexes...and has degraded women and has degraded each successive generation of their daughters, following an increasing amount of disgrace and corruption, until it now seems almost impossible that a lower depth of vice can be reached." This is certainly strong language and calls us to investigate whether Islam has really misunderstood the relations between sexes and whether it has really degraded women. Very few of the critics make an effort to determine exactly what the actual teachings of Islam are in this respect, those that are embodied in the Glorious Qur'an, and fewer still care to study the Prophet's life, which is the most authentic commentary on the Qur'an text. Therefore, it is most regrettable that this misconception should have arisen about the status of women in Islam, a point on which the attitude of Islam is clear and unmistakable. I am afraid many in Europe and in the USA form such strange opinions from a study of tales or romance or books on travelling written by professional globe-trotters. They see in the 'harem', which is, by the way, a name in the East for the ladies 'apartment', a home of gross sensuality and voluptuous pleasures. Such ideas have unfortunately prevailed in the West for a very long time and are supported by the wrong interpretations that have been put on certain Qur'an verses and certain sayings of the Prophet of Islam, which have taken a firm hold on the imagination of the Western critics.

The idea in the teachings of Islam with regard to the man and woman is that the husband and the wife should complement each other, call into play the distinctive excellence of their respective characters, in mutual confidence, and strive to achieve the happiness of both of them. The woman is to exercise her beneficent, taming influence over the husband, soften the hardness of his nature and temper the stiffness of his character; while man is to educate the woman's mind and help her to realize those womanly qualities in which she, by her very nature, excels. This is the concept of wifehood, which the Prophet of Islam favoured, as is inferred from his teaching. "A woman is married for four reasons," he said. "Either in consideration of her wealth, her noble parentage, her beauty or her piety. Choose a woman of piety for your wife, in order to prosper, for she is, to her husband, a helper in life, and she remains content with little" [*Saheeh Muslim* 3457].

In compiling "Women in Islam: A Companion Book", I relied basically upon the following references:

- 1) Details on the Rulings for Women and the Muslim Household. (*Al-Mofasssal fi Ahkam Al-Mar'ah wa Al-Beit Al-Muslim*), by Abdel Kareem Ziedan.
- 2) La Morale du Coran, by Dr Muhammad Abdallah Draz.
- 3) Saheeh Al-Bukhari.
- 4) Saheeh Muslim
- 5) Tafseer ibn Katheer
- 6) The Ideal Muslimah, by Muhammad Ali Hashimi.
- 7) The Religion of Islam, two volumes, by Dr Ahmad Ghalwah.
- 8) Women in Islam Versus Women in the Judeo-Christian Tradition, by Dr Sherief Abdel Azim.
- 9) Women in Islam: A Discourse on Rights and Obligations, by Fatima Umar Naseef.

PREFACE

Qur'anic extracts have been taken from the M. Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali and M. Muhsin Khan translation and other extracts were taken from the Marmaduke Pickthall translation of the Glorious Qur'an, although with some alterations by changing the archaic English to be understandable by the contemporary reader.

My single endeavour is to give the reader a true account and a fair exposition of Islam.

Khaled Fahmy

Alexandria, Jan. 7th 2022

INTRODUCTION

*Position of women worldwide at the time
of the revelation of Islam*

The ancient civilisations, throughout centuries, have given women only a minimal degree of respect. Women were usually oppressed or abused; rules and legislation concerning women were shockingly unjust. They were deprived of their civil rights as well as their natural human rights. People doubted their humanity, and they were isolated and burdened in the name of customs and traditions. They were often denied their rights of social life and being allowed to express their opinions. They were no better than slaves, cheap to buy and easy to sell. Young women, wives and mothers were escorted from one prison to another, submitting to the authority of the father, husband or male guardian, who was in control of all aspects of their lives. They were not allowed to make decisions, nor did they have any economic or civil rights. For further clarification of the plight of women before Islam, a general overview of women's status in various ancient civilisations is provided. [1]

[1] Fatima Umar Naseef, "Women in Islam: A Discourse in Rights and Obligations". pp 3-4.

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WOMEN IN THE CHINESE CIVILISATION

The Historian Will Durant, the author of “The Story of Civilisation”, said in his book, “Perhaps the beginning of the feudal system was responsible for their [women’s] dishonour and degradation in terms of political and economic rights. The authoritarian father was the pivot of the family and male children, their wives and their children lived under the authority of the father. Though all family members owned the land, the father had absolute sovereignty over the rest of the family as well as the land. Under the reign of Confucius, the father had tyrannical and absolute power regarding all members of his family. He even had the right to sell his wife and children into slavery.” [1]

“Men prayed and asked god to grant them, boys. The utmost shame for a woman was not to have male children, since boys worked harder in the fields and were more reliable in the battleground. Girls, on the other hand, were regarded as a burden on the family since the parents had to provide for them as children and pay for their marriage when they grew up. Female infanticide was widely prevalent amongst Chinese people and was practised whenever the number of girls exceeded the need and means of their family. Female infants were abandoned in the fields and left to die of cold or to be devoured by beasts. This practice was viewed as normal and acceptable and was rarely associated with even the slightest feelings of guilt. [2] “She submitted to the will of man and obeyed him during her entire life. She was deprived of economic and social rights. She was considered unable to manage her affairs, and her guardian made all decisions for her. She had no right to education or intellectual development. She stayed at home and learned to be at the service of the family. She learned many skills which are required from a devout servant. She had to cut her hair at fifteen and get married at twenty. The father usually chose the husband with the help of a broker. Moreover, women lived in

[1] Will Durant, “The story of civilisation”.

[2] *ibid* Vol. 4.

separate rooms of the house and rarely mixed with men, since social life was restricted to men unless the women involved were from a class which allowed such mixing, for instance, singers and entertainers.” [1] “After marriage, the wife would move in with her husband’s parents. She bore her husband’s name and it was her duty to strive in assisting her-in-laws, as she did before for her parents. She was called *Fu Cong*, which means “submission”, indicating her obedience and submission to the will of her husband. The husband thought of his wife only as the mother of his children. He assessed her not according to beauty or intellect, but according to fertility, perseverance in assisting him and his family, and her obedience. He would be served food and would rarely invite his wife or his children to join him at mealtimes. They rarely ate at the same table. When the husband died, his wife could never re-marry. She was asked to pay tribute to her dead husband by sacrificing and burning herself.”[2]

The author of “The Book of Civilisation” quoted the following from Mrs Ban Hoban’s famous letter describing women of her society, “We occupy the lowest class of the human race; we are the weakest of mankind, and we have to engage in the most degrading of jobs. How just and fair is the book of the law in dealing with women’s issues since it decrees that if a woman loves her husband, she should spend the remaining of her days with him. However, if she does not love him, she should still spend her entire life with him.” Will Durant comments, “This was the opinion of an aristocratic woman; I dare not imagine the condition of women from lower social classes.”

This was the condition of Chinese women. It can be summarised as follows: “She was a despised, deprived of education and of all her rights and freedoms, and kept in submission to her menfolk and in service to her family. She only possessed what men granted her and did what she was told to do. She remained silent, abused, and lost.”

[1] Will Durant, op. cit. Vol.4.

[2] ibid Vol. 4, p. 273.

WOMEN IN INDIAN CIVILISATION

“The Indian woman used to be the property of her father, who could dispose of her as he wished. After her marriage, she became the bondservant of her husband. If her husband died, she became the property of his relatives.” Louis Frank said that the law of Mane stipulates, “An Indian woman has no right to make any decision, even in matters concerning the management of her household. She needs prior consent from her father or brother. The young woman should attend to her father with respect and perseverance. She should acquire a good character and should be able to manage the house with expertness and agility and keep it well furnished without being uneconomical.”^[1]

Mane stipulates, “A devoted wife should attend to her master [husband] as if he was a god. She should not engage in any matter that may hurt his feelings. Even if her husband is deprived of qualities and good character, she should address him by saying, ‘My Lord, My God, Oh master!’ And if they walk together in public, she should walk behind him, keeping a distance from him.” He very rarely addressed her. The husband expected his wife’s devotion in all matters: preparing his food, eating the remains of his meals with her children, falling between his legs in bed. Even when doing all this, woe to her if she disobeyed him. If she did, they believed that her soul would be reincarnated as a jackal in the next life.”^[2]

“A woman had no right to dispose of her money and property, and everything was under the control of her husband. This was her condition during her husband’s lifetime, but when he died, her situation went from bad to worse. She was doomed to be burnt alive with her husband’s corpse, or else she was ostracised from society. “From their sacred books, we learn that a widow had

[1] Umar Ridah Kahaaleh, ‘Al-Mar’ah fe Al- Qadeem wal Hadeeth’, [Women in Old and Modern Times], volume I, Beirut, Mu’ssasat al-Risalah, 1399 AH / 1979, p.137-138.

[2] Will Durant, op. cit. Vol.3, p.177.

to throw herself into the fire prepared to cremate her husband. The corpse would be placed on firewood, and the wife would walk to it with a veil on her face. The Brahman would then approach her and pull away her veil and take off her ornaments. She would also take off her jewellery and distribute it to her family and relatives, and then unplait her hair. The senior Brahman would take her right hand and walk with her three times around the funeral pyre. Next, she would kneel and lift her husband's feet and put them on her forehead as a sign of respect and eternal devotion. She would then stand up, turn around, and sit by his head, laying her right hand on his body. The Brahmans would then start the fire and burn her alive with her husband's corpse. They claimed that by doing so, the wife was granted a happy and long life of 35 million years [the number of hairs in a human body] in the heavens with her husband. Moreover, they claimed that by doing so, she also purified her parents, maternal and paternal relatives, and her husband's family. She would redeem her husband of his sins even if he had killed a close friend or a Brahman during his lifetime. She would then be considered the purest of her kind and the most glorious and honourable person with the best reputation. Unfortunately, this habit was widespread and continues to this day.” [1]

Commenting on this barbaric tradition, G. Lepont says, “...the reason [for this] is that the Indian women considered their husbands to be representatives of gods on earth.” [2] Therefore, the woman who was not sacrificed in this horrid way was forever rejected from society and considered to be on the level of animals. Lepont says, “The unmarried women and especially the widows were despised and rejected by Hindu society and were classified as animals. Many women lost their husbands at a very young age and were doomed to eternal suffering and humiliation. They were dismissed as impure creatures that contaminated anything they touched. The only decent solution for a widow was to throw herself in the fire, or else she suffered a more gruesome

[1] Ibid, Vol. 3, p.1181

[2] Daaher Witr, op. cit. p.345

punishment.” [1] The author ‘Umar Kahaaleh says, “The widow was for-ever ostracised and rejected by her people. For them, she was a repugnant and horrid creature. She was so insignificant that she only ate one meal a day, wore the same outfit, slept on the floor, and was burdened with different chores. Moreover, she shaved her hair to emphasise the fact that she was a widow.”[2] This was the condition of young girls and older women in the Indian civilisation. The following quotation from Manichaios Manes can summarise it, “The women are the source of disgrace, the cause of trouble and strife, and the origin of this worldly existence. Her destructive power does not only lead the unwise man astray, but she is also able to deceive the wise. She controls him and leads him to be the slave of his desires and anger.” [3] Manes, the father of mankind, give women a wretched position on earth. He decided, “Women have neither power nor dignity. They should remain ignorant and kept as slaves in the house. They possess no virtue whatsoever, nor do they have an eternal soul. All these facts have contributed to degrading women to the extreme, and it is not surprising that we do not find prominent female personalities in the Indian civilisation.”[4] We learn from Hinduism that, “Predestined fate, the winds, death, poison, serpents, hell and fire are no greater an evil than women.” [5] The consensus is that Indian women should have neither financial nor civil rights and should be oppressed and humiliated throughout their lives.

[1] Umar Ridah Kahaaleh, p.138

[2] *ibid.*

[3] Will Durant, *op. cit.* Vol.3, p.177.

[4] Umar Ridah Kahaaleh, *op. cit.* P.136.

[5] Gustave Lepont, *Hadaarat Al-Arab'*, [The Civilisation of the Arabs], translated into Arabic by Adel Zu'aytar, Beirut: Issa Al-Baabi Al-Halabi and Co. [no date]. P. 406.

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WOMEN IN BABYLONIAN AND ASSYRIAN CIVILISATIONS

Women in Babylonian and Assyrian civilisations were oppressed and humiliated in the same way as were women in the other ancient civilisations. Their traditions and religious rituals are proof that both women's humanity and social role were denied. This conclusion is evident in the books of ancient history which depicts the different phases of their lives. The young woman was her father's property and whenever he experienced financial difficulties, he would force his daughter into prostitution."^[1] As for her marriage, it could be described as an auction. The law stipulates that those who had daughters old enough to be married should bring them to the marketplace where men gathered once a year. The auctioneer would give a general description of each woman and would sell them one by one. He would begin with the most attractive one to secure a high price and would only sell them under the condition that the buyers would marry them.^[2] Moreover, the law concerning punishment did a great injustice to women. It stipulated that if a man hit a girl and she died, he would not be punished. The man's daughter would be punished instead, and she would be put to death.^[3]

"She was always burdened with numerous manual chores. Therefore, she would spend her life in a constant struggle trying to fulfil her duties towards her husband and her obligations towards the house. She had to go early in the morning and late in the evening, daily, to bring water from the river or the well. She had to grind the corn, knead the dough, bake and knit, and it was her responsibility to furnish the house. Her permanent state of pregnancy was followed by the breastfeeding period, which lasted for three years. She struggled day and night, day in day out. The

[1] Will Durant, op. cit. Vol. 2, p. 234.

[2] *ibid.* Vol.2, p. 232.

[3] *ibid.*

only positive aspect of her life appears to be her freedom of movement, for she could go out whenever she wanted, even without her husband's permission. [1] Herodotus reports that when an enemy surrounded the Babylonians, they would kill their wives to economise on food. [2]

The Babylonians tolerated sexual freedom before marriage but were very strict in terms of the wife's loyalty to her husband. "Before marriage, they enjoyed absolute sexual freedom. They fulfilled their desires whenever and however they liked. They never thought of disguising their immorality by an arrangement such as "a temporary marriage" or "a trial period". They did not bother with marriage but just indulged in fulfilling their basic instincts. Cortis wrote in the year 42 A.C., "Nothing is more astonishing than the sexual behaviour of these people. Nowhere else in the world can we find such a city with all the facilities provided to fulfil one's sexual desires." [3] Will Durant also described Babylon as "Babylon, the whore".

One of their disgraceful traditions, which Durant called "the sacred prostitution" and which destroyed any dignity or humanity left for women, was that every woman in Babylon had to retire to the "flower temple" at least once in her life to have sexual intercourse with a stranger. Rich women were too proud to mix with others and so arrived at the temple in a closed carriage and sat there surrounded by a large number of servants and attendants. As for the vast majority of women, they would sit in the temple with rope crowns on their heads. Men would walk by and each would choose the woman they liked. The woman was not allowed to leave the temple until a man chose her, threw a silver piece in her lap, and had sexual intercourse with her. When throwing the silver piece, the man would say, "May the gods protect you." The woman had no right to refuse the silver piece, however small it may have been since it was regarded as sacred. Then she would

[1] Umar Ridah Kahaaleh, op. cit.

[2] Will Durant, op. cit. Vol. 2, p. 232.

[3] ibid. p. 234.

follow him and, after fulfilling her religious obligations towards the gods, she would finally leave the temple and return home. [1] Beautiful women naturally returned home very quickly as they were chosen soon. The less fortunate ones could stay in the temple for several months and even for several years until they were chosen for the service and thus were able to fulfil the obligations stipulated by the law and could return home.”

Whatever the reason, this immoral and repulsive tradition continued to be practised in Babylon until Constantinus abolished it in 325 A.C. The only positive rights granted to women in commercial centres such as Babylon were: their right to own property; enjoy full control over their own money, and inherit.

[1] Umar Ridah Kahaaleh, op. cit. p.128.

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WOMEN IN PERSIAN CIVILISATION

Being a military nation, the Persians favoured male children because they offered financial benefits to their fathers and were pillars of the army during wars.

Regarding women's status in the family, "The woman submitted totally to the male authority in the family, who had the right to put her to death or to grant her the right to live, according to his whims and desires. He treated her as an object, no better than a piece of merchandise or an old piece of furniture."^[1] Furthermore, the Persians included women among their list of incentives to crime: which consisted of land, women and gold. ^[2]

Umar kahaaleh said, "During their menses and the post-natal period, women deserted their homes and dwelt in small tents set aside especially for them on the outskirts of the town; they were called "foulness". Even servants who were in charge of servicing food to these women had to block their noses and ears and wrap their hands with thick materials. They took such precautions because they thought that they would be contaminated if they touched the menstruating women or if they even touched the objects that surrounded them, including the air." ^[3]

[1] Umar Ridah Kahaaleh, op. cit. p.132.

[2] Ibid. p. 132.

[3] Ibid.

WOMEN IN ROMAN CIVILISATION

The situation of women in Roman civilisation was no better than their situation in the rest of the ancient civilisations. They suffered oppression and rejection in all aspects of social life. “The Romans abhorred women, hated the birth of a girl, and their traditions allowed the father to put his female child to death. On the other hand, they rejoiced at the birth of a male child. This was because, in the rough countryside, the male child was more likely to be a source of income for his parents.” ^[1]

As a result, they taught the boys science and art, whereas the education of young girls was restricted to housework. ^[2]

The historical Romans and Greeks considered the practice of adult and child sacrifice barbarous. ^[3] However, “exposure” of new-borns was widely practised in ancient Greece to get rid of them. In Greece, the decision to expose a child was typically the father’s, although, in Sparta, the decision was made by a group of elders. ^[4] Exposure was the preferred method of disposal, as that act in itself was not murder; moreover, the exposed child technically had a chance of being rescued by the gods or any passers-by. ^[5]

This very situation was a recurring motif in Greek mythology. Families did not always keep their new children. After a woman had a baby, she would show it to her husband. If the husband accepted it, it would live, but if he refused it, it would die. Babies would often be rejected if they were illegitimate, unhealthy or deformed, the wrong sex, or too great a burden on the family. These babies would not be directly killed, but put in a clay pot or jar and deserted outside the front door or on the roadway.

[1] Will Durant, op. cit. Vol. 2, p. 119.

[2] Umar Ridah Kahaaleh, op. cit. p.138.

[3] Hughes, Dennis D. [1991]. *Human Sacrifice in Ancient Greece*. Routledge. p. 187.

[4] See Plutarch’s *Life of Lycurgus*.

[5] Budin 2004, p. 122-23

In the ancient Greek religion, this practice took the responsibility away from the parents because the child would die of natural causes, for example, hunger, asphyxiation or exposure to the elements. The practise of female infanticide was prevalent in ancient Rome. Philo was the first philosopher to speak out against it. ^[1]

A letter from a Roman citizen to his sister, dating from 1 B.C., demonstrates the casual nature with which infanticide was often viewed: “I am still in Alexandria. I beg and plead with you to take care of our little child, and as soon as we receive wages, I will send them to you. In the meantime, if [I wish you good fortune] you give birth and it is a boy, let it live; but if it is a girl, expose it.” ^[2]

In some periods of Roman history, it was traditional for a new-born to be brought to the *pater familias*, the family patriarch, who would then decide whether the child was to be kept and raised or left to die by exposure. ^[3] The attitude toward Roman women improved little throughout their lives, even if they were fortunate enough to escape exposure: “Roman wives were also denied autonomy... Their husbands controlled their access to food and sex; they had no legitimate access to wine at all. ^[4]

In these areas, the husband’s legal power extended to life and death. ^[5] Wives were consequently and consistently portrayed as gluttonous, bibulous, and sex-crazed, and thus in need of constant supervision. Their greed imperilled the husband’s goods; their lust imperilled his house... So too, in her role as a stranger, she could

[1] [Philo [1950], *The Special Laws*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press. III, XX.117, Volume VII, pp. 118, 551, 549].

[2] Exposure of a female child. Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, 1 B.C. [Oxyrhynchus papyrus 744. G]. Stoa.org. Retrieved 2013-07-18. Naphtali, Lewis, ed. [1985]. “Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 744”. *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 54].

[3] John Crossan, *The Essential Jesus: Original Sayings and Earliest Images*, p. 151 [Castle, 1994, 1998].

[4] Durry 1955; Cantarella [1987, 118-19; Treggiari 1991, 423].

[5] Pomeroy 1975, 153-4

exhibit the servile vice of treachery.” [1] “Roman men defined Roman women only in relation to a man. This was a fact of law as well as a fact of life. [2] Like the slave, the woman was dependent on others for her status and her very existence. Yet this opened a way for her to achieve honour, recognition, and humility.” [3]

Women could seemingly only gain status by submitting completely to their male guardians and husbands, even to the point of suicide following his death. This was actively encouraged in several gruesome ways. The woman’s act of suicide gave her husband a high status, even after his death. It reinforced the importance of man over woman as she demonstrated that her life was worthless and she was completely incapable of living without him. Many women extended their suffering by starving themselves almost to the point of death and then eating just enough to bring them back from the brink of death. This was a perpetual public demonstration of her hopelessness without him.

The irony of a woman’s death or her years spent in self-inflicted starvation to the point of near death, to bring a good status to a man and his wife within the social society, is a terrifying and tragic condition elicited by simple “Tales of Loyalty” which were told to women in order to control and enforce obedience and servitude. Such subservience was considered a “goal” to be achieved by women to become what was considered a good wife. These “tales” served as man-made laws, and as written laws were few at this time, they became laws unto themselves.

Roman law deprived women of their civil rights throughout their lives. Before her marriage, a woman was under the main family authority, who was the father or paternal grandfather. This authority gave him full control over her life. He had the right to put her to death, banish her from the family, or sell her into

[1] Family Structure and Liminality by Holt Parker, from *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture*. P. 154, 155, 156.

[2] Gardiner 1986, 5-80.

[3] Family Structure and Liminality by Holt Parker, from *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture*. P. 154, 155, 156.

slavery. After her marriage, this sovereign authority was delegated to her husband, and her relationship with her family came to an end. Roman women were considered to possess an equivalent status to that of slaves, and as such, their legal capacity was virtually non-existent. “The legal capacity of slaves and women was extremely circumscribed; it was neither ever spoken about before a jury. Slaves could neither sue nor be sued except insofar as they were the instrument of their owner, who would have conducted the case himself.”^[1]

Women were occasionally defendants and inheritance cases were often initiated on their behalf, but in every case, their male guardians spoke for them. Even suits in which a male represented a woman or slave seem to have been rare. Among the extant speeches, except for inheritance cases, only two involve female defendants and none concern slaves. Neither slaves nor women could appear as witnesses... “The law abridged the voices of women and slaves not just by preventing them from speaking but also through conventions, governing the stories told in courts, refiguring ‘disputes’ as legal cases.”^[2]

It should be noted that once a case was defined as a legal case, no woman or slave could speak in it. Refiguring was a tool that could be exploited by men as their word was taken in their stead. Moreover, should the case be against a man, all worked to protect his status, being considered more important than anything else, and often at the expense of justice towards the women they were supposed to be defending. “In almost all cases, only adult male citizens could act as litigants. These stories also defined the dispute as fundamentally between male citizens, the interests of other parties, women and slaves, were eclipsed.... This is important because details, which were irrelevant from the perspective of the law, often provide clues for understanding the degree to which litigation imposed a particular meaning on a complex set of events. The boundaries of the stories of the law thus imposed silence on

[1] Todd 1993, 186-7, 192, 4.

[2] Johnstone.

slaves and women not by suppressing all information about them, but rather by making it impossible in court for them to narrate their perspective.”^[1] “The most notoriously vague Athenian law nullified wills made by a man who was ‘Deranged on account of insanity, old age, drugs, or illness, or because of the influence of a woman, or forced by necessity or because of being held captive.’”

^[2] Speakers could thus attack the validity of a will alleging the nefarious influence of a woman. While such claims depended upon highly negative depictions of women [which equated their influence with insanity], and similar to the positive portrayals of good women, they also limited female subjectivity to the way it effected a man’s interests.”^[3]

“Slaves and wives are conceptually united. Because Roman men defined themselves negatively—not a woman, not a slave, not a child, not a beast—there was a tendency for these negatives to merge. Slaves are bestialised, infantilized and effeminized; women were likened to beasts, children and slaves. Most importantly, slaves and wives shared the same liminality; they were both intimate strangers. Slaves and wives were members of the family, intimate, sometimes loved, always necessary. They were in daily and physical contact with their masters. Lacking any tie by blood and nature to their new household, they remain potentially dangerous. They were described with the vices of laziness, lust, drunkenness, and disloyalty. They were considered capable of the most heinous crimes: betrayal, adultery, murder. To reply to the Tales of Horror, the Romans devised the Tales of Loyalty. In these, slaves and wives enact the same *topoi*, show the same desire

[1] Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture, edited by Sandra R. Joshel and Shelia Murnaghan [1998] Chapter: Cracking the Code of Silence—Athenian legal oratory and the histories of slaves and women by Steven Johnstone. P. 225.

[2] Demosthenes 46, 14; Rhodes 1981, 443-4.

[3] Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture, edited by Sandra R. Joshel and Shelia Murnaghan [1998] Chapter: Cracking the Code of Silence—Athenian legal oratory and the histories of slaves and women by Steven Johnstone.

to prove their loyalty by overcoming their vices, even to the point of death.^[1]

Tales of Loyalty in the ancient Roman era used stories to elicit obedience, loyalty, compliance, and subservience of slaves to their owners and wives to their husbands. “Each story purports to be about real events, but each is told for specific rhetorical purposes and responds to specific psychological needs. Far from being value-free, their great interest to us lies precisely in the values they embody, the conception of slave and wife and hence that of master and husband that they reveal.”

“These stories provide a means of shoring up that threatened stability, by offering to the female and servile reader a paradigm of rewarded behaviour and a series of heroes or heroines with whom identification is encouraged. They thus give the masters not only mental but also physical control over what they perceive as the danger spots in their society.” So unfortunate was her situation that they considered her an object to be bought by her husband. The latter would pay her father a certain amount of money, and in return, the wife had to do all the housework and undertake any chores without protesting or even questioning her situation. She had no right to claim her husband’s fortune after his death, and he could, if he so wished, deprive her of any inheritance from him.^[2] She had no right to object to her husband’s injustice, however outrageous it might have been since even killing or selling the wife was allowed. The legislation considered women to have no intellectual capacities and no right to freedom. ^[3] The Romans described women as inherently unintelligent. ^[4] “Both slaves and wives are intimate parts of the family, yet both are still thought of as foreign and outsiders. ^[5]

[1] Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture. Edited by Sandra R. Joshel and Sheila Munaghan. Tales of Loyalty: Loyal Slaves and Loyal Wives by Holt Parker.

[2] Ismatudden Karkar, Al-Mar’ah Min khilaal Al-Ayyat Al-Qur’aaniyah, Haram Al-Heelah: al-sharikah Al-Tunisiyah li-altawzee’ 1979, P.29.

[3] Muhammad Daaher Wittr, op. cit., p.346

[4] Abbas Mahmood Al-Qaad, op.cit, p. 10.

[5] Weidmann 1987, 25-6.

Thus, slaves and wives share the feature of *liminality*: they are interior and exterior, family and not family.” “The exchange of women is part of the founding legend of Rome...The very interchangeability and exchangeability of women on which Rome was based necessitated that a woman be still attached to a member of her family for her to have any value as an exchange, as a conduit of the society’s life. She was connected vertically up to her natal family and down to her husband’s children. However, horizontally, the wife remained an outsider to her husband’s family; she was in her husband’s household but not kin to her husband’s *familia*. As a result, she is still a stranger in her new family by marriage and can be resented, suspected, and feared as a stranger. Thus, slaves and wives share the liminal position of being an outsider within; both are intimate strangers.” [1]

[1] Family Structure and Liminality by Holt Parker, from *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture*. p. 154, 155, 156.

WOMEN IN GREEK CIVILISATION

Greek poets and writers wrote very satirically and cynically when discussing women. Even though the Greeks were known for their intellectual advancement and scientific discoveries, they treated women with disgrace and injustice. They denied their humanity and overlooked their sensitivities. Troilong said, "The unfortunate who did not give birth to a strong child suitable for the army was put to death."^[1]

The Greeks believed that women had two purposes in life: to procreate and to do the housework. Troilong adds, "The fertile woman would be snatched naked from her husband to conceive children for the country from other men."^[2] Fathers had absolute control over their daughters.

"The authority of the guardian over the young woman was unlimited. He could arrange her marriage without even consulting her.... After her father's death, her brothers inherited everything. If she had no brothers, she became part of the inheritance. This meant that she had to become the wife of the eldest of her father's inheritors. Her child would be named after his grandfather, and the fortune would be transferred to him. In other words, it was her male child who inherited from her father, and not her."^[3]

"Male legislators deprived woman of her civil rights and submitted her to the absolute authorities of men through the different phases of her life. Before marriage, she was the property of her father; and after marriage, she was the property of her husband."^[4]

"As for the participation of individuals in political collectivity, these individuals were among the ancient peoples, and it is known that there were very heavy restrictions on the conditions for this

[1] Gustave Lepont, op.cit, p. 406.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ali Abdulwaahed Waafi, *Al-Mar'ah fee Al-Islam*, p. 18.

[4] Ismatudden Karkar, op. cit. p.27.

participation. The political community was limited to those who were free adult males; women were totally excluded, of course, and slaves and foreigners were also excluded.” [1]

Ancient philosophers did little to give status, respect, rights or even the slightest favourable recognition to women: Aristotle declared, “Mother Nature did not endow women with intellectual capacities, therefore their education should be restricted to housework, mothering, nursing, and other similar tasks.” After declaring this philosophical notion, he included women in the list of those miserable people who had no right to freedom. “Three categories of people have neither the eligibility nor the capacity to make their own decisions: The slave has no volition, the child possesses a will-power but it is incomplete, the woman possesses a will but hers is deficient.” [2]

Plato, the pioneer of the “Rational School” was no more rational than Aristotle. “He classified women at the same level as children and slaves. He believed that men are superior to women, while Euripides noted that women are deficient and incapable of handling decent jobs, and they constantly corrupt society with their evil deeds.” [3]

“The Greek philosopher Aristotle was the most influential non-Christian source of ideas in many fields, up to the seventeenth century, which had very unfortunate effects for women. For Aristotle, women were imperfect men, the result of something wrong with the conception that created them—their parents were too young or too old, or too diverse in age, or one of them was not healthy. Nature always aimed at perfection, and Aristotle termed anything less than perfect “monstrous”; a woman was thus “a deformity, but one which occurs in the ordinary course of nature.” “...but because he regarded women as fundamentally intellectually

[1] World in Fragments: Translations from Cornelious Castiadis's writings. Polis, the Greek and the Modern Political Imaginary. P. 95-96 & Published by Le Seuil and Cornelious Costradis 1986, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1993.

[2] *ibid.*

[3] Umar Ridah Kahaaleh, *op. cit.* p.170.

inferior, he saw their primary function as procreation, not companion-ship. The philosopher Plato agreed, for he viewed the best love and friendship as that between men and commented in one of his dialogues that originally all humans had been created, but some had been reborn as women when they proved to be cowardly and wicked.”^[1]

[1] Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe [18th Century] First published October 1993 by Merry E. Wiesner p. 13. Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, trans. A. L. Peck, Loeb Classics [Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1943], Book 4, part 6, p. 460.

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WOMEN IN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

It is mentioned in the Exodus that, “If a man sold his daughter into slavery, she could not be treated like other slaves.” This means that she cannot be redeemed nor released but had to remain a slave for life. She was not only sold but also doomed to eternal slavery.

“The Hebraic family was patriarchal and had huge financial and political networks. It comprised the oldest married man and his wives, his single children, his married children, their wives, children, and slaves if any.”^[1]

“Moreover, the father had absolute authority over his family and especially his daughters.” “The power of the father was unlimited. The land belonged to him, and his children could not survive if they did not obey him. He was the chief and he had the right to sell his daughter to slavery and the right to choose her husband. Nevertheless, he sometimes was merciful and asked for her consent to the marriage.”^[2]

“A Christian married woman was legally subject to her husband, in all matters. She could not sue, make contracts, or go to court for any reason without his approval. Moreover, in many areas of Europe, all goods or property that a wife brought into a marriage and all wages she earned during the marriage were considered the property of her husband, a situation that did not change legally until the nineteenth century. In England, a married woman was not even considered to be a legal person under common law; she was totally subsumed within the legal identity of her husband. She could not accept a gift from her husband or make a will separate from him because they were “one person”^[3]

[1] Will Durant, Qisst Al-Hadaarah, “The Story of Civilisation”, translated into Arabic by Muhammad Badraan Mataabi, al-Rajwa, 1971, Vol. 2, p. 374.

[2] *ibid.*

[3] Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe [18th Century] First published October 1993 by Merry E. Wiesner p. 30-31.

“The husband’s control of the wife’s property could be modified somewhat by a marriage contract which gave her legal ownership of the dowry she brought into the marriage. The husband then had the use of this money, goods, or property as long as both spouses were alive, but she or her heirs were to receive the actual property or something of comparable value after his death. In many parts of Europe, widows were also assured of a certain portion of her husband’s estate, termed a dower, after his death. This was usually fixed by law or custom at one-third to one-half; this was hers to use for the remainder of her life, though it reverted to his heirs after her death and so was not legally regarded as belonging to her. Widows were generally free to manage this property as they wished, though the heirs could take them to court if they felt the widow was harming the value of the property.”

Jewish women were captured, sold and inherited as one would inherit a camel or a piece of furniture. They were considered to be taboo and the embodiment of an abominable sin. In Ecclesiastes, we find the following: “So I turned my mind to understand, to investigate and to search out wisdom and the scheme of things and to understand the stupidity of wickedness and the madness of folly. I find more bitter than death the woman who is a snare, whose heart is a trap and whose hands are chains. The man who pleases Allah will escape her, but the sinner she will ensnare. ‘Look,’ says the teacher, ‘This is what I have discovered by adding one thing to another to find an explanation. What I have continually searched for but did not find; I found one upright man among a thousand, but not one upright woman among them all.’”^[1]

In another part of the Hebrew literature which is found in the Catholic Bible, we read, “No wickedness comes anywhere near the wickedness of a woman. Sin began with a woman and thanks to her we all must die” [Ecclesiasticus 25: 19, 24].

Jewish Rabbis listed nine curses inflicted on women as a result of the Fall, “To the woman He gave nine curses and death: the burden of the blood of menstruation and the blood of virginity;

[1] The Old Testament, Ecclesiastes 7:25, 28

the burden of pregnancy; the burden of childbirth; the burden of bringing up the children; her head is covered as one in mourning; she pierces her ear like a permanent slave or slave girl who serves her master; she is not to be believed as a witness; and after everything, death.”^[1]

To the present day, orthodox Jewish men recite in their daily morning prayers, “Blessed be Allah, the King of the universe, that Thou has not made me a woman.” The women, on the other hand, thank Allah every morning for “making me according to Thy will.”^[2] When speaking about the quotes of so-called educated men in relation to women, the author of the book “Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe”, Merry E. Wiesner, states:

“The works which contain them, especially religious, scientific, and philosophical writings, came to be considered authoritative and unquestionable so that the ideas of educated men spread to the vast majority of women and men who could not record their ideas and served as the basis for codes of law which attempted to regulate behaviour. These ideas and opinions were often no longer recognized as such, but were regarded as religious truth or scientific fact, particularly when the laws that resulted from them led women to act in ways which conformed to male notions.”

“[W]e must survey commonly held notions about women, many of which were inherited from classical and medieval writers and Jewish and Christian religious thinkers. Though they disagreed about many other things, the vast majority of religious and secular writers before 1500 regarded women as clearly inferior to men and provided subsequent generations with countless examples of women’s negative qualities.

The fact that so many revered authorities agreed about “Women’s nature” indicated to most people that they must be

[1] Leonard J. Swidler, *Women in Judaism: the Status of Women in Formative Judaism* [Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1976] p. 115.

[2] Thena Kendath, ““Memories of an Orthodox youth” “in Susannah Heschel, ed. *On being a Jewish Feminist* [New York: Schocken Books, 1983], pp. 96-97.

right. Only a few individuals recognized that the largely negative view of women in Western culture resulted from the fact that almost all written records came from male authors and that a very different picture might have emerged had women also left records of their thoughts.” [1] Here follow examples of the quotations of what were considered as educated Judeo-Christian men: “A woman, properly speaking, is not a human being.” [2]

“Women, then being the last of creatures, the end, the complement and consummation of all the works of God, so what ignorance is there that is so stupid or what impudence can there be that is so affronted as to deny her a prerogative above all other creatures without whom the world itself would have been imperfect.”[3]

“Women are created for no other purpose than to serve men and be their helpers. If women grow weary or even die while bearing children, that does not harm anything. Let them bear children until they die; they are created for that.”[4]

The Biblical Eve has played a far more prominent role in Christianity than in Judaism. Her sin has been pivotal to the whole Christian faith because the Christian conception of the reason for the mission of Jesus Christ on Earth stems from Eve’s disobedience to God. She had sinned and then seduced Adam to follow suit.

Consequently, Allah expelled both of them from Heaven to Earth, which had been cursed because of them. They bequeathed their sin, which had not been forgiven by God, to all their descendants and, thus, all humans are born in sin. In order to purify human beings from their “original sin”, Allah had to

[1] *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe [18th Century]* First published October 1993 by Merry E. Wiesner.

[2] Jacques Cujas, *Observationes et emendationes*, 6:21 in *Opera Omnia* [Lyons, 1606] Vol. 6, p. 1484.

[3] Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *De nobilitate et praecellentia sexus foeminei* [1529] in *Opera* [2 vols., Lyon, 1600].

[4] Martin Luther, *Sammtliche Werke* [Erlangen and Frankfurt, 1826-57] Vol. 2, p. 533.

sacrifice Jesus, who is considered to be the Son of God, on the cross. Therefore, Eve is responsible for her own mistake, her husband's sin, the original sin of all humanity, and the death of the Son of God. In other words, one woman acting on her own caused the fall of humanity. [1] What about her daughters? They are sinners like her and have to be treated as such. Listen to the severe tone of St. Paul in the New Testament: "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one who was deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner" [I Timothy 2: 11-14].

St. Tertullian was even blunter than St. Paul, while he was talking to his "best-beloved sisters" in faith, he said, "Do you not know that you are each an Eve? The sentence of Allah on this sex of yours lives in this age: the guilt must, of necessity, live too. You are the Devil's gateway: You are the unsealer of the forbidden tree: You are the first deserter of the divine law: You are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert, even the Son of God had to die." St. Augustine was faithful to the legacy of his predecessors. He wrote to a friend, "What is the difference; whether it is a wife or a mother, it is still Eve, the temptress that we must beware of in any woman...I fail to see what use woman can be to a man if one excludes the function of bearing children." Centuries later, St. Thomas Aquinas still considered women as defective, "As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten, for the active force in the male seed tends towards the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex; while the production of a woman comes from a defect in the active force or some material indisposition, or even from some external influence."

[1] Rosemary R. Ruether, "Christianity" in Arvind Sharma, ed., *Women in World Religions* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987] p. 209.

“Christianity was the most important source of ideas about women for early modern Europeans, and Christianity had, in turn, inherited many of its ideas from Judaism. There are two somewhat conflicting accounts of creation in Genesis, the first book of both the Jewish Scripture and the Christian Bible. In the first, Allah created women and men at the same time, and in the second, Eve was created out of the rib of the first man, Adam, after Allah decided that Adam needs a mate. The second account is the one that came to be retold and portrayed visually much more often, so that medieval and early modern Europeans were much more familiar with it. It is the one that goes on to describe the first human sin, in which Eve is tempted by a serpent to disobey Allah to gain knowledge and then tempts Adam; their disobedience gets them expelled from the Garden of Eden and came to be described in Christian doctrine as the “fall of man” or “the original sin”. Most later Jewish and Christian commentators thus chose to view Eve, and by extension all women, as the source of evil and sin in the world.”

“The authors of the Jewish Scriptures had a clear idea of the ideal woman; she was the mother of many children, up working before sunrise to provide food and clothing for her household, making no objections when her husband brought home concubines or a second wife, totally obedient and deferential.”

“It is perhaps no wonder that by the first century A.C. Jewish men included a special thank-you to Allah, “Who has not made me a woman”, in their regular morning prayers. Along with Eve, Jewish Scripture also describes other women whose actions helped to create a negative stereotype for women: Delilah, whose sexuality could tempt even the strongest man; Rebekah, whose love for one of her sons led her to deceive her husband; Lot’s wife [her name is not recorded], who was changed into a pillar of salt for disobeying Allah and her husband.” [1]

[1] Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe [18th Century] First published October 1993 by Merry E. Wiesner p. 10-11.

Finally, the renowned reformer Martin Luther could not see any benefit from a woman but bringing into the world as many children as possible, regardless of any side effects, "If they become tired or even die, that does not matter. Let them die in childbirth, that's why they are there" Again and again all women are denigrated because of the image of Eve, the temptress, thanks to the Genesis account. To sum up, the Judaeo-Christian concept of women has been poisoned by the belief in the sinful nature of Eve and her female offspring.^[1] In fact, the difference between the Biblical and the Qur'anic attitude towards female sex starts as soon as a female is born. For example, the Bible states that the period of the mother's ritual impurity is twice as long if a girl is born than if the child was a boy [Lev. 12:2-5].

The Catholic Bible states explicitly that, "The birth of a daughter is a loss" [Ecclesiasticus 22:3]. In contrast to this shocking statement, boys receive special praise, "A man who educates his son will be the envy of his enemy" [Ecclesiasticus 30:3].

Jewish Rabbis made it an obligation on Jewish men to produce offspring in order to propagate the race. At the same time, they did not hide their clear preference for male children: "It is well for those whose children are male but ill for those whose are female", "At the birth of a boy, all are joyful...at the birth of a girl, all are sorrowful", and "When a boy comes into the world, peace comes into the world...When a girl comes, nothing comes."^[2] A daughter is considered a painful burden, a potential source of shame to her father, "Your daughter is headstrong? Keep a sharp look-out that she does not make you the laughing stock of your enemies, the talk of the town, and the object of common gossip, putting you to public shame" [Ecclesiasticus 42:11].

[1] For all the sayings of the prominent Saints, see Karen Armstrong, *The Gospel According to Woman* [London: Elm Tree Books, 1986] pp. 52-62. See also Nancy van Vuuren, *The Subversion of Women as Practiced by Churches, Witch-Hunters, and Other Sexists* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press] pp. 28-30.

[2] Leonard J. Swidler, *Women in Judaism: the Status of Women in Formative Judaism* [Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1976] p. 140.

“Keep a headstrong daughter under firm control, or she will abuse any indulgence she receives. Keep a strict watch on her shameless eye; do not be surprised if she disgraces you” [Ecclesiasticus 26:10-11].

The heart of Judaism is the Torah, the law. However, according to the Talmud, “Women are exempt from the study of the Torah.” Some Jewish Rabbis firmly declared “Let the words of Torah rather be destroyed by fire than imparted to women,” and “Whoever teaches his daughter the Torah is as though he taught her obscenity.”^[1]

If a man accuses his wife of unchastity, her testimony will not be considered at all according to the Bible. The accused wife has to be subjected to a trial by ordeal. In this trial, the wife faces a complex and humiliating ritual that was supposed to prove her guilt or innocence [Num. 5:11-31]. If she is found guilty after this ordeal, she will be sentenced to death. If she is found not guilty, her husband will be innocent of any wrongdoing.^[2] Because the Old Testament recognised no inheritance rights to them, widows were among the most vulnerable of the Jewish population. The male relatives who inherited all of a woman’s deceased husband’s estate were to provide for her from that estate. However, widows had no way to ensure this provision was carried out and lived on the mercy of others. Therefore, widows were among the lowest classes in ancient Israel and widowhood was considered a symbol of great degradation [Isaiah 54:4].^[3]

But the plight of a widow in the Biblical tradition extended even beyond her exclusion from her husband’s property. According to Genesis 38, a childless widow must marry her husband’s brother, even if he is already married, so that he can produce offspring for his dead brother, thus ensuring his brother’s

[1] Denise L. Carmody, “Judaism” in Arvind Sharma, ed., op. cit., p. 197.

[2] Sherief Abdel Azeem: Women in Islam Versus Women in the Judaeo-Christian Tradition: the Myth & the Reality.

[3] Sherief Abdel Azeem, op. cit. p.45.

name will not die out.^[1] “Then Judah said to Onan, ‘Lie with your brother’s wife and fulfil your duty to her as a brother-in-law to produce offspring for your brother’” [Genesis 38:8].

The widow’s consent to this marriage is not required. The widow is treated as part of her deceased husband’s property, and her main function is to ensure her husband’s posterity. This Biblical law is still practised in today’s Israel. A childless widow in Israel is bequeathed to her husband’s brother. If the brother is too young to marry, she has to wait until he comes of age. Should the deceased husband’s brother refuse to marry her, she is set free and can then marry any man of her choice. It is not an uncommon phenomenon in Israel that widows are subjected to blackmail by their brothers-in-law to gain their freedom.

Widows and divorced women were so looked down upon in the Biblical tradition that the high priest could not marry a widow, a divorced woman, or a prostitute: “The woman he [the high priest] marries must be a virgin. He must not marry a widow, a divorced woman, or a woman defiled by prostitution, but only a virgin from his people. And so he will not defile his offspring among his people” [Lev. 21:13-15]. ^[2]

[1] B. Aisha Lemu and Fatima Heeren, *Woman in Islam* [London: Islamic Foundation, 1978] p. 23.

[2] Sherief Abdel Azeem, *op. cit.* p.45.

WOMEN IN THE PRE-ISLAMIC ARABIA

It is necessary to understand women's status at the advent of Islam to fully appreciate the generosity and the magnificence of the tenets of Islam which liberated women from the oppression, ignorance and unjust of pre-Islam paganism. The majority of Arabs led a nomadic life, with nomadic traditions and customs. Wars and sudden attacks were part of their lives and they, therefore, aspired to physical strength, which was essential to defend their tribes and protect their lands. In this environment, the male was a symbol of security and power.

Among the pre-Islam Arabs, the custom of polyandry ^[1] was common. A woman could break off her relations with her husband simply by turning the side of her tent. She was also free to choose her husband, either directly or through her parents, and dismiss him at her pleasure. A woman could possess several husbands, and children were born to unknown fathers. And since they did not know the fathers, they had to live with the mother. Kinship was recognised from the mother's side, and affection of children was built up more among the relatives of the mother than of the father. The eldest member of the family was recognized as the head, and several brothers had one wife in common between them. The man who was with her at any time used to fix his stick on the door of the tent, which was a sign for others not to enter it. Women among pre-Islam Arabia were included in the inherited property, and on the father's death, a son could marry his step-mother. Mothers-in-law were also taken as wives.

Islam, however, definitely abolished all these relations and made the father's side stronger to safeguard the chastity of women, to prevent polyandry, and to make man responsible for the support of his wife and children. Thus, while Arab women lost certain indecent privileges and freedom, they gained security in their livelihood and a higher social position. Islam abolished the evil custom of female infanticide, which was common among pre-

[1] The condition or practice of having more than one husband at one time.

Islam Arabs; the father considered it his sacred duty to take his tender age daughter to bury her alive. Islam contributed to the improvement of the position of women in various ways:

1. It retains some of the more healthy ancient customs, such as respect and good treatment of the foster mother.
2. It makes the woman a mistress of her property, in which the husband has no right to interfere except with her permission.
3. It gives her the right to ask for divorce on the following grounds: impotence of the husband; leprosy or insanity on his part; inferior social status; non-payment of the dowry; and conversion to any religion other than Islam. Divorce of women is allowed in certain other cases. Thus, if the wife is suspected and accused by her husband of adultery and he cannot prove her guilt and swears that she is guilty, and she swears she is not guilty, she becomes free from her husband. If she accepts marriage on certain conditions which are not fulfilled by her husband, she secures freedom of action. ^[1] Moreover, if she is not paid *nafaqa* [maintenance], is highly maltreated or can establish an appropriate reason why she should be allowed to have recourse to divorce proceedings, she becomes free.
4. She needs not to take part in fighting on the front lines in case of war, though she may help the fighting men and nurse or encourage them against the enemy.
5. She is free to re-marry after divorce.
6. She is encouraged to study and acquire learning.
7. Furthermore, if the husband remains absent from home in an unknown place for a very long time and does not pay for her maintenance, the wife may procure a decree of divorce from the judge, etc.

Divorce was very common among the pre-Islamic Arabs and, though a lawful act, it was condemned by the Prophet (peace be upon him), who said, "The thing most disliked by Allah [of lawful acts] is divorce." He also praised a good wife by saying, "The

[1] Vide: Chapter on Marriage where it is stated that "marriage in Islam is only a 'civil' contract."

world and its pleasure are valuable but more valuable than all pleasures is a virtuous wife.” And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “The best of you, in Allah the Almighty’s sight is the man who treats his wife best.”

“When considering women’s treatment in these ancient nations, within their respective cultures and religions, since Judeo Christian’s today claim they still devoutly follow their original religion as revealed by Allah, it seems, in their recognition, defense and shame of such horrific treatment and attitudes towards women throughout their history, they have come to rely on laws and regulations innovated by mankind to improve their condition and status. This is rather than trusting implicitly upon what they believe to be unaltered revelations and commands of Allah within their Scriptures. Why is it then, if their religion is so pure and unaltered, they would find the need and seek to change or supersede Allah’s commands within those Scriptures, replacing them with human laws?

In Islam, the revelations of Allah suffice and are above all else. The Word of Allah alone has ensured a high status and respectable treatment of its women since its very beginnings. It continues to do so to this very day, without any need to resort to man-made laws to intervene or correct an injustice of any kind. No laws or regulations in Islam are taken from mankind, but they are directly taken from Allah’s Revelations and the teachings of His Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), in the Quran and Sunnah. This is because they are absolutely sufficient and unequivocally just. Surely, mankind can never claim to be above the wisdom or justice of God.

PART I

WHAT RIGHTS DID WOMEN GAIN IN ISLAM?

Islam has given women their full rights, proclaiming and establishing these rights with clear, explicit texts. These texts cannot be alerted or denied.

The following are but just a few examples of what women gained by being Muslims, even if, in post-modern ideologies, such gains are looked down upon as being losses!

1. THE RIGHT ESTABLISHING HER HUMANNESS

Allah has dignified all of mankind, regardless of whether male or female. He says,

“And indeed We have honoured the children of Adam, and we have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with good things, and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preferment” [The Night Journey, 17: 70].

The Lord honoured human beings, whether male or female. This honour and dignity have been established for all human beings, regardless of their sex, colour, race, or country; they all descend from one origin, one father, and one mother. Islam came to teach people how to be just and fair to humanity, and secure women from the oppression and humiliation they suffered.

A woman is a human being with a dignified and honoured human soul; this is clearly stated in the Quran:

“O, people! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single soul, and from it, He created his wife, and from them both He created many men and women. And fear Allah through Whom you demand your mutual rights, [and do not cut the relations of] the wombs! Surely Allah is ever an Observer over you” [Women, 4: 1].

This verse has been interpreted in two ways: “From him,” means from the soul of Adam, meaning that woman is a part of Adam. Abu Hurairah also narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Treat women kindly. The woman has been

created from a rib, and the most crooked part of the rib is its upper part. If you try to make it straight, you will break it, and if you leave it as it is, it will remain curved. So treat women kindly.”^[1]

In the second narration, “from it” means, “the same original substance set in readiness for creation of human beings.” Allah also says, “*And Allah has given you wives of your own kind*” [The bee, 16: 72].

In this verse Allah establishes two facts:

- 1) Men and women are created from the same substance.
- 2) Man and woman together constituted the origin of mankind.
Allah also says, “*And Allah has given you wives of your kind and has given you, from your wives, sons and grandsons*” [The bee, 16: 72].

Many verses also prove the brotherhood and common parentage of mankind. The woman is, therefore, the sister of the man. They both descend from the same father and mother. Allah says:

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

Since we are all brothers and sisters descended from the same mother and father, nobody should claim superiority over the other based on his or her colour, race, language, or country of origin. These should not be the criteria to assess a human being. Piety is indeed the only criterion: “*Verily, the most honourable of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you*” [The Private Apartments, 49: 13].

Islam has liberated women from the curse which was falsely attributed to them and the conviction of committing the original sin. The glorious Qur’an makes it clear that both Adam and Eve

[1] Al-Imam Yahya bin Sharaf Ibn Hazm al-Nawawi, Saheeh Muslim, Sharh Al-Nawawi, compiled by: Abdullah Ahmad Abu-Zeina, Vol.2, ‘Kitaab al-Janaaiz’, Cairo, Maktaba’at al-Sha’ab [no date], 2nd edition Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Zhyaa’ al-Turaath al-Arabi, 1392AH/ 1972.

were responsible for their expulsion from Paradise. The prohibition was directed to both of them, as Allah (Glorified be He) says in the Qur'an, "*And We said, 'O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in Paradise and eat both of you freely with pleasure and delight of things therein as wherever you will, but come not near this tree or you both will be of the wrongdoers.'* Then the Satan made them slip therefrom and got them out from that which they were...." [The Cow, 2: 35, 36].

Both of them disobeyed Allah and together were tempted by Satan. He whispered to both of them, contrary to the Biblical version in which Satan whispered to Eve and she tempted Adam. Allah says, "*Then Satan whispered suggestions to them both in order to uncover that which were hidden from them of their private parts. He said, 'your Lord did not forbid you this tree except that you should become one of the immortals'*" [The Heights, 7: 20].

2. MATERNAL RIGHTS

Rights for Maintenance, Breastfeeding, Upbringing and Education:

Allah has encouraged parents to rejoice at a female infant birth and look after her and be responsible for her upbringing and education. The father is responsible for the child's upbringing, whether male or female, even when the child is still an embryo in its mother womb. Therefore, in case of divorce, a pregnant wife is eligible for support for the child she is carrying. This maintenance is to be paid by the father to the mother until she gives birth. Allah says, "*And if they are pregnant, then spend on them until they deliver*" [Divorce, 65: 6].

After childbirth comes breastfeeding. During this period, the father is also responsible for his ex-wife if she consents to breastfeed their child. He has to ensure that the mother of his child is provided with healthy and nutritious food during breastfeeding. Allah says, "*And if, after that, they give suck to their children, give them their pay and consult together in all reasonableness*" [Divorce, 65: 6].

Interpreting the above verse, Ahmad Al-Maraghi says, "After the end of her waiting period [*iddah*], a divorcee has the right to either accept or refuse to suckle the child. If she chooses to suckle

the baby, she will be entitled to a remuneration paid by the child's father, her ex-husband. The amount should be discussed by the parents or the child's guardians. It is the father's responsibility to provide food and clothing for the child and mother." [1]

This is essential because the mother's milk is indispensable nourishment for the child. Allah has declared the breastfeeding period, and therefore mother's support, to be set at two years:

"Mothers shall give suckle to their children for two whole years, for him who wishes the suckling to be completed. They must be maintained and clothed in a reasonable manner by the father of the child" [The Cow 2: 233]. [2]

Islam also deals with children's custody issues, in case of separation. A child is in unceasing need of care, protection and maternal affection. Child custody is awarded to the mother. Abdullah bin 'Amr narrated, "A woman came to Allah's Messenger and said, "This child is the one whom I bore in my womb, who rested on my lap and suckled my milk. His father has taken him away from me." Allah's Messenger replied, "You have custody of this child as long as you do not re-marry." [3] Dr Muhammad Salaam Madkoor has written about the wisdom behind awarding young children's custody to their mother. This is because Allah has endowed her with endless affection towards her children. Maternal love incites her to devote herself to her children, and to protect and to look after them. She strives in doing this, overlooking hardship, weariness and fatigue. When a child reaches the age when he or she no longer requires feminine attention, he or she should be placed under complete supervision of a father or guardian. As a child matures, he or she will need someone to direct him and protect him from social corruption and religious

[1] Ahmad Mus'aa Al-Maraaghi, Tafseer Al-Maraaghi, [Al-Maraaghi's Explanation of the Quran], Vol. 28, Egypt, Mustafa Al-Babi & Son, not dated, p.146.

[2] Muhammad Salaam Madkoor, Al-Islam Wa al-Usrah Wa Al-Mujtama, [Islam, Family and Society], First edition, Cairo: Daar Al-Nahdah Al-Arabiyya, 1388 AH/1968, p.150.

[3] Abaadi and Al-Jawzia, op.cit, Vol. 6. P. 371.

deviation. The father or guardian is more suitable for this responsibility. [1]

3. RIGHT TO KNOWLEDGE

In Islam, knowledge of religion is obligatory for every Muslim man and woman. A deep respect for knowledge and those who possess knowledge is evident in the following verse. Allah says, *“Allah will raise to high ranks those that have faith and knowledge amongst you”* [The Women Who Pleads, 58: 11]. Allah speaks highly of scholars’ excellence and superiority over common people. He says, *“Are the wise and the ignorant equal? Truly, none will take heed but men of understanding”* [The Troops, 39: 9].

The first verse revealed to the Messenger also stressed the importance of knowledge: *“Read in the name of your Lord who created, created man from a clinging substance. Read! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One. Who taught [to write] with the pen, taught man what he did not know”* [The Clot, 96: 1-5].

The Muslim woman is responsible, just as a man, so she is also required to seek knowledge, whether it is “religious” or “secular” that will be of benefit to her. She recites the verse, *“... But say, O my Lord! Advance me in knowledge”* [Tâ Hâ, 20: 114] and hears the hadith, “Seeking knowledge is a duty on every Muslim.”[2]

A knowledgeable Muslim woman avoids all foolish superstitions and nonsensical myths that tend to fill the minds of ignorant and uneducated women. The Muslim woman who understands her religious teachings believes that consulting and accepting words of fortune-tellers, soothsayers, magicians and other purveyors of superstition and myths is a major sin that annuls the believer’s good deeds and spell doom for him or her in the Hereafter. Muslim reported from some of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) wives that he said, “Whoever goes to a fortune-teller

[1] *ibid.*

[2] A hassan hadith narrated by Ibn Majah, 1/81, in *Al-Muqaddimah*, bab fadl Al-‘ulama’ wa’l-hath ‘ala talab Al-‘ilm.

and asks him about anything, his prayers will not be accepted for forty days” [*Related by Muslim*].

Abu Dawud reports a hadith from Abu Hurairah that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Whoever goes to a fortune-teller and believes in what he says, has disbelieved in that which was revealed to Muhammad” [*Related by Abu Dawud*].

The Muslim woman does not let her household duties and burdens of motherhood avert her from reading widely, because reading is the source which will supply her mind with nourishment and knowledge for her to flourish and grow, thus increasing her intellectual abilities. We learn from the biography of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that the ransom of each of his captives in the Badr battle was to teach ten Muslims to read and write.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say, “Acquiring knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim.” The word “Muslim” in this narration refers to both Muslim men and women. Scholars have agreed that all commandments ordained by Allah apply equally to both men and women. ^[1]

Scholars of hadith did not stipulate that the narrator should be a man. Their criteria were based on the narrator’s intellectual capabilities, accuracy, righteousness and commitment to Islam. If these four conditions were present, the narration would be authenticated, regardless of the narrator’s gender. Therefore, hadith books flourish with the names of female narrators of the companions and those who came after them. Some of the scholars have devoted whole sections to narrations related by women, such as the book “*Attabaqat*” by Ibn Saad.

4. MARITAL RIGHTS

Her right to choose her husband

Islam has restored women’s dignity, given them freedom of choice, established their rights, and most importantly, given them the right to choose their husbands. Forcing a woman to marry,

[1] Huqooq Al-Nisaa’ fee Al-Islam: Muhammad Rasheed Ridah, p 18.

without her consent, is a violation of the Islamic *Shari'ah* and transgresses the Prophet's teachings. He (peace be upon him) said, "A matron should not be given in marriage except after consulting her; a virgin should not be given in marriage without taking her permission." The "matron" is a divorcee or widow. "Consulting her" means to ask her consent as, without it, her marriage is not valid. A "virgin" is a young woman who has never been married before. Her marriage is not valid without her permission or consent, and if she does not speak up and express her consent because of her timidity and modesty, her silence will be enough. Explaining this narration, Al-Nawawi says, "It means that she has a right to her person and her guardian also has a right to her person. However, her right is greater and more decisive. If her guardian wishes to give her in marriage to whom he considers to be suitable and she refuses, he cannot force her to marry him. On the other hand, if she wishes to marry someone suitable and her guardian refuses, he will be asked to consent to this marriage. If he does not, the judge will allow her to marry without her guardian's consent. Hence, her right is established and has predominance."

5. RIGHT TO SEEK EMPLOYMENT

Islam rewards labour, assiduity and hard work. It is the religion of sacrifice and giving. As Muslims, we are encouraged to work and undertake lawful jobs. Allah says, "*Do what you will, Allah will be see your works and so will His Apostle and the faithful*" [Repentance, 9: 105]. The wisdom behind the creation of mankind is revealed in the Qur'an. Allah says, "*He who has created life and death, so that We may test them as to which of them do best*" [The Sovereignty, 67: 2]. "*We have made that which is on earth an ornament for it, so that We may test them as to which of them do best*" [The Cave, 18: 7].

Al-Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal narrated, on the authority of Raafi' ibn Khudaij, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked about the best source of revenue. He replied, "Manual work and lawful trade." [1] Abu Hurairah narrated that Allah's Messenger

[1] Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Musnad Al-Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Vol.4, Beirut, Al-Maktab al-Islami, Daar Al Saader, P141.

said, "One would rather chop wood and carry a bundle of it on his back better than ask somebody who may or may not give him."^[1]

Islam has permitted women to undertake lawful professions and crafts which are not incompatible with their femininity or which abuse their dignity. Islam has allowed widows or divorcees to work during *idaah* [waiting period before second marriage, during which she is supposed to stay in her house] because if her work is necessary for her family and the Muslim nation in general, she is encouraged to carry on with her profession."

However, Islam has not made "work" an obligation upon women, since the general principle in Islam is to divide obligations and responsibilities between men and women, husband and wife. Man's obligation is to earn his living and provide for his children and women in his family [mother, wife and daughter].

On the other hand, a woman is primarily in charge of her children, husband and the management of her household. Islam has therefore made it an obligation upon the husband to provide for his wife so that she can devote her efforts and time to her important responsibilities at home. Indeed, divine wisdom manifests itself in this harmonious division of obligations and responsibilities. Allah has ordered the husband to provide for his wife, even though she is rich, and has ordered the state to take over this responsibility when she loses the provider.

Islam has granted women the right to independent business, trade, giving charity...etc., in cases of necessity or when a collective advantage can be gained, such as nursing, treating female patients, midwifery, educating young women, and other activities and social services involving women. A competent woman is encouraged to go out and meet the needs of her community, but only under the following conditions:

[1] Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, Fath Al-Baari bi Sharh Saheeh Al-Bukhari, compiled and edited by Abdulaziz ibn Baaz, Vol. 4, printed by Al-Matba'ah al Salafiyah, [no date], p 303.

- a. Her work must not consume her entire time and energy, thus preventing her from fulfilling her more important role as a wife and mother.
- b. Her career must not conflict with or remove her special natural functions.
- c. She should be able to exercise her profession with dignity and modesty, avoiding temptations and situations which might arouse suspicion and distrust. Indeed, many verses and Prophetic traditions enjoin women to do this as well as to avoid soft speech, perfume, and adornment while being outside.
- d. She should avoid mixing with men and being alone with one of them, since the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "No man should be alone with a woman except when there is a mahram with her." [1]

As long as the above conditions are observed, a woman has the right to seek employment. She can choose any career that corresponds to her abilities and natural disposition as a woman. However, a Muslim woman should not seek employment merely for the sake of it, overlooking her religious instructions and family responsibilities.

These stipulations may at first appear to be somewhat restrictive for working women in Islam; that is until we begin to look at the effects upon the family unity, marriage and children of working women in the West and USA without such limitations. 50% of women and 67% of men in monogamous relationships who attended marriage therapy have indulged in infidelity. Reports include finding that 40% of divorces are due to infidelity among the employed, opposed to the unemployed. The cause is attributed thus: "Today's careers offer more opportunity for extramarital affairs. Group interaction in workplaces, frequent travel, and long hours create more opportunity and temptation than ever. All of

[1] Al-Imam Yahya Ibn Sharaf Al-Nawawi, 'Saheeh Muslim-Sharh Al-Nawawi', compiled by Abdullah Ahmed Abu Zeina, Vol. 3 'Pilgrimage' p.489. *mahram* is the woman's husband or close relatives e.g. [father, brother, uncle, adult son]

these changes and others allow individuals to mix freely where once they were segregated and restricted.” [1] When considering these statistics, it is surely enough to realize that the restrictions ordained by Allah in Islam for working women are there for a good reason.

There are further proven reasons why work restrictions of Muslim women have been ordained within Islam. Women engaged in full time working careers, while also being wives and mothers, has a negative effect within marriages and upon children. In the USA in 2000, 33% of children had parents who both worked full time and “In some cases, long hours of employment among mothers with very young children have been associated with modestly negative child outcomes” [Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics – Child Indicators – Trends Child Databank]. It is important to look at the facts to see just how “moderate” the impacts and effects are. It is a fact that many thousands of school-age children across the West and the USA are returning home from school to an empty house while parents are still at work. When the parents arrive home, they are tired and exhausted and have little energy left to cook a meal and eat together, assist a child with homework, tend to the home, and, least of all, bond with each other or indeed to address the full needs of a child’s formative years.

In the UK such children are labelled as “Latchkey Kids” as they are invariably given a key, tied around their necks, to let themselves into an empty house with no parental supervision, and more often than not in the morning, parents leave for work before the child leaves for school, resulting in the child making their breakfast and getting themselves ready and off to school. Others are left with child carers, who often spend more time with these children than the parents themselves; thus, these children take on

[1] “Not Just Friends” by Dr Shirley P. Glass [Author], Jean Coppock Staeheli - Published 3rd Feb 2004.

the traits and influences of the carer rather than the parents themselves. The effects of being a latchkey child differ with age.

Loneliness, boredom and fear are most common for those younger than ten years of age. In the early teens, there is a greater susceptibility to peer pressure, potentially resulting in such behaviours as alcohol or drug abuse, sexual promiscuity and smoking. The behaviours might stem from unspent energy, peer pressure to misbehave, or hostility because of the lack of appropriate adult attention. ^[1] When both parents are working, without limitations, certain factors negatively impact a child's social and emotional development and affect the ability to bond with their parents. These factors result in issues like behavioural problems and poor academic performance. The quality and quantity of time spent in child-care settings may also impact development. A longitudinal study ^[2] found that teens who spent the most time in child-care settings [with nannies or other carers] were more likely to exhibit impulsiveness and risk-taking behaviours than peers who had spent less time in such care. These clear indicators are ignored for want of higher standards of living and luxury material possessions at the loss of a child's right to be raised with love, support, education, morals and ethics which enable them to turn into successful contributors toward the society in the future generations.

In Islam, a mother's significantly important role to take care of her husband and home is never considered demeaning. She is the primary carer and nurturer of children through their early formative years. She suckles them, educates them, teaches them good virtues, morals and behaviours, and provides the love, support and guidance every child needs at this time. She is also the supporter and carer of her husband, and in totality; she is the bond

[1] Barlow, David: Durland, V. Mark [2008]. *Abnormal Psychology: An Interrogative Approach*: Cengage Learning p. 414 [American Library Association [ALA]. Association for Library Services to Children's Division. "Latchkey Children", "In the public library". Chicago, American Library Association.

[2] *Wrinkles in Parental Time with Children: Work, Family Structure, and Gender* - Ronald E. Bulanda, Stephen Lippmann, Volume 13, Issue 1, 2009, pp. 5-20.

of the family unit. Given that her husband provides financially for the family and that she has the right to keep all monies she earns for herself despite being provided for by her husband, she places her employment willingly, and as ordained by Allah, second in priority to her husband and family. Without the restrictions of work that Islam places upon a woman, the family unit would break and the impacts on children, marriage, family and society would be negative and damaging, which has been demonstrated by the given examples. In Islam, a modest way of living with the necessities of life within a loving and supportive setting, rather than the want of high standards of living and the trappings of material possession, do not take precedence over the nurturing and raising of children or demean a woman's status.

6. RIGHT TO PROTECTION AND CARE

Islam came to correct a misconception, implement justice, and restore the dignity of women in society as human beings who contribute to building their society.

It has prohibited female infanticide, offered guidelines for the girls' upbringing to protect them throughout their lives, and stipulated for them mercy and love.

Islam has also obligated preventive regulations to further protect women from any defamation, humiliation and erroneous accusations. Islam has granted women the protection and security they need to lead a decent virtuous life that was prescribed by their Creator. Among these preventive regulations is Allah's granting women the right to wear modest clothes, or what is known as *hijab*.

Some people may wonder how lawful *hijab* can be considered to be an ethical right for women. For many, the *hijab* appears to represent repression and oppression, but for those who want to comprehend the divine wisdom that lies behind it, they will perceive why it is considered an ethical right. In Islam, a woman covers herself to protect herself from any potential threats to her honour and dignity.

Islam teaches that prevention is better than cure. It has therefore laid down a set of rules regarding the mixing of men and women. Addressing both sexes, but beginning with men, Allah says, “*Say to the believing men to turn away their eyes and to preserve their chastity. This is purer for them. Allah has knowledge of all that they do*” [Light, 24: 30], Then, similarly addressing women, Allah says:

“Say to the believing women to turn their eyes away [from temptation] and to preserve their chastity and not to show their beauty except such as normally appears; to draw their head covers over ‘juyubihinna’ [i.e. their necks and bosoms, etc.] and not to reveal their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands’ fathers, their sons, their step-sons, their brothers, their brothers’ sons, their sisters’ sons, their women, their slaves, male attendants lacking sexual desire, and children who have no knowledge of sex. And let them not stamp their feet [while walking] so as to reveal their hidden adornments. Believers, turn to Allah together in repentance that you may prosper” [Light, 24: 31].

Allah says, “*O Prophet! tell your wives and daughters and the believing women that they should cast their outer garments over their bodies [when abroad]: that is most convenient, that they should be known [as such] and not molested. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful*” [The Clans, 33: 59].

Allah has clearly ordered women to abide by certain rules:

- turn their eyes away from temptation,
- preserve their chastity,
- cover their adornments.

Regulations regarding *hijab* are revealed in a more general manner in Sûrat Al-Ahzâb, in which Allah says:

“O Prophet, enjoin your wives, your daughters and the wives of the true believers to draw their cloaks [jalaabeeh] all over their bodies. That is more proper, so that they may be recognised and not molested. Allah is Forgiving and Merciful” [The Clans, 33: 59].

A Muslim woman has the right to select any outfit as long as it fulfils the following requirements:

1. It covers the whole body, except that which has been excluded.
2. It must not be an ornament in itself.
3. It must be thick and non-transparent.
4. It must be loose and not stretched tightly over the body.
5. It should not be perfumed or scented.
6. It should not resemble the dress of men.
7. It should not resemble the dress of non-believers.
8. It should not be the dress of a celebrity.

Allah has made *hijab* an obligation upon every believing woman to protect her chastity and preserve her dignity. Indeed, the time has proven that adornment and free mixing of men and women only leads to general corruption and dissoluteness, which increased the prevalence of adultery, sexually transmitted diseases, illegitimate pregnancies and divorce. ^[1]

A woman does not sit alone with a “stranger”, as obedience to Allah and His Messenger is achieved by following their commands and keeping away from what they prohibited. She does not sit alone with a “stranger” [*ajnabi*], i.e., a man to whom she is not related, because doing so is prohibited according to the consensus of the scholars, based on the hadith, “A man should not sit alone with a woman unless a *mahram* is with her, and a woman should not travel without a *mahram*.” A man stood up and said, “O Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him), my wife has set out for Hajj and I have enlisted for such-and-such a military expedition.” He replied, “Go and perform Hajj with your wife” [*Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim*].

A *mahram* is a man to whom marriage is forever forbidden for a woman, such as a father, brother, paternal uncle, maternal uncle, etc. *Ajnabi* or “stranger” is a man to whom marriage is allowed in principle, even if he is a relative, especially a husband’s brother and other similarly close relatives. It is forbidden for a woman to sit alone with all of these because the Prophet (peace be upon him)

[1] Dr Muhammad Ali Albaar, *Amal Al-Mar’ah fi Al-Meezaan*, 1st edition, Madinah Al-Munawrah: Al-Daar al-Saudeeyah, 1401 AH/ 1981, p.136.

said, “Beware of entering upon women.” A man of the Ansar asked, “O Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him), what about the brother-in-law?” He replied, “The brother-in-law is death” [*Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim*].

A true Muslim woman avoids mixing with men as much as possible; she does not pursue it or encourage it, she would not wish to shake hands with anyone who is not her *mahram*, following the Prophet’s teaching and example. Al-Bukhari reports that Aisha said, “When believing women made Hijrah to the Prophet (peace be upon him), he would examine and test them, following the verse:

“O you who believe! When there come to you believing women as refugees, examine [and test] them’...” [She That Is to Be Examined, 60: 10]

Whoever accepted these conditions required of believing women has thereby accepted their allegiance. When Allah’s Messenger accepted their words, he told them [the women], “You may go now, for I have accepted your allegiance. By Allah, the Prophet’s hand (peace be upon him) never touched the hand of a woman; he accepted their allegiance by only words. By Allah, he never put any conditions on women other than those that Allah commanded him [to put], and when he had confirmed the allegiance, he would say, “I have accepted your allegiance by your words.” [1]

One of Islam rulings concerning women is that a woman should not travel without a *mahram*, because travel is full of dangers and hardships and it is not right for a woman to face all this alone without a *mahram* to protect and take care of her. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade women to travel alone without a *mahram*; this is recorded in numerous hadith, but it will suffice to quote just one of them here, “A woman should not travel for three days except with a *mahram*” [*Related by Al-Bukhari*].

[1] Fath al-Bari, 9/420, Kitab al-talaq, bab idha aslamat al-mushrikah aw al-nasraniyyah taht al-dhimmi aw al-harbi.

7. POLITICAL RIGHTS

Islam has conceded the important role of women in our society and its impact on political life. The following are some of these rights:

a. FREEDOM TO EXPRESS ONE'S OPINION

Mutual consultation is a methodology established for the creation of a successful nation, which invites its members to advise and consult one another. Allah says, *"And those who respond to their Lord and establish prayer, and whose affairs are a matter of counsel, and who spend of what We have bestowed on them"* [Counsel, 42: 38].

"Who conduct their affairs by mutual consultation", means that they do not issue any endorsements concerning matters such as wars or equally important affairs unless they consult and advise each other about them. ^[1] Allah says, *"...and ask forgiveness for them and consult them about the affairs..."* [The Family of 'Imran, 3: 159].

Since Muslims are directed to conduct their affairs by mutual consultation, it is a duty upon all Muslim men and women to express their opinion. They should do this if they feel that offering valuable advice and wise counsel to the Muslim nation is of benefit, and to comply with the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil. Allah says, *"Let there arise out of you a nation that shall call for righteousness, enjoin justice and forbid evil. It is those who are successful"* [The Family of 'Imran, 3: 104]. ^[2] Enjoining good and forbidding evil is a duty upon every Muslim man and woman. Allah says, *"The true believers, both men and women, are friends to each other; they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil; they attend to their prayers and pay the alms-tax and obey Allah and His Apostle"* [Repentance, 9: 71].

[1] Al-Imaam Al-Hafez Imaduddean Abu Al-Fiidaa Ismaa'eel Ibn Katheer, Tafseer al-Qur'aan Al-Adheem, Vol.4, Makkah Al Mukarramah, Beirut, Daar al-Haaz, Abbas Ahmad Al-Bax, Daar al-Marifah, 1388 AH/1969, p 118

[2] Abi Abdullah Muhammad bin Al-Qurtubi, Aljuami Ahkaam Al-Qur 'nan, Vol. 7, Beirut, Daar Zhyaa Al-Turath Al-Arabi, (no date), Cairo, Daar al-Shaa'b, Kitaab al Shaa'b 0.2, Al-Qasr al-Ayni (no date), p 5856

Surah At-Tawba, which was the last Surah to be revealed, establishes that enjoining good and forbidding evil is a duty upon every Muslim man and woman. Allah (Glorified Be He) says, "*The true believers, both men and women, are friends to each other. They enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil; they attend to their prayers and pay the alms-tax and obey Allah and His Apostle*" [Repentance, 9: 71]. Enjoining good and forbidding evil is manifested in speech, action and written commands to forbid what is unlawful and establish righteousness.

It is narrated on the authority of Tamim Ad-Daari that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) stated, "Religion is *Naseeha* [sincerity and well-wishing]." Upon this, the Companions said, "For whom?" He replied, "For Allah, His Book, and His Messenger, leaders, and the general Muslims."^[1]

Imam Abu Sulaiman Khattabi said, "*Naseeha* is a comprehensive term which stands for all virtues and deeds for which counsel is given. *Naseeha* for Allah implies that one should possess sincere belief that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone and no partner is to be associated with Him. *Naseeha* in Allah's book means it should be sincerely believed as a revelation from the Lord. *Naseeha* for the Messenger signifies his prophethood must be affirmed with perfect sincerity in the heart. *Naseeha* for the leaders and rulers implies they should be respected, obeyed, advised, and given support in all affairs they conduct according to Islamic jurisprudence and reminded and brought to the straight path when they deviate from it. *Naseeha* for Muslims is they should be advised in all matters concerning good in this world and hereafter, their life, honour and dignity should be protected, and a sincere endeavour should be made to enhance their religion understanding."^[2]

Freedom to express one's opinion is guaranteed in Islam as long as this opinion is expressed for the nation's general welfare and does not lead to a greater evil being imposed on Muslims, in

[1] Al-Nawawi, op.cit. Vol.1, "Kitab Al-Imaan", p 237

[2] *ibid.*

general, or to *fitnah* (discordance) being developed amongst themselves. On this basis, Islam has encouraged men and women to express their opinions and speak freely, without fear or reluctance. Islam does not delegate this duty to a specific group or race. It is a duty upon every Muslim who wants to apply the principles of mutual consultation to enjoin good and forbid evil.

Consequently, Muslim women have always had the right to express their opinions and to offer their advice. The Prophet (peace be upon him) listened to their counsel and very often acted upon it. One famous example is an incident that took place after the Prophet (peace be upon him) had signed the Hudeybiyah Treaty.

When the peace treaty had been concluded, the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered his companions to slaughter their sacrificial animals, but they resented this treaty and were too depressed to obey the Prophet's order. The Prophet (peace be upon him) repeated the same instruction three times, but to no avail. He (peace be upon him) then went and told his wife Umm Salâmah about his companions' attitude and disobedience to him. She advised him to go out without addressing any of his people, slaughter his animal, and have his head shaved. Seeing that, the Muslims started to slaughter their animals and shave their heads. [1]

The above-mentioned incident is an example of how a woman's advice was given and acted upon for the good of the Muslim nation. The freedom to express one's opinion applies to every member of society, regardless of age, social status and gender.

[1] Al-Haafez Abi Abdullah Muhammad Al-Qizwini, Sunan Ibn Mitjah, texts compiled by: Pu'aad Abdulbaaqi, Vol.2, Daar Zhyaa al-kutub al-Arabeeyah, Abbas Al-Baaki & Co. 1372 AH/1955, p.957. Imam Muhammed bin Muhammed bin Salmaan, Jam 'Al-Fawaa 'id minjaami' Al-Ifsool ma Majmaa 'Al-Zawaa 'id, (Collecting Benefits from the Compiler of Fundamentals and the Collection of Additions). Kitab Al-Iman, Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah, printed by: Abdullah Hashim Al-Yamani Al-Madani, 1381 AH/1961

‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), the second Caliph who was renowned for his passionate character, noticed that his people were asking for excessive amounts of dowry and he feared the consequences. He stood on the pulpit and started his sermon by severely reprimanding the people and ordering them not to exceed a certain amount of dowry. He then ordered the people who had done so to put the excess in the Muslims treasury. On hearing this order, a woman amongst the crowd stood up and shouted, “O ‘Umar! Have you not heard what Allah Almighty has revealed regarding this matter? He says, *‘If you wish to take a wife in place of a divorced one, do not take from her the dowry you have given her even if it be a mountain of gold. That would be improper and grossly unjust’*” [4:20]. Being reminded of this verse, ‘Umar withdrew his order and said, “I am wrong and she is correct.” [1]

Surah Al-Mujadilah (The Disputation) unfolds the story of a woman who disputed with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and advocated her rights, refusing her husband’s ill-treatment. Allah heard her complaint and revealed the following: “*Allah has heard the words of her who pleaded with you concerning her husband and made her complaint to Allah. Allah has heard the arguments of both of you. Verily, Allah is All-Hearer, All-Seer*” [The Women Who Pleads, 58: 1].

Consequently, on the basis of the Qur’an and the tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him), freedom to express one’s opinion is an established right to be enjoyed by every Muslim woman as long as she abides by the rules and regulations of her religion in exerting this right, as we have seen from the above-mentioned examples.

b. Security while practising political roles

For believing women who emigrate from a country of disbelief and embrace Islam, Islam has ensured protection and ensured her care, thus adding another advantage to the list of women’s rights. Allah has ordered the believers to help women

[1] Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 126. This quotation is part of a long narration by: Al-Messwar bin Makhramah

who have left their homes, escaping persecution in the disbelievers' land and wishing to join the Islamic community by accepting Islam as their religion. Allah has ordered us to shield and protect such women, to help their integration into society, to guard them against disbelieving parents and relatives, to pay compensation to their husbands if necessary, and finally to provide them with a dignified and tranquil existence. Allah says:

“Believers, when believing women seek refuge with you, test them. Allah knows best their faith. If you find them true believers, do not return them to the unbelievers; they are not lawful for the unbelievers nor are the unbelievers lawful for them. But hand back to the unbelievers what they have spent. Nor is it an offence for you to marry such women provided you give them their dowries” [60: 10]. We conclude the following:

1. It is an obligation to protect, safeguard, and uphold Muslim women rights.
2. It is a duty to guard believing women from unbelievers who otherwise would seek revenge through them. It is a duty to pay compensation to emigrant women's husbands if they ask for it.
3. Emigrant women have the right to re-marry and to ask for dowries.

Some writers have made an analogy between these rights and the status of political refugees. However, the differences are great and obvious. Firstly, the above rights are granted by Allah to “all” emigrant women who embrace Islam, regardless of their race, colour or nationality. The status of political refugees is given to “some” people who very often are politically or militarily involved. Secondly, a believing woman would never be returned to her unbelieving relatives, but a political refugee can be returned to the enemy whenever and however the host country requires, depending on the fluctuation of the overall political situation. Thirdly, the Muslims pay compensation to the husbands of emigrant women. This does not apply to any political refugee in any country. There is no comparison between man-made international laws and the divine legislation ordained by the Lord

of the Heavens and Earth for the welfare of mankind. I aim to illustrate advantages that Muslim women are able to enjoy under Islamic Jurisprudence legislation. These legislations have dignified, honoured and given women immense protection, thus enabling them to lead tranquil and respectable lives. Moreover, after studying the evolution of International Law from the dawn of civilization until the 20th century, I have not encountered any legal right which equals the rights given to an emigrant Muslim woman.

c. Pledge of allegiance

Equity and justice are further manifested in Islam when we learn that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would receive an oath of allegiance from both men and women. They would pledge to worship Allah alone and obey His Messenger (peace be upon him). Allah says: *“O Prophet, if believing women come to you and pledge to associate in worship nothing with Allah, to commit neither theft, nor adultery, nor child-murder, to utter no monstrous falsehoods, nor disobey you in what is right, then accept their allegiance and ask Allah to forgive them. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful”* [60: 12]. The above verse was revealed after the Hudeybiyah treaty. Accordingly, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to test the believing women who emigrated to him. ‘Urwa narrated that ‘Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), the Prophet’s wife, said, “Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) used to examine believing women who emigrated to him, in accordance with this verse:” [1]

‘Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said, “And whoever of the believing women accepted the conditions assigned in the verse, Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) would say to her, ‘I have accepted your pledge of allegiance.’ He would only say that, for, by Allah, his hand never touched any woman during the pledge of allegiance. He did not receive their pledge except by saying, ‘I have accepted your pledge of allegiance for that.’”

On the day of the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) received the pledge of allegiance from men as well as

[1] Ibn Katheer, op. cit. Vol 1, p. 468

women, whom he (peace be upon him) regarded as independent and active members of the Islamic nation. They came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and pledged to accept Islam as their religion, to worship Allah alone and associate no partners with Him, to respect Allah's prescribed limits, and to avoid the unlawful, such as adultery, theft, killing and other crimes. They also pledged to obey the Prophet (peace be upon him), to oppose none of his orders, to be quick in obeying him, and to avoid what he had not allowed. This pledge of allegiance, with the commitment and responsibility it involved, could not but reflect the independent and important role played by women in Islam. The pledge involved a number of conditions. They are as follows:

1- Associate in worship nothing with Allah: Indeed, to associate partners with Allah is the greatest sin that will never be forgiven. Allah (Glorified be He) says, "*Allah will not forgive setting up partners with Him and He will forgive whom He wills all other sins*" [4:116], and, "*He that worships other gods besides Allah shall be forbidden Paradise by Allah, and his abode shall be in the Fire*" [5: 72].

2- Not steal: A woman who steals shall have her hand cut off. Theft refers to stealing in general.

3- Not commit fornication or adultery: Indeed, adultery is one of the ugliest sins and can lead to severe punishment. Allah has warned women and ordered them not to be tempted into unlawful sexual intercourse.

4- Not murder their children: In the pre-Islamic period of ignorance, people used to murder their female children. Islam aimed to put an end to that pagan practice. Abortion is one way of murdering a soul, especially if it is done for trivial, personal and non-medical reasons. Therefore, abortion may only be carried out if the mother's life or health is threatened by the pregnancy. Ibn Hajar said, "Allah has specified infanticide in particular because it involves two crimes at the same time: murdering a human soul as well as cutting a relation of one's womb." [1]

[1] Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, op. cit., Vol 8, p. 636

5- Utter no monstrous falsehood: The literal phrase is “between their hands and legs”. This is an allusion to pregnancy and childbirth. The above words, therefore, mean a woman should not produce any lie that they have devised falsely attributing the paternity of her illegitimate children to her lawful husband, thus intentionally uttering slander and forging falsehood, and thereby adding to the monstrosity of her original sin. Ibn Hajar said, “Allah has specified the hands and feet because most of our deeds, good or bad, are carried out by them.” [1]

6- Not disobey the Prophet (peace be upon him) in anything just: All the Prophet’s orders should be obeyed and his guidance followed. Indeed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has forbidden evil and enjoined all that is good. Therefore, everything he has forbidden should be avoided.

When granting women the right to give their pledge of alliance, Islam has also granted them the right to discuss and seek a full understanding of its binding conditions. Indeed, women have the right to question and express their opinions, especially in matters related to their religion. The Prophet (peace be upon him) accepted women’s pledge of allegiance and treated men and women equally while doing so. ‘Ubaadah bin As-Saamit narrated, “While we were with the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said, ‘Will you swear to me the pledge of allegiance that you will not worship anything besides Allah, will not commit illegal sexual intercourse, and will not steal?’

Then he recited the verse concerning women. The Prophet [pbAbuh] added, ‘Whoever among you fulfils his pledge will receive his reward from Allah, and whoever commits any of those sins and receives legal punishment (*Qisaas*), his punishment will be an expiation for that sin; and whoever commits any of those sins and Allah screens him, then it is up to Allah to punish or forgive him.’”

[1] Ibid, Vol I, p. 64

8. RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN JIHAD

Jihad was made a duty upon the Muslims in the year 2 AH. Allah (Glorified be He) says in the Qur'an, "*Fighting is decreed for you, much as you dislike it. But you may hate a thing although it is good for you, and love a thing although it is bad for you. Allah knows, but you do not*" [The Cow, 2: 216].

Jihad comes next in importance after religious obligations. Ibn Mas'ood narrated, "I asked the Prophet [pbAbuh] 'Which deed is most loved by Allah.' He [pbAbuh] replied, 'To offer prayers at their earliest stated times.' I said 'What is next?' The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, 'To be good and dutiful to one's parents.' I asked 'What is next?' The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, 'To participate in Jihad for Allah's cause.'" [1]

There are seven conditions for Jihad: Accepting Islam as religion, adulthood, good understanding, freedom, manhood, freedom from disabilities, and the availability of the cost. 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), the mother of the believers, narrated, "I asked the Prophet [pbAbuh] if women were to participate in Jihad and He [pbAbuh] replied, 'For you there is a jihad without fighting: *Hajj and Umrah*.'" [2]

Jihad is a collective duty:

Ibn Qudaamah says, "Jihad is a duty upon the Muslims. If one group is already fighting the enemy and protecting the land, this duty ceases to be an individual duty. If not, Jihad remains an obligation upon every Muslim, since Allah (Glorified be He) says,

"The believers who stay at home, apart from those that suffer from a grave impediment, are not equal to those who fight for the cause of Allah with their wealth and their persons. Allah has given those that fight with their wealth and their persons a higher rank than those who stay at home. He has promised all a good reward" [4: 951].

[1] Al-Tabaari, op. cit., Vol 28, p 51

[2] Ibid, Vol 8, p. 638

Jihad is also an individual duty:

When the enemies invade a Muslim land, every Muslim should go out in order to fight and repel them. In this situation, the woman is allowed to go out without her husband's permission, the child without his father's permission, and the slave without his master's permission. Allah says, "*Whether slightly or well-equipped, march on and fight for the cause of Allah, with your wealth and your persons*" [Repentance, 9: 41]. In such situations in which human life and property are endangered, Islam invites men and women to work together for the restoration of peace and harmony. ^[1]

Jihad has not been made a duty upon women because it is they who give birth to soldiers who fight in Jihad. A woman is more physically and psychologically prepared for that. She possesses a natural disposition that helps her prepare her sons to fight their way through life as well as in jihad. By doing so, she renders a better service. ^[2]

The divine wisdom has decreed that women should devote themselves to their vital duties for the survival of the nation. They are first of all mothers and guardians of their houses. These are permanent duties, which do not cease when their husbands go out for jihad. Their children will always need protection and the care of their mothers, and homes will always need their guardians. This important fact was pointed out by an Ansari woman, Asma bint Yazeed, when she said to the Prophet [pbAbuh], "When you go out to fight in Jihad, we, the women, will spin your clothes, bring up your children, and guard your wealth." Women can also participate in fighting when *jihad* becomes an individual duty. The female Companions did this whenever they were in danger or witnessed the heat of the battle. Some of them fought with swords in the battle of Ohud when the Muslims unexpectedly faced their enemy and the Prophet [pbAbuh] was surrounded by only a small number of soldiers at the time.

[1] Al-Imam Shamsuddeen Ibn Qudamah, Al-Mughni wa Al-Sharh Al-Kabeer, Vol 10, new edition, Beirut, Daar Al-Kitaab Al-Arabi, 1392 AH/1972, p. 366

[2] Ibid, p. 365

When the female Companions saw that the life of the Messenger was in danger and Islam and all the Muslims were threatened, they rushed forward to protect the Prophet [pbAbuh]. In Umaarah Nusaibah bint Ka'b pulled out her sword to protect the Prophet [pbAbuh], stood against the unbelievers, and fought vigorously. Ibn Hisham said, "Umm Umaarah Nusaibah bint Ka'b fought in the battle of Uhud."^[1]

Imam Al-Nawawi said, "The women would accompany their husbands in the military expeditions and distribute water and treat the injured during the battles."^[2] The following narration also confirms that women participated in jihad. Imam Al-Nawawi said, "During the military expeditions, several tasks were delegated to women, such as distributing water, nursing the injured, etc. Every woman would nurse her husband or her mahram. When treating other people wounds, they would limit physical contact to the strict minimum and absolute necessity."^[3] They were all true believers who possessed a sound knowledge of their religion and respected the limits set by Allah. Ar-Rabee' bint Mu'az narrated, "We used to take part in holy battles with the Prophet (peace be upon him) by providing the people with water and other services as well as bringing the killed and the wounded back to Madīnah."^[4]

9. RIGHT TO GIVE SANCTUARY

In Islam, women, as well as men, have the right to offer shelter to anyone, even an idolater or an enemy of war. Allah (Glorified be He) says, "*If an idolater seeks asylum with you, give him protection so that he hears the Word of Allah, and then convey him to safety for they are ignorant people*" [Repentance, 9: 6].

[1] Mahmood Shaltoot, Al-Islam Aqidah wa-Sharee'ah, [Islam as a Creed and Legislation], 2nd edition, Jeddah, Daar Al-Shurooq 1390 AH p. 228.

[2] Abi Muhammad Abdulmalik bin Hishaam Al-Aamiri, As-Seerah An Nabamyyah, The Prophet's Biography, edited, corrected and commented by: Taaha Abdul Ra'oof Sa'ad, Vol 3, new edition, Beirut, Lebanon, Daar Al-Jeel, 1975, p. 29.

[3] Al-Asqalaani, "Path al Baari", op. cit., p.58

[4] Al-Nawawi, op. cit., Vol 12, "Kitaab Al-Jihad was-Seeyar", p. 190

Islam has given women the right to grant asylum and protection to the enemy. Umm Hani, the daughter of Abu Talib, narrated in an authentic tradition, "I went to Allah's Messenger on the day Makkah was liberated. I said, 'O Allah's Messenger! My brother Ali has declared that he will kill a man to whom I have granted asylum. The man is so-and-so bin Hubaira.' Allah's Messenger said, 'O Umm Hani! We will grant asylum to the one whom you have granted asylum.'" [1]

In this way, the Prophet [pbAbuh] bound every Muslim to respect the pledge given by a Muslim woman, to consent to her wishes, and to not harm the person to whom she has offered shelter and protection, even if this person is condemned to death. At-Tirmidhi related that Umm Hani said, "I granted asylum to some men among my relatives and the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'We will grant asylum to whom you have granted asylum.'" [2] In man-made laws and throughout the centuries, even men did not enjoy this right, let alone women. Granting her such a privilege, acknowledges the equality of men and women and gives each woman the opportunity to be an active and valuable member of society.

WOMEN AND POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY

This applies to the Caliph of the state, Emir of the province, the army commander, etc. Based on the principle of "division of duties and responsibilities", [3] such positions of authority can only be assumed by men. Allah Almighty created men and women with different physical and psychological predispositions to prepare them for their different yet equally important roles in society. If a woman were to assume a position of authority, she would be required to travel constantly in order to fulfil her duties; her job

[1] Al-Asqalaani, *Path al Baari*, op. cit., Vol 6, p. 195.

[2] Al-Tirmidhi, op. cit., p. 141 Al-Tirmidhi said: "This hadith is hassan saheeh (authentic)".

[3] Dr Abdulwahaab Ash-Shishaani, Huqnoq Al-insaan ma Huriyaatuhu: **Asaaseeyah** Fi al-Nidhaam Al-slaami wal Nudhum Al-Mu'aasirah, [Man's Rights and Basic Freedoms in the Islamic and Modern Laws], 1st edition, 1400 AH/1980, p. 689

would also involve long hours of mixing freely and social interaction with the opposite sex, which is forbidden in Islam.

Indeed, Islam would have never denied this right to women were it not for the general benefit of the nation. The divine wisdom has decreed that a woman's natural and primary career is her home with her children and that men should provide for their families. Both responsibilities require full attention and complete devotion. Nevertheless, women can occupy less strenuous executive positions which do not conflict with their natural and primary roles as mothers and wives.

Umar ibn Al-Khattâb (may Allah be pleased with him), the second Righteous Caliph, appointed Ash-Shaffaa' bint Abdullah Al-'Adawiyya as manager of the sooq (market). [1] Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) would listen to her advice. He may have delegated such responsibilities to her because she had mastered writing, possessed vast knowledge and was a virtuous woman.

10. ECONOMIC RIGHTS

Right to ownership is established in the Qur'an and Sunnah and includes the right to possess moveable property, real estate, farm land...etc. Allah says, *"And do not wish for the things in which Allah has made some of you excel others. For men there is reward for what they have earned and for women there is reward for what they have earned, and ask Allah of His Bounty. Surely, Allah is Ever Knowing of everything"* [Women, 4: 32].

The verse forbids covetousness, envy and jealousy. It promises men rewards for the good things they have earned and gained. Likewise, the verse promises women rewards for the good things they have earned and gained. The verse also establishes that Allah Almighty is the One who bestows His favours upon mankind; that men and women should ask His forgiveness and rewards; and that Allah is the Knower of everything. This verse mustn't be separated from the three verses that precede it:

[1] Al-Asqalaani, Path Al-Baari, op. cit., Vol 13, p. 46.

“O you who believe! Devour not your property among yourselves unjustly, but it should be a trade amongst you by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves. Surely, Allah is most Merciful to you” [4:29]. “And whoever commits that through aggression and injustice, We shall cast him into the Fire, and that is easy for Allah” [4: 30]. “If you avoid the great sins from which you are forbidden, We shall remit from you your misdeeds and admit you to a Glorious Entrance” [4: 31].

In the above verses, Allah Almighty warns mankind from consuming the properties of one another. Verse [4: 32], therefore, would logically refer to women’s eligibility to lawful ownership, investment and earnings and the sanctity of their property as such. [1] Other verses have also established women’s eligibility to own things. Allah (Glorified be He) says, *“and offer prayer and give Zakat (Alms- tax) and obey Allah and His Messenger...”* [The Clans, 33: 33]. In this verse, Allah orders women to pay Zakat, which in itself is proof that women can own property etc.

“For Muslim men and women; for believing men and women; for devout men and women; for men and women who are patient; for men and women who humble themselves; for men and women who give charity; for men and women who fast; for men and women who guard their chastity; for men and women who remember Allah much—for them all, Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward” [The Clans, 33: 35]. In this verse, Allah praises women who give charity. Ibn Katheer says, “Charity is given to the poor and people with disabilities who cannot earn their bread and do not have a bread-winner. Excess money should be given to those people as an act of charity and beneficence towards Allah’s creation.” [2] Hence, if women did not possess the right to ownership, they would have not been able to give charity and Allah would not have praised them for doing so. Allah also says, *“O you who believe! Spend of the good things which you have earned.”*

This is an order for the Muslims, men and women, to spend from their earnings. Ibn Katheer said, “to spend’ means to give in

[1] Muhammad Izzat Daroozah, "AI-Tafseer Al-Hadeeth", (see p.90, #32 for full information), Vol.6, p.63.

[2] Ibn Katheer, op. cit. Vol.4, P-488

charity. Ibn ‘Abbas said, “Of the good things which you have earned” means from the wealth you possess. Mujahid said it means from the profit which Allah has made easy for them to gain in trade. Ali and As-Sudi said it means good things, such as gold, silver, fruit and crops bestowed by Allah upon mankind. Islam has made every woman a mistress of her property and made her eligible for inheritance after she had been denied this right in the pre-Islamic period of ignorance. ^[1]

Allah established rules of inheritance by revealing to mankind His laws of inheritance in [2:267]. In this verse, Allah urges everyone by saying,

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

Allah has also established women’s right to a dowry. He says, *“Give women their dowries as a free gift”* [Women, 4: 4]. He then says,

“..do not take from her [the dowry] what you have given her, even if it be a heap of gold. That would be improper and grossly unjust” [Women, 4: 20].

Indeed, there are many Qur’anic injunctions and narrations which prove that women are legally eligible to own property. They also have the right to trade, to bargain, to manumit slaves, to give guarantees, to give charity, to give counsel, to delegate, to contract...etc. Ibn Hazm said, “A woman has the right to sell as soon as she reaches puberty. This includes the adult whose father is alive, the adult whose father is dead, the married woman, divorcee and the widow; they all have right to sell and buy.” ^[2]

Donations or alms given by a married woman, an unmarried woman whose father is living, an orphan girl, a person received in a transaction, one who is sick, and one who is on the brink of death, as well as those given by an unmarried orphan girl, are similar to those given by a free-born man. ^[3] Consequently, a

[1] Ibid. Vol 1, p.321.

[2] Ibn Hazm, Vol. 9, p.54.

[3] Ibid. p. 160.

woman, whether married or unmarried, has the right to ownership and the right to dispose of her property. Her property does not have to be placed under the guardianship of her husband, because being a woman does not entail such financial restrictions. This opinion is held by the major schools of thought. ^[1]

Therefore, we can conclude that women in Islam are fully eligible to own property and they also have the right to dispose of their money without their husband's permission. This, of course, applies only when a woman has reached puberty and her adulthood is discerned. However, she may ask for her husband's consent as an act of kindness and respect. Moreover, Islam allows women to spend, wisely and without being extravagant, from their husband's money without their husbands' prior permission.

11. RIGHT TO MAINTENANCE

Islam has provided effective social security for women by securing for them provisions and means of support throughout their lives. These provisions are to be provided by the father, husband or son. Islam has also exempted women from all financial responsibilities and at the same time, Islam has secured their civil and economic rights. A married woman possesses her fortune and be financially independent of her husband, who is responsible for providing for her and their household. Indeed, Islam has shown infinite care and mercy towards women by making their maintenance a duty upon their male relatives. This maintenance includes food, clothing and accommodation. When a baby girl is born, her maintenance is her father's duty, and when she marries, it becomes her husband's duty. If her husband dies, this duty is delegated to the son, and if she has no son, it is delegated to her closest male relatives.

It is clear from the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah that men should assume this responsibility. Allowance paid to the wife for her maintenance and that for the maintenance of children are

[1] Abdurrahmaan Al-Jazairi, *Al-Fiqh 'aalal-Madhaahih Al-Arba'ah*, Vol.2, p.352, (see p.116, #14).

usually mentioned together in the Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet [pbAbuh], and it is very difficult to treat them separately. I shall therefore quote arguments applying to both to prove that the maintenance of a young girl (and the maintenance of children generally), and the maintenance of a wife are duties of the father and husband respectively.

Allah says, "*Let the rich man spend according to his wealth and the poor man according to what Allah has given him*" [Divorce, 65: 7].

This verse makes fathers responsible for the maintenance of their children, whether male or female and each father should provide for his children according to his means. Ibn Katheer said, "The father or the guardian should spend on his children, the poor according to his means and according to what Allah has given him." Indeed, Allah does not burden a soul with more than it can handle. Allah says, "*Allah does not charge a soul beyond its capacity*" [The Cow, 2: 286].

In another verse, Allah (Glorified be He) says, "*Do not give the feeble-minded the property with which Allah has entrusted you for their support; but maintain and clothe them with its proceeds*" [Women, 4: 5].

Ibn Katheer said, "Allah has forbidden us to give control over property, wealth and businesses to those of weak understanding. Hence, children, the mentally ill and sick require the guardianship of a parent or a relative. The verse also mentions kindness towards family and the obligation upon the guardian to feed, clothe and offer good advice to those who are under his guardianship." [1] Obligations of the father and husband towards the family are clearly stated in the following verse:

"*Mothers.... must be maintained and clothed in a reasonable manner by the father of the child*" [The Cow, 2: 233].

This means that the husband should provide maintenance for the mother of his children. He should provide food and clothing according to the standards of the country they live in. In doing so,

[1] Ibn Katheer, op. cit. Vol 1, p.452.

he should be neither extravagant nor too thrifty. He should spend within his means, whether rich or poor. Ad-Dahak said, "If a man divorces his wife and she continues to suckle his child, he should continue to provide provision and clothing for her in a reasonable manner." [1] This verse indicates that alimony should be given to the divorcee as long she continues to suckle the baby. Besides paying alimony to the divorced mother and providing food for the child, scholars have deduced from the following verse that the husband should also provide accommodation. Allah says: "*Lodge them in your own homes, according to your means. Do not harass them so as to make life intolerable for them. If they are with child, maintain them until they deliver their burden; and if, after that, they give suck to their children, give them their pay and consult together in all reasonableness. But if you cannot bear with each other, let other women suckle for you*" [Divorce, 65: 6].

The verse states that the father should continue to provide maintenance and accommodation for his estranged wife if she continues to fulfil her main duty (suckling the baby). Ibn Katheer said, "Allah orders the believing men, in case of a divorce, to provide accommodation for their wives during their waiting period (*iddah*). "*Lodge them in your own homes*" means "*in your own dwelling*." [2]

The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "Fear Allah and treat your wives kindly. They have been entrusted to you by Allah and have been made lawful to you by the word of Allah, and it is your duty to maintain and clothe them reasonably." (Reported by Jaabir) With these words, the Prophet [pbAbuh] secured women's right to maintenance and provision throughout her life span. Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) also narrated that Hind bint 'Utba said, "O Allah's Messenger! Abu Sufyaan is a miser and he does not give me what is sufficient for my children and me. Can I take of his property without his knowledge?" The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "Take what is sufficient for you and your children, and the amount should be just and reasonable." [3]

[1] Ibid, p.283.

[2] ibid, Vol. 1, p. 491.

[3] Al-Asqalaani, "Tath Al-Liaari", op. cit., Vol. g. p.507.

Indeed, divine wisdom has decreed that men and women have different duties and responsibilities in life. A wife has to give birth, educate children, and supervise the management of her household. She is also a lawful companion for her husband. Divine justice has decreed that man should be responsible financially towards his family so that his wife will not need to strive and earn her living as well as fulfilling her numerous duties as mother and wife. He should maintain her by providing what she needs of food, drink, clothing and accommodation in a just and reasonable manner. It is the husbands' legal duty to do this, and if he neglects this responsibility, the wife has the right to ask for a divorce. ^[1]

DOWRY (MAHR OR SADAAQ)

This is a financial right for women. It is a present given by the groom to his bride at the time of marriage. In the pre-Islamic period of ignorance, this right was taken from women in different ways. The father or the guardian used to treat the marriage as a transaction in which the dowry constituted the retail price of the young woman. He would sell her to whomever he liked as long as he could get the price he wanted. An alternative practice was that of *Shighaar*. This was a type of marriage in which they would exchange daughters or sisters without a *mahr* since each woman was considered the *mahr* of the other. This was a transaction between two people where men were winners and women were losers, Islam abolished this type of marriage, unconditionally.

Islam has established sublime and glorious objectives for a marriage of two human beings. Islam has also established the dowry as an exclusive right for women. It is a legal financial right that nobody can violate. Allah says, “*And give to the women their mahr with a good heart.*” With these words, Allah has decreed that *mahr* is an obligation upon men towards their new wives.

It is a divine right granted and secured for all women by Allah, Who says, “*Wed them with the permission of their own folk and give them their mahr according to what is reasonable*” [Women, 4: 25]. This verse

[1] Ibn Qudaamah, op. cit., Vol. g, p.243.

means that a *mahr* should be given to the female bond slaves with willingness, justice and without discrimination with the free born women. [1]

Women of the Book also have the right to a *mahr* if a Muslim man intends to marry one of them. Allah (Glorified be He) says, *"Lawful to you in marriage are chaste women from the believers and chaste women from those who were given the Scripture (Jews and Christians) before your time, when you have given their due mahr"* [The Table Spread, 5: 5].

In this verse, Allah states that it is lawful for Muslim men to marry chaste and free born women from among the believers. This is a preamble to what follows: *"and chaste women from those who were given the Scripture before your time."* As they are chaste and pure, they should be given their *mahr* willingly and with a good heart. [2]

It is consequently an obligation upon the groom to give his bride the amount of dowry set at the time of marriage. If later he refuses to do so, his wife has the right to claim it and to take it from him against his will, unless his wife allows him a certain time to be able to gather the amount stated or discharges him from his obligation in consideration of his difficult financial situation or as an act of generosity and kindness. [3]

Allah says, *"...but it shall be no offence for you to make any other agreement among yourselves after you have fulfilled your duty. Allah is Knowing, Wise."*

This means that if after an amount of dowry has been set but the bride exempts her husband from the bridal money or a certain amount of it, she and her husband will not be committing a sin. The scholars have agreed that there is no limit concerning the value of the *mahr* since Allah says,

[1] Ibn Katheer, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 475.

[2] Ibn Katheer, op. cit., Vol.2, Surah The Table Spread, 5:5.

[3] Aboo Al-A'laa Al-Mawdoodi, Huqooq Al-Zawjeeyah, [Marital Rights], a critical study of "The law of Personal Affairs", translated by Ahmad Idrees, (MTU, Al-Mukhtaar Al-Islami, p.26, and Al-Jaza'iri Al-Fiqh 'ala Al-Mahaahib Al-Arb'ah, op. cit., Vol 4, p. 157.

“If you wish to have a wife in the place of a (divorced) one, do not take from her the dowry you have given her even if it be a heap of gold. That would be improper and grossly unjust” [Women, 4: 20].

Allah, the All-Wise, has prescribed *mahr* and made it a condition for the marriage contract to be valid so that the groom would realise his responsibility towards his bride and so that she would understand that it is his job and his duty to strive and provide, maintain, support, and sustain and look after her and their future family. This *mahr* is also a symbol of the fact that the wife deserves her husband’s devotion, sympathy, care and compassion, that he will assume his responsibilities, and support and assist her throughout their marriage. The *mahr* also symbolises the husband’s willingness and desire to seek this union. This indeed has a great impact on the bride herself.

Jabir narrated that the Prophet [pbAbuh] said in his farewell speech, “Fear Allah and treat your wives kindly. They have been entrusted to you by Allah and have been made lawful to you by the word of Allah.” [1] The *mahr* is consequently a right that honours women and symbolises the husband’s commitment to care and look after his wife throughout their marital life.

INHERITANCE

The status of women’s welfare in Islam is reflected by their eligibility for inheritance. This was a revolution in women’s rights at that time, since pagan Arabs and many ancient nations did not allow women to inherit. Inheritance was exclusively for men who, as they said, “Carried the swords, defended the tribe, and protected the land.” With the revelation of the Glorious Qur’an, such humiliation was eliminated. Allah says,

“O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women forcibly, and you should not treat them with harshness that you may take back part of the dowry you have given them” [Women, 4: 19]. Women have a legal share in the estate that is inherited, and this share is stated clearly in the Glorious Qur’an: *“There is a share for men and a share for women from*

[1] Al-Nawawi, op. cit. Vol.3, "Al-Hajj", P.344.

what is left by parents and those nearest related, whether the property be small or large—a legal share” [Women, 4: 7]. Islam has taken into account the practical obligations of each individual vis-a-vis his family, in particular, and his society, in general. The verses below explain and specify women’s shares of inheritance in different situations. Allah Almighty has revealed to people a fair and legal distribution of property among their children and relatives. He (Glorified be He) says: “Allah commands you as regards your children’s inheritance; to the male, a portion equal to that of two females; if there are only daughters, two or more, their share is two-thirds of the inheritance; if only one, her share is half. For parents, a sixth share of inheritance to each if the deceased left children; if no children and the parents are the only heirs, the mother has a third; if the deceased left brothers or sisters, the mother has a sixth. [The distribution in all cases is] after the payment of legacies he (the deceased) may have bequeathed or debts. You know not which of them, whether your parents or your children, are nearest to you in benefit. [These fixed shares] are ordained by Allah. And Allah is ever All-Knowing, All-Wise” [Women, 4: 11].

Another hadith has been reported regarding the revelation of the verses of inheritance. Jabir narrated that the wife of Sa’d bin Ar-Rabee came to Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] and said, “O Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh]! These are the two daughters Sa’d bin Ar-Rabee, the martyr who was killed on the day of Uhud. Their uncle has taken their money and left nothing for them. They will not marry if they do not possess any property.” The Prophet [pbAbuh] replied, “Allah will settle this question.” The verses of inheritance were then revealed.

The Prophet [pbAbuh] then readily sent a message to the girls’ uncle, saying, “Give two thirds to the daughters, one-sixth to the mother, and keep the rest for yourself.”^[1] Both narrations are authentic. It is immaterial to know after which of these two incidents the verse was revealed. What matters is the contents of the verse, in which Allah Almighty instructs parents concerning their children and presents to them laws of inheritance with set shares for each of their children.

[1] Al-Tirmidhi, op. cit., Vol.4, p.414.

Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, “During the early days of Islam, inheritance used to be given to one’s offspring and legacies used to be bequeathed to parents. Then Allah cancelled what He wished from that order and decreed that a male should be given the equivalent of two portions of a female, one-sixth for each of the parents, one-eighth for one’s wife (if the deceased had children) but one-fourth (if he had no children), and one-half for one’s husband (if the deceased had no children) but one-fourth (if she had children).” [1] The next verse reveals the set share ordained for the deceased’s wife. Allah (Glorified be He) says:

“In that which your wives leave, your share is a half if they have no child, but if they leave a child, you get a fourth of that which they leave after payment of legacies that they may have bequeathed or debts. In that which you leave, their share is a fourth if you leave no child, but if you leave a child, they get an eighth of that which you leave after payment of legacies that you may have bequeathed or debts. If the man or woman whose inheritance is in question has left neither ascendants nor descendants but has left a brother or a sister, each one of them gets a sixth, but if more than two, they share in a third, after payment of legacies he or she may have bequeathed or debts so that no loss is caused. This is a Commandment from Allah, and Allah is Ever-Knowing, Most-Forbearing” [Women, 4: 12].

“They ask you for a legal verdict. Say, ‘Allah directs [you] about Al-Kalaalah (those who leave neither descendants nor ascendants as heirs). If it is a man that dies, leaving a sister but no child, she shall have half the inheritance. If (such a deceased was) a woman, who left no child, her brother takes her inheritance. If there are two sisters, they shall have two thirds of the inheritance, and if there are brothers and sisters, the male will have twice the share of the female. Thus does Allah make clear to you (His Law) lest you go astray. And Allah is the All-Knower of everything” [Women, 4: 176].

It was not easy for Arab Muslims to overcome traditions they had inherited from their fathers to abide by Allah’s laws, especially when it came to giving to female children money that men had always inherited according to pagan laws. Divine laws of

[1] Al-Bukhari, op. cit., Vol.8, p.7.

inheritance were not readily welcomed and appreciated by the Arabs, due to the pagan culture and traditions embedded in their minds and hearts. They were astonished, even incredulous. They used to say to one another, “A woman is given a quarter or an eighth; a daughter is given half; even a young boy is allocated share, the one who does not fight the enemy or seize spoils!? Do not mention this verse at all, so that Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] may forger it; or shall we ask him to change it?” Some of them said. “O Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh]! Do you allocate to a daughter half the property of her father although she does not ride a horse nor fight people? Do you allocate a share for a young boy who does not make us any wealthier?” [1] However, the divine law must be enforced, and the divine will must be obeyed. Only then can women’s rights be protected. Laws of inheritance ordained by Allah have established justice and put an end to women’s oppression. This divine justice is based on principles of “division of responsibilities”, and “benefits according to responsibilities”, which have broad applications. Islam has exempted women from all financial responsibilities and has handed these responsibilities to men. Imam Al-Nawawi explained, “The divine wisdom has taken into account the heavy duties assigned to men, such as providing for the family, the guests, and the visitors, as well as consoling the beggar, paying financial penalties, and many other obligations. And Allah knows best.” Indeed, the authentic tradition of the Prophet [pbAbuh] confirmed and supported Allah’s commands in this respect. The following narration has dignified and honoured Muslim women uncompromisingly by preserving their right to inheritance. [2]

Sa’d bin Abi Waqqaas narrated, “I was stricken by an illness that led me to the edge of death. The Prophet [pbAbuh] came to visit me. I said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger! I have much property and no heir for me except my single daughter. Shall I give two-thirds of my property in charity?’ He said, ‘No.’ I said, ‘Half of it?’ He said, ‘No.’ I said, ‘One-third of it?’ He said, ‘You may do so though

[1] Al-Tabari, op. cit., Vol.8, p.32.

[2] Al-Nawawi, op. cit., Vol. 4, "Kitaab al-Faraa'id", p.137.

one-third is also too much, for it is better for you to leave your offspring wealthy than to leave them poor, asking others for help. And whatever you spend (for Allah's sake) you will be rewarded for it, even for a morsel of food which you may put in the mouth of your wife." Although S'ad had a daughter, the Prophet [pbAbuh] still protected and insisted on her right to her father's wealth and explained to Sa'd the wisdom behind his judgement. Therefore, it is evident that Allah secures women's rights by prescribing set shares for each condition of her life: as a daughter, a sister, a mother, or a wife.

Women's inheritance in Islam is apportioned according to the responsibilities enjoined on them by Allah. The discriminating notion between men and women in inheritance, that which people put forth claiming it to be evidence of Islam's demoralisation of women and the absence of equality between women and men, has been addressed. It has been proven—in response to the doubts concerning this idea—that differentiation in inheritance is not governed by masculinity and femininity, and that three criteria govern it:

1] Degree of the relationship between the inheritor, male or female, and the one to be inherited (the deceased): the closer the relationship, the greater the share in the legacy.

2] Position of the inherited generation, according to the time sequence of generations. Generations still facing a full life usually have a greater share in the legacy than the share of generations that are about to retire from life, regardless of the masculinity and femininity of the inheritors. The girl inherits more than the mother does, and both of them are females, but she inherits more than the father does! Moreover, the son inherits more than the father does, and both of them are males!

3] Financial burden that the Islamic law enforces the inheritor to fulfil towards others. This is the standard that produces a difference between males and females. "*Allah instructs you concerning [the inheritance of] your children: to the male the equivalent of the portion of two females*" [Women, 4: 11]. This is because the male heir here—in

the case of equal kinship and generation—is charged with supporting a wife, while the female heir is dependent on the male for her provision. Cases of this discrimination are minimal compared to the total number of cases of inheritance. With this Islamic logic, Islam has distinguished the female over the male with regards to legacy, and it is not unjust to the male; rather, the female enjoys financial protection that protects her from contingencies of time, events and days of weakness. Proportions are different because men have the full financial responsibility of supporting women, be they daughters, mothers, wives, sisters or other female relatives in the absence of husbands or guardians. Therefore, when one considers that Islam affords a woman the right to keep to herself all of her wealth, be she rich or poor, and that she will be financially provided for by Muslim men, it makes perfect sense and gives good valid reasoning to the absolute perfection of Allah’s command to proportion the legacy at a lesser amount for women than men. [1]

Cases of women’s inheritance are divided into four sections:

1. Women inherit half that of the men, which are four cases:

1. A sister when her brother is alive: *“Allah instructs you concerning [the inheritance of] your children: to the male the equivalent of the portion of two females”* [Women, 4: 11].
2. A mother when the father is alive and the deceased boy or girl has no husband, wife or sons: *“and if he had no son and his parents are his heirs, then to his mother belongs the third”* [Women, 4: 11].
3. A full sister and brother being alive, or the deceased having paternal half brothers and sisters: *“and if they be brothers and sisters, to the male is the equivalent of the share of two females”* [Women, 4: 176].

[1] The Woman’s Privilege Over Men in Inheritance and Alimony: A Juristic Study, by Salauddin Sultan and presented by Dr Muhammad Emara, first edition, 2004, p. 4. Sultan Publishing Co. Inc. USA.

4. The wife inherits half of what her husband inherits when one of them die: *“And to you belongs a half of that which your wives leave, if they have no child; but if they have a child, then to you the fourth of that which they leave, after any legacy they may have bequeathed or debt [they may have contracted, has been paid]. And to them (your wives) belongs the fourth of that which you leave if you have no child; but if you have a child, then the eighth of that which you leave, after any legacy you may have bequeathed or debt [you may have contracted, has been paid]”* [Women, 4: 12].

2. Cases where women inherit the same as men. They are eight cases:

- 1) Mother takes the same as the father when one or more daughters are alive, such as the deceased leaving a mother, a father, a husband and a daughter.
- 2) Maternal brothers and sisters: “If a man or a woman inherits in Kalalah (having left neither ascendants nor descendants) but has a brother or sister, each one of them a sixth; but if they were more than that, they are partners in the third” [Women, 4: 12].
- 3) A case that is known as a shared issue, which is the death of a woman who has a husband, mother, maternal brothers, maternal sisters and a full brother. In this case, the maternal sisters inherit the same as their brothers, both the maternal brother and the full brother.
- 4) If a man or woman is the sole heir, he takes the whole legacy and she takes a right as an enjoined duty and the rest by the method of Radd [return].
- 5) A full sister takes the same as a husband when a woman dies and leaves a husband and a full sister.
- 6) A maternal sister takes the same as a full brother, such as the death of a wife who leaves a husband, a mother, a maternal sister and a full brother.

- 7) An equal number of women and men who are never fully excluded from the legacy; they are husband and wife, son and daughter, father and mother, i.e., three males and three females.
- 8) The distribution among distant relatives concerning the inheritance when there are no sharers or residuaries. The inheritance is divided equally between the men and women, such as when the [maternal] uncle and [maternal] aunt are alive.

3. Cases when women inherit more than men:

It is essential to know that the *Shari'ah* has made specific cases when the legacy of women is more than the cases of men. The *Shari'ah* imposed 17 shares for women, while imposed only 6 Qur'anic shares for men, as follows:

- 1) Two-thirds, which is the largest share stipulated in the Qur'an, is the share of only women, and no share for men!!
- 2) Half of the legacy is given to a man: a husband when there are no descendants, but a woman inherits half in four cases. These are when she is one daughter, one son's daughter, one full sister, and one paternal sister.
- 3) One-third of the legacy is received by a mother when there are no descendants, or and by a maternal sister when there are two or more full brothers but no parents nor descendants.
- 4) One-sixth of the legacy is taken by five categories of women and three categories of men.
- 5) A quarter is obtained by the husband and the wife.
- 6) The eighth is the share of only the wife.
- 7) This, when it is applied to the division of legacy, means there are many cases when women take a larger share than men. For example, if a man dies leaving a wife, a mother, two maternal sisters, and two brothers, and leaves 48

thousand Dinars, the wife's share is 12 thousand. The mother's share is 8 thousand, the sisters' share is 16 thousand, and the brothers' share is 12 thousand. This means that the share of a sister is 8 thousand and a brother is 6 thousand. There are many other examples which are too many to cite in this article.

4. Cases where women inherit but men do not:

Especially when the grandmother inherits but not the grandfather when the grandmother is entitled to inheritance.

- 1) There are several cases in the division of the legacy when a man does not get a share, but if he were a woman, he would inherit!

For example, if a woman dies leaving a husband, a mother, a father, a daughter, and daughter of a son, in this case, the daughter of a son has a sixth; but if the woman leaves a son's son instead of a son's daughter, then his share will be zero because he is residuary who would inherit the remainder, but there is no remainder. ^[1]

[1] Kefayat Al-Foudala'a Fi Ilem Al-Fara'ad, by Mousa'ab Nabil Ibrahim, First edition, Al-Majed publishing,

Part II

WOMEN AND RELIGION

Do women have religious obligations?

Scholars have agreed that conditions that make a person responsible for their actions are: Islam, puberty and mental fitness. And there is no difference between men and women concerning these. Allah has addressed His commands to both men and women, since the dawn of humanity:

“We said, ‘O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the Garden; eat of the bountiful things therein as [where and when] you will, but approach not this tree or you will run into harm and transgression” [The Cow, 2: 35].

When Allah disapproved of their disobedience, He directed His blame to both of them: *“And their Lord called unto them, ‘Did I not forbid you that tree and tell you that Satan was an avowed enemy unto you?’* [The Heights, 7: 22].

Moreover, to establish women’s independence and equality with men in terms of religious responsibilities, their pledge of allegiance was taken separately. Allah says:

“O Prophet! When believing women come to you to take the oath of fealty to you, that they will not associate in worship any other thing whatever with Allah that they will not steal, that they will not commit adultery [or fornication], that they will not kill their children, that they will not utter slander, intentionally forging falsehood, and that they will not disobey you in any just matter; then do receive their fealty and pray to Allah for the forgiveness [of their sins]: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful” [She That Is to Be Examined, 60: 12].

The verses of the Glorious Quran are revealed to all human beings, men and women. This is clear from the recurrent evocative style of the Quran: “O mankind”, “O people”. Allah addresses all human beings of different races and languages, without differentiating between men or women, black or white, poor or rich, king or servant and regardless of any man-made hierarchy. The Glorious Quran was revealed for all human beings and all

times. Hence, Allah's commands, warnings and promises involve men and women, equally ^[1] the verses indicate that men and women are equal in terms of religious obligations Allah says:

"For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast [and deny themselves], for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise, for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward" [The Clans, 33: 35].

Allah has established the equality of men and women in terms of worship and commitment to religious rights and obligations. Similarly, the following verse compels both men and women to obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah says: *"For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast [and deny themselves], for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise, for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward"* [The Clans, 33: 36].

Calling others to Islam [*dawah*] is a duty upon every Muslim man and woman. Allah says, *"Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to righteousness, enjoining good and forbidding wrong, and such men shall surely triumph"* [The Family of Imran, 3: 104].

Allah (Glorified be He) has made it a duty upon all Muslims to enjoin good and to forbid evil, without differentiating between men and women in this very important religious duty. He (Glorified be He) also says: *"The believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another: they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practise regular charity, and obey Allah and His*

[1] Muhammad Shaloot, Tafseer al-Quraan Al-Kurecm, (The Explanation of the Holy Quran), 5th edition, Daar al-Shurooq, 1973, p. 113.

Messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise” [Repentance, 9: 71].

A true Muslim woman obeys Allah’s commands and does not forget that she is obligated to perform all the religious duties Allah has commanded. In this regard, her situation is equal to man and there is no difference except in a few regulations which apply exclusively to either men or women. Other than that, women and men are equally responsible before Allah. *“Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has faith, verily, to him We will give a new life, a life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions”* [The Bee, 16: 97].

“And their Lord has accepted from them and answered them: Never will I suffer to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female: you are members, one of another; those who have left their homes and were driven out therefrom and suffered harm in My cause and fought and were slain. Verily, I will blot out from them their iniquities and admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing beneath. A reward from the presence of Allah, and from His presence is the best of rewards” [The Family of ‘Imrân, 3: 195].

A true Muslim woman always bears in mind Allah’s words, *“It is not fitting for a believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His Messenger, to have any option about their decision: if anyone disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he is indeed on a clearly wrong path”* [The Clan, 33: 36]. Believing men and women are equally responsible for their obligatory acts of worship [prayers, alms, pilgrimage, etc.], with there being no difference between a man and a woman. Both are eligible for the corresponding supererogatory acts of worship [i.e. additional prayers, charity...].

A true Muslim woman always seeks to earn Allah’s pleasure in everything she does. Therefore, she measures all matters against this precise standard and will retain or discard any practice accordingly. Whenever there is a conflict between what pleases Allah and what pleases the people, she chooses what pleases Allah with no hesitation or argument, even if it will anger the people. She does this because she knows, due to her deep understanding of Islam and her common sense, that pleasing people is a goal that

can never be achieved and that it will only bring about Allah's wrath. The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "Whoever seeks Allah's pleasure at the risk of displeasing the people, Allah will take care of him and protect him from them. But whoever seeks the pleasure of the people at the risk of displeasing Allah, Allah will abandon him to the people's care" [*Related by Tirmidhi*].

Muslim woman's pride in her Islamic identity means that she will never be loyal to anything or anyone other than Allah, not even her husband or her father, who are among the closest people to her. A true Muslim woman understands the true meaning of being a servant to Allah and has a firm belief that she has been created to fulfil an important purpose in life, which Allah has defined in the Qur'an: "*I have only created jinns and men that they may serve Me*" [The Winnowing Wind, 51: 56].

A Muslim woman realises the importance of the acts of worship. She strives to establish Allah's rule on earth and follow the way of life that He has prescribed so that Islam will govern the individual's life, family, community and nation. A sincere Muslim woman endeavours to promote the supremacy of Allah's authority on earth, which is the only way mankind can truly worship Allah: "*I have only created jinns and men that they may serve Me*" [The Winnowing Wind, 51: 56].

The Muslim woman who understands her religion enjoins what is good and forbids what is evil, and reads the verse: "*The Believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another: they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practise regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise*" [Repentance, 9: 71], which Allah revealed fourteen hundred years ago. She finds herself on the highest level of intellectual and social status that any woman of any nation or race has ever known.

To be a real Muslim, every man and woman should fully submit to what is termed the six pillars of *Iman* "faith" which deal with beliefs and the five pillars of Islam which deal with rituals or acts of worship "*ibadat*".

FIRST: THE SIX PILLARS OF FAITH

The following hadith informs us about the pillars of faith that every Muslim should embrace.

On the authority of Ibn Umar, who said that Umar ibn al-Khattâb told him, “One day we were sitting in the company of Allah’s Apostle [pbAbuh] when there appeared before us a man dressed in pure white clothes, his hair extraordinarily black. There were no signs of travel on him. None among us recognized him. At last, he sat with the Apostle [pbAbuh]. He knelt before him, placed his palms on his (own) thighs and said, ‘Muhammad, inform me about Al-Islam.’ The Messenger of Allah [pbAbuh] said, ‘Al-Islam implies that you testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and you establish prayer, pay Zakat, observe the fast of Ramadan, and perform pilgrimage to the (House) if you are solvent enough (to bear the expense of) the journey.’ He (the inquirer) said, ‘You have told the truth.’ He (Umar ibn al-Khattâb) said, ‘It amazed us that he would ask the question and then he would himself verify the truth of the answer.’ He (the inquirer) said, ‘Inform me about Iman (faith).’ He (the Holy Prophet) replied, ‘That you affirm your faith in Allah, in His angels, in His Books, in His Apostles, and in the Day of Judgment, and you affirm your faith in the Divine Decree about good and evil.’ He (the inquirer) said, ‘You have told the truth.’ He (the inquirer) again said, ‘Inform me about Al-Ihsan (performance of good deeds).’ He (the Holy Prophet) said, ‘That you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, for though you do not see Him, He, verily, sees you.’ He (the enquirer) again said, ‘Inform me about the hour (of the Day of Resurrection).’ He (the Holy Prophet) remarked, ‘The One who is asked knows no more than the one who is inquiring (about it).’ He (the inquirer) said, ‘Tell me some of its indications.’ He (the Holy Prophet) said, ‘That the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress and master, and you will find barefooted, destitute goat-herds vying with one another in the construction of magnificent buildings.’” He (the narrator, Umar ibn Al-Khattâb) said, “Then he (the inquirer) went on his way but I stayed with him (the Prophet) for a long while. He then said to

me, ‘Umar, do you know who this inquirer was?’ I replied, ‘Allah and His Apostle know best.’ He (the Prophet) remarked, ‘He was Gabriel (the angel). He came to you in order to instruct you in matters of religion.’”

1. BELIEF IN ALLAH:

To believe in Allah’s divinity; that is: He is the Lord, the Creator, the Sovereign, and the Manager of all affairs. We believe in Allah’s godship, that is: He is the true God, and every other so-called deity is false. We believe in His names and attributes, that is: He has the most magnificent names and the sublime perfect attributes. We believe in His Oneness in all of this, that is: He has no associate in divinity, godship, names or attributes. Allah (Glorified be He) says in the Qur’an, *“He is the Lord of the heavens and the Earth and all that is in between them, so worship Him and be patient in His worship; do you know any equal to Him?”* [Mary, 19: 65].

To believe that He (Glorified be He) is: *“Allah there is no god but He, the Living, the Everlasting. Slumber does not seize Him, neither sleep; to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the Earth. Who is there that shall intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they do not encompass anything of His knowledge except what He wills. His throne extends over the heavens and the Earth, the preservation of them does not burden Him; He is the High, the Great”* [The Cow, 2: 255].

2. BELIEF IN HIS ANGELS:

To believe in the existence of the angels of Allah and that they are honoured servants. *“They do not speak before He does, and they act only by His command”* [The Prophets, 21: 26]. Allah created them, and they worship and obey Him. *“Those who are in His presence do not disdain to worship Him, nor do they weary”* [The Prophets, 21: 19].

3. BELIEF IN HIS BOOKS:

To believe that Allah revealed books to His Messengers as proof against mankind and guidance for the righteous workers. They were purified and taught wisdom through these books. To believe that Allah sent down a book with every Messenger because He

says, “*Indeed, We sent down Our Messengers with clear signs, and We sent down with them the book and the balance, so that people may uphold justice*” [Iron, 57: 25]. Among the books that were revealed, we know:

- 1) The Torah, which was revealed to Moses (peace be upon him). It is the greatest among the Israelites’ books: “*Lo! We did reveal the Torah, wherein is guidance and a light, by which the prophets who surrendered [unto Allah] judged the Jews, and the rabbis and the priests [judged] by such of Allah’s Scripture as they were bidden to observe, and thereunto were they witnesses. So fear not mankind, but fear Me. And barter not My revelations for a little gain. Whoever judges not by that which Allah hath revealed: such are disbelievers*” [The Table Spread, 5: 44].
- 2) The Gospel, which Allah revealed to Jesus (peace be upon him). It is a confirmation of the Torah and a complement to it: “*And we gave him the Gospel, wherein is guidance and light and confirming the Torah before it, as a guidance and an admonition to the Allah-fearing*” [5: 46]; “*And to make lawful to you certain things that, before, were forbidden to you*” [The Family of ‘Imrân, 3: 50].
- 3) The Psalms, which Allah gave to David (peace be upon him).
- 4) The Tablets of Abraham and Moses (peace be upon them).
- 5) The Glorious Qur’an, which was revealed to His Prophet Muhammad [pbAbuh], the Seal of the Prophets. It is “*Guidance to the people and clear signs of guidance and the criterion between right and wrong*” [The Cow, 2: 185].

The Qur’an is Protected from Change:

The Qur’an is the book “*Confirming the scripture that was before it and standing as a guardian over it.*” Thus, through the Qur’an, Allah abrogated all the previous revealed books. Allah has also guaranteed its protection from any idle or mischievous distortion:

“*Indeed, We sent down the message and We will guard it*” [The Rocky Tract, 15: 9], for the Qur’an is a proof against mankind till the Day of Judgement.

4- BELIEF IN HIS MESSENGERS:

To believe that Allah has sent to His people Messengers who were *“bringing good tidings and warnings so that mankind might have no argument against Allah after the Messengers. Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise”* [Women, 4: 165]. Believe that the first among the Messengers is Noah and the last is Muhammad, peace be upon them all: *“We revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him”* [Women, 4: 163]; and *“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but Allah’s Messenger and the Seal of the Prophets”* [The Clan, 33: 40].

Believe that the most excellent among the Messengers is Muhammad, and then Abraham, Moses, Noah, and Jesus, son of Mary. It is they who are meant by the following Qur’anic verse: *“And when We took a covenant from the prophets, and from you, and from Noah, and Abraham, then Moses, and Jesus, son of Mary. We took from them a solemn covenant”* [The Clan, 33: 7].

Believe that Muhammad’s Message includes all the merits of the messages of those dignified Messengers, because Allah says, *“He ordained for you what He enjoined on Noah and what He revealed to you and what He enjoined on Abraham, Moses and Jesus; namely, establish this faith and be united in it”* [Counsel, 42: 13].

Believe that all Messengers are created human beings who have none of the divine qualities of Allah. Allah, the Exalted, said about Noah, who was the first among them, *“I do not say to you, ‘I possess the treasures of Allah.’ I do not know the unseen, and I do not say ‘I am an angel’”* [Hûd, 11: 31].

5- BELIEF IN THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT:

Believe in the Final Day, which is the Day of Judgement when people will be resurrected and then told to remain forever in the abode of enjoyment or the abode of severe punishment.

a. **RESURRECTION:** Believe in the resurrection, which is when Allah brings to life all those who have died, and when *Esrafeel* shall blow the horn for the second time: *“And the trumpet shall be blown, and all who are in the heavens and who are in the Earth shall fall down fainting, except those that Allah shall spare. Then, it shall be blown again*

and they shall rise gazing around them” [The Troops, 39: 68]. People will arise from their graves, answering the call of the Lord of the universe. They will be barefooted, naked and uncircumcised: “As We started the first creation, so We shall bring it back again. This is a promise from Us, so We shall assuredly fulfil it” [The Prophets, 21: 104].

b. RECORDS AND SCALES: To believe in the records of deeds that will be given to people in their right hands, or behind their backs and in their left hands:

“As for him who is given his book in his right hand, he shall surely receive an easy reckoning and he will return to his family rejoicing. But as for him who is given his book behind his back, he shall call for destruction on himself and will burn in a blazing fire” [The Sundering, 84: 7-12]; “Every man’s work We have fastened on his own neck, and on the Day of Judgement We shall bring out for him a book which he will see spread open, saying, ‘Read your own book! Enough for you this day that your own soul should call you to account” [The Night Journey, 17: 13-14].

Believe that the scales of deeds will be set up on the Day of Judgement and that no soul shall be wronged: *“Whoever has done an atom’s weight of good shall see it” [The Earthquake, 99: 7-8];*

“Those whose scales are heavy, they are the successful; but those whose scales are light, they are the ones who have lost their souls in Hell, dwelling forever. The fire will burn their faces, and there they will be gloomy with lips displaced” [The Believers, 23: 102-4];

and *“He that does a good deed shall be rewarded ten times the like of it, and he that does evil shall only be rewarded the like of it. And they shall not be wronged” [Cattle, 6: 160].*

c. THE PROPHET’S [PBABUH] INTERCESSION: To believe in the great special intercession of the Prophet Muhammad [pbAbuh]. He will plead with Allah, after Allah’s permission and on behalf of mankind, to judge among His servants when they suffer from worries and troubles that they cannot bear. They will go to Adam, then to Noah, then to Abraham, then to Moses, then to Jesus, and finally, to Prophet Muhammad [pbAbuh].

Believe that the intercession concerns some believers who will be taken out of the fire. This mediation is granted to the Prophet Muhammad [pbAbuh] and others among the prophets, believers and angels. Believe that Allah will save some believers from Hell without the intercession of anyone but due to His grace and mercy.

d. **THE PROPHET'S CISTERN:** Believe in the cistern of the Prophet [pbAbuh], the water of which is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey and better in fragrance than musk. Each of its length and width is the distance of a month's travel. Its glasses are like stars in beauty and number. The believers among the Prophet's [pbAbuh] followers come to take from this great cistern a drink after which they will never be thirsty.

e. **THE STRAIGHT PATH:** Believe in the straight path [*sirat*] set up over Hell. People pass over it according to their deeds: the first of them as fast as lighting, then as fast as the wind, then as fast as birds, and then as fast as a running man. The Prophet [pbAbuh] will be standing on the path, saying, "Lord, save them! Save them!" As some people's deeds will fall short. Some of them will come crawling. At both sides of the path, there are hooks designed to take whom Allah wills: some are saved but bruised, others are thrown into Hell. [*Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim*]. Believe in all that is mentioned in the Qur'an or the prophetic sayings concerning that day and its horrors, may Allah save us from them. We believe in the intercession [*Shafa'ah*] of Prophet Muhammad [pbAbuh] for the people of Paradise to enter therein. This intercession is exclusively limited to Prophet Muhammad [pbAbuh].

f. **PARADISE AND HELL:** Believe in Paradise and Hell. Paradise is the abode of enjoyment which Allah, the Exalted, prepared for the righteous. No eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no human being has ever thought of the blessings that they will enjoy there: "*No soul knows what comfort is kept hidden for them, as a reward for their deeds*" [The Prostration, 32: 17].

Hell is the abode of punishment that Allah has prepared for the unbelievers and the evildoers. The torture and horror in it cannot be imagined:

“Surely, We have prepared for the evildoers a fire, whose pavilion encompasses them. If they call for help, they will be helped with water like molten copper, which will scald their faces. How dreadful a drink and how evil a resting place!” [The Cave, 18: 29].

Both Paradise and Hell exist now and will never perish: *“Whoever believes in Allah and does righteousness, He will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein forever. Allah had indeed made for him an excellent provision”* [Divorce, 65: 11];

“Certainly, Allah has cursed the unbelievers and prepared for them a blazing fire to dwell therein forever, [in it] they shall find neither protector nor helper. On the day when their faces are turned about in the fire, they shall say, ‘Would that we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger!’” [The Clans, 33: 64-6].

We confirm that Paradise is for whom it is granted in the Qur’an or the prophetic traditions, either by name or description. Among those who are granted paradise and mentioned by name are Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman, ‘Ali and others (may Allah be pleased with them) who were specified by the Prophet [pbAbuh] [*Al-Bukhari and Muslim*].

Among those whom we confirm will enter Paradise because they fit the description are the faithful and pious. We likewise confirm Hell is for whom it is allocated in the Qur’an and the sayings of the Prophet [pbAbuh], whether in name or description.

6. BELIEF IN FATE AND DIVINE DECREE

Believe in fate, whether good or bad, which Allah has measured and ordained for all creatures according to His previous knowledge and as deemed suitable by His wisdom.

The Muslim woman who is obedient to the command of her Lord naturally accepts His will and decree, because this is one of the greatest signs of faith, obedience and righteousness in a person.

So the Muslim woman who is guided by the teachings of Islam always accepts whatever befalls her in life, whether it is good or bad, because this attitude of acceptance is good for her in all cases, as the Prophet [pbAbuh] explained, “How amazing is the affair of the Muslim! His affairs are all good. If he experiences ease, he is grateful, and that is good for him. If he experiences hardship, he faces it with patience and perseverance, and that is also good for him” [Related by Muslim].

LEVELS OF THIS BELIEF:

Belief in fate entails four levels:

1] KNOWLEDGE:

Believe that Allah, may He be Exalted, knows everything. He knows what has happened and what will happen and how it will happen. His knowledge is eternal. He does not acquire a piece of new knowledge, nor does he forget what He knows.

2] RECORDING:

Believe that Allah has recorded in the secured tablet [*Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuz*] whatever is going to happen until the Day of Judgement: “*Did you not know that Allah knows all that is in heaven and Earth? Surely, that is in a book. Surely, that for Allah is an easy matter*” [The Pilgrimage, 22: 70].

3] WILL:

Believe that Allah has willed everything in heaven and Earth. Nothing happens except by His will. Whatever He wills will take place, and whatever He does not will, will not take place.

4] CREATION:

Believe that “*Allah is the Creator of all things; He is the Guardian over all things, and to Him belong the keys of the heavens and the Earth*” [The Troops, 39: 62-3]. This level includes whatever Allah Himself does and whatever His creatures do. Thus, each saying, deed, or omission of the people is known to Allah, Who has recorded, willed and created them:

“To those among you who will to be upright. But you shall not will except as Allah wills, the Lord of the Worlds” [The Overthrowing, 81: 28-29];

“And had Allah willed they would not have fought one against the other; but Allah does whatever He desires” [The Cow, 2: 253]; *“Had Allah willed, they would not have done so, but leave them alone and their false inventions”* [Cattle, 6: 137]; and *“And Allah created you and what you do”* [Those who set the Ranks, 37: 96].

MAN’S FREE WILL:

Believe, however, that Allah has granted man power and a free will by which he performs his actions. That man’s deeds are done by his power. The following points can prove the free will:

1] Allah (Glorified be He) says, *“So approach your fields [wives] when and how you will”* [The Cow, 2: 223]; And *“Had they desired to go forth, they would have made some preparation for it”* [Repentance, 9: 46]. In these verses, Allah affirmed for man “a going forth” by his will and “a preparation” by his desire.

2] Directing man to do or not to do; if a man has no free will and power, these directions mean that Allah is asking a man to do that which he cannot do. This proposition is rejected by Allah’s wisdom, mercy and His truthful statement: *“Allah does not charge a soul beyond its capacity”* [The Cow, 2: 286].

3] Praising the virtuous for his deeds and blaming the evildoer for his actions, and recompensing each of them with what he deserves. If the individual’s free will does not do the action, then praising the virtuous is ludicrous and punishing the evildoer is an injustice, and Allah is, of course, far from being ludicrous and unjust.

4] Allah has sent Messengers who are *“bearing good tidings and warnings, so that mankind might have no argument against Allah after the Messengers”* [Women, 4: 165]. If the individual’s action is not performed by his free will, his argument is not invalidated by the sending of Messengers.

5] Every doer of actions realises that he does or does not do a thing without any coercion. He stands up and sits, comes in and goes out, travels and stays by his own free will without feeling that anybody forces him to do any of these actions. In fact, he clearly distinguishes between doing something of his own free will and someone else forcing him to do that action. Islamic law also wisely distinguishes between these states of affairs. It does not punish a wrongdoer for an action done under compulsion.

SECOND: THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

These are the acts of worship that every Muslim should practice in full submission to Allah.

On the authority of Abdullah, the son of Umar ibn Al-Khattâb (may Allah be pleased with him), who said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say, “Islam has been built on five [pillars]: testifying that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, establishing the *Salah* (prayer), paying the *zakat* (obligatory charity), making the *hajj* (pilgrimage) to the House, and fasting in Ramadhan” [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

1- Testifying that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah

These are the testimonies that no one has the right to be worshipped but Allah, and that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His slave and Messenger. This is a verbal pillar of Islam, but one must also follow it with belief and action. This is the key to entering Islam.

The Meaning of the First Testimony:

This is the phrase of *Tawbeed*. For this concept, Allah brought the creation into being, and for this concept, He created Paradise and Hellfire. Allah (Glorified be He) says, “And I have created neither the Jinn nor mankind except to worship Me” [51: 56]. This is the belief to which all Prophets and Messengers called their peoples, may Allah praise them and keep them safe from all evil. Allah (Glorified be He) says, “*And we have not sent before you any Messenger except that We have revealed to him that there is no god that is worshipped in truth except Me, so worship and obey Me*” [21: 25].

The first testimony, that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, includes the following meanings:

- Allah is the Creator of all that exists. Allah (Glorified be He) says, “*Such is Allah, your Lord! None has the right to be worshipped*

but Him, the Creator of all things. So worship and obey Him Alone, and He is the Guardian over all things” [The Cattle, 6: 102].

- Allah is the Proprietor of all that exists, and the Disposer of all affairs. Allah (Glorified be He) says, *“Surely, His is the Creation and Commandment. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of all that exists!” [The Heights, 7: 54].*
- Allah is the One who deserves to be worshipped. Allah (Glorified be He) says, *“Unquestionably, to Allah belongs whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth. And those who invoke other than Allah do not follow His alleged partners. They follow nothing except assumptions, and they only invent lies” [Yunus, 10: 66].*
- To Him belong the beautiful names and perfect attributes. Far removed is He from every imperfection. Allah (Glorified be He) says, *“And all the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny His Names. They will be requited for what they used to do” [The Heights, 7: 180].*

The Conditions of the Testimony:

It is not enough to merely say this testimony for it to be accepted by Allah. It is a key to the gates of Paradise, but in order for the key to work, it needs to have the right teeth. This testimony must meet the following conditions for it to be accepted by Allah:

1. **KNOWLEDGE:** This comprises knowing that all things worshipped besides Allah are false. There is no god worshipped in truth except Allah, even if it be a Prophet, a Messenger or an angel. Allah is the only One Who deserves all types of worship, such as prayer, supplication, hope, sacrifice, fasting, etc. Whoever assigns any act of worship to other than Allah, while that person intends to worship or aggrandize the one to whom he assigned the act, has committed an act of disbelief, even if he uttered the two testimonies.
2. **CERTAINTY:** The heart must be firmly certain of the meaning of the two testimonies. Certainty is the opposite of

doubt, so there is no room for a person to doubt or hesitate about his belief. Allah (Glorified be He) says, *“The believers are only those who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and afterwards doubt not, and strive with their wealth and their lives for the Cause of Allah. Those are the truthful”* [The Inner Apartments, 49: 15].

3. **ACCEPTANCE:** One should accept the testimony fully, and not reject it. Allah (Glorified be He) says, *“Truly, when it was said to them, ‘There is no true deity that is worshipped except Allah,’ they puff themselves up with pride in denial”* [Those Who Set Ranks, 37: 35].
4. **SUBMISSION:** This means obedience and acting upon all what the testimonies necessitate. A person must do what Allah ordered and abstain from what He prohibited. Allah (Glorified be He) says, *“And whoever submits his face to Allah, while he is a Muhsin, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold. And to Allah return all matters for decision”* [Luqman, 31: 22].
5. **TRUTHFULNESS:** One must be truthful in professing the testimonies. Allah (Glorified be He) says, *“They say with their tongues what is not within their hearts”* [Victory, 48: 11].
6. **SINCERITY OF WORSHIP:** One must sincerely dedicate all acts of worship to Allah alone. Allah (Glorified be He) says, *“And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, following the religion purely and sincerely for Him and turning away from other religions”* [The Clear Proof, 98: 5].
7. **LOVE:** One must love the testimonies and all that they necessitate. He must love Allah, His Messenger, and His righteous servants. He must hate and show enmity towards all who show enmity to Allah and His Messenger. He must prefer what Allah and His Messenger love, even if it differs from his desires. Allah (Glorified be He) says, *“Say, ‘If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and fighting in His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about His decision.”*

And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people” [Repentance, 9: 24]. These testimonies also necessitate that Allah is the only One Who has the right to legislate, whether it be in matters concerning worship or those concerning human relations and in both individual and public matters.

The act of making something prohibited or lawful is for Allah alone. Make sure your speech and deeds are purely for Allah’s sake, that they are done according to what He legislated, and that you spend your time in Allah’s obedience. Take account of yourself before you are taken to account, and let Allah see you doing what He commanded, not what He forbade. His Messenger merely explained and clarified Allah’s commandments. Allah (Glorified be He) says,

“And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatever he forbids you, refrain from it” [The Exile, 59: 7].

The Meaning of the Second Testimony: “Muhammad is His Messenger”

To bear witness that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Messenger of Allah necessitates the following:

- To believe that he is a Messenger and that he is the last of the Messengers; no Messenger will come after him. Allah (Glorified be He) says, *“Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets”* [The Clans, 33: 40].
- To believe that he is infallible in the teachings he conveyed from Allah (Glory be to Him). Allah, the Exalted, says, *“Nor does he [Prophet Muhammad] speak of his own inclination. It is only a Revelation that is revealed to him”* [53: 3-4]. As for the affairs of this world, he was a human and he had his own opinions. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *“Indeed, I am only a human. It may be that a claimant comes to me with a dispute, and due to one of them being more convincing in speech than*

the other, I may rule in his favour. Whoever was ruled in his favour while he is wrong, what he receives without right is only a portion of the Hellfire, so let him take it or leave it” [Muslim].

- To believe that he is a Messenger to all creation: to Jinn and humans, until the Final Hour. Allah (y) says, “*And We have not sent you [O Muhammad] except to all of mankind, as a giver of glad tidings and a warner. But most people do not know*” [The City of Saba, 34: 28].
- To obey the Prophet [pbAbuh] in what he ordered, to believe in everything he said, and to refrain from what he forbade and warned against. Allah (y) says, “*And whatever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatever he forbids you, refrain from it*” [The Exile, 59: 7].
- To follow and adhere to the Prophet’s Sunnah, without innovating matters in it. Allah, the Exalted, says, “*Say [O Muhammad] If you truly love Allah then follow my example, Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful*” [The Family of ‘Imran, 3: 31].

2- SALAH [PRAYER]

The five daily prayers are an obligation upon every Muslim man and woman. Allah says, *“And be steadfast in prayer and regular in charity: and whatever good you send forth for your souls before you, you shall find it with Allah: for Allah sees well all that you do”* [The Cow, 2: 110].

Allah also says, *“When you finish [congregational] prayers, celebrate Allah’s praises, standing, sitting down, or lying down on your sides; but when you are free from danger, set up regular prayers: for such prayers are enjoined on the believers at stated times”* [Women, 4: 103].

The Muslim woman turns to Allah in repentance when she finds herself becoming neglectful and slipping from the Straight Path. She may fall short in her practice of Islam in a way that does not suit the believing woman, but she will soon notice her fault, seek forgiveness for her mistakes and shortcomings, and return to the protection of Allah:

“Those who fear Allah, when a thought of evil from Satan assaults them, they bring Allah to remembrance, and lo! They see [aright]!” [The Heights, 7: 201].

She is persistent in offering each of the five daily prayers at its appointed time and does not let domestic chores or her duties as a wife and mother prevent her from doing so. Prayer is the pillar of Islam—whoever establishes prayer establishes faith, and whoever neglects prayer destroys his/her faith. Prayer is the best and most glorious of deeds, as the Prophet [pbAbuh] explained in the hadith narrated by ‘Abdullah ibn Masoud: “I asked Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh], ‘What deed is most beloved by Allah?’ He said, ‘To offer each prayer in its due time.’ I asked him, ‘Then what?’ He said, ‘Treating one’s parents with mercy and respect.’ I asked him, ‘Then what?’ He said, ‘Jihad [striving] in the way of Allah.””^[1]

The Muslim woman does not neglect to polish her soul with worship, *dhikr*, and reading Qur’an; she never neglects to perform

[1] See Imam Al-Baghawi, Sharh Al-Sunnah, 2/176 [Kitab al-salah, bab fadl al-salawat al-khams]; published by Al-Maktab Al-Islami.

acts of worship at the appointed times. Just as she takes care of her body and mind, she also takes care of her soul. This is because she understands that the human being is composed of a body, a mind and a soul and that all three deserve appropriate attention.

When a Muslim woman prays, she does so with the calmness of heart and clearness of mind, so that her soul may be refreshed by the meaning of the words of the Qur'an, *dhikr* and *tasbeeh* that she is mentioning. Then she sits alone for a little while, praising and glorifying Allah and reciting some verses from His Book while meditating upon the beautiful meanings of the words she is reciting. She checks her attitude and behaviour, now and then, correcting herself if she has done anything wrong or fallen short in some way. Thus, her worship will bring about the desired results of purifying the soul, cleansing herself of her sins and freeing herself from the bonds of Satan whose constant whisperings may destroy a person.

If she makes a mistake or stumbles from the Straight Path, the true Muslim woman soon puts it right, seeks forgiveness from Allah, renounces her sin or error, and repents sincerely. This is the attitude of righteous, Allah-fearing Muslim women:

“Those who fear Allah, when a thought of evil from Satan assaults them, they bring Allah to remembrance, and lo! They see aright” [The Heights, 7: 201].

Therefore, the Prophet [pbAbuh] used to tell his companions, “Renew your faith.” He was asked, “O Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh], how do we renew our faith?” He said, “By frequently repeating *la ilaha ill-Allah*” [Related by Ahmad].

The Muslim woman always seeks Allah’s help in strengthening and purifying her soul by constantly worshipping and remembering Allah, checking herself, and keeping in mind at all times what will please Allah. So whatever pleases Him, she does, and what angers Him, she refrains from it. Thus, she will remain on the Straight Path, never deviating from it or doing wrong.

Women are also encouraged to attend public gatherings on *Eid Al-Fitr* and *Eid Al-Adha*, so that they may take part in these blessed occasions. This is demonstrated in several hadiths reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim in which the Prophet [pbAbuh] commanded this. Umm Atiyyah said, “Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] commanded us to bring out to the *Eid* prayers adolescent and prepubescent girls, those who usually remained in seclusion, and virgins, and he ordered those who were menstruating to keep away from the prayer-place” [Related by Muslim].

The Muslim woman does not limit herself to the five daily obligatory prayers; she also prays those Sunnah prayers which the Prophet [pbAbuh] used to regularly perform [*al-rawatib*] and prays as many of the *nafil* [supererogatory] prayers as her time and energy allow. These prayers include *salat al-duba*, Sunnah prayers following the *Maghreb* prayer, and prayers offered at night. Nafil prayers bring a person closer to Allah, earn him or her the love and pleasure of Allah, and make him or her one of the victorious, obedient and righteous ones. There is no clearer indication of the great status attained by the believer who draws closer to Allah by performing nafil deeds than this hadith *Qudsi*: “My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I will love him. When I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him; and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant it to him” [Related by Al-Bukhari].

The true Muslim tries hard to perform her prayers properly, concentrating deeply and performing the physical movements precisely. She thinks about the meaning of the verse she is reciting and the words of praise and glorification that she is uttering. Her soul is flooded with fear of Allah, with gratitude to Him, and sincere worship of Him. If Satan happens to whisper some idea to her during prayer, to distract her from concentrating properly, to keep him away, she focuses on the words that she is reciting from the Qur’an and the words of praise that she is uttering.

Pronouncing the Formula of Faith: After heartedly believing that Allah is One, having no partner or son and that Muhammad is His Prophet [pbAbuh] and Messenger, who came to announce Allah's word to mankind, it is a religious duty of every faithful person embracing Islam to perform religious practical devotions.

- 1) The first and foremost of these is to pronounce the formula of faith publicly, as follows: "I bear witness that there is no deity save Allah and that Muhammad is His slave and His Messenger."
- 2) Next comes the duty of performing the stated prayers, as given in detail, though only summarized hereinafter.

Prayers to Allah, according to Islam, are the essence of man's duties to Allah. It is an outpouring of the heart's sentiments, a devout supplication to Allah, and a reverential expression of the soul's sincerest desires being addressed to its Maker. Prayers, according to the Qur'an, are the only way to communicate with Allah. The word of Allah in the Qur'an teaches: "*Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book [the Qur'an] and establish the prayer, for prayer precludes indecency and wrongdoing, while the remembrance of Allah is greater still*" [The Spider, 29: 45].

Islam, therefore, enjoins prayers as a means of attaining the moral elevation of man. But if prayer is said carelessly or with an absent heart, it degenerates into a mere ritual, into a lifeless and dull ceremony performed with an insincere heart. This is not the sort of prayer accepted by Islam. Such prayer is denounced by Qur'an, which gives the warning: "*So woe to the worshippers, who are neglectful of their prayers, those who [want only] to be seen [of men]*" [Small Kindness, 107: 4-6].

While the rite of *Salât*, [i.e. the enjoined prayers] is being performed, one concentrates internally on Allah, while reflecting on the meanings and reasons of the verses one reads stir and exalt one's soul to everything that is supreme, lofty and good. This *Salât* is, so to say, a form of exercise and training. But it is not enough to practice merely its various movements, which will be described

later, movements of standing, bending, prostrating and sitting. The real spirit of *Salât* is to be in constant communication with and worship Allah. The *Fātiha*—the Opening Chapter of the Qur'an—forms an essential part of every prayer; no prayer, according to a teaching of the Prophet [pbAbuh] of Islam, is complete without the *Fātiha*, which has wonderful meanings. Its translation is as follows:

“All praise is due to Allah the Lord of all the Worlds, the Beneficent, the Merciful, the King of the day of reckoning. You only do we worship, and from You only do we seek help. Guide us to the straight path, the path of those to whom You have been gracious, not of those who have earned Your anger nor those who are misguided” [The Opening, 1: 1-7].

The *Fātiha* is rightly described as having wonderful meanings. Actually, the supplication contained in the *Fātiha* is the greatest of all supplications that exist in any religion. It is composed of seven verses, the first three speak of Divine attributes of Providence, Beneficence, Mercy and Requital; the last three verses lay open before the Creator of the Universe the earnest desire of man's soul to walk in righteousness without stumbling on either side, while the middle verse expresses man's entire dependence on Allah. The attributes referred to are those that disclose Allah's overwhelming benevolence and care, the ideal to which a human soul is made to aspire is the highest to which man can rise, namely the path of righteousness, the path of grace in which there is no stumbling.

On the one hand, Allah administers His providence to all human beings, and even the creatures that exist in the world; He gave nourishment and perfection to the creatures long before they came into existence. On the other hand, there is the high aspiration of the soul for an unbounded religious rise without the least consideration of the care of the body which craves for the “daily bread”.

The Prophet of Islam [pbAbuh] attached great importance to the human body as well as to the soul, along with preserving its cleanliness and purity. He taught that faith is a spring of cleanliness. Islam considers the human body as something

entrusted to man by Allah, and, therefore, obliges him to take care of it. Islam enjoins upon its followers to keep it clean and pure, morally as well as materially.

PRAYER—THE PRINCIPLE OF ACTION

We now take the practical side of the faith of Islam. As already said, sayings and actions in Islam are just an essential part of the religion as belief. In this respect, Islam occupies a middle position between religions which have ignored the practical side altogether and those which bind their followers to a very detailed ritual. Islam sees the necessity of developing the faculties of man by giving general directions and then leaves sufficient scope for the individual to exercise influence on the individual practical life.

The precepts of Islam which inculcate duties towards Allah and duties towards man are based on that deep knowledge of human nature, which cannot be possessed but by the Creator of that nature. They cover the whole range of the different grades of the development of man and are thus wonderfully adapted to the requirements of different peoples.

In the Qur'an are found guiding rules for the ordinary man of the world as well as scholars and different communities in civilisation, the lowest level as well as the highly civilized nations of the world. Practicality is the keynote of its precepts, and thus the same universality, which marks its principles of faith, is met within its practical ordinances, suiting, as they do, the requirements of all ages and nations.

Prayer is the second of the five fundamental principles or pillars of practical devotion in Islam. It is a devotional exercise which every Muslim is required to render to Allah five times a day, namely in the early morning before sunrise, at midday, in the afternoon, in the evening after sunset, and fifthly at night.

The general duty is frequently enjoined in the Qur'an while the appointed times, as well as the mode of rendering prayers, were prescribed distinctly by the Prophet [pbAbuh], both by his personal practice and teachings. Hints and orders met within the

Qur'an as regards the enjoinder of *Salât* (prayer) are rendered as follows: “*And establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night, as those things that are good remove those that are evil. This is a word of remembrance for those who remember [their Lord]*” [Hûd, 11: 114]. “*Glorify Allah [by rendering prayers to Him] when it is evening and in the morning—praise be to Him in the heavens and the earth—and in the afternoon and at noontide*” [The Romans, 30: 17, 18].

“*Put up then with what they say; and celebrate the praise of your Lord before sunrise, and before sunset, and during the night do praise Him, and in the extreme of the day, so that you may be well-pleased*” [Ta Ha, 20: 130].

“*Observe prayers at sunset until the first darkening of the night and observe reading [the Qur'an] at daybreak. Lo! The recital of the Qur'an [that is, rendering prayers] is ever witnessed. And some part of the night, awake for it, as a supererogatory [devotion] for you. It may be that your Lord will raise you to a praised state*” [The Night Journey, 17: 78-79].

“*Take aid by observing patience and prayers*” [The Cow, 2: 45]. “*When you have fulfilled your prayer, remember Allah, standing and sitting and lying on your sides. And when you are in safety, then be steadfast in prayer. Verily prayer is a timed ordinance on the believers*” [Women, 4: 103]. The *Salât* must be performed in Arabic, the clothes and body of the worshipper must be clean, and the praying-place must be free from all impurity. It may be said either privately or in a company, or in a congregation in a mosque—although prayers in a mosque are more meritorious.

The stated prayers are always preceded by the ablution of the face, head, hands and feet, as will be fully described later. The *Salât* is thus one of the most prominent features of the religion of Islam, and there are very many injunctions regarding it, which have been handed down in the traditions of the Prophet [pbAbuh]. The following are a few quotations: “Between a man and shirk and kufr is his abandoning the prayer” [Related by Muslim, *Kitaab al-eemaan. Imam Ahmad, Al-Sharh Al-Mumti 'ala Zaad Al-Mustanqi*, 2/26].

“Allah does not accept the prayers of a woman who has reached puberty unless she covers her head as well as the whole

body, except her hands and feet. [*Related by Al-Bukhari, and Al-Tirmidhi (hassan)*]. “The five stated prayers erase the sins which have been committed during the intervals between them if they were not major sins” [*Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Ibn Maajah and Al-Tirmidhi*].

“The prayers of a person who has broken his ablution will not be accepted until he completes another ablution” [*Related by Al-Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 4, Number 137*].

“Tell me if anyone of you had a rivulet before his door and bathed five times a day therein whether any dirt would remain on his body?” The Companions said, “Nothing would remain.” The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “In this manner will the five daily prayers as ordered by Allah erase sins” [*Saheeh Muslim, 668*].

TIME OF THE FIVE STATED PRAYERS

The Prophet [pbAbuh] taught that “time for *Zuhr* [noon] prayer begins from when the sun inclines to the west and closes at the time when the shadow of a person is the length of his own stature, which time marks the beginning of the *‘Asr* [afternoon] prayer. The time of the *‘Asr* prayer is from that time till the sun assumes a yellow appearance. The time of *Maghrib* [sunset] prayer is from sunset as long as the red is apparent on the horizon. The time of the *‘Isha* [night] prayer is from that time till near daybreak. And the time for the *Fajr* [daybreak or morning] prayer is from the break of day till when the sun rises.” Just before the sun has risen, a Muslim must wait to recite his morning supplications [if not already recited] until the sun has well arisen.

AIM OF THE PRAYERS

The prayer is a type of worship consisting of specific statements and actions. A person begins the prayer by pronouncing the greatness of Allah and concludes it with salutations of peace. As prayer is the essence of Islam, we will discuss it here in detail. To state it simply, prayer must exist, for

without it, Islam cannot stand.^[1] The aim of enjoining prayers upon Muslims is for them to worship and think of Allah, to develop a pure heart, to take care of the body and clothes, to overcome evil desires, and to be a good-natured, decent person in all respects. The prayers recited by an immoral person are not acceptable. Good character comes before everything else.

Considering that modern life obliges us to do hard and tiring work, one may say that there would be no time to perform *Salât* five times a day. But the case is quite contrary; by performing the stated prayers, the body will be kept clean and at ease in virtue of the repeated ablution or washing, which is a preparatory practice to performing prayers. Through *Salât*, organs, which have become stiff, will be revitalised and regain their natural liveliness. Thus, no better means other than the two rites of ablution and *Salât* can be suggested to remove laziness and exhaustion caused by the tiresome work of the day. In other words, the practice of *Salât* ensures us moral, spiritual and material advantages.

THE MUSLIM'S PRAYER

To the Muslim, prayer is his spiritual diet of which he partakes five times a day. Those who think that prayer is prescribed too often should remember how many times a day they require food for their bodies. And is not spiritual growth much more essential than physical growth?

The following is the translation of the *azân*: -

“Allah is Greater, Allah is Greater. Allah is Greater, Allah is Greater. I do testify that there is no deity save Allah. I do testify that there is no deity save Allah. I do testify that Muhammad is Allah’s Messenger. I do testify that Muhammad is Allah’s Messenger. Come to prayer. Come to prayer. Come to prosperity. Come to prosperity. Allah is Greater. Allah is Greater. There is no deity save Allah.”

[1] Sayed Sabiq, *Fiqh Al-Sunnah*.

This is what a Muslim hears from the mosque five times a day. The call from the mosque reminds him that he should not serve the inner man, living by bread alone, but that Allah is the greatest, and all other concerns are small. Allah alone is to be served first. And if a man is keen to gain prosperity, true prosperity comes to him through prayer, which means to live by the words he or she recites which are revealed from Allah.

One would naturally ask whether the stroke of the church bell has any comparison to the soul-edifying Muslim *aẓān*. Pastor Mogola Agbebi, D.D., Lagos, Director of the Niger Delta Mission, gives the best answer in his paper contributed to the First Universal Races Congress held in London: “Five times a day from the turrets and minarets Islam’s call to prayer startles Africa, demanding attention from dawn to dark; and Christianity in its best form, whatever it may have used, never presented a formula more rousing than:

Rise you, believers.

Prayer is better than sleep.

Prayer is better than sleep.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MUSLIM PRAYERS

There are certain minor differences amongst the various schools of Islam regarding the way prayer is formed, but its main features are the same in all Muslim countries. We shall describe prayer according to *the Hanafi School of Sunni Muslims*. The stated prayers are always preceded by the ablution of one’s face, hands, arms, head and feet with water.

ABLUTION [*wuḍūʾ*]

Ablution [Arabic *wuḍūʾ*] is described by the Prophet [pbAbuh] as the key to prayer and is founded on the authority of the Qur’an: “O believers, when you prepare yourselves for prayer, wash your faces and

hands up to the elbows and wipe your heads and [wash] your feet to the ankles” [The Table Spread, 5: 6].

And on the authority of the Sunnah: Abu Hurairah reported that Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] said, “Allah does not accept the prayer of one who nullified his ablution until he performs it again” [Related by *Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi*]. This ablution is necessary as a preparation for the prayer. They are performed as follows: -

- 1) The worshipper washes his or her hands first.
- 2) Then he rinses his mouth and nose, throwing the water into the mouth with his right hand and throwing water up into his nostrils, snuffing it up at the same time, then blowing it out, and compressing his nostrils with the thumb of the left hand.
- 3) He or she then washes his face with both hands.
- 4) He next washes his right hand and arm, up to and including the elbow, causing water to run along the arm from the palm to the elbow. In the same manner, he washes the left hand and arm.
- 5) Afterwards, he draws his or her wetted right hand over the upper part of his head. If he has a beard, he then combs it with the wetted fingers of his right hand.
- 6) After that, he puts the tips of his forefingers, still wet with water, into his ears and twists them around, at the same time passing his thumbs round the ears back from the bottom upwards.
- 7) Next, he wipes his neck with both hands and fingers, making the ends of his fingers meet behind his neck, and then drawing them forward. ^[1]

[1] There is no reliable hadith which supports this view [Editor].

- 8) Lastly, he washes his feet, up to and including the ankles, and passes his fingers between the toes, ensuring thereby their cleanness.

Before ablution, the worshipper usually mentions the Name of Allah: "In the name of Allah, the Merciful and Beneficent."

The ablution does not have to be performed before each of the five stated prayers, when the person is conscious if he has not slept and has avoided every kind of impurity, particularly urination, defecation and breaking wind, since the last performance of the ablution. The private parts of the body must also be purified when answering the call of nature.

When water cannot be procured or would be injurious to health, the ablution may be performed with pure dust or sand. This is called *Tayamoum*. The permission to use sand for this purpose, when water cannot be obtained, is granted in the Qur'an: "*If you cannot find water, then take fine surface pure sand and wipe your faces and your hands therewith. Allah does not wish to make any hindrance to you but He wishes to purify you and that He may complete His favour on you, so that you may be grateful*" [The Table Spread, 5: 6].

It is related in the tradition [*hadith*] that the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "The whole earth is fit to serve as a mosque for Muslims to worship on, and the very dust of the earth is fit for purification when water cannot be obtained."

Tayamoum or purification using sand or clean dust is allowable under the following circumstances:

- [a] When water cannot be procured except at a great distance [about two miles];
- [b] In case of sickness;
- [c] When the use of water is infeasible because of incurring danger from an enemy, a beast or a reptile; and
- [d] When, on the occasion of the prayers of a feast day or at a funeral, the worshipper is late and has no time to perform the

wudû. On ordinary days or normal conditions, this substitution of *Tayamoum* is not allowable.

The washing of the whole body to absolve it from uncleanness and to prepare it for the performance of prayer is necessary after the following acts: wet dreams, menstruation, sexual intercourse, and after the puerperal period. Washing the whole body is highly recommended [by the *Sunnah*, or the practice and teachings of the Prophet [pbAbuh], on Friday before going to the mosque for the Friday prayer, on the festivals, and after washing the dead.

PURIFICATION

Water which may be used for purification: The following kinds of water are lawful for purification: rain, sea, river, fountain, well and snow water. All kinds of water are fit for purification provided that the normal colour, smell and taste are not changed and the water has not been used before. Rubbing socks with water in substitution for washing the feet in ablution is legally allowed, provided that socks have been put on after performing a regular ablution which includes washing the feet. This legality is permitted for twenty-four hours from the time of the regular ablution, after which period the feet must be washed along with the face and hands.

HOW THE PRAYER IS PERFORMED

At prayer time, as stated before, the *muezzîn* or caller ascends the minaret or stands at the mosque on the side nearest to the public thoroughfare, and gives *aẓân* or call to prayer out loud to the public, as follows: -

1. Allah is Greater, Allah is Greater [*twice*].
2. I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah [*twice*].
3. I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger [*twice*].
4. Come to prayer [O you Muslims] [*twice*].
5. Come to salvation and prosperity [*twice*].
6. Allah is Greater [*twice*].
7. There is no deity but Allah.

In the early morning, the following “call” is added: “Prayers are better than sleep” [twice].

When prayers are performed privately, in a congregation or mosque, they begin with the *iqâma*, which is the second call of the *Salât*, with the addition of the sentence: “Prayers are now ready [twice]”. The regular form of prayer then begins with the *niyya*, i.e. the worshipper’s intention, expressed [by the heart] that he intends to offer to Allah such *rakâts* ^[1] as the case may be for that prayer while standing up with the face towards the *Qibla*, i.e. towards Makkah. The Arabic expression is as follows [see Fig. 1]:



Fig.1. Posture for *niyya*



Fig.2. *Takbirât El-ibrâm* posture

1- Then follow the words of “*takbirât El-ibrâm*”: *Allahu Akbar* “Allah is Greater”, uttered with the thumbs touching the lobules of the ears and the hands open on each side of the face, as shown in [Fig. 2].

2- Next comes the *qiyâm* position: The right hand is placed upon the left over the breast while in the standing position, the eyes looking to the ground in self-abasement [see Fig. 3].

[1] “*Rak’a*” literally means “a bending”.

During this posture, the worshipper recites the following *tasbeeh* or supplication: “*Subhânaka Allahumma wa be hamdika wa tabâraka ismuka wa ta’âla judduka wa lâ Ilâha ghayruk. A’ôzu billâhi minashshaytânir-rajîm*” [Transliteration].

“Glory to You, O Allah, and Yours is the praise and blessed is Your name and exalted is Your majesty; there is no deity to be worshipped but You. I seek Allah’s protection against the cursed Satan [temptation]” [Translation].



Fig. 3. Qiyâm position

After this, the *Fâtiha* [the Opening Chapter of the Qur’an] is recited in the same position. It runs as follows:

“*Bismillâbir-rahmânir-rahim. Al-hamdu lilâhi-rabbil-’âlamîn, ar-rahmânir-rahîm, mâliki-yanmiddîn. Iyyâka na’bodû we iyyâka nast’in. Ihdinassirâtal-mustaqîm, sirâtal-lazîna an’amta’alayhim, ghayril-maghdubi ‘alayhim walad-dâllîn. Amen*” [Transliteration].

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all Worlds. The Beneficent, the Merciful, King of the day of reckoning. You only do we worship, and from You only do we seek help. Guide us to the straight path, the path of those to whom You has been gracious, not of those who have earned Your anger nor those who are misguided” Amen

(i.e. be it so!) [Translation]. A surah follows: “*Qul hum Allahu abad, Allahu-samad. Lam yalid wa lam yûlad. Wa lam yakun labu kufwan abad*” [Transliteration]. “Say, He [Allah] is one, Allah is the Eternal Refuge. He begets not, nor is He begotten; and none is like unto Him” [Translation] [The Unity, 112: 1-5].

3- Then, saying *Allahu akbar* [Allah is Greater], the worshipper lowers his head down so that the palms of his hands reach the knees. In this position, which is called *ruku*, that is bending [see Fig. 4], words expressive of the Divine glory and majesty are repeated three times. They are the following: “*Subâna Rabbiyal-‘azem wa bihamdih.*” “Glory to my Lord, the Great and Praiseworthy.”

4- After this posture, the standing position is resumed [see Fig. 5], but unlike the *qiyâm* position as the hands are placed on either side. While rising, the following words are recited: “*Sami’a Allahu-liman hamida. Allahumma wa lakal-hamd*” [Transliteration], “Allah accepts him who praises Him. O our Lord, Yours is all the praise” [Translation].



Fig. 4. Ruku' posture.



Fig. 5. Resumed standing position.

5- Then the worshipper prostrates himself, with the toes of both feet, both knees, the nose and the forehead touching and resting

on the ground while the following words expressing Divine greatness are uttered three times [see Fig. 6]: “*Subhâna Rabbiya-lâ wa bi-hamdih*” [Transliteration], “Glory and praise be to my Lord, the Highest” [Translation]. The following words are added: “*Allahumma ighfirli*,” i.e. O, Allah! Grant me Your forgiveness. This is called the first *sajda* [first prostration] [see Fig. 6].

6- Next, raising his hands and body and sinking backwards to sit upon his heels and placing his hands upon his thighs, he says the *takbir*, i.e. *Allahu Akbar* [Allah is Greater]. This is called the first *jalsa*, i.e. the first sitting [see Fig. 7].

7- Then the worshipper performs another *sajda* [see Fig. 8], the same as the first, as described before, with the repetition of the same expression, also three times: “*Sabbâna Rabbiya-lâ wa bihamdih*” [Glory and praise be to my Lord, the Highest]. At the close of one *rak’a*, the worshipper should repeat the *takbir* while rising to the standing position; but at the end of two *rakâts* and at the close of the prayer, he repeats: “*Allahu Akbar*” [Allah is Greater], while going into a sitting position, as in [Fig. 7].

8- Here ends one *rak’a*. The worshipper then rises and assumes a standing position for the second *rak’a*, which is finished in the same manner as the first but instead of assuming a standing position after the second *rak’a*, he sits down in a reverential position [see Fig. 9]. At the close of each two *rakâts*, the worshipper sits down to recite the *tahiyât* or the glorification of Allah [see Fig. 9], and utters the *tashah-hud*, or bearing witness. Both *tahiyât* and *tashah-hud* run as follows:



Fig. 6 The first *sajda*



Fig. 7. The first *jalsa*

“At-tahiyātu lillāhi, wassala-wātu wattayibātu. Assalāmu ‘alayka ayyuhan-nabiyyu wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh. Assalāmu ‘alaynā wa ‘ald ‘ibādillāhis-sālihīn. Ash-badu an-lā Ilāha-ill Allahu wa ash-badu anna Mohammedan abdubu wa Rasūluh” [Transliteration].

“All prayer and worship, rendered through words, actions, and good deeds, are due to Allah. Peace be to you, O my Prophet [pbAbuh], and may the mercy of Allah and His blessings be showered upon you. Peace be to us [to those attending this prayer] and to the righteous slaves of Allah. I confess that there is no deity but Allah and that Muhammad is His slave and His Prophet” [Translation].



Fig. 8 The second *sajda*



Fig. 9 *Tahiyāt and Tashahhud* posture

9- If the worshipper intends to perform more than two *ral'āts*, he then stands up, but if he has to say the prayer of only two *rakāts*, he also recites the following prayer of blessings for the Prophet:

“Allabumma sallī ‘alā Mubammad wa ‘alā āli Mubammad kamā sallayta ‘alā Ibrâhīm wa ‘alā āli Ibrâhīm, innaka hamīdon majīd. Allabumma bârik ‘alā Mubammad wa ‘alā āli-Mubammad kamâ bârakta ‘alā Ibrâh”m wa ‘alâ ali Ibrah”m innaka hamidon majīd” [Transliteration].

“O, my Lord! Kindly magnify your favour upon Muhammad and the family [1] of Muhammad as You magnified Your blessings upon Abraham and the family of Abraham, for surely You are the

[1] “Family” also means “those believes who are dutiful to Allah”.

most Laudable and Glorious. O, my Lord! Kindly bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You blessed Abraham and the family of Abraham, for surely You are the most Laudable and Glorious” [Translation].

The following supplication is recommended to be also added to the above: “*Rabbij’alnî muqîm-assalâti wa min zurriyatî. Rabbana wa taqabbal du’a-î; Rabbanaghfirî wa li wâ-lidayya wa limu’minîna jawma yayûmal-bisâb*” [Transliteration].

“O my Lord, Make me keep up offering prayer to You and grant that my offspring keep up offering prayer, too. O my Lord, kindly accept my supplication! O my Lord, forgive my sins and those of my parents and the faithful when the day of reckoning comes!” [Translation].

10- This closes the two *rakâts*’ prayer, which ends with the *salâm* or the greeting, thus: Turning the head round to the right [see Fig. 10], the worshipper says, addressing any visible or invisible creature of Allah on his right:



Fig. 10 First salâm

“*Assaâlmû ‘alayqom wa rahmatul-lâbi wa barakâtub*” [Transliteration],
 “Peace and mercy of Allah be upon you” [Translation].

Then, turning the head round to the left, the worshipper repeats the *salâm* with the same intention as above [see Fig. 11].

At the close of the whole set of the stated prayers, the worshipper raises his hands and offers up some *munâjât* or supplication. This usually consists of prayers selected from the Qur'an or traditions of the Prophet [pbAbuh]. If possible, they ought to be said in Arabic; or, if not, in the person's native language.

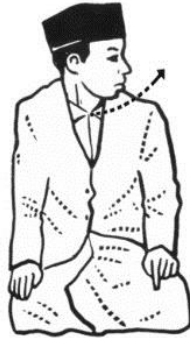


Fig. 11 Second *salâm*

Such supplications were highly commended by the Prophet [pbAbuh], who was related to have said, "Supplication is the core of worship." And he also said, "Verily your Lord will not admit that His servants when they raise their hands in supplication, should return them empty," i.e. without the supplication being accepted from the righteous. The following is a table showing the number of rak'ats for the different prayers:

2- SALAH [PRAYER]

No.	Prescribed Period	Prayer Name & Time	Number of Rak'ats			
THE FIVE ENJOINED OR OBLIGATORY PRAYERS						
1	From dawn till sunrise	Fajr or morning	<i>Fard</i> 2	<i>Sunnab</i> 2	<i>Witr</i> -	<i>Notes</i> Before the <i>Fard</i>
2	From the inclination of the sun to the west; and It finishes	<i>Zuhr</i> or noon	4	2	-	Before the <i>Fard</i>
	When the shadow of a person is the length of his own stature.			2	-	After the <i>Fard</i>
3	From that time till the sun assumes a yellow appearance.	<i>'Asr</i> or afternoon	4	4	-	Before the <i>Fard</i>
4	From sunset till the sun glow is not apparent on the horizon.	<i>Maghrib</i> or sunset	3	2	-	After the <i>Fard</i>
5	From that time till some moments before dawn	<i>'Isba</i> or night	4	2	3	After the <i>Sunnab</i>
THE THREE VOLUNTARY PERIODS						
1	When the sun has completely risen.	<i>Shrooq</i> or sunrise			4	
2	From that time till about twenty minutes before <i>Zuhr</i> prayer	<i>Douba</i> or sunshine			4	
3	After midnight	Tahâjjud			8	

THE STATED DAILY PRAYERS

The daily prayers entail *Fard*, *Sunnah*, *nafl* or *witr*. The *Fard* prayers are those *rakâts* which are enjoined by Allah and are obligatory. The *Sunnah* prayers are those founded on the practice of the Prophet practice [pbAbuh]; although they are desirable, they are not obligatory. The *Nafl* prayers are voluntary performances of two *rakâts*, or more, which may be omitted without any sin. The *Witr* prayers are an odd number of *rakâts*, either one or three, said after the *‘Isha* (night) prayer. These types of prayer are entirely distinct from each other. They each begin with the *niyya* [intention].

The five stated times of prayers are known as *Zuhr*, *‘Asr*, *Maghrib*, *‘Isha* and *Fajr*. There are also three voluntary periods called *shrooq*, *douha* and *tabâjjud*. The following table on the preceding page shows the exact number of *rakâts* to be performed for each prayer:

GENERAL NOTES FOR THE TABLE

- 1) A fresh ablution is necessary only when a man has answered the call of nature or has fallen asleep.
- 2) If the person is wearing socks and they have been put on after performing ablution, it is not necessary to take them off: the wet hands may be passed over them. The same practice may be resorted to in case the person is wearing boots, but it would be more decent to take off the boots when going into a mosque. It is, however, necessary that the socks be taken off and the feet washed about once every twenty-four hours.
- 3) The *takbîr*, i.e. the utterance of the expression *Allahu Akbar* [Allah is the Greater] is to be repeated on assuming every position of the *rak‘ah*, as explained previously. This repetition is deemed necessary as a reminder to the worshipper to keep alert during his prayer by making his inner soul and consciousness attentive throughout the prayer.
- 4) *Ghusl*, or washing the whole body, is a religious act of bathing the body after a legal impurity. It is founded upon the express injunction of the Qur‘an [The Table Spread, 5:6] which may be

rendered in English as follows: “If you, i.e. the faithful and believers, are polluted, then purify yourselves.”

The traditions and the sayings of the Prophet [pbAbuh] relate to the occasions on which the Prophet [pbAbuh] performed the ceremony of *ghusl* or bathing. The Muslim teachers of all sects are unanimous in prescribing the washing of the whole body after the following acts which render the body *junub* or impure:

- a. *hayd* [menses];
- b. *nifās* [puerperium];
- c. *ḡimā'* [sexual intercourse];
- d. *ihṭilām* [nocturnal emission, wet dream].

It is necessary to wash every part of the body; otherwise, the *ghusl* ceremony is rendered incomplete.

5) *Masnūn Ghusl* or meritorious bathing; such washings are founded on the precept and practice of the Prophet [pbAbuh], although they are not obligatory. They are four in number:

- a. Upon the admission of a convert to Islam.
- b. Before going to the mosque to perform Friday prayer and on the great two religious festivals, i.e. two *Bairams*, the one occurs after the end of the fasting month of *Ramadan* and the other on the day following the day the pilgrims perform their pilgrimage.
- c. After washing the dead.
- d. After blood-letting.

6) The Friday Prayers.

7) The *Qunut*.

THE FRIDAY PRAYER

The Friday prayer is held at the time of *Zuhr* [noon], and it substitutes the stated *Zuhr* prayer. The four *rakāts* said in *Zuhr* are reduced to two *rakāts* preceded by a *khutba* [sermon], given by the *imām* [prayer leader of the mosque], urging Muslims to be good and

dutiful to Allah, showing them means to elevate their moral and dwell upon their national and communal welfare.

Salât ej-Jumu'ah, or Friday prayer, is enjoined on Muslims by a divine command in the Qur'an [The Congregation, 62: 9-11], where the believers are required when the call is made to prayer on Friday:

“To hasten to the remembrance of Allah and leave off business for the time being...And when the prayer is ended they can disperse in the land to re-join their material and physical activities” [The Congregation, 62: 9-10].

The Friday prayer for Muslim men must be said in a mosque if one is available, or in a congregation, but it should not be performed in private. Ibn Al-Mundhir (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *Al-Ijmaa'* (no. 52):

They (the scholars) unanimously agree that *Jumu'ah* is not obligatory for women. The evidence for that is the hadeeth of Taariq ibn Shihaab (may Allah be pleased with him) according to which the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “Jumu'ah is a duty that is required of every Muslim in a congregation, except four: a slave, woman, child or one who is sick.” [Narrated by *Abu Dawud*, 91067. *Al-Nawawi* said in *Al-Majmoo'* (4/482): *its isnaad is saheeb (authentic) according to the conditions of the two Shaykhs* [Al-Bukhari].

If a Muslim man cannot join the public Friday prayer for any lawful reason, he has to make up for it by performing the normal *Zuhr* [noon] prayer of four *rak'ats*. The reasons exempting a Muslim from attending the public Friday prayer are either sickness or heavy rainfall, causing great difficulty in going to the mosque. For a Muslim woman, it is not obligatory for her to pray the Friday prayer in a mosque; instead, she performs the normal *Zuhr* prayer of four *rak'ats*.

THE QUNUT

The *Qunut* is a supplication recited at the close of the ‘*Isba* [night] stated prayer, while the worshipper is in the standing position after bowing [see Fig. 4] during the third *rak’a* of the *witr* prayer. The most well-known *Qunut* which is narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him) is the following:

Allabumma ib-dina fi-man hadayta, wa a’fina fi-man a’fayta, wa tawallana fi-man tawal-layta, wa bārik lanā fi mā a’tayta wa qina shar-ra mā qadyta fa-in-naka taqdī wa la yuqda ‘alayka wa in-na-hu lā yazillu man wal-layta wa lā-ya-’izzu man qādayta, nastaghfi-ruka wa natūbu ilayka wa sallal-lāhu ‘alā nabiyinā Muhammad wa ‘alā ālihi wa sabbihi wa sallam [Transliteration].

“O, Allah! Guide us among those whom You have guided aright, and preserve us among those whom You have preserved in good health. And befriend us among those whom You have befriended. And bless us in all You have granted to us, and protect us from the evil of all You have judged as evil; for surely You are the only judge, and none can judge against Your judgment. O, Allah! We invoke your increasing blessings and favours upon our Prophet Muhammad and his family and companions” [Translation].

Another Style of Qunut.

The following supplication of *Qunut* is also commonly adopted:

Allabmuma innā nasta’nu-bika wa nastaghfiruka wa nu’minu bika wa natawakkalu ‘alayka wa nuthni ‘alaykal-khayra wa nashkuruka wa lā nakfuruka wa nakhlā’u wa natruku man yafjuruka. Allabumma iyyāka n’abudu wa laka nusalli wa nasjud wa ilayka nas’a wa nahmid wa narjū rahmataka wa nakhāfu ‘azābaka inna ‘azābaka bilkuffāri muhlik [Transliteration].

“O, Allah! We implore Your help and Your forgiveness as we are faithful to You and depend wholly upon You. We praise You in the best way. We thank You and shall never forget Your favours. We cast off and forsake him who is unmindful of You. O,

Allah! We worship none but You. To You we pray and make obeisance and to You do we promptly flee. We hope for Your mercy and fear Your punishment, for surely Your punishment overtakes the disbeliever” [Translation].

SPECIAL PRAYERS

In addition to the stated daily prayers and the Friday prayer, there are special prayers for special occasions, as given below:

- 1) *Salâtul-Musâfir* [Prayers of the Traveller]. Two *rakâts* instead of the usual number for the noon, afternoon, and night prayers; *maghrib* [evening prayer] always remaining the same, *i.e.* three *rakâts*.
- 2) *Salâtul-khauf* [Prayers of Fear]. This is said in war-time. They are two *rakâts* recited first by one regiment or company and then by the other.
- 3) *Salâtul-Tarawîh*. *Eight rakâts are performed every evening during Ramadan, the month of fasting, immediately after the fifth daily prayer, the Tsha prayer, or before dawn.*
- 4) *Salâtul-Istikhâra* [Prayers for Guidance]. The person who is about to undertake any special affair or business performs two *rakâts* for which he seeks guidance.
- 5) *Salâtul-Janâzah* [Prayers at the funeral for the dead]. This special prayer is founded upon very minute instructions given by the Prophet [pbAbuh], which are recorded in the *hadith* [traditions]. The Muslim funeral prayer is not recited in the graveyard, but either in the mosque or in some open space near the deceased person’s dwelling or graveyard. The nearest relative is the proper person to lead the prayer, but it is usually conducted by the family *imâm* or by a learned man.

The following is the order of the prayer: Someone present calls out: “Here begin the prayers for the dead.”

Then those present arrange themselves in one, two or three rows or more, as the case permits, opposite the corpse, with their faces facing the *Qibla* [*i.e.* towards Makkah]. The *imâm* stands in front of the ranks of the praying people opposite the head of the corpse, if the deceased is a man, and in the middle of the corpse if the deceased is a woman.

To all attendants, having taken the standing position, the *imâm* opens the prayer by saying: "I purpose to perform for this dead person prayers to Allah consisting of four *takbîrs*." Then, placing his hands on the lobes of his ears, he recites the first *takbîr*: Allah is Greater. Afterwards, he folds his hands below his breast and recites the *tashih* or glorification to Allah, thus:

Subhanakal-lahumma
Wabi hamdika wa
Tabarakas-muka
Wa la ilaha ghairûk.

"Glory be to You, O Allah!
And to You be praise!
Blessed is Your name.
High is Your greatness.
There is no deity but You."

Next, he recites the *fâtiha* [the Opening Chapter of the Qur'an]. Here ends the first *takbîr*. Then follows the second *takbîr*: *Allah is Greater*. The *imâm* recites, after that, *salatu-'ala-Nabi* [prayer for the Prophet], thus: "O Allah, send prayers upon Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad just as You sent prayers upon Ibrahim [*Abraham*] and the followers of Ibrahim; You are praised and You are great. O Allah, send blessings on Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad just as you sent blessings upon Ibrahim and the followers of Ibrahim; You are praised and You are great."

Here ends the second *takbîr*: then follows the third *takbîr*: *Allah is Greater*, after which the following prayer can be recited: "O Allah, we beseech you to forgive the sins of this dead person and have mercy upon him or her. He or she was faithful to Islam, he or she believed in Your Oneness and the Message of Your Prophet."

Here ends the third *takbîr*. Then follows the fourth *takbîr*: *Allah is Greater*, after which the following prayer can be recited: "O

Allah, forgive our living and dead and those of us who are present and absent. O Allah, those whom You do keep alive amongst us, keep them alive in Islam, and those whom You cause to die, let them die in the Faith of Islam.”

Turning the head round to the right, the *imâm* says the *salâm*: “Peace and mercy be to You.” Turning the head round to the left, he repeats the *salâm*: “Peace and mercy be to You.”

Takbîrs are recited by him aloud, but *tasbîh*, *salâm*, and prayers are recited by him and by people attending the funeral in a low voice.

The attendants then raise their hands in silent supplication [*Dua’a*] on behalf of the deceased person, and afterwards, addressing the relatives, they say, “Verily, to Allah belongs what He has taken and to Him belongs what He has given. For everything, He has set a term. So be patient and be content. May Allah increase your reward, give you the best consolation, and forgive your beloved deceased”, to which the chief mourner replies, “I am pleased with the will of Allah.”

Those who wish to return to their business may do this at that time, the rest proceed to the grave. Lastly, the corpse is placed on its back in the grave, with the head to the north and the feet to the south, the face being turned towards the *Qibla* [Makkah]. The persons who place the corps in the grave repeat the following sentence: “We commit you, in the name of Allah and on the religion of Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh].”

The shroud bands having been loosened, the recess, which is called *lahd*, is closed with unburnt bricks and the grave filled with earth. Three handfuls of earth are then thrown into the grave by each person present.”

3- FASTING [SLAM]

Fasting the month of Ramadan is an obligation upon every Muslim man and woman. Allah (Glorified be He) says, “*O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed to those before you, so that you may guard against evil doings*” [The Cow, 2: 183].

Fasting is one of those religious pillars which is universally recognized. In Islam, fasting is enjoined for the moral elevation of man and his spiritual development. This objective is made clear in the Glorious Qur’an itself, where fasting is enjoined upon Muslims. The interpretation of the verse on fasting in the Qur’an, [The Cow, 2: 183], is as follows:

The Glorious Qur’an teaches man the ways, by walking in which, the tendency to perform evil in him can be suppressed and the tendency to perform good can be improved. Fasting is one of these means. Hence fasting in Islam does not simply mean abstaining from food and drink, but also every kind of evil and indulgence. Fasting is actually like a sort of training of man’s faculties, for just as every faculty of man requires training to attain its full force, the faculty of submission to the Divine Will also requires to be trained. Fasting is one way how this is achieved.

In addition to that specific training, fasting has its physical advantages. It not only prepares a man to bear hunger and thirst and thus to accustom himself to a life of hardship and frugality, so that he may not be too much given over to ease, but also has a very good effect upon health in general.

It is a well-known teaching of the Prophet [pbAbuh] of Islam that hunger is the best cure for many diseases; this is a fact proved and defended nowadays by recent medical authorities. The injunction of fasting as an established religious system and devotional practice in Islam is dealt with in the Qur’an as follows:

“*O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed to those before you, so that you may guard against evil doings*” [The Cow, 2: 183]. This teaches that fasting is an established religious system almost as universal as prayer; and in Islam, it is one of the four

fundamental practical ordinances, the other three being prayer [Salât], paying poor-tax [zakât] and performing the pilgrimage, [hâjj]. The Qur'an teaches that fasting was enjoined on all nations by prophets who passed before Prophet Muhammad [pbAbuh]. But Islam has introduced quite a new meaning into the pillar of fasting before Islam.

Fasting used to mean the suffering of some privation during times of mourning and sorrow; in Islam, it becomes an established system for the improvement of the moral-spiritual character of a man. This is plainly stated in the concluding words of the Qur'anic verse on fasting, viz. "*So that you may guard against evil doings.*"

The objective of fasting is that man may learn how he can shun evil. As already stated, all the pillars of Islam are practical steps leading to the perfect purification of the soul. Along with moral elevation, which is the aim of fasting, another objective is hinted at. In fact, the twofold objective is that Muslims may be able to guard themselves:

- a. Morally and spiritually, against evil, for he who can renounce lawful satisfaction of his desires in obedience to divine commandments certainly acquires the power to renounce unlawful gratification; and
- b. Physically, against the opponents of the Muslims by habituating themselves to suffer tribulations which they must suffer in defence of the cause of Islam.

The number of days of fasting is stated in verses 184, 185 and 186 of Chapter two of the Qur'an, namely twenty-nine or thirty days during the month of Ramadan: the ninth month of the lunar calendar. But, whoever is temporarily sick or on a journey during the month of Ramadan, shall fast a like number of other days.

As regards those who cannot keep the fast on account of persistent or long-standing disease or who are too old or weak, including in this class the woman who is with a child or who is breastfeeding, the practice is to give away the measure of one man's food to a poor man every day during the whole month. It is

relevant to observe here that doing good to others [charity or otherwise] is enjoined in addition to fasting during the month of Ramadan. We are told that the Prophet [pbAbuh] who was universally recognised for his charity was most charitable during the month of Ramadan. Lunar months do not always have the same number of days every year.

As to the duration of each day of the fast, it is from dawn to sunset. Nothing whatsoever is allowed to be eaten or drunk within that duration. Sexual intercourse is also strictly forbidden. But it is made lawful to go to the wives during the night of the fast. It is meritorious to cut oneself from worldly connections during the last ten days of the month of Ramadan, passing the day and night in a mosque. This practice is known as *I'tikâf*, i.e. seclusion. It is, however, voluntary and not obligatory.

An important question arises regarding such countries in which the days, from dawn to sunset, are sometimes very long, where it would be beyond the ability of an ordinary man to abstain from food from the breaking of dawn to sunset. In this case, a Muslim is allowed to keep the fast only for such hours of fasting as are kept in ordinary countries. However, in cases of extraordinary difficulties, Muslims may postpone the fast to days of shorter length.

The true Muslim woman fasts the day and prays at night in the month of Ramadan, and her soul is filled with the faith that: "Whoever fasts Ramadan out of faith and hope of a reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven" [*Al-Bukhari and Muslim*].

She has the attitude of one who truly fasts, whose faculties keep away from all kinds of sins that may invalidate the fast or diminish its reward. If she finds herself exposed to the trials of hostility or argument, she follows the Prophet's [pbAbuh] advice to men and women who fast: "When any of you is fasting, he should not utter foul words or raise his voice in anger. If at that time, anyone provokes or fights him, he should say, 'I am observing fast'" [*Al-Bukhari and Muslim*].

The true Muslim woman also observes nafil fasts at times other than Ramadan, if it is not too difficult for her to do so. So she fasts the day of ‘Arafat, *Ashura*’, and the ninth day of Muharram, because fasting on these days and others is one of the righteous deeds that may expiate sins, as the Prophet [pbAbuh] told us: Abu Qutadah said, “Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] was asked about fasting on the day of ‘Arafat, and he said, ‘It is an expiation for the sins of the previous year and the current year’” [*Muslim*].

4- ZAKAT OR LEGAL ALMS

Paying the *ḡakat* is an obligation upon every Muslim man and Muslim woman. Allah (Glorified be He) says, “*Of their goods, take alms so that you might purify and sanctify them; ...*” [Repentance, 9: 103],

“The Believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another: they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practise regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His Mercy: for Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise” [Repentance, 9: 71],

“[They are] those who, if We establish them in the land, establish regular prayer and give regular charity, enjoin the right and forbid wrong: with Allah rests the end [and decision] of [all] affairs” [The Pilgrimage, 22: 41].

Every religion of the world has preached the giving of charity. Islam makes charity obligatory and binding upon all those who embrace Islam. Here we have a brotherhood into which the rich man cannot enter unless, and until, he is willing to give part of his possessions for the support of the poor and the needy members of the community.

In its primary sense, the word *ḡakat* means purification, where it is also used to express a portion of the remainder belonging to the proprietor. It is a pillar of Islam founded upon an express command in the Qur’an, as one of the five foundations of the practical side of the religion.

It is an obligatory religious duty upon any person who is free, sane, adult and a Muslim, provided that he possesses in full the property of such estate or belongings as are termed, in *Shari’ah* law language, a *nisab*, i.e. a fixed amount of the property and that he has owned the same for one complete year. The *nisab* or fixed amount of property upon which *ḡakat* is due varies regarding the different kinds of property possessed, as is detailed in the present article. The one complete year in which the property is held in possession is termed in the *Shari’ah* law as *hawlul-hawl*, i.e. the return of duration. *Zakat* is not obligatory upon a man who has debts equal or exceeding the amount of his whole property, nor it is due upon the necessities of life, such as dwelling-houses, articles of

clothing, household furniture, cattle kept for immediate use, war prisoners employed as actual servants, or armour and weapons designed for present use, or upon books of science or law used by scholars, or upon tools used by craftsmen. *Zakat* is obligatory when the *nisab* is reached concerning the following possessions: [a] Camels. [b] Bulls, cows and buffaloes. [c] Sheep and goats. [d] Horses. [e] Silver. [f] Gold and silver ornaments. [g] Cash, bank-notes, etc. [h] Articles of merchandise. [i] Mines or buried treasures. [j] Fruits of the earth. The following is the *nisab*, or proportionate property, upon which *zakat* is due on the above various possessions:

[A] CAMELS

Zakat is not due upon less than five camels; and upon five camels it is one goat or sheep, provided that they live upon pasture throughout the year; this is because *zakat* is due only upon such camels living on pasture and not upon those which are fed in the home where the forage is. One goat or sheep is due upon five to nine camels; two goats for ten to fourteen camels; three goats for fifteen to nineteen camels; for goats for twenty to twenty-four camels. Upon any number of camels from twenty-five to thirty-five, the *zakat* is a *bintmakâd* or a yearling female camel; from thirty-six to forty-five, a *bint-labûn*, or a two-year-old female camel; from forty-six to sixty, a *haqqa*, or a three-year-old female camel; from sixty-one to seventy-five, a *jaza'a*, or four-year-old female camel; from seventy-six to ninety, two female two-year-old colts; from ninety-one to one hundred and twenty, two *haqqa* has to be given. When the number of camels exceeds one hundred and twenty, the *zakat* is calculated by the aforesaid rule (one *hiqqa* for every fifty camels and one *bint-labûn* for every forty).

[B] BULLS, COWS AND BUFFALOES

No *zakat* is due upon fewer than thirty of these cattle. Upon thirty cattle which are fed on pasture for the greater part of the year, at the end of the year a *tabi'a* or one-year-old calf is due; and upon forty, a *musinna*, or a calf of two years, is due; and where the number exceeds forty, the *zakat* is to be calculated according to

this rule. For example, upon sixty, the *ḡakat* is two *tabī'a*, upon seventy, one *tabī'a* and one *musinna*; upon ninety, three *tabī'a* etc. Upon one hundred and nine, the *ḡakat* is two *tabia* and one *musinna*; and upon one hundred and twenty, four *tabī'as*.

The usual method, however, of calculating the *ḡakat* upon large herds of cattle is by dividing them into thirties and forties, imposing upon every thirty-one: a *tabī'a*, or upon every forty-one: a *musinna*.

[C] SHEEP AND GOATS

No *ḡakat* is due upon less than forty which have fed the greater part of the year on pasture. For more than forty heads, one goat or sheep is due, until the number reaches one hundred and twenty; for one hundred and twenty-one to two hundred, two goats or sheep are due; and above this, one for every hundred.

[D] HORSES

When horses and mares are kept indiscriminately together, feeding for the great part of the year on pasture, it is the proprietor's option to give one *dīnar* [a *dīnar* is worth about 13 grams gold, or its equivalent in currency] per head, or to estimate the whole and give pay ten dirhams for each 200 dirhams of their value. No *ḡakat* is due upon droves of horses consisting entirely of males or entirely of mares. There is no *ḡakat* due upon horses or mules unless they are articles of merchandise, nor it is due upon war horses, or beasts of burden or cattle kept for drawing ploughs and so forth.

[E] SILVER

It is not due upon silver of value less than two hundred *dirhams* [one *dirham* is equivalent to 3.12 grams], but if one possesses this sum for a whole year, the *ḡakat* due upon it is five *dirhams* till there are forty dirhams over the *nisab*, on which the *ḡakat* is six *dirhams*, and for every succeeding forty one more *dirham* is due. These *dirhams*, which are made from silver, are to be counted as silver, and the laws respecting silver apply to them, even if they

contain some alloy. The same rule holds concerning all articles falling under the denomination of dishes, such as cups and drinking bowls.

[F] GOLD AND SILVER ORNAMENTS:

No *zakat* is due upon gold under the value of twenty *misqâls*,^[1] and the *zakat* due upon twenty is half a *misqâl*. When the quantity of gold exceeds twenty *misqâls*, two *qirâts*^[2] are due on every four *misqâls* more than this *nisab* of twenty, and so on, in the same proportion. *Zakat* is due upon gold and silver bars and all gold and silver ornaments and utensils.

[G] CASH, BANK-NOTES, ETC.

No *zakat* is due upon notes, etc., the value of which does not exceed eighty-nine grams of gold of twenty-one carat or its equivalent of foreign currency. And the *zakat* due upon a value of eighty-nine grams and upwards of gold of twenty-one karate is two and a half per cent of the total money remaining idle in the person's possession for one year.

[H] ARTICLES OF MERCHANDISE

Articles of merchandise should be valued and *zakat* of two and a half per cent is paid upon the value if it exceeds two hundred *dirhams* of silver in value.

[I] MINES OR BURIED TREASURES

Mines of gold, silver, iron, lead or copper are subject to *zakat* of one-fifth, but if the mine is discovered within the grounds of a person's own home, nothing is due. And if a person finds a deposit of buried treasures, one-fifth is due upon it. No *zakat* is due upon precious stones.

[J] FRUITS OF THE EARTH

Upon everything produced from the ground, there is one-tenth, whether the soil is watered by the overflow of rivers or by

[1] A '*misqâl*' is equivalent to 4.680 grams.

[2] A '*qirât*' equals one-sixteenth of a '*dirham*', or 0.195 grams.

periodical rains, except articles of wood, bamboo, and grass, which are not subject to tithe. If soil is watered using buckets, machinery, or watering camels, etc., the *zakat* is one-twentieth.

Honey and fruits collected in the wilderness are subject to tithe. The *zakat* is received by collectors duly appointed by the state, although it is lawful for the possessor to distribute his alms himself. If a person comes to the collector and makes a declaration upon oath as to the amount of his property or as to his having himself distributed the due alms, his statement is to be credited.

EXPENDITURE OF INCOME FROM ZAKAT

As regards the expenditure of income from *zakat*, eight types are mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an: "*Alms are for the poor; and the needy; and those employed to administer the [funds]; those whose hearts have been [recently] reconciled [to the truth]; those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer. [Thus is it] ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom*" [Repentance, 9: 60].

1. The poor.
2. The needy.
3. The officials who are appointed in connection with the collection of *zakat*.
4. Those whose hearts are to be reconciled by material support.
5. Ransoming of captives [prisoners of war]
6. Those in debt.
7. In the cause of Allah.
8. The wayfarer.

A few words may be added to explain the above:

- 1) The poor are those who are unable physically or otherwise to earn their living.
- 2) The needy are those who may be able to earn their livelihood but lack the means, such as implements, etc.
- 3) Those in debt means persons who may be able to support themselves, but if they are in debt, their debts may be paid off from the *zakat* fund.

- 4) The captives are those who have been taken prisoners in war. A portion of the *zakat* fund must go for their release.
- 5) The wayfarer is a traveller who, though in well-to-do circumstances, needs help in a strange place or country; hence, a part of the *zakat* income must be spent on such a person.
- 6) The officials who collect *zakat* are staff members appointed officially to manage its collection as well as its expenditure; hence, their wages are also to be paid out of the *zakat* fund.
- 7) Those whose hearts are to be harmonised with the way of While the preaching of religion, there is always a class of people who are ready to listen and ready to embrace Islam when they are preached to, but who, upon embracing Islam, have to forego material advantages which are very difficult for them to relinquish. These persons are spoken of in the Qur'an as those whose hearts are to be harmonised or united by giving them a portion of the *zakat* fund to reassure them.
- 8) The cause of Allah means the cause of the advancement or defence of Islam. Under this heading, *zakat* may be spent for the propagation of the religion of Islam and to meet the objections advanced against it.

The above laws covering the established system of the principle of *zakat* in Islam are detailed according to the *Hanafi* School of Muslim Jurisprudence. The differences amongst the teachings of the *Sunni* Schools of Muslims are small and even insignificant.

However, the fact that the staff employed in connection with the poor-tax [*zakat*] are paid wages from that revenue clearly denotes that the system involves raising a public fund the management of which should entirely be in the hands of a public body, although it is lawful for the possessor to distribute his alms himself. If he makes a declaration under oath to this effect, his statement is to be credited.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

ZAKAT IS NOT A STATE TAX

As already mentioned in the foregoing chapter, the scope of *zakat* is clearly set forth in the Glorious Qur'an and, therefore, must not be confused with other forms of compulsory taxes imposed by the state on its Muslim and non-Muslim citizens alike. In the first place, *zakat* is not a tax imposed by the state nor is *zakat* a tax allotted to the state as such. The very nature of the system of *zakat* requires that the part which the state is to play in the function thereof is merely one of "supervision" and not of full control, as is the case when government taxes are concerned.

The difference between supervision and full control is that the latter would imply the right to increase or modify the tax, to extend or limit its scope, to suspend the imposition thereof, or even to abrogate it all together. However, in its role of supervising, the right of the state is only to enforce the observance of the divine law as directed by the precepts of the Qur'an and the instructions of the Prophet [pbAbuh].

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF ZAKAT

Zakat exclusively concerns productive wealth: that is wealth represented by:

- 1) Agricultural produce.
- 2) Pasturing domestic animals.
- 3) Things constituting the ready medium of exchange, such as silver, gold, and money invested [in trade capital, in cash, and articles of merchandise] or kept as savings.

The law of *zakat* considers the productivity of wealth as either potential or actual, the former existing in such wealth as silver, gold, and money kept as savings. The latter is actual productivity existing in such wealth, such as agricultural produce, pasturing domestic animals and invested money, i.e. trade capital in cash and articles of trade.

1) REASON AND OBLIGATION OF THE ACT OF PAYING ZAKAT

The reason for *zakat* is to encourage the productivity of wealth existing in a quantity, number, or value equal to or above the established minimum taxable limits (*nisab*). *Zakat* becomes an obligation when the legitimate owner of wealth professes Islam.

2) RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PAYMENT OF ZAKAT

Zakat is an act of worship; it is an obligatory impost on Muslim-owned wealth. The *zakat* must be discharged regardless of age or state of mind. For adult Muslims, the responsibility is allocated directly upon the legitimate owner of the wealth; for minors or insane persons, it lies with the legal guardian or custodian thereof, as the case may be. For the *zakat* of wealth belonging to minor children [as, for example, in the case of wealth inherited from the mother], the responsibility for the payment of dues rests with the person entrusted with the care and administration thereof [*i.e.* the child's father, or any other responsible person] until the child comes to full age. The same ruling applies to Muslim orphaned children or insane Muslim men or women, in which case the responsibility of payment of *zakat* rests with the legal guardian or custodian, as the case may be. Trade capital, that is to say, both the reserve and working capital [*i.e.* money and articles of trade] belonging to individuals or companies, is also subject to the payment of *zakat* whenever its value is equal to or above the minimum taxable limit.

When private ownership of a business is involved, responsibility for the payment of dues rests with the owner or owners. For endowments, such responsibility rests with the individual or committee entrusted with the administration of the establishment or concern in question.

3) EXEMPTION FROM ZAKAT DUES

It is one of the fundamental doctrines of Islam that the needy and poor citizens of any Muslim community have an inherent right in the wealth of *every* Muslim of means. No justification can be

found in the Qur'anic text for exempting the wealth owned even by minors, orphans or persons of unsound mind.

All privately owned establishments or endowed, which are either devoted to charitable purposes [*i.e.* hospitals, orphanages, homes for the poor, disabled and elderly people, etc.] or the service of humanity [*i.e.* scientific research, free educational institutions] are naturally exempt from the obligation of paying *zakat* as by their very nature they fulfil the purpose to which the proceeds of *zakat* are dedicated. Likewise, wealth which has been purposely set aside to cover the expenses of the first pilgrimage to the *Ka'ba* is exempt from *zakat*, regardless of the period during which it remains suspended. Subsequent pilgrimages being purely optional, wealth set aside to cover expenses of the same is considered as savings, and, therefore, it is subject to *zakat* when the quantity or value is equal to or above the minimum taxable limit.

4) FACTORS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The person subject to *zakat* must be:

- a) An avowed Muslim [non-Muslims being exempt from such *zakat*].
- b) Of sound mind.
- c) A person enjoying full freedom of action. If for any reason, he/she is under any kind of constraint, his responsibility remains suspended until full freedom of action is recovered.

The Muslim woman pays *zakat* on her wealth if she is wealthy enough to be liable for *zakat*. Every year, at a specified time, she calculates how much she owns and pays what she has to because *zakat* is a pillar of Islam. There can be no compromise or excuse when it comes to paying it every year, even if the amount comes to thousands or millions. A true Muslim woman would never try to avoid paying some of the *zakat* that she is obliged to pay. *Zakat* is a clearly defined financial obligation and an act of worship that Allah has enjoined upon every Muslim, man or woman, who owns the minimum amount [*nisab*] or more. Withholding *zakat*, or

denying that it is obligatory, is tantamount to apostasy [riddah] and kufr for which a person may be fought and even killed until or unless he pays it in full, as required by Islam.

The words of Abu Bakr concerning the apostates who withheld their zakat have echoed down the centuries to us: “By Allah, I will fight whoever separates *Salât* from *zakat*” [*Muslim*]

5- PILGRIMAGE [HAJJ]

Women [as well as men] are commanded to perform the pilgrimage at least once in their lives. Allah (Glorified be He) says, "... *pilgrimage to the House is a duty people owe to Allah, for all those who can afford the journey*" [The Family of 'Imran, 3: 97].

Pilgrimage as a Fundamental System

Pilgrimage to Makkah is performed in the month of *Zul Hijja*, the twelfth month of the Islamic year. It is the fifth pillar of Islam and an obligatory religious duty to be performed once during a lifetime. It is founded upon express injunctions in the Qur'an. It is a divine system and has the following interpreted authority in the Qur'an for its due observance:

"And proclaim to the people the pilgrimage. They will come to you on foot and on every fleet camel, coming from remote defile" [The Pilgrimage, 22: 27]. *"The rites of pilgrimage are performed in the well-known months, so whoever determines the performance of the pilgrimage therein, let him not transgress by partaking in intercourse with women or by making an unlawful dispute or any wrangling. And whatever good you may do, Allah certainly knows it. And make provision [for your journey], but the best provision is the fear of Allah. So fear Me, O you people of understanding"* [The Cow, 2: 197].

"There shall be no sin on you for seeking bounty ^[1] from your Lord. So when you hasten on from Arafat, remember Allah, Who has guided you, though, before, you were certainly going astray" [2: 198],

"When you have performed your sacred rites, then praise ^[2] Allah as you do your own fathers, or with a yet more intense lauding. But there are some

[1] Bounty here stands for trading. What is meant is that there is no harm in seeking an increase of wealth by trading in Makkah in the pilgrimage season. Before the advent of Islam, fairs were held for trading purposes in the pilgrimage season. The Muslims thought it was a sin to take part in this, and so they were told that trade was not forbidden to them even on these days.

[2] In the days of ignorance, i.e. before the advent of Islam, the Arabs used to boast among themselves of the greatness of their fathers or forefathers after they had performed their pilgrimage. They were now bidden to laud Allah, Who would make them much greater than their forefathers.

people who say, 'Our Lord, give us [our portion] in this world,' but such shall have no portion in the Hereafter" [The Cow, 2: 200]. "And there are some other people who say, 'Our Lord, grant us good in this world and good in the next and safeguard us from the chastisement of the fire'" [The Cow, 2: 201].

"These shall be allotted what they have earned: Allah is swift at reckoning" [The Cow, 2: 202]. "The first House [mosque] established for mankind was that at Bakka [Makkah], a place of blessing and guidance for all beings" [The Family of 'Imrân, 3: 96], "... pilgrimage to the House is a duty due to Allah upon all mankind, [for anyone] who is able to undertake the journey" [The Family of 'Imrân, 3: 97].

Certain Rites of this Religious Pillar

Preparatory: Pilgrimage is a fundamental ordinance of practical devotion in Islam, and it represents the last stage in the spiritual progress in this life. Of the principal requirements of the pilgrimage is what is called *ibrâm*, which represents the severance of all worldly connections. All these costly and fashionable dresses, in which the inner self is so often mistaken for the outward appearance, are cast off, and the pilgrim has only two seamless wrappers to cover himself, thus showing that in his obedience to his Creator he is ready to cast off all lower connections. The other important requirement is making circuits around the *Ka'ba*, called *tawâf*, and running between two appointed small hills known as *Al-Safa* and *Al-Marwa*, the running being called *sâ'iy*. Of the rites to be observed in connection with the pillar of pilgrimage is the kissing of a monumental "Black Stone" when making certain appointed circuits around the *Ka'ba*.

The Way of Performing the Pilgrimage

The following is a complete summary of the principal rites in connection with the pillar of the pilgrimage, as observed by the *Sunni* Muslims: Upon the pilgrim's arrival at the last stage of his journey, near Makkah, he bathes himself and performs two *rak'ats*, and then strips himself of his clothes to put on the pilgrim's garment, which is called *ibrâm*. This garment consists of two seamless wrappers, one being wrapped around the waist and the

other thrown loosely over the shoulder. The head is always left uncovered, but women must always keep their heads covered. Sandals may be also worn, but not boots or shoes. After having assumed the pilgrim's garb, he must not cover his head, shave any part of his body, cut his nails, nor wear any other clothes besides the *ihram*. The pilgrim, having now entered the state of pilgrimage, faces Makkah and makes the *niyya* [intention] by saying, "O Allah, I intend to perform the pilgrimage; make this devotion easy for me and accept it from me." He then proceeds on his journey to the sacred city and on his way, as well as different periods during the pilgrimage, he recites, in a loud voice, alone or with the company of his fellow pilgrims the pilgrim's supplication called the *talbiya* [a word signifying waiting or keep standing for orders]. In Arabic, it runs thus:

"Labbayka, Allahumma labbayka. Labbayka ; lâ sharika lak, labbayka. Innal-hamda wan-ni'-mata lak. Wal-mulko lak Lâ sharika lak." Which may be rendered in English as follows:

"I stand up for Your Service, O Allah. I stand up." "I stand up. There is no partner with You." "I stand up. Verily, Yours is the praise, the blessing and the Kingdom." "There is no partner with You."

Immediately on his arrival at Makkah, the pilgrim performs legal ablution in the *Masjidul-Harâm* [the Sacred Mosque of Makkah] and then kisses the Black Stone. He then goes around the *Ka'ba* seven times; three times at a quick step or run and four times at a slow pace. These acts are called *tawâf* or circuits, which are performed by commencing on the right with the *Ka'ba* on the left. Each time the pilgrim passes round the *Ka'ba*, he touches the *Ruknul-Yamani* or the Yemen corner and kisses the Black Stone. He then proceeds to the *Maqâmu-Ibrâhîm*, or the seat of Abraham, where he recites the verse [2: 125] of the Qur'an: "*Wattakbizû min maqâ Ibrânhim mu-sallâ*," i.e., "Take the station or seat of Abraham for a place of prayer," and performs prayers consisting of two *rakâts*.

He then goes to the gate of the Sacred Mosque leading to Mount *Al-Safa*, and from it he ascends the hill, reciting in a loud

voice the verse 158 of the second chapter of the Qur'an: "*In-nas-Safâ wal Marwâ min Sh'â'ir-il-Lâh,*" i.e., "*Verily Al-Safa and Al-Marawa are counted as divine rites of Allah.*" Having arrived at the summit of the hill and turning towards the *Ka'ba*, he recites the following;

"*Lâ il-lal-Lâh, Lâ ilâha-il-al-Lâh wahdah; lâ sharika lah; sadaqa wa'dah wa nasara abdah; wa hazamal-abzâba wahdah, la ilaha illal-Lah,*" i.e., "There is no deity except Allah. There is no deity but Allah alone. He has no partner. He has executed His promise and has given victory to His slave [Muhammad], and He has alone defeated the hosts of disbelievers. There is no deity save Allah." These words are recited thrice.

He then runs from the top of Mount *Al-Safa* to the summit of Mount *Al-Marwa* seven times, repeating the aforesaid supplication or prayer. This is the sixth day when the evening is spent at Makkah, where he again makes one *tawâf* (7 rounds) around the *Ka'ba*. On the seventh day, he listens to the *khutba*, or sermon, in the Sacred Mosque, on the excellence of the pilgrimage and the necessary duties required of all true Muslims. On the following day, which is called the day of *tarniya* ^[1] [satisfying thirst], thirst], he proceeds with his fellow-pilgrims to a place called *Mina*, where he spends the night performing the usual Muslim rites. On the next day, which is the ninth of the month, all pilgrims proceed to Mount *Arafat* where they spend the whole day, performing the midday and afternoon stated prayers, listening to the sermon, and spending the time in reciting the Qur'an or making humble supplications to Allah asking His favour of forgiveness of their sins and soliciting His guidance to a virtuous life, etc. Before sunset, the pilgrim leaves *Arafat* for a stage called *Al-Muzdalifa*, a place between *Mina* and *Arafat*, where he should arrive for the sunset and night prayers.

The next day is the tenth of the month, known all through the Muslim world as *Yanmul-nabri*, or the day of sacrifice, and

[1] The 8th day of the pilgrimage is so called because the pilgrims, in olden times, used to give drinking water to their camels on that day.

celebrated as the “*Eid-el-ad-bâ*”, or the great feast, known in the West as *Qurban Bairam*. Early in the morning, having said their prayers at *Al-Muẓdalifa*, the pilgrims proceed in one body to three monumental pillars at Mina. The pilgrim casts seven small stones or pebbles at each of these pillars; this ceremony is called *ram-yol-jumâr*, or throwing of the pebbles. Holding the pebble [which he can easily pick up from the sand at that locality] between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand, the pilgrim throws it at a distance of some fifteen feet, saying, “*Allahu Akbar*,” “Allah is Greater.” The remaining pebbles are thrown in the same way at each of the other pillars.

The pilgrim then returns to *Mina* and performs the sacrifice; the sacrificial animal may be a sheep, a goat, a cow or even a camel, according to the means of the pilgrim. When slaughtering the animal, the pilgrim says in a loud voice, “*Allahu Akbar*,” “Allah is Greater.” “O Allah, accept this sacrifice from me.” This ceremony concludes the pilgrimage; and there the pilgrim then has his head shaved, his nails pared, and the *ihrâm* or pilgrim’s garment are taken off and replaced by the usual dress. Although the pilgrimage rites are over by this time, he should have a rest at Makkah for the following three days, which are known as *ayyâmul-tashriq*. Before finally leaving Makkah, the pilgrim should once more perform the circuits around the *Ka’ba* and throw stones at the monumental pillar at Mina seven times. He must also drink the water of the famous well near the *Ka’ba*, known as *Zamzam* well.

Throwing stones or pebbles against the aforesaid monumental pillar represents a deeply rooted sincere intention on the part of the pilgrim that he will never again follow wicked footsteps, mischievous or impious company, or listen to evil suggestions, usually known as the devil or the path of Satan. This practice can by no means be mistaken for a form of idolatry. It is rather a meritorious act to remind oneself. Most Muslims then go to Al-Medina to visit the mosque of their Prophet [pbAbuh]. From the time the pilgrim assumes the *ihrâm* until he takes it off, he must abstain from worldly affairs and devote himself entirely to the duties of the pilgrimage. He is not allowed to hunt or kill the game.

He is prohibited to unite in sexual intercourse, make a vain dispute, commit any unlawful act, or use bad language or insulting words. The pilgrimage can only be performed on the appointed days of the month of *Zul-Hijjah*, but a visit can be meritoriously made to the Sacred Mosque at Makkah [the house of Allah at Makkah] at any time of the year; in this case, it is not called a pilgrimage, but it takes the name of “*Umrah*”, meaning a visit to the Sacred Mosque. If the pilgrim happens to arrive at Makkah as late as the ninth day of the month, he can still legally perform his dutiful pilgrimage if he can join the pilgrims when they are at Mount *Arafat* on that day. The pilgrimage cannot be performed by deputation, according to the *Sunni* School of Law.

However, if a Muslim on his death-bed leaves a sum of money to be paid to a certain person to perform pilgrimage by deputation, this is considered as satisfying the rules of Muslim Law. If a Muslim has the means of performing the pilgrimage but fails to do so, he is considered to have committed a great sin. According to the sayings of the Prophet [pbAbuh], the merits of a pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque are very great: “He who makes a pilgrimage for Allah’s sake and does not talk badly or act wickedly shall return from it as pure from sin as the day on which he was born.” “Verily, pilgrimage and *Umrah* [visit to the Sacred Mosque] remove poverty and sin like the fire of a forge removes dross.” “When you see a pilgrim, salute and embrace him, and request him to ask pardon of Allah for you, for his sins have been forgiven and his supplications may be accepted.”

SUMMARY OF FUNDAMENTAL ENJOINMENTS OF THE PILGRIMAGE

The principal rites to be observed in connection with the pillar of the pilgrimage are:

- 1) *Ihrâm*, that is: entering the sacred land in a state of *ihrâm* in which the ordinary clothes are put off and all pilgrims wear one kind of apparel, consisting of two seamless

sheets and leaving the head uncovered, except in case of female pilgrims, who cover their heads.

- 2) Tawâf, or making circuits around the Ka'ba seven times.
- 3) Sa'y, or running seven times between two small hills neighbouring the Ka'ba, known as Al-Safa and Al-Marwa.
- 4) Staying in the plain of Mount Arafat on the 9th day of the month of pilgrimage [Zul Hijja], where the noon and afternoon prayers shall be said.

It will be seen that the state of *ihram* makes all men and women stand upon one plane of equality, all wearing the same very simple dress and living in the same conditions. All distinctions of rank and colour, wealth and nationality disappear; and the prince is now indistinguishable from the peasant. The whole of humanity assumes one form and has one standing before the Creator. Thus the greatest and glorious sight of human equality is witnessed in that wonderful desert plain called "*Arafat*" which makes man obtain better knowledge of his Creator; the word "*Arafat*" is derived from *Arafa*, meaning: he came to acquire knowledge [of something]. The whole of the world is unable to present such a glorious picture of real brotherhood and equality. The condition of the pilgrim and the different movements connected with the pilgrimage, making the circuits and running to and fro, in fact, represent the state of the worshipper which is imbued with the spirit of true submission to the Creator. That submission to Allah, which is so much just talked of in other religions, becomes a reality here. Lower connections have been cut off and all the comforts of this life have lost their attraction compared to their longing for the Lord. The pilgrim, indeed, represents the final stage of spiritual advancement, and by his outward condition and movements, the pilgrim only announces to the whole world how all the lower connections must be cut off to reach the great goal of human perfection and nearness to Allah, which can only be attained by having true submission to the Unseen Creator.

The true Muslim woman intends to go on *Hajj* to the House of Allah when she is able to do so and it is easy for her to travel. Before she sets out on her journey, she takes time to study the

rules of *Hajj* [*ahkam*] in-depth, so that when she begins to perform the rituals of *Hajj*, her actions will be based on true understanding and her Hajj will be complete according to the conditions laid down by the *Shari'ah*. It will be equivalent of jihad for men, as the Prophet [pbAbuh] described Hajj in a hadith narrated by Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her): "I [Aisha] said, 'O Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh], can we [women] not go out on military expeditions and fight in jihad with you [men]?' He said, 'You [women] have the best and the most beautiful *jihad* for you is Hajj, a blessed Hajj.'" Aisha said, "I never stopped going for Hajj after I heard this from Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh]" [*Related by Al-Bukhari*].

Just as Hajj is obligatory for the Muslim woman, so also is Umra, if she can go, - especially Umra during Ramadan, the reward for which is equivalent to that for performing Hajj with the Prophet [pbAbuh]. This is seen in the hadith narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari from Ibn 'Abbas, who said, "When the Prophet [pbAbuh] came back from Hajj, he said to Umm Sinan Al-Ansariyyah, 'What stopped you from going to Hajj?' She said, 'Abu so-and-so—meaning her husband—has two camels; he took one to go to Hajj and we need the other to irrigate our land.' He said, 'When Ramadan comes, go for 'Umra, for 'Umra in Ramadan is a Hajj.'" According to another report also narrated by Ibn Abbas, the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "For 'Umra in Ramadan is equivalent to [performing] Hajj with me" [*Related by Al-Bukhari*].

PART III

DO WOMEN HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES IN RETURN FOR THEIR RIGHTS?

RESPONSIBILITIES AND REWARDS

Men and women are equal in terms of responsibilities and rewards for his or her acts. Allah (Glorified be He) says, *“Every soul will be [held] in pledge for its deeds”* [The Cloaked one, 74: 38].

Allah also says, *“On the Day every soul will come struggling for itself, and every soul will be recompensed [fully] for all its actions, and none will be dealt with unjustly”* [The Bee, 16: 111].

Women will thus be accounted for and credited for their religious obligations and worship. Their deeds are equally assessed, judged and rewarded. Allah says, *“If any do deeds of righteousness, be they male or female, and have faith, they will enter Heaven, and not the least injustice will be done to them”* [Women, 4: 124].

Verses that refer to the equality of men and women in terms of actions and rewards are numerous. Allah says, *“Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has faith, verily, to him will We give a new life, a life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions”* [The Bee, 16: 97].

Hence, on the Day of judgement, each individual will be rewarded according to his or her deeds, and not according to status or gender. Allah says, *“He that works evil will not be requited but by the like thereof: and he that works a righteous deed, whether male or female, and is a believer; such will enter the Garden [of Bliss]: therein will they have abundance without measure”* [Forgiver, 40: 40].

Allah also says, *“Allah has promised to believers, men and women, Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein, and beautiful mansions in Gardens of everlasting bliss. But the greatest bliss is the Good Pleasure of Allah: that is the supreme felicity”* [Repentance, 9: 72].

Allah has established that men and women who have migrated and have been expelled from their homes or suffered persecution for His cause will be equally rewarded. Allah says, *“And their Lord*

has accepted from them and answered them: 'Never will I suffer to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female: you are members, one of another; those who have left their homes, and were driven out therefrom, and suffered harm in My Cause, and fought and were slain, verily, I will blot out from them their iniquities, and admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing beneath, a reward from the Presence of Allah. And from His Presence is the best of rewards' [The Family of 'Imrân, 3: 195].

The true Muslim woman is distinguished by her Islamic character and is proud of the high-status Islam gave her at a very early stage fourteen centuries ago, before women in other nations. Islam proclaimed full rights of women for the first time in history, with Muslim women enjoying human rights centuries before the world had ever heard of human rights organizations or witnessed any "Declaration of Human Rights".

At that early stage, Islam declared that women were twin halves of men, as stated in the hadith narrated by Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, Al-Darimi and Ahmad. At a time when the Christian world doubted the humanity of woman and the nature of her soul, the Qur'an declared, "*And their Lord has accepted of them and answered them, 'Never will I suffer to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female: you are members, one of another'*" [The Family of 'Imrân 3: 195].

The Prophet [pbAbuh] accepted women's oath of Islam and obedience just as he accepted that of men. Women's allegiance was independent and separate from that of their menfolk and was not performed as an act of blind obedience.

WOMEN'S LEGAL STATUS IN TERMS OF HUDOOD AND QISAAS

HUDOOD [Punishments stipulated in the Quran]:

Islam is based on justice. Men and women are equally punished for their sins, just as they are equally rewarded for their good deeds. I shall illustrate this with a few rulings for different crimes and explain how they were implemented at the time of the Prophet [pbAbuh] and the righteous Caliphs.

FORNICATION AND ADULTERY [ZINA]

Allah says, *"The woman and the man [who have not previously been married] guilty of illegal sexual intercourse or fornication, flog each of them with a hundred stripes: let not compassion move you in their case in a matter prescribed by Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day: and let a party of the believers witness their punishment"* [Light, 24: 2].

Ibn Katheer said, "In this verse, Allah (Glorified be He) pronounces His sentence upon those who commit fornication. People of knowledge have studied this subject in detail. In applying the above sentence, they differentiate between the married adulterer and fornicator who has never been married.

All the scholars, except Abu Hanifa, agree that the sentence should be a hundred lashes for the one who has never been married, plus he should be expelled from their country for one year. Abu Hanifa believes that the fornicator should be given the choice to emigrate or to stay in his country. The verse specifies the punishment of fornicators who have never been married. On the other hand, the narration that follows clearly specifies the punishment of a married adulterer or adulteress; if she or he confesses, he or she is stoned to death [*rajm*].

The majority of the scholars have presented the evidence of the following narration and disagreed with Abu Hanifa in giving the fornicator a choice: Abu Huraira and Zaid bin Khalid (may Allah be pleased with them) narrated, "While we were with the Prophet [pbAbuh], a man stood up and said, 'O Prophet [pbAbuh], I beseech you by Allah that you should judge us

according to Allah's Laws.' Then the man's opponent got up saying, 'Judge us according to Allah's Law and kindly allow me to speak.' The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, 'Speak.' He said, "My son was a labourer working for this man and he committed illegal sexual intercourse with the man's wife. I gave one hundred sheep and a slave as a ransom for my son's sin. Then I asked a learned man about this case and he informed me that my son should receive one hundred lashes and be exiled for one year, and the man's wife should be stoned to death.' The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, 'By Him in whose Hand my soul is, I will judge you according to the Laws of Allah (Glorified be He). Your one hundred sheep and the slave are to be returned to you, and your son has to receive one hundred lashes and be exiled for one year. O Unais! Go to the wife of this man, and if she confesses, then stone her to death.' Unais went to her and she confessed. He then stoned her to death." [1]

DEFAMATION

[wrongly accusing a righteous woman of adultery or fornication]: After establishing the punishment for fornication and explaining the dangers of the ill consequences and atrocities of such crimes, Allah establishes the punishment for defamation in the following verses. Allah says,

"And those who launch a charge against chaste women and produce not four witnesses [to support their allegations], flog them with eighty stripes and reject their evidence ever after, for such men are wicked transgressors; [this is] unless they repent thereafter and mend [their conduct], for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" [Light, 24: 4-5].

The legal verdict, in this case, is a physical punishment of 80 lashes, and greater mental punishment for those who defame innocent men or women is to have their testimony forever rejected and to be no longer regarded as "trustworthy". This is an efficient deterrent to protect people's honour.

[1] Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Vol.8, offset print, Istanbul, Dar al Fikr, from Dar Al-Iba'ah Al-Amira (no date), p. 24.

THE OATH WHEN ACCUSED OF ADULTERY [MULAA'ANAH]

Although this legislation concerns only women, it reflects the dignified and respected position of women in Islam. When a man accuses his wife of committing adultery, the adopted procedure is different from that concerning defamation, in general. This verdict is based on the following verses. Allah says,

“And those who accuse their wives and have no witnesses except themselves, let one of them testify by swearing four times by Allah that his charge is true, calling down upon himself, on the fifth time, the curse of Allah if he is lying. But they shall spare her the punishment if she swears four times by Allah that his charge is false and calls down upon herself Allah’s wrath if it is true. Were it not for Allah’s grace and mercy on you and that He is Forgiving and Wise, [He would immediately uncover your sins and hasten your punishment]” [Light, 24:6-10].

Allah has thus delivered the truthful husband from the burden of presenting four witnesses and allowed him to prove his case through mulaa'ana. However, it is probably distrust and excessive jealousy that led a husband to wrongly accuse his wife of committing adultery. Therefore, Allah has given her the means to protect her dignity and honour of her family by rejecting her husband’s oaths. Allah has given both men and women the chance to conceal their lies in this world and the chance to escape punishment in the hereafter if they truly repent. Indeed, no other religion, man-made set of laws, customs, or social traditions have ever honoured women in this way.

On the contrary, men have always had the right to execute revenge and even to kill their wives on mere suspicion of adultery, without giving them a chance to speak or to refute the charge. Islam provides security, dignity, and respect for women through its legislation.

THEFT:

The legal punishment concerning theft is the same for men and women. Allah says, “*As for a man or a woman who is guilty of theft,*

cut off their hands to punish them for their crimes, a deterrent [punishment] enjoined by Allah. He is Mighty, Wise. But whoever repents and mends his ways after committing evil shall be pardoned by Allah. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful” [The Table Spread, 5: 38-39].

Allah has ordered amputation of the thief's hand who steals the property of others, as a punishment for his crime. The following tradition has established the execution of this penalty: ‘Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated, “Quraish became very worried about the *Makhzoomiya* lady who had committed theft. They said, ‘Nobody will speak to Allah’s Messenger and nobody dares do that except Usama, who is a favourite of Allah’s Messenger.’ When Usama spoke to Allah’s Messenger about the matter, Allah’s Messenger said, ‘Do you intercede to violate one of Allah’s legal punishments?’ Then he got up and addressed the people, saying, ‘O people! Nations before you went astray because if a noble-ranking person committed theft, they would leave him, but if a weak person among them committed theft, they would inflict legal punishment on him. By Allah, if Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad, committed theft, Muhammad would cut off her hand.” [1]

ARMED ROBBERY [AL-HIRAABAH]:

“This is referred to as “grand theft”, as *Al-Haraabah* does not resemble an ordinary theft, which consists of taking others’ money secretly and privately. *Al-Haraabah* is the act of going out in a group with the intention of waging war [i.e., threatening and terrorising] people to steal their property. [2]

Allah says, “*Those that wage war against Allah and His apostle and spread disorder in the land shall be put to death or crucified or have their hands and feet cut off on alternate sides or be banished from the land. They shall be held in shame in this world and sternly punished in the next, except those that repent before you overcome them. And know that Allah is Forgiving, Merciful*” [The Table Spread, 5: 33, 34].

[1] Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalaani, op. Cit. Vol. 8, p. 176.

[2] Al-Bukhari, op. cit. Vol. 8 p., 18.

ALCOHOL:

Islam forbids alcohol consumption. Allah says, *“Believers, wine and games of chance and idols and divining arrows are abominations devised by the devil. Avoid them, so that you may prosper. The devil seeks to stir up enmity and hatred among you by means of wine and gambling and to keep you from the remembrance of Allah and from your prayers. Will you not abstain from them?”* [The Table Spread, 5:90, 91].

We also learn from the following narration that the legal penalty consists of forty lashes: Ibn Nu'man narrated, “When Al-Waleed bin 'Aqbah was brought drunk before the (Caliph) 'Uthman, the latter said to Ali, ‘He is your paternal cousin, so apply the punishment on him,’ so Ali did, and he said, “The Prophet [pbAbuh] gave forty lashes, Abu Bakr gave forty, and 'Umar gave eighty (when drunks became mischievous and disobedient), and all are the Sunnah.” ^[1] The penalty for drinking applies to every person who is accountable for his/her religious obligations, hence it applies to every sane adult man or woman. This is also true for all legal punishments, including the penalty of sorcery and *riddah* [apostasy].

LEGAL RETRIBUTION [QISAAS]:

Allah has forbidden the deliberate killing of a human being and reserved for those who do so an abode in Hellfire. As for those who kill unintentionally, Allah says, *“It is unlawful for a believer to kill another believer except by mistake. He that kills a believer by mistake must free one believing slave and pay the blood money to the family of the victim, unless they choose to give it up as a charity. If the victim is a believer from a hostile tribe, the penalty is the freeing of one believing slave. But if the victim is a member of an allied tribe, then the blood-money must be paid to his family and a believing slave set free. If a man cannot afford to do this, he must fast two consecutive months. Such is the penance imposed by Allah: He is All-Knowing, All-Wise. He that kills a believer on purpose shall burn in Hell forever. He shall incur the wrath of Allah, Who will lay His curse on him and prepare for him a woeful scourge”* [Women, 4: 92, 93].

[1] Al-Bukhari, op. cit. Vol.8 p.36.

The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "The principal major sins are:

- [1] to associate others as partners in the worship of Allah,
- [2] to murder a human being,
- [3] to be disobedient to one's parents, and
- [4] to make a false statement."

The sanctity of a believing soul is precious indeed, and it is utterly forbidden for a believer to deliberately kill his brother in Islam. The one who does so shall be submitted to the law of *Qisaas* stipulated by Allah. Allah says,

"O you who believe! The law of equality is prescribed to you in cases of murder: the free for the free, the slave for the slave, the woman for the woman. But if any remission is made by the brother of the slain, then grant any reasonable demand and compensate him with handsome gratitude. This is a concession and a mercy from your Lord. After this, whoever exceeds the limits shall have a grave penalty" [The Cow, 2:178].

The following verse further clarifies the legislation. Allah says, *"We ordained therein for them: 'Life for a life, eye for an eye, nose for a nose, ear for an ear, tooth for a tooth, and wounds equal for equal.' But if anyone remits the retaliation by way of charity, it is an act of atonement for himself. And if any fail to judge by [the light of] what Allah has revealed, they are [no better than] wrongdoers"* [The Table Spread, 5: 45].

Consequently, the majority of the scholars have agreed that there is no difference between men and women in retaliation. Ibn Qudamah said, "The man is killed for killing the woman and the woman is killed for killing the man." This is the opinion of most of the religious scholars, including Al-Nakh'i, Al-Sha'bi, Al-Zuhri, 'Umar bin Abdul-Aziz, Malik, the people of Madinah, Al-Shafi'i, Ishaq, and others.

BLOOD MONEY [DIYYA]:

All scholars have agreed that the *Diyya* for a free Muslim is a hundred camels. The Prophet [pbAbuh] wrote to the Yemenites, saying, "There is a *Diyya* of one hundred camels for the soul, and a

man is killed for killing a woman. As for the people who have gold, the Diyya is one thousand Dinars.”^[1]

There is no doubt that the punishment of a deliberate murder is Qisaas, whether the victim was a man or a woman, according to the principle "a soul for a soul". This is because men and women are equal in terms of their humanity. However, in the case of an unintentional killing and similar cases, the punishment will consist of a small compensation or imprisonment.

TESTIMONY:

The following verse clarifies the legislation. Allah (Glorified be He) says, *“O you who believe! When you deal with each other, in transactions involving future obligations in a fixed period of time, reduce them to writing. Let a scribe write down faithfully between the parties; let not the scribe refuse to write, as Allah has taught him, so let him write. Let him who incurs the debt dictate, but let him fear His Lord, Allah, and not diminish aught of what he owes. But if the debtor is mentally deficient, or weak or unable himself to dictate, let his guardian dictate faithfully. And get two witnesses, from your own men. And if there are not two men, then a man and two women, such as you choose for witnesses, so that if one of them errs, the other can remind her”* [The Cow, 2: 282].

In economic dealings related to wealth and property, the testimony of two women is equal to one man when declaring a verdict or proving a case; the testimony of two men or one man and two women is needed. This does not affect the status of women but it takes into consideration the woman's primary role as a mother and a wife, which requires her presence at home when most of the business is being carried out outside the home.

However, in matters exclusively concerning women, such as pregnancy, birth, sexual defect, and puberty, a testimony of one woman is enough. “Precaution regarding the testimony of a woman in cases where it is unusual for her to be a witness is to

[1] Al-Haafez Jalaaludeen Al-Suyooti, Sunan Al-Nisaa'i [Al-Suyooti, Explanation of Al-Nasaai Traditions of the Prophet], footnote by: Al-Imam Al-Sindi, edited by: Shiekh Hassan Mas'oodi, Vol.8, 'Al-Qasaamah', p.58.

avoid doubt and suspicion related to her evidence. Islamic jurisprudence accepts the testimony of women in affairs concerning them or which involve women more than men. Hence, this decision is not based on the difference in dignity, eligibility, or capability between men and women. It is merely a way to establish the truth and to repel any suspicion in the making of verdicts. This is natural for any judicial system that cares to establish justice. ^[1]

[1] *ibid.* p.31, 32.

PART IV

THE DUTIES OF MUSLIM WOMEN

1- HER DUTIES TOWARDS HERSELF

Islam encourages Muslims to stand out among people, readily distinguishable by their dress, appearance and behaviour so that they will be a good example, worthy of the great message that they bring to humanity.

According to the hadith narrated by Ibn Al-Hanzaliyyah (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet [pbAbuh] told his companions, when they were travelling to meet some brothers in faith, “You are going to visit your brothers, so repair your saddles and make sure that you are dressed well so that you will stand out among people like an adornment, for Allah does not love ugliness.”^[1]

The Prophet [pbAbuh] considered an unkempt and careless appearance and scruffy clothes and furnishings to be forms of ugliness, which is hated and forbidden by Islam. Islam encourages Muslims, in general, to stand out among people; the Muslim woman, in particular, is encouraged to be distinct from other people in her appearance, because this reflects well on her and her husband, family and children.

The Muslim woman does not neglect her appearance, no matter how busy she is with her domestic chores and duties of motherhood. She is keen to look presentable, without going to extremes, because a good appearance is an indication of how well she understands herself, her Islamic identity, and her mission in life. The outward appearance of a woman cannot be separated from her inner nature: a neat, tidy and clean exterior reflects a noble and decent inner character, both of which go to make up the character of the true Muslim woman. The smart Muslim woman is one who strikes a balance between her external appearance and

[1] Reported by Abu Dawud, 4/83, in Kitab al-libas, bab ma ja'a fi isbal al-izar; its isnad is *Sahih* (authentic).

internal nature. She understands that she is composed of a body, a mind and a soul, and gives each the attention it deserves, without exaggerating in one aspect to the detriment of others. In seeking to strike the right balance, she is following the wise guidance of Islam, which encourages her to do so. How can the Muslim woman achieve this balance between her body, mind and soul?

A- HER BODY

MODERATION IN FOOD AND DRINK:

The Muslim woman takes good care of her body, promoting its good health and strength. She is active, not flabby or overweight. Therefore, she does not eat to excess; she eats just enough to maintain her health and energy. This is following the guidance of Allah in the Qur'an: "... *Eat and drink: but waste not through excess, for Allah loves not the wasters*" [The Heights, 7:31]. The Prophet [pbAbuh] also advised moderation in food and drink: "There is no worse vessel for the son of Adam to fill than his stomach, but if he must fill it, then let him allow one-third for food, one-third for drink, and one-third for air."^[1]

‘Umar said, "Beware of filling your stomachs with food and drink, for it is harmful to the body and causes sickness and laziness in performing prayers. Be moderate in both food and drink, for that is healthier for your bodies and furthest removed from extravagance. Allah hates the fat man (one who revels in a life of luxury), and a man will not be condemned until he favours his desires over his religion."^[2]

The Muslim woman stays clear of drugs and stimulants, especially those known to be *haram*. She avoids terrible habits that many women have fallen into in deviated societies which are away from the guidance of Allah and His Messenger, such as staying up late at night to waste time in idle pursuits. She goes to sleep early

[1] A *Sabeeh hassan* (stronger than good) hadith narrated by Ahmad, 4/132 and Tirmidhi, 4/18, in *Kitab al-zuhd*, bab ma ja'a fi karahiyyah kathirat al-akl.

[2] *Kanz Al-Ummal*, 15/433. See also the valuable article on the harmful effects of overfilling the stomach on a person's body, mind and soul by Muhammad Nazim Nasimi MD in *Hadarah Al-Islam*, Nos. 5, 6, Vol.15.

and gets up early to start the day's activities with energy and enthusiasm. She does not weaken her energy with late nights and bad habits; she is always active and efficient so that her household chores do not exhaust her and she can meet her targets. She understands that a strong believer is more loved by Allah than a weak believer, as the Prophet [pbAbuh] taught, so she always seeks to strengthen her body using a healthy lifestyle.

REGULAR PHYSICAL EXERCISE

The Muslim woman does not forget to maintain her physical fitness and energy by following the healthy practices recommended by Islam. Nevertheless, she is not content only with the natural, healthy diet referred to above, she also follows an organised exercise program, appropriate to her physical condition, weight, age and social status. These exercises give her body agility, beauty, good health, strength and immunity to disease; this will make her more able to carry out her duties and more fit to fulfil her role in life, whether it be as a wife or mother, young girl or older woman.

CLEANLINESS

The Muslim woman who truly follows the teachings of Islam keeps her body and clothes very clean. She frequently bathes, following the teachings of the Prophet [pbAbuh] who advised Muslims to take baths, especially on Fridays: "Have a bath on Fridays and wash your heads, even if you are not in a state of *janabah* (impurity, e.g. following marital relations), and wear perfume." [1] "Whoever attends Friday prayer, man or woman, should take a bath (*ghusl*)."^[2] The Prophet [pbAbuh] placed such a great emphasis on cleanliness and bathing that some of the Imams considered performing *ghusl* before Friday prayer to be obligatory (*wajib*). Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "It

[1] Fath Al-Bari, 2/370, Kitab al-jumu'ah, bab al-dahn li'l-jumu'ah. Note: the command to wear perfume applies to men only; it is forbidden for women to wear perfume when they go outside [Translator].

[2] A hadith narrated by 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar and recorded as *Saheeh* (authentic) by Abu 'Awanah, Ibn Khazimah and Ibn Hibban. See also Fath Al-Bari, 2/356, Kitab Al-Jumu'ah, bab fadl al-ghusl yawm al-jumu'ah.

is the duty of every Muslim to take a bath (at least) once every seven days, and to wash his head and body.” [1] Cleanliness is one of the essential requirements of people, especially women, and one of the clearest indicators of a sound and likeable character. Cleanliness makes a woman more likeable, not only to her husband but also to other women and her relatives. Imam Ahmad and Al-Nisa’i reported that Jabir said, “Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] came to visit us and saw a man who was wearing dirty clothes. He said, “Could this person not find anything with which to wash his clothes?”

The Prophet [pbAbuh] hated people who wear dirty clothes in public when they were able to clean them. He drew attention to the fact that Muslims should always be clean, smart and pleasing to look at. This teaching is directed to men and women, who are usually thought of as being cleaner and a source of joy and tranquillity in the home.

HYGIENE OF MOUTH AND TEETH

An intelligent Muslim woman takes care of her mouth, for no one should ever have to smell an unpleasant odour coming from it. She cleans her teeth with a siwak, toothbrush, toothpaste and mouthwash after every meal. She checks her teeth and visits the dentist at least once a year to keep her teeth healthy and strong. She consults otolaryngologists (“ear, nose and throat” doctors) if necessary so that her breath will remain clean and fresh. Aisha said, “Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] never woke from sleeping at any time of the day or night without cleaning his teeth with a siwak before performing wudu.” [2]

The Prophet’s concern for oral hygiene was so great that he said, “If it were not for the fact that I did not want to overburden my Ummah, I would have ordered them to use the *siwak* before

[1] Agreed upon. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 2/166, Kitab Al-Hayd, bab ghushl al-jumu’ah.

[2] A *bassan* (good) hadith, narrated by Ahmad (6/160) and Abu Dawud (1/46) in Kitab Al-Taharah, bab al-siwak.

every prayer.”^[1] Aisha was asked what the Prophet [pbAbuh] used to do first when he came home. She said, “Use the siwak.”^[2] He said, “Whoever eats onions, garlic or leeks should not approach our mosque, because whatever offends the sons of Adam may offend the angels.”^[3]

HAIRCARE

The Prophet [pbAbuh] also taught Muslims to take care of their hair and make it attractive and beautiful, as indicated in the hadith quoted by Abu Dawud from Abu Hurairah, who said, “Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] said, ‘Whoever has hair, let him look after it properly.’”^[4]

Looking after one’s hair involves keeping it clean, combed, and perfumed. The Prophet [pbAbuh] did not like people to leave their hair uncombed and unkempt so that they looked like wild monsters; he likened such ugliness to the appearance of Shaytan.

In Al-Muwatta’, Imam Malik reported a hadith from ‘Ata’ ibn Yassar, who said, “Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] was in the mosque when a man with unkempt hair and an untidy beard came in. The Prophet [pbAbuh] pointed to him as if indicating to him that he should tidy his hair and beard. The man left and did so, then returned. The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, ‘Is this not better than that any one of you should come with unkempt hair, looking like the Shaytan?’”^[5]

This is how the Prophet [pbAbuh] taught men to take care of themselves. How much more applicable are his teachings to women? It is evident to sensitive Muslim women that hair is one of the essential features of a woman’s beauty and attractiveness.

[1] Fath Al-Bari, 2/374, Kitab Al-Jumu’ah, bab al-siwak yawm al-jumu’ah; Saheeh Muslim, 3/143, Kitab Al-Taharah, bab al-siwak.

[2] Saheeh Muslim, 3/143, Kitab al-taharah, bab al-siwak.

[3] Saheeh Muslim, 5/50, Kitab al-masajid, bab nahi akil al-thum wa’l-basal ‘an hudur almasjid.

[4] Reported by Abu Dawud, 4/108, in Kitab al-tarajjul, bab fi islah al-sha’r; its isnad is hassan.

[5] Al-Muwatta’, 2/949, Kitab al-sha’r, bab islah al-sha’r.

APPEARANCE

It is no surprise that the Muslim woman is concerned with her clothes and appearance, without going to extremes or making a wanton display of herself. She presents a pleasing appearance to her husband, children, mahram relatives and other Muslim women, and people feel comfortable with her. She does not put them off with an ugly or untidy appearance, and she always checks herself and takes care of herself, following the teachings of Islam which asks its followers to look good in ways that are permitted.

“Say, ‘Who has forbidden the beautiful [gifts] of Allah which He has produced for His servants, and the things, clean and pure [which He has provided] for sustenance...” [The Heights, 7:32].

Al-Qurtubi said that Makhul reported from Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), “A group of the Companions of the Prophet [pbAbuh] were waiting at the door for him, so he prepared to go out to meet them. There was a vessel of water in the house, and he peered into it, smoothing his beard and his hair. (Aisha said) I asked him, ‘O Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh], even you do this?’ He said, ‘Yes when a man goes out to meet his brothers, let him prepare himself properly, for Allah is beautiful and loves beauty.’”^[1]

The Muslim does all of this in accordance with the Islamic ideal of moderation, avoiding the extremes of either exaggeration or negligence:

“Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just [balance] between those [extremes]” [The Criterion, 25:67]. He regards dressing well and looking good to be a demonstration of the Blessings of Allah: “Allah loves to see the signs of His gifts on His servant.”^[2]

[1] See Tafsir Al-Qurtubi, 7/197.

[2] A *bassan* hadith narrated by Tirmidhi, 4/206, in Kitab al-isti’dhan, bab athar al-ni’mah ‘ala’l-‘abd.

Ibn Sa'd reported in *Al-Tabaqat* (4/346) that Jundub ibn Makith said, "Whenever a delegation came to meet Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh], he would wear his best clothes and order his leading Companions to do likewise. I saw the Prophet [pbAbuh] on the day that the delegation of Kindah came to meet him; he was wearing a Yemeni garment and Abu Bakr and 'Umar were dressed similarly."

"Say, 'Who has forbidden the beautiful [gifts] of Allah which He has produced for His servants and the things, clean and pure [which He has provided] for sustenance?' Say, 'They are, in the life of this world, for those who believe, [and] purely for them on the Day of Judgement.' Thus do We explain the signs in detail for those who understand" [The Heights, 7:31-32].

Muslim reported from Ibn Mas'ud that the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "No-one who has even an atom's-weight of pride in his heart will enter Paradise." A man asked him, "What if a man likes his clothes and shoes to look good?" (meaning, is this counted as pride?) The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "Allah is beautiful and loves beauty. Pride means denying the truth and looking down on other people." [1]

The Prophet [pbAbuh] told us about *fitrah* and outlined its requirements: "Five things are part of the *fitrah*: circumcision, removing the pubic hair, plucking hair from the armpits, cutting the nails, and trimming the moustache." [2]

Paying attention to one's appearance should not make a Muslim woman fall into the trap of wanton display (*tabarruj*) and showing her beauty to anyone other than her husband and *mahram* relatives. She should not upset the balance, which is the basis of all Islamic teachings. She never forgets that Islam, which encourages

[1] Saheeh Muslim, 2/89, Kitab al-iman, bab tahrir al-kibr.

[2] Fath Al-Bari, 10/334, Kitab al-libas, bab qass al-sharib; Muslim, 3/146, Kitab al-taharah, bab khisal al-fitrah.

her to look attractive within the permitted limits, is also the religion that warns her against going to such extremes that she becomes a slave to her appearance, as the hadith says, “Wretched is the slave of the dinar, dirham and fancy clothes of velvet and silk! If he is given (these), he is pleased, and if he is not given (these), he is displeased.” [1]

With regards to our women today, many have been influenced by the international fashion houses and have fallen into that slavery about which the Prophet [pbAbuh] warned. They are trapped in the misery of that senseless enslavement to excessively luxurious clothing and accessories. Such women have deviated from the purpose for which humanity was created in this world.

B - HER MIND

PERUSING KNOWLEDGE

The sensitive Muslim woman takes care of her mind just as she takes care of her body because the former is no less important than the latter. Long ago, the poet Zuhayr ibn Abi Salma said, “A man’s tongue is half of him, and the other half is his heart; what is left is nothing more than the image of flesh and blood.”[2]

The Muslim woman is responsible, just as a man is, so she is also required to seek knowledge, whether it is “religious” or “secular” that will be of benefit to her. She recites the verse: “*But say, ‘O my Lord! Advance me in knowledge’*” [Ta Ha, 20: 114] and hears the hadith, “Seeking knowledge is a duty on every Muslim.” [3] She knows that the teachings of the Qur’an and Sunnah are directed at men and women equally and that she is also obliged to seek the kinds of knowledge that have been made obligatory for individuals and communities (*fard ‘ayn and fard kifaya*).

[1] Fayd al-Bari, 6/81, Kitab al-jihad, bab al-hirasah fi’l-ghazw fi sabil-Allah.

[2] See Hashimi (ed.), Jumharah Ash’ar al-‘Arab, 1/300, published by Dar Al-Qalam, 1406 AH.

[3] A hassan hadith narrated by Ibn Majah, 1/81, in Al-Muqaddimah, bab fadl al-‘ulama’ wa’l-hath ‘ala talab al-‘ilm.

The early Muslim women had a keen desire for knowledge, and they never felt too shy to ask questions about the teachings (ahkam) of Islam, because they were asking about the truth, and (Allah is not ashamed [to tell you] the truth) [Qur'an, 33:53].

Many reports illustrate the confidence and maturity with which the early Muslims posed questions to the Prophet [pbAbuh], this great teacher, seeking to understand their religion more fully. Aisha reported that Asma' bint Yazid ibn Al-Sakan Al-Ansariyyah asked the Prophet [pbAbuh] about performing ghusl after a period. He said, "Let one of you (who has finished her period) take her water and purify herself properly, then pour water over herself, and then take a piece of cloth that has been perfumed with musk and clean herself with it." Asma' asked, "How should she clean herself?" The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "Subhan Allah! You clean yourself with it!" Aisha told her in a whisper, "Wipe away the traces of blood." Asma' also asked him about performing ghusl when one is in a state of janabah. He said, "You should take your water and purify yourself with it properly and clean yourself all over, then pour water on your head and rub it so that the water reaches the roots of the hair, and then pour water all over yourself."^[1]

Aisha said, "How good are the women of the Ansar! Shyness did not prevent them from understanding their religion properly."^[2]

Umm Sulaym bint Milhan, the mother of Anas ibn Malik, came to the Prophet [pbAbuh] and said, "O Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh], Allah is not ashamed (to tell) the truth, so tell me, does a woman have to perform ghusl if she has an erotic dream?" Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] said, "Yes if she sees water (i.e., a discharge)." Umm Salamah covered her face out of shyness, and

[1] Fath Al-Bari, 1/414, Kitab al-hayd, bab dalk al-mar'ah nafsaha idha tatahharat min almuhi; Saheeh Muslim, 4/15, 16, Kitab al-hayd, bab istihbab isti'mal al-mutaghasilah min al-hayd al-misk.

[2] See Fath Al-Bari, 1/228, Kitab al-'ilm, bab al-haya' fi'l-'ilm; Saheeh Muslim, 4/16, Kitab al-hayd, bab ghusl al-mustahadah wa salatiha.

said, “O Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh], could a woman have such a dream?” He said, “Yes, may your right hand be covered with dust, otherwise how could her child resemble her?” [1]

The women of that unique generation never hesitated to strive to understand their religion; they would put questions directly to the Prophet [pbAbuh] about whatever happened to them. If they doubted a person’s opinion (*fatwa*) or were not convinced of it, they would enquire further until they were sure that they understood the matter properly. This is the attitude of the wise and intelligent woman.

This was the attitude of Subay’ah bint Al-Harith Al-Aslamiyyah, the wife of Sa’d ibn Khawlah, who was from Banu ‘Amir ibn Lu’ayy and had been present at Badr. He died during the Farewell Pilgrimage; she was pregnant and gave birth shortly after his death. When her nifas ended, she prepared herself to receive offers of marriage. Abu’l-Sanabil ibn Ba’kak (a man from Banu ‘Abd Al-Dar) came to her and said, “Why do I see you preparing to receive offers of marriage? By Allah, you will never get married until four months and ten days have passed.” Subay’ah (later) narrated, “When he said this to me, I got dressed and went to see Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] in the evening. I asked him about it, and he told me that my ‘iddah had ended when I gave birth to my child and said that I could get married if I wished.” [2]

What a great service Subay’ah did to the scholars of the Muslim Ummah by seeking to understand the shar’i rulings precisely and to reach a level of certainty about this issue!

The first thing that a Muslim woman needs to know is how to read the Qur’an properly (with tajwid) and to understand its meaning. Then she should learn something of the sciences of hadith, the *Sirah* of the Prophet [pbAbuh], and the history of the

[1] Fath Al-Bari, 1/228, Kitab al-‘ilm, bab al-haya’ fi’l-‘ilm; Saheeh Muslim, 3/223, 224, Kitab al-hayd, bab wujub al-ghusl ‘ala’l-mar’ah bi khuruj al-maniy minha.

[2] See Fath Al-Bari, 7/310, Kitab al-maghazi, bab istifta’ Subay’ah bint al-Harith al-Aslamiyyah; Saheeh Muslim, 10/110, Kitab al-talaq, bab inqida’ ‘iddah al-mutawafa’ anha zawjuha wa ghayruha.

women of the companions and Tabi'in who are prominent figures in Islam. She should acquire as much knowledge of fiqh as she needs to ensure that her worship and daily dealings are correct, and she should ensure that she has a sound grasp of the basic principles of her religion.

Then she should direct her attention to her primary speciality in life, which is to take proper care of her house, husband, family and children, for she is the one whom Allah has created especially to be a mother and to give tranquillity and happiness to the home. She is the one to whom Islam has given the immense responsibility of raising intelligent and courageous children. No woman can do all of that unless she is open-minded and intelligent and has a strong personality and a pure heart. So, she is in great need of education, correction and guidance in forming her distinct Islamic personality.

It is unwise for women's education to be precisely the same as that of men. There are some matters that concern women only that men cannot deal with, and there are matters that concern men only that women cannot deal with. Whatever a woman's academic speciality is, she tries to understand it thoroughly and do her work perfectly, in accordance with the teaching of the Prophet [pbAbuh]: "Allah loves for any of you, when he does something, to do it well." [1] The gates of knowledge are open to the Muslim woman and she may enter whichever of them she chooses, so long as this does not go against her feminine nature but develops her mind and enhances her emotional growth and maturity.

We find that history is full of prominent examples of remarkable women who sought knowledge and became highly proficient. Foremost among them is the Mother of the Believers Aisha, who was the primary source of hadith and knowledge of the *Sunnah* and was the first *faqihah* in Islam. Imam Al-Zuhri said, "If the knowledge of Aisha were to be gathered and compared to the

[1] A hassan hadith reported by Al-Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab A-iman*, 4/334, from 'A'ishah.

knowledge of all the other wives of the Prophet [pbAbuh] and all other women, Aisha's knowledge would be greater.” [1]

How often did the greatest of the Companions refer to her to hear the final word on matters on the fundamentals of Islam and the precise meanings of the Qur'an. Her knowledge and deep understanding were not restricted only to matters of religion; she was equally distinguished in poetry, literature, history, and medicine, and other branches of knowledge that were known at that time. The *faqih* of the Muslims, 'Urwah ibn Al-Zubayr, was quoted by his son Hisham as saying, “I have never seen anybody more knowledgeable in fiqh or medicine or poetry than Aisha.” [2]

Among the reports in which the books of literature speak of the vast knowledge of Aisha is that which describes how Aisha bint Talhah was present in the circle of Hisham ibn 'Abd Al-Malik when the shaykhs of Banu Umayyah were present. They did not mention any point of Arab history, wars and poetry but she contributed to the discussion, and no star appeared but she did not name it. Hisham said to her, “As for the first (i.e., knowledge of history etc.), I find nothing strange (in your knowing about it), but where did you get your knowledge about the stars?” She said, “I learnt it from my (maternal) aunt Aisha.” [3]

Aisha had a curious mind and was always eager to learn. Whenever she heard about something she did not know, she would ask about it until she understood it. Her closeness to Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] meant that she was like a vessel full of knowledge.

Imam Al-Bukhari reports from Abu Mulaykah that Aisha, the wife of the Prophet [pbAbuh], never heard anything that she did not understand but she would keep going over it until she understood it. The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “Whoever is brought to account will be punished.” Aisha said, “I said, ‘But does Allah

[1] Al-Isti'ab, 4/1883; Al-Isabah, 8/140.

[2] Tarikh Al-Tabari: Hawadith 58; Al-Samt Al-Thamin, 82; Al-Isti'ab, 4/1885.

[3] Al-Aghani, 10/57.

not say, “*Soon his account will be taken by an easy reckoning*” [The Rending Asunder, 84: 8]. He said, “That refers to al-’ard (when everyone is brought before Allah on the Day of Judgement), but whoever is examined in detail will be doomed.” [1]

In addition to her great knowledge, Aisha was also very eloquent in her speech. When she spoke, she captured the attention of her audience and moved them deeply. This is what made Al-Ahnaf ibn Qays say, “I heard the speeches of Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman, ‘Ali and the *khalifa*’ who came after them, but I never heard any speech more eloquent and beautiful than that of Aisha.” Musa ibn Talhah said, “I never saw anyone more eloquent and pure in speech than Aisha.” [2]

Another of these brilliant women who achieved a high level of knowledge was the daughter of Sa’id ibn Al-Musayyab, the scholar of his age, who refused to marry his daughter to the khalifah, ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, and instead married her to one of his righteous students, ‘Abdullah ibn Wada’ah. ‘Abdullah married his wife, who was one of the most beautiful of people and one of the most knowledgeable in the Qur’an, Sunnah and the rights and duties of marriage. In the morning after the wedding, ‘Abdullah got up and was preparing to go out. His wife asked him, “Where are you going?” He said, “To the circle of your father Sa’id ibn al-Musayyab, so that I may learn.” She said, “Sit down; I will teach you what Sa’id knows.” For one month, ‘Abdullah did not attend Sa’id’s circle because the knowledge that this beautiful young girl had learned from her father (and was passing on to him) was sufficient.

Another of these prominent female scholars was Fatimah, the daughter of the author of Tuhfat Al-Fuqaha’, ‘Ala’ Al-Din Al-Samarqandi (d. 539 AH). She was a faqihah and scholar in her own

[1] Fath Al-Bari, 1/196, Kitab al-’ilm, bab man sami’a shay’an fa raji’ hatta ya’rifuhu.

[2] Reported by Tirmidhi, 5/364, in Kitab al-munaqib, bab min fadl ‘A’ishah; he said that it is *hassan Sabeeh gharib* (strong than a good hadith, reported by only one narrator).

right: she had learned *fiqh* from her father and had memorised his book *Al-Tuhfah*. Her father married her to his student ‘Ala’ Al-Din Al-Kasani, who was highly distinguished in the fields of *Al-Usul* and *Al-Furu’*. The student wrote a commentary on *Tuhfat Al-fuqaha’*, entitled *Bada’i’ Al-sana’i’*, and showed it to his shaykh, who was delighted with it and accepted it as a mahr for his daughter, although he had refused offers of marriage for her from some of the kings of Byzantium. The *fuqaha’* of his time said, “He commentated on his *Tuhfah* and married his daughter.” Before her marriage, Fatimah used to issue fatwas along with her father, and the fatwas would be written in her handwriting and that of her father. After she married the author of *Al-Bada’i’*, the fatwas would appear in her handwriting and that of her father and her husband. Her husband would make mistakes, and she would correct them.^[1]

Al-Hafiz ibn ‘Asakir (d. 571 AH), one of the most reliable narrators of hadith who was so trustworthy that he was known as *hafiz al-ummah*, counted eighty-odd women among his shaykhs and teachers.^[2] If we bear in mind that this scholar never left the eastern part of the Islamic world and never visited Egypt, North Africa or Andalusia, which were even more crowded with women of knowledge, we will see that the number of learned women he never met was far greater than those from whom he did receive knowledge. The position of these great women is enhanced by the fact that they were sincere and truthful, far above any hint of suspicion or doubt—a status that many men could not reach. This was noted by Imam Al-Hafiz Al-Dhahabi in *Mizan Al-I’tidal*, where he stated that he found four thousand men about whose reports he had doubts, then follows that observation with the comment, “I have never known of any woman who was accused (of being untrustworthy) or whose hadith was rejected.”^[3]

The modern Muslim woman, looking at the magnificent heritage of women in Islamic history, is filled with the desire for

[1] *Tuhfat Al-Fuqaha’*, 1/12.

[2] *Tabaqat Al-Shafi’iyyah*, 4/273.

[3] *Mizan Al-I’tidal*, 3/395.

knowledge, as these prominent women only became famous and renowned throughout history by virtue of their knowledge. Their minds can only be developed and their characters can only grow in wisdom, maturity and insight, through the acquisition of useful, beneficial and correct knowledge.

The knowledgeable Muslim woman avoids all the foolish superstitions and nonsensical myths that tend to fill the minds of ignorant and uneducated women. The Muslim woman who understands the teachings of her religion believes that consulting and accepting the words of fortune-tellers, soothsayers, magicians and other purveyors of superstition and myths is one of the major sins that annul the good deeds of the believer and spell doom for him or her in the Hereafter.

Muslim reported from some of the wives of the Prophet [pbAbuh] that he said, “Whoever goes to a fortune-teller and asks him about anything, his prayers will not be accepted for forty days.” [1]

Abu Dawud reported the hadith of Abu [Huraiah in which the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “Whoever goes to a fortune-teller and believes in what he says, has disbelieved in that which was revealed to Muhammad.” [2]

The Muslim woman does not let her household duties and the burdens of motherhood prevent her from reading widely, because she understands that reading is the source, which will supply her mind with nourishment and knowledge that it needs in order to flourish and grow.

The Muslim woman who understands that seeking knowledge is a duty required of her by her faith can never stop nourishing her mind with knowledge, no matter how busy she may be with housework or taking care of her children. She steals the odd moment, here and there, to sit down with a good book or a useful

[1] See Saheeh Muslim, 14/227, Kitab al-salam, bab tahrir al-kahanah wa ityan al-kahan.

[2] A hassan hadith narrated by Abu Dawud, 4/21, in Kitab al-tibb, bab fi'l-kahin.

magazine so that she may broaden her horizons with some useful academic, social or literary knowledge, thus increasing her intellectual abilities.

C - HER SOUL

The Muslim woman does not neglect to polish her soul through worship, *dhikr*, and reading Qur'an; she never neglects to perform acts of worship at the appointed times. A person may be distinguished by the balance he or she strikes between body, mind and soul so that none is cared for at the expense of another. Striking this balance guarantees the development of a sound, mature and moderate character.

The Muslim woman pays due attention to her soul and refines it through worship, doing so with a pure and calm approach that will allow the spiritual meanings to penetrate deep into her being. She removes herself from the hustle and bustle of life and concentrates on her worship as much as she is able to when she prays; she does so with the calmness of heart and clearness of mind so that her soul may be refreshed by the meaning of the words of Qur'an, *dhikr* and *tasbeeh* that she is mentioning. Then she sits alone for a little while, praising and glorifying Allah, reciting some verses from His Book, and meditating upon the beautiful meanings of the words she is reciting. She checks her attitude and behaviour now and then, correcting herself if she has done anything wrong or fallen short in some way. Thus, her worship will bring about the desired results of purity of soul, cleansing her of her sins and freeing her from the bonds of Shaytan whose constant whispering may destroy a person. If she makes a mistake or stumbles from the Straight Path, the true Muslim woman soon puts it right, seeks forgiveness from Allah, renounces her sin or error, and repents sincerely. This is the attitude of righteous, Allah-fearing Muslim women:

“Those who fear Allah, when a thought of evil from Satan assaults them, they bring Allah to remembrance, and lo! They see aright” [The Heights, 7:201].

Therefore, the Prophet [pbAbuh] used to tell his companions, “Renew your faith.” He was asked, “O Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh], how do we renew our faith?” He said, “By frequently repeating *la ilaha ill-Allah* (there is no god but Allah).” The Muslim woman always seeks the help of Allah in strengthening and purifying her soul by constantly worshipping and remembering Allah, checking herself, and keeping in mind at all times what will please Allah. Consequently, whatever pleases Him, she does, and what angers Him, she refrains from it. Thus, she will remain on the Straight Path, never deviating from it or doing wrong. In order to attain this high status, the Muslim woman chooses righteous, Allah-fearing friends, who will be true friends and offer sincere advice and will not betray her in word or deed. Good friends have a great influence in keeping a Muslim woman on the Straight Path and helping her to develop good habits and refined characteristics. Mixing with decent people is an indication of one’s good lineage and noble aims in life: “By mixing with noble people you become one of them, so you should never regard anyone else as a friend.”

The Muslim woman is keen to attend gatherings where there is a discussion on Islam and the greatness of its teachings regarding the individual, family and society. She also is interested in attending meetings where those present think of the power of Almighty Allah and His bountiful blessings to His creation, encouraging one another to obey His commandments, heed His prohibitions, and seek refuge with Him. In such gatherings, hearts are softened, souls are purified, and a person’s whole being is filled with the joy of faith.

So ‘Abdullah ibn Rawahah, whenever he met one of the Companions of the Prophet [pbAbuh], used to say, “Come, let us renew our belief in our Lord for a while.” When the Prophet [pbAbuh] heard about this, he said, “May Allah have mercy on Ibn Rawahah for he loves the gatherings that the angels feel proud to attend.” ^[1]

[1] Reported by Ahmad (2/359) with a reliable isnad.

The rightly-guided *khalifah* ‘Umar al-Faruq used to make the effort to take a regular break from his many duties and the burden of his position as a ruler. He would take the hand of one or two men and say, “Come, let us go and increase our faith,” then they would remember Allah. [1] Even ‘Umar, who was so righteous and performed so many acts of worship, felt the need to purify his soul from time to time. He would remove himself for a while from the cares and worries of life to refresh his soul and cleanse his heart. Likewise, Mu’adh ibn Jabal would often say to his companions, when they were walking, “Let us sit down and renew our belief for a while.” [2]

The Muslim is responsible for strengthening his soul and purifying his heart. He must always push himself to attain a higher level and guard against slipping down: “*By the soul, and the proportion and order given to it; and by its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right—truly, he succeeds that purifies it, and he fails that corrupts it.*” [The Sun, 91:7-10].

So the Muslim woman is required to choose best friends with care and attend the best gatherings so that she will be in an environment which will increase her faith and taqwa: “*And keep your soul content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His pleasure; and let not your eyes pass beyond them, seeking the pomp and glitter of this life; nor obey any whose heart We have permitted to neglect the remembrance of Us: one who follows his own desires, whose case has gone beyond all bounds*” [The Cave, 18: 28].

Another way in which the Muslim woman may strengthen her soul and connect her heart to Allah is by repeating the supplications which the Prophet [pbAbuh] used to say on various occasions, according to reliable narrations. So there is a du’a’ (supplication) for leaving the house, and others for entering the house, starting to eat, finishing a meal, wearing new clothes, lying down in bed, waking up from sleep, saying farewell to a traveller, welcoming a traveller back home, etc.

[1] Life of the companions, 3/329.

[2] *ibid.*

There is hardly anything that the Prophet [pbAbuh] did that he did not have a du'a' for, through which he asked Allah to bless him in his endeavour, protect him from error, guide him to the truth, decree good for him, and save him from evil, as is explained in the books of hadith narrated from the Prophet [pbAbuh].^[1] He used to teach these du'a's and adhkar (words of remembrance) to his Companions and encouraged them to repeat them at the appropriate times.

The true Muslim woman is keen to learn these du'a's and *adhkar*, following the example of the Prophet [pbAbuh] and his distinguished Companions, and she keeps repeating them at the appropriate times, as much as she is able to do. In this way, her heart will remain focused on Allah (Glorified be He), her soul will be cleansed and purified, and her *iman* will increase.

The modern Muslim woman is in the utmost need of this spiritual nourishment to keep her away from the temptations and unhealthy distractions of modern life that could spell doom for women in societies that have deviated from the guidance of Allah and sent groups of women to Hell, as the Prophet [pbAbuh] indicated: "I looked into Hell and saw that the majority of its inhabitants were women."^[2] The Muslim woman who understands the teachings of her religion looks where she is going and strives to increase her good deeds so that she may be saved from the terrifying trap into which the devils among mankind and jinn in all times and places try to make women fall.

[1] See, for example, *Al-Adhkar* by Al-Nawawi and *Al-Ma'thurat* by Hasan Al-Banna'. [Translator's note: English-speaking Muslims who wish to learn du'a's may consult *Selected Prayers* by Jamal Badawi, which is based largely on *Al-Ma'thurat* and includes transliterations and translations of many du'a's].

[2] Saheeh Muslim, 17/53, *Kitab al-riqaq*, bab *akthar ahl al-jannah al-fuqara' wa akthar ahl al-nar al-nisa*

2- HER DUTIES TOWARDS HER PARENTS

One of the main distinguishing characteristics of the true Muslim woman is her respectful and kind treatment of her parents. There are many definitive texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah. In the Glorious Qur'an, dutifulness to one's parents has been associated with one's primary duty, which is the worship of Allah alone, and associating none in worship with Him. Allah (Glorified be He) says,

“Worship Allah and associate none with Him in worship, and do good to your parents...” [Women, 4:36]. *“Say (O Muhammad), ‘Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited you: Join not anything in worship with Him; be good and dutiful to your parents...’”* [The Cattle, 6: 15].

Many other verses in the Qur'an convey a similar message. Allah says, *“And when we took a covenant from the Children of Israel, saying, Worship none but Allah and be dutiful and good to parents...”* [The Cow, 2:83]. He also says, *“Give thanks to Me and to your parents; unto Me is the final destination”* [Luqman, 31: 14].

This is the high status to which Allah has raised parents. It is a status which mankind has never known except in Islam, one which has placed respect for parents just one step below belief in Allah and true worship of Him and confirms that treating parents well is the best of good deeds after having faith in Allah. Any Muslim woman who reads these texts has no choice but to adhere to their teachings and treat her parents with kindness and respect, no matter what the circumstances or the state of the relationship between daughter and parents may be.

The Prophet [pbAbuh] raised his teachings to a new peak when he enjoined his followers to treat their parents with kindness and respect, even if they were adherents of a religion other than Islam. This is clear from the hadith of Asma' bint Abi Bakr Al-Siddiq, who said, “My mother came to me, and she was a *mushrikah* at the time of the Prophet [pbAbuh]. I asked the Prophet [pbAbuh], ‘My mother has come to me and needs my help, so

should I help her?’ He said, ‘Yes, keep in touch with your mother and help her” [*Al-Bukhari and Muslim*].

Just as a Muslim woman hastens to treat her parents with kindness and respect, she is also afraid to sin by disobeying them, because she realises the enormity of this sin, which is counted as one of the major sins [*al-kaba’ir*]. She is aware of the frightening picture which Islam paints of the one who disobeys her parents. Islam draws a comparison between disobedience towards one’s parents and the crime of associating partners with Allah, just as it establishes a link between true faith in Allah and respectful treatment of parents. Disobedience to one’s parents is a heinous crime, which a true Muslim woman is loath to commit, for it is the greatest of major sins and the worst of errors. Abu Bakrah Nufay’ ibn Al-Harith said, “Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] asked us three times, ‘Shall I tell you the greatest sins?’ We said, ‘Yes, O Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh].’ He said, ‘Associating partners with Allah and disobeying one’s parents”” [*Al-Bukhari and Muslim*].

Islam has encouraged respect and kindness towards parents. Some texts further confirm that the mother should be given precedence over the father. A man came to the Prophet [pbAbuh] and asked him, “O Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh], who among the people is most deserving of my good company?” He said, “Your mother.” The man asked, “Then who?” The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “Your mother.” The man asked, “Then who?” The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “Your mother.” The man asked, “Then who?” The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “Then your father” [*Al-Bukhari and Muslim*]. A man came to the Prophet to take the Oath of Allegiance and to pledge to undertake Hijrah and *jihad* in the hope of receiving a reward from Allah. The Prophet did not rush to accept his oath of allegiance, but asked him, “Are either of your parents alive?” The man said, “Yes, both of them.” The Prophet asked, “And do you wish to receive a reward from Allah?” The man replied, “Yes.” So the kind-hearted and compassionate Prophet told him, “Go back to your parents and keep them

company in the best possible way.”^[1] The Muslim woman who has embraced the values of Islam is kind and respectful to her parents and surrounds them with all honour and care, lowering to them the wing of humility, as commanded by Allah in the Qur'an. She never utters a word of contempt or complaint to them, no matter what the circumstances may be, always heeding the words of Allah:

“Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour. And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility and say, ‘Oh Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood’ [The Night Journey, 17: 23-24].

These verses have established parents’ rights upon their children, conclusively and decisively, with the use of the expression: “And your Lord has decreed.” This has a powerful linguistic impact on the construction of the style of the text. It conveys a notion of a definite and undeniable obligation. Imam Al-Qurtubi said, “The words, ‘Allah has decreed,’ means that Allah has ordered, enjoined, and prescribed.” Ibn ‘Abbas, Al-Hassan and Qataadah said “In this context ‘decree’ does not refer to a legal sentence, but rather, to a legal injunction.”

Regarding the above verses, Sayyed Qutb said, “With such beautiful words and expressive imagery, the Qur'an arouses the sentiment of dutifulness and the feeling of mercy in the children's hearts so that they will be reminded of their duty towards their elderly parents who exhausted their energy in looking after them until they had no more to spend. In these verses, the duty of obedience and dutifulness to one's parents is expressed in the form of a decree ordained by Allah, with the notion of an emphatic order which comes after Allah's asserted order to worship Him alone.”

[1] See Fath Al-Bari, 9/194, Kitāb al-nikah, bab ikrah al-bint 'ala al-zawaj; Ibn Majah,

3- DUTIES TOWARDS HER HUSBAND

OBJECTIVE OF MARRIAGE

The Prophet [pbAbuh], in clear unambiguous words, defined the objective of marriage. It was instituted to safeguard against lewdness and lack of self-restraint, and in the second place, as a means of procreation. Moreover, it puts great stress on the piety and fruitfulness of women. “Whoever marries a woman solely for her power and position,” said the Prophet [pbAbuh], “Allah only increases his humiliation. Whoever marries a woman solely for her wealth, Allah only increases his poverty. Whoever marries a woman solely for her beauty, Allah only increases his ugliness. But whoever marries a woman so that he may restrain his eyes, observe self-restraint, and treat his relations kindly, Allah puts blessedness in her for him and in him for her. Thus, piety and self-restraint are uppermost, in the concept of Islam, as the prime motive for marriage. This is clear enough in another saying of the Prophet [pbAbuh], He said, “There are three persons whom the Almighty Himself as undertaken to help—first, he who seeks to buy his freedom; second, he who marries intending to secure his chastity; and third, he who fights in the cause of Allah.”

Another saying of the Prophet [pbAbuh] is equally clear on this point: “He who marries completes half his religion: it now rests with him to complete the other half by leading a virtuous life in constant fear of Allah.” That Islam viewed marriage as a means of procreation, and not for the gratification of sensual desires, is clear from a saying of the Prophet [pbAbuh]: “Marry and generate.” On another occasion, he said, “Marry a woman who holds her husband extremely dear and who is very prolific.” The Prophet [pbAbuh] advised great caution in the selection of the bride and even permitted that the intended bride be seen, before her betrothal, by him who seeks her hand, lest a blunder in choice or an error of judgment should defeat the very aim of the marriage. Aims to promote peaceful and successful marriages based on mutual assistance between husband and wife. Among the objectives of marriage are: -

[1] FIND REPOSE, AFFECTION AND MERCY

Allah (Glorified be He) says in the Qur'an, "*And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for those who give thought*" [The Romans, 30:21]. Allah also says, "*He it is Who has created you from a single person, and He has created from him his wife, in order that he might dwell in security with her*" [The Heights, 7: 189].

Ibn Katheer said, "(This means) in order that he (the husband) might find affection and peace in her company. Indeed, no affection exchanged between two human souls is greater than the one exchanged between the husband and his wife." The Glorious Qur'an has described the relationship between husband and wife beautifully; speaking of men and women, Allah says, "*They are garments for you and you are the same for them*" [The Cow, 2:187].

A garment adheres to the human body, covers it and protects it. The metaphor of the garment suggests that the relationship which exists between the husband and his wife is similar to that which exists between body and garment. Their hearts and souls are connected to one another, they shield one another and protect one another from anything that could corrupt their morals or jeopardise their honour and dignity, and these are indeed the requisites of true affection and mercy. ^[1]

[2] ACHIEVEMENT OF CHASTITY AND SEXUAL SATISFACTION

The husband and wife are joined together in marriage in order to live together and to satisfy their inherent sexual desires lawfully. The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "O young people, note this! Whoever among you can marry, should marry because it helps him lower his gaze and guard his chastity. And whoever is not able to marry, should fast, as fasting diminishes the sexual desires." ^[2]

[1] Ibn Kathcer, Tafseer Al-Qur'aan Al-Adheem, Vol 6, (see p.196 #1). p.274.

[2] Al-Bukhari, Sahch Al-Bukhari, Vol 6, p.117

[3] OFFSPRING, REPRODUCTION, AND CONTINUANCE OF HUMAN EXISTENCE: Allah says in the Qur'an, "*And Allah has given you wives of your own kind, and has given you, from your wives, sons and grandsons...*" [The Bee, 16:72].

Allah Almighty has conferred upon His slaves a great gift, which is the ability to produce children and grandchildren, and for this, He should be gratefully praised. The Prophet [pbAbuh] has also said, "Marry the loving and fertile woman for I will compete with the other Prophets [pbAbuh] in the numbers of followers." [1]

One of the main purposes of marriage is thus increasing the number of Muslim nation. To achieve these three objectives, Allah has enjoined different duties upon husbands and wives while giving them their mutual rights, in line with the principle of rights according to responsibilities, so that they may live together in harmony.

ISLAMIC LAWS CONCERNING MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

The laws of marriage and divorce were so framed by the Prophet [pbAbuh] that they may ensure the permanence of marriage relations without impairing individual freedom. These laws display a wonderful insight into human nature since they never lose sight of exceptional circumstances requiring special treatment. If more than one wife is permitted, under certain circumstances, or dissolution of marriage is favoured, it is because of the same principle of flexibility that governs the entire body of the Islamic laws. The Islamic laws have recognised women as free and responsible members of society and have assigned them a convenient position. A Muslim woman is entitled to the eligible portion of the stipulated dowry, which is payable to her on-demand as soon as the status of marriage is established, and the deferred portion on the termination of the marital relation, unless the woman is guilty of a manifest wrong.

Under the Muslim law, the dowry settled upon the wife is an obligation imposed by the law on the husband, as a mark of

[1] Al-Suyooti, Sunan Al-Nasa'ii, Vol.6, "An-Nikaah". (see p.i&9 #50)

respect for the wife, the non-specification of which, at the time of marriage, does not affect the validity of the marriage. In the event of dissolution of marriage, the husband cannot retain any of the wife's property, including her antenuptial settlement; and if the administration of the wife's estate was entrusted to him, he must render the wife an account of such administration. Her property is strictly guarded on all sides, and no restrictions are placed on the individual right she has in her belongings. She possesses the right to divide and transfer her property to anyone, and this individual right to transfer is her personal right in which neither her husband nor anyone else can interfere. She can sue her husband, just as she can sue her other debtors, in the open court. She does not require her husband or father to represent her in court. She can act as an executive and can enter into any contract independently.

A Muslim wife retains her distinct individuality even after marriage, and she never assumes her husband's name. Marriage under Islam is only a civil contract and not a sacrament in the sense that those who are once joined in wed-lock can never be separated. It may be controlled and, under certain circumstances, dissolved by the will of the parties concerned. The public declaration is no doubt necessary, but it is not a condition of the validity of the marriage. Nor is any religious ceremony deemed absolutely essential. Two witnesses are required to attest to the contract that has been concluded.

Therefore, it is clearly demonstrated that since the advent of Islam that Muslim women are afforded the utmost protection and security within marriage and also in the unfortunate event of divorce. A woman is permitted to include within the marriage contract additional legally binding agreements for her personal security and comfort if she wishes. It is interesting to note that within Europe and the USA there has been a recent adoption, and at times insistence, upon the completion of a legally binding pre-nuptial agreement before marriage to protect the division of wealth after divorce. In addition, it is well known that the vows taken within the marriage ceremony of Christians have been radically changed due to the injustice of financial settlements following

divorce. No longer does the man or woman pronounce, “And all my worldly goods I thee endow” or “All that I have I give to you”. In its stead, a couple will more often choose to omit the standard vows or write their own vows and utter them within a church or a civil marriage ceremony. However, these words are not legally binding with regard to financial rights within marriage or after divorce and are rarely documented, thus arises the necessity for a pre-nuptial agreement.

The pre-nuptial agreement is, in fact, partial assimilation of the Islamic pre-agreed marriage contract, which has provided both the Muslim woman and man legal protection and justice, both within marriage and the following divorce, and all without the need for bitter legal battles within the law-courts to seek justice.

When considering such legal protection has become necessary to remedy these injustices, the question has to be asked as to why the Islamic marriage contract is still mistakenly considered to be little more than a demeaning business transaction with regards to a Muslim woman, whilst in reality, it is being adopted globally for both a man and woman’s protection. One thing is very clear, and this is that the Christian marriage doctrine does not provide such protection and that man-made laws need to be implemented to gain justice, whereas, in Islam, the religion and command of Allah Himself in the Islamic Law has provided this protection of rights for centuries. Though the Islamic Laws recognise the consent of a woman as an indispensable element of a valid marriage, they recommend the consent of her guardian be also taken. According to the *Hanfi* Islamic School of Law, the capacity of a woman who is an adult and of sound mind to carry out her marriage contract herself is absolute. The same school explicitly lays down that a woman who is an adult and of sound mind may be married by virtue of her own consent although the contract may not have been made or acceded to by her guardian. This is whether she be a virgin or a “thayyiba”.^[1]

[1] Namely, a woman who is not a virgin; a widow or a divorced woman.

Following the same principle, the marriage of an adult woman under compulsion has been held to be invalid. It is related with a good authority that an adult woman, who was married by her father to a man against her will, came and spoke about the matter to the Prophet [pbAbuh], who declared the marriage void. Moreover, according to the Hanafi School, the marriage of a minor under compulsion of her father or grandfather is good, on the assumption that a marriage thus contracted is *prima facie* in the best interests of the child. Therefore, she cannot cancel the contract of marriage when she reaches full age unless there be good grounds for such a step. If, however, a guardian other than her father or grandfather gave her in marriage, she can exercise, if she likes, “the option of puberty” and ask the court to stop the marriage.

It is clear, then, that under the Hanafi School of law, a marriage can be contracted with or without a guardian, provided the girl is an adult and has given her consent to the contract.

The Shafie and the Maleki School of law, on the other hand, maintain that a maiden cannot personally consent to the marriage. According to them, the Wali’s [the guardian’s] consent, in the case of a maiden, is one of the essential factors of marriage, though not in the case of a *thayyiba*. The distinction seems to have been derived from the idea that a *thayyiba*’s judgment is naturally more reliable than a virgin’s and that she is expected to understand better the nature of the marriage contract. In support of their view, they refer to the tradition, related by Ayesha, that the Prophet [pbAbuh] said that the contract of marriage is absolutely void if a woman enters into such without the consent of her guardian. The great majority of the girls being quite innocent of the nature of the contract, it is, therefore, necessary that the guardian of the girl should intervene and protect her from being duped by interested persons, or from the evil consequences likely to flow from the choice of the girl when it is injudicious or against her own interest. Many misconceptions surround the consent of Muslim women to marriage. Forced marriages are understandably sensationalised within the media. In addition, the marriageable age is also a source

of many misconceptions in Islam. It is therefore important to briefly present a few examples from a historical and global perspective in order to redress the misconceptions and to clarify the Islamic position with regards to a woman's rights in Islam.

In England, most specifically around the 1600s, early unconsented marriages were a frequent occurrence and were often arranged by parents, guardians and the monarchy for financial benefit. In the days of James I, the disposal in marriage of young and wealthy orphan heiresses was in the hands of the reigning monarchs, and they usually arranged marriage to the sons of their favourites, by whom wealthy girls were welcomed.

In Islam, the orphans and their wealth are strictly protected, a guardian's duty is not to dispose of their wealth by any means other than the orphan's benefit.

“Give to orphans their wealth. Exchange not the good for the bad [in your management thereof] nor absorb their wealth into your own wealth. Lo! that would be a great sin” [Women, 4: 2]. *“Those who unjustly eat up the property of orphans eat up Fire into their own bodies: They will soon be enduring a Blazing Fire!”* [Women, 4: 10].

In an able work by the late Rev. W. Denton, M. A.,^[1] Mr Denton says that the youthful marriages “probably originated due to the desire of preceding the Crown in its claim to the wardship of minors and the disposal of them in marriage.” “A father sought, by the early marriage of his son or daughter, to dispose of their lands in his lifetime, instead of leaving them to be dealt out to hungry courtiers who only sought to make a large profit, as they could, from the marriage of wards they had bought for the purpose. Fourteen was a usual age for the marriage of the children of those who would save their lands from the exactions of the Crown.” He also refers to marriages at an earlier age and even paternity [fatherhood] at fourteen.

Once again, within the Qur'an, we find it is a great sin to dispose of property this way, not just for orphans but for any

[1] England in the Fifteenth Century, Rev. W. Denton M.A. [London, 1888].

Muslim: “*And do not consume one another’s wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful]*” [The Cow, 2: 188].

In England in 1719, Charles Lennox, [the illegitimate son of Charles II by his mistress Louise de Keroualle], namely the second Duke of Richmond, was forcibly married at 18 years to Lady Sarah Cadogan, who was just 13. Neither gave their consent and it is reported that the marriage took place to cancel gambling debts between their parents. They parted immediately after the wedding ceremony, and it was only many years later when Charles spied an attractive lady and made advances toward her, that he realised she was, in fact, his own wife. ^[1]

In the “Diary and Correspondence of John Evelyn, F.R.S.” he revealed, on August 1st, 1672, “I was at the marriage of Lord Arlington’s only daughter [a sweet child if ever there was any] to the Duke of Grafton, the king’s natural son by the Duchess of Cleveland, with the Archbishop of Canterbury officiating and the king and all the grandees being present. The little girl at this time was only five years of age.” Seven years later, the children were re-married again, and Evelyn, in his “Diary”, on November 6th, 1679, states that he attended the re-marriage of Duchess Grafton to the Duke, she being now twelve years old.

The General Assembly of Scotland, in 1600, ruled that no minister should marry any male under fourteen and any female under twelve years of age. However, as late as the 1st June 1859, there was a marriage of a boy of 15 in St. James’ Square, Edinburgh, to a girl in her eleventh year. The official inspector, on an investigation, found it was true. The marriage, however, was not annulled. The American colonies followed the English tradition, but the law could at best be called just a guide. For example, in Virginia in 1689, Mary Hathaway was only nine when she was married to William Williams. We know of her case only because two years later she sued for divorce.

[1] Old Church Lore by William Andrews p.208.

In Islam, the age of consent to marry is at the age when puberty is reached. This is still echoed in many other countries. Historically, across the globe, the age of consent for a marital union was determined by tribal custom or was a matter for families to decide. In most cases, this coincided with signs of puberty: menstruation for a girl and pubic hair for a boy. ^[1]

For a woman, this is attained at around the age of nine or ten. When historian Magnus Hirschfeld surveyed the age of consent of some fifty countries [mostly in Europe and the Americas] at the beginning of the twentieth century, the age of consent was twelve in fifteen countries, thirteen in seven, fourteen in five, fifteen in four, and sixteen in five. In the remaining countries, it remained unclear. ^[2]

Despite the previous and relatively recent history given, the early marriage of Muslims, and in particular that of the Prophet [pbAbuh] Muhammad to Ayesha at age nine, after she had reached puberty, is vehemently attacked by those in the West and USA.

However, on the contrary to those forced and unconsented marriages for a financial benefit which are given as an example in England and the USA, the marriage of the Prophet [pbAbuh] Muhammad to Ayesha was consented to legally by her implicit silence and was not for any kind of financial benefit. Her father, guardian and closest companion to the Prophet [pbAbuh] Muhammad, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), also consented to her marriage. Furthermore, this marriage was inspired by Allah and was a legal and blessed marriage. Abu Hurairah reported Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) as having said, "A woman without a husband [i.e., who is divorced or widowed] must not be married until she is consulted, and a virgin must not be married until her permission is sought." They asked the Prophet [pbAbuh] of Allah, "How can her consent be solicited?" He said, "That she keeps silent" [*Sabeeh Muslim, book of marriage, hadith 3303*].

[1] Encyclopaedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society

[2] Hirschfeld, Magnus. 2000. *The Homosexuality of Men and Women*.

MOURNING & 'IDDAH

Islam has enjoined upon women to complete a waiting period of four months and ten days after the death of their husbands. During this period, the widow should stay at home to express her sorrow for her husband's death. She should not adorn herself and only go out when necessary. During this period, she should also show respect and loyalty for her deceased husband by avoiding any form of betrothals leading to marriage until the end of her *'iddah*. Allah (Glorified be He) says, “

And those of you who die and leave wives behind them, they shall wait (as regard their marriage) for four months and ten days. Then, when they have fulfilled their term, there is no sin for you if they dispose of themselves in a just and honourable manner. And Allah is well-Acquainted with what you do” [The Cow, 2: 234].

Explaining this verse, Ibn Katheer said, “This is a divine order directed to women whose husbands have died and left them behind. They shall complete a waiting period (*'iddah*) of four months and ten days. This applies both to the women who consummated their marriages before the death of their husbands and those who did not.” [1] “Shall wait” means that: They (women) should be patient, not hurry into marriage and not leave their marital homes, but stay there during the night.”[2] In the tradition of the Prophet [pbAbuh], mourning has been described as follows: Umm Habeebah narrated that she have heard Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] saying, “It is not lawful for a lady, who believes in Allah and the Last Day, to mourn for a dead person for more than three days unless he is her husband, for whom she should mourn for four months and ten days.” [3] Four months and ten days is thus the waiting period that a widow should complete. If she is pregnant, however, her *'iddah* ends with her delivering her baby, as Allah says, “*And for those who are pregnant, their 'iddah is until they deliver*” [Divorce, 65: 4].

[1] Ibn Katheer, Vol.1, p.284.

[2] Al-Qurtubi, op.cit, Vol.3, p.176.

[3] Al-Bukhari, op. cit., Vol.6, p.185.

Therefore, the *iddah* of pregnant widows can be shorter or longer than four months and ten days, depending on the stage of their pregnancy. The *iddah* can thus extend up to nine months or be reduced to only a few days, as was the case with Subai'a Al-Aslamiya: Umm Salama. The wife of the Prophet [pbAbuh] narrated that a woman from Bani Aslam called Subai'a became a widow while she was pregnant. Abu As- Sanaabil bin Ba'kak asked for her hand in marriage, but she refused to marry him and said, "By Allah, I cannot marry him unless I have completed one of the two prescribed periods." About ten days later (after having delivered the baby), she went to the Prophet [pbAbuh] and he said, "You can marry now." [1]

Abdullah bin Abdullah narrated that his father had written a letter to Ibn Al-Arqam asking him to ask Subai'a Al-Aslamiya about the verdict that the Prophet [pbAbuh] had given her. She said, "The Prophet [pbAbuh] gave me his verdict that after I gave birth, I could marry." [2] These two hadiths indicate clearly that the waiting period of a pregnant woman comes to end when she delivers the baby.

[1] *ibid*, p.185.

[2] *ibid*.

MAIN PRINCIPLES FOR ESTABLISHING FAMILIES IN ISLAM

I have attempted to elucidate the main principles on which the family is based in Islam. This is in order for this notion of leadership to be understood as intended by Allah, and Muslim women to willingly assent to men's right to family leadership and consequently be able to fulfil their prescribed duties. In summary, the main principles are as follows:

[1] EQUITY

When Allah prescribed obligations for both men and women, He also prescribed rights for both of them, so that they could deeply sense and be aware of divine justice. Only then will they be able to contribute and sacrifice, and consequently lead a happy, peaceful life. This principle of equity in terms of rights and duties is embodied in the following verse. Allah says, “...*And due to them (i.e., wives) is similar to what is expected of them according to what is equitable*” [The Cow, 2:228].

Explaining this verse, Imam Al-Qurtubi said that this means that the wife has marital rights over her husband, just as he has over her. Therefore, Ibn ‘Abbas said, “I beautify myself for my wife, as she beautifies herself for me. I do not like to indulge in exercising all of the rights that I possess over her so that she should not exercise all the rights that she has over me. This is because Allah has said, ‘*And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them.*’” This means that just as women are expected to be obedient to their husbands, men are expected to treat their wives kindly and according to what is equitable. [1]

Muhammad ‘Izzat Duruzah said, “Everything that a man expects and demands from his wife according to what is lawful, such as obedience, reliability, honesty, loyalty, kind treatment, companionship, compassion, respect, faithfulness, dutifulness, entertainment, understanding, thoughtfulness, care, the fulfilment of various duties, as well as abstaining from disputes, aggressive-

[1] Al-Qurtubi, Al-Jaami’i Ahkaam Al-Qur’aan, Vol 3 (see p. 196 #2), p. 123.

ness, contentiousness, peevishness, vulgarity, insolence, arrogance, haughtiness, demanding the impossible ...etc., is also to be expected and required by the wife from her husband.” [1] Allah then says, “... *and men have a degree over them...*” [The Cow, 2: 228].

In this verse, men may appear to have privileges over women, but this would contradict the first half of the same verse, “*And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them.*” The logical explanation would be that “the degree” refers to the *Quwama* (maintenance and protection).

[2] MUTUAL CONSENT AND CONSULTATION

The relationship between the husband and his wife is based upon the principle of mutual consultation. Islam rejects a relationship of dictatorship and tyranny between man and woman. Allah describes faithful believers as the ones who “*conduct their affairs by mutual consultation*” [42:38].

The Glorious Qur’an indicates that every decision concerning both husband and wife ought to be reached after mutual consultation. Allah says, “*...If they both decide on weaning, by mutual consent and after due consultation, there is no sin for them*” [The Cow, 2:223].

Hence, if a divorcee has the right to be consulted by her ex-husband to reach mutual consent for the advantage of their baby, then logically, the actual wife, who is in charge of the management of her husband’s household, must also be consulted in family decisions.

[3] FAIR TREATMENT

The Glorious Qur’an has described the relationship between husband and wife as being just and fair, which are the fundamental attributes of every sincere relationship. Allah says, “*...and let each of you accept the advice of the other in a just way*” [Divorce, 65:6].

[1] Muhammad Izzat Daroozah, *Al-Mar'ah Fi Al-Qur'aan Wa Al-Sunnah*, (see p. 90 # 16), p.30.

Explaining this verse, Ibn Katheer said, “It means that you should deal with each other in a just way, without causing harm to one another.” [1] Allah also says, “.. *And live with them honourably*” [Women, 4:19].

Ibn Katheer said, “This verse means that you (the husbands) should address your wives with loving words and treat them kindly, and you should improve your appearance as much as you like them (your wives) to beautify themselves for you.” [2] Consequently, every marriage must be based on the principles mentioned above, and the maintenance of the family is delegated to the husband to achieve a harmonious and well-balanced human system.

4- CHOOSING A HUSBAND

One of the ways in how Islam has honoured women is by giving them the right to choose their husbands. Her parents have no right to force her to marry someone she dislikes. A Muslim woman knows this right but does not reject the advice and guidance of her parents when a potential suitor comes along, because they have her best interests at heart and they have more experience of life and people. At the same time, she does not forego this right because of her father’s wishes that may make him enforce his daughter into a marriage with someone she dislikes.

Many texts support women in this sensitive issue. For example, a report quoted by Imam Al-Bukhari from Al-Khansa’ bint Khidam states, “My father gave me in marriage to his nephew and I did not like this match, so I complained to Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh]. He said to me, “Accept what your father has arranged.” I said, “I do not wish to accept what my father has arranged.” He said, “Then this marriage is invalid. Go and marry whoever you wish.” I said, “I have accepted what my father has arranged, but I wanted women to know that fathers have no right in their daughter’s matters [i.e. they have no right to force a marriage on

[1] Ibn Kathcer, op.cit. Vol 4, p.373.

[2] Ibn Kathcer, op.cjt. Vol 1, p.466.

them].” [1] At first, the Prophet [pbAbuh] told Al-Khansa’ to obey her father, and this is as it should be because fathers concern for their daughters’ well-being is well known.

When he realised her father wanted to force her into a marriage she did not wish, he gave her the freedom to choose and saved her from the oppression of her father, who tried to force her into an unwanted marriage.

5- OBEDIENCE TO THE HUSBAND

The true Muslim woman is always obedient to her husband if no sin is involved. She is respectful towards him and always eager to please him and make him happy. If he is poor, she does not complain about his being unable to spend much on her housework. This is because she remembers many virtuous women in Islamic history who have set an example of patience, goodness and a positive attitude in serving their husbands and taking care of their homes, despite the poverty and hardships they faced.

One of these exemplary wives is Fatimah Al-Zahra’, the daughter of Muhammad [pbAbuh] and the wife of Ali ibn Abi Talib. She used to complain of the pain in her hands caused by grinding grain with a hand-mill.

Her husband ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib said to her one day, “Your father has brought some female slaves, so go and ask him for one to come and serve you.” She went to her father but she felt too shy to ask him what she wanted. Ali went and asked him to provide a servant for his beloved daughter, but the Prophet [pbAbuh] could not respond to those who were most dear to him while ignoring the poor and needy among the Muslims. Therefore, he came to his daughter and her husband and said, “Shall I not teach you something better than that for which you asked me? When you go to bed at night, say ‘*Subhan Allah*’ thirty-three times, ‘*Al-hamdu lillahi*’ thirty-three times, and ‘*Allahu akbar*’ thirty-four times. This is

[1] See Fath Al-Bari, 9/194, Kitab al-nikah, bab ikrah al-bint 'ala al-zawaj; Ibn Majah, 1/602, Kitab al-nikah, bab man zawwaja ibnatahu wa hiya karihah; Al-Mabsut 5/2.

better for you than a servant.” One of the most famous and most beautiful of these texts was recorded by ‘Abd Al-Malik ibn ‘Umayr Al-Qurashi, who was one of the outstanding scholars of the second century AH. He quotes the words of advice given by Umamah bint Al-Harith, one of the eloquent and learned women who was possessed of wisdom and great maturity, to her daughter on the eve of her marriage.

‘Abd Al-Malik said, “When ‘Awf ibn Muhallim al-Shaybani, one of the highly respected leaders of Arab nobility during *jabiliyyah* (times of ignorance), gave his daughter Umm Iyas in marriage to Al-Harith ibn ‘Amr Al-Kindi, she was prepared to be taken to the groom. Her mother Umamah came into her, to advise her, and said, ‘O my daughter, if it were deemed unnecessary to give you this advice because of good manners and decency, then it would have been unnecessary for you because you possess these qualities, but it will serve as a reminder to those who are forgetful and will help those who are wise. O my daughter, if a woman were able to do without a husband because of her father’s wealth and her need for her father, then all people would be most qualified to do without a husband, but women were created for men just as men were created for them.’

‘O my daughter, you are about to leave the home in which you grew up, where you first learned to walk and to go to a place you do not know, to a companion with whom you are unfamiliar. By marrying you, he has become a master over you, so be like a servant to him and he will become like a servant to you. Take from me ten qualities, which will be a provision and a reminder for you.

The first and second: be content in his company and listen to and obey him, for contentment brings peace of mind and listening to and obeying one’s husband pleases Allah.

The third and fourth: make sure that you always smell and look good; he should not see any ugliness in you and not perceive anything but a pleasant smell from you. Kohl is the best kind of beautification to be found, and water is better than the rarest perfume.

The fifth and the sixth: prepare his food on time and keep quiet when he is asleep, for raging hunger is like a burning flame and disturbing his sleep will make him angry.

The seventh and eighth: take care of his servants [or employees], children and wealth, for taking care of his wealth shows that you appreciate him, and taking care of his children and servants shows good management.

The ninth and tenth: never disclose any of his secrets or disobey any of his orders, for if you disclose any of his secrets, you will never feel safe from his possible betrayal, and if you disobey him, his heart will be filled with hatred towards you.’

‘Be careful, O my daughter, of showing joy in front of him when he is upset, and do not show sorrow in front of him when he is happy, because the former shows a lack of judgment, while the latter will make him unhappy.’

‘Show him as much honour and respect as you can and agree with him as much as you can, so that he will enjoy your companionship and conversation. Know, O my daughter, that you will not achieve what you would like until you put his pleasure before your own and his wishes before yours in whatever you like and dislike. And may Allah choose what is best for you and protect you.’”^[1] She was taken to her husband, and the marriage was a great success; she gave birth to kings who ruled after him. The wife should be devoutly obedient to her husband according to what is just. Allah (Glorified be He) says, “*Therefore, righteous women are devoutly obedient and guard in his absence what Allah would have them guard*” [Women, 4: 34].

Allah has described the righteous women as obedient and as guardians for their husbands, which means, according to As-Sudi and others, “they guard their chastity and their husband’s property.”

[1] Jamharah Khutab Al-'Arab, 1/145.

Sayyed Qutb explained this verse, saying, “*Devoutly obedient* means that the wife is willingly obedient; she chooses to be obedient, she loves to be obedient, and she wishes to succeed in being so. She does not obey simply because she is forced and obliged to do so. Because of this, Allah has described her as devoutly obedient rather than simply *obedient*. This attitude is the one befitting the mutual affection, love, protection, and care which exists between the two halves of a single soul.” It is natural that a righteous woman guards the sanctity of the marriage bond and protects her chastity in the absence and presence of her husband. The Prophet [pbAbuh] has been reported as saying, “The best of women is the one who pleases her husband when he looks at her, obeys him when he asks and does not oppose him in anything he dislikes as regards herself and her wealth.”^[1]

The primary duty of a wife is thus to obey her husband in all that is lawful. However, if he invites to what is unlawful and displeasing to Allah, she should not obey him. The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “There is no obedience in matters involving disobeying or displeasing Allah. Obedience to the husband is obligatory only in what is good and reasonable.”^[2]

Imam Ibn Hajar said, “A woman is urged to obey her husband in everything, except in what is unlawful and displeasing to Allah. Therefore, if a husband invites his wife to commit an illegal act, she should refrain from doing so.”^[3]

The Prophet [pbAbuh] has been reported as saying, “All of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards. The ruler is a guardian, the man is a guardian of his family; the woman is a guardian and is responsible for her husband’s house and his offspring, and so all of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards.”^[4]

[1] Al-Suyooti, op. cit., Vol.6, p.68.

[2] Al-Nawawi, Saheeh Muslim, Vol.12. Al-Imaarah, p.227.

[3] Al-Asqalaani, Path al-Baari..., Vol.9. (See p.196 #7), p.304.

[4] Ibid. p.299.

Accordingly, a wife is responsible for the education and upbringing of her children, the management of her household, including servants and the welfare of other dependants. She strives to improve their condition and fulfil her role as a guardian. The Prophet [pbAbuh] also said, “Allah will hold each one of you accountable for his/her wards.” [1]

The wife is expected to be obedient to her husband because men are the maintainers of women; Allah says, “*Men are the maintainers of women because of what Allah has given one over the other and because they spend (to support them) from their means*” [Women, 4: 34].

This divine injunction describes the man as the *Qawaam* (maintainer and protector) of his wife. However, the man’s role of leadership concerning his family does not denote dictatorship over his wife. On the contrary, Islam emphasises the importance of taking counsel and mutual agreement in family decisions.

The verse gives us the reason why men are described as maintainers. Men have always assumed the role of providing, waging war against the enemies, and protecting their families and communities. The father thus maintains and sustains his daughters, and the husband protects, safeguards supports and provides for his wife. Man has been put in charge of his home; it is a responsibility, not a privilege that undermines women’s rights, as many have come to believe. Instead, it is based on the *Shari’ah* principle of benefits, in accordance with the degree of responsibility along with men and women’s different temperaments and physiological differences which make men suitable for family leadership. Moreover,

- Children are attributed to their father.
- It is the husband’s responsibility to provide a house and sustain his family.
- It is the husband’s responsibility to protect and safeguard his family, given his natural physical strength.

[1] Al-Tirmidhi, "Sunan Al-Tirmidhi", (sec p.226 #1), p.208, No.11705.

Again, this leadership does not denote tyrannical authority, but it is the leadership of duties and responsibilities. Since a leader has to be just, he can only assume his jurisdiction if he is fulfilling his obligations towards his dependants. In appointing the man to the leadership of his family, divine providence has taken into account the different inherent dispositions of men and women. Describing Himself, Allah says, “*Should He not know what He created? And He is the Subtle, the Aware*” [The Kingdom, 67: 14].

6- KINDNESS AND RESPECT WITH HIS MOTHER AND FAMILY

The Muslim woman who truly understands the teachings of her religion knows that the person who has the most excellent right over a man is his mother, so she helps him to honour and respect his mother by honouring and respecting her. In this way, she will do herself and her husband a favour, as she will help him to do good deeds and fear Allah, as commanded by the Qur’an. At the same time, she will make herself appealing to her husband, who will appreciate her honour and respect towards his family in general and towards his mother in particular. Nothing could please a decent, righteous, and respectful man more than seeing strong ties of love and respect between his wife and his family. And nothing could be more hateful to a decent man than to see those ties destroyed by the forces of evil, hatred and conspiracy.

The Muslim family, which is guided by faith in Allah and follows the pure teachings of Islam, is unlikely to fall into the trap of such *jahiliyyah* behaviour, which usually flourishes in an environment that is far removed from the true teachings of this religion.

A Muslim wife may find herself being tested by her mother-in-law and other in-laws if they are not of good character. If such is the case, she is obliged to treat them in the best way possible, which requires a great deal of cleverness, courtesy, diplomacy and repelling evil with that which is better. She will maintain a balance between her relationship with her in-laws and her relationship with her husband. She will protect herself and her marriage from any adverse effects that may result from the lack of such a balance.

Islam has regulated marital relationships by giving each partner both rights and duties. The wife's duties of honouring and taking care of her husband are balanced by the rights that she has over him, which are that he should protect her honour and dignity from all kinds of mockery, humiliation, trials or oppression. These rights of the wife comprise the husband's duties towards her: he is obliged to honour them and fulfil them as completely as possible.

One of the Muslim husband's duties is to properly fulfil his role as a maintainer and protector. It is a role that can only be effectively fulfilled by a man who is a successful leader in his home and family, one who possesses likeable masculine qualities. Such a man has a noble and worthy attitude; he is tolerant, overlooks minor errors, is in control of his married life, and is generous without being extravagant. He respects his wife's feelings and makes her feel that she shares the responsibility of running household affairs, bringing up the children, and working with him to build an all-encompassing Muslim family, as Islam wants it to be.

7- SEXUAL SATISFACTION

The wife is duty-bound to satisfy her and her husband's desire for sexual intercourse and fulfil her sexual duties towards her husband. She has no right to abstain except for a reasonable cause or legal prohibition. Indeed, the tradition of the Prophet [pbAbuh] has confirmed and emphasised this critical duty through various narrations. Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "If a woman spends the night deserting her husband's bed, then the angels curse her till the morning," and, "If a man invites his wife to sleep with him and she refuses to come to him, then the angels curse her till the morning."^[1] For these reasons and many more, the Prophet [pbAbuh] has said, "A woman should not fast (optional fasts) except with her husband's permission if he is at home." This is lest it would prevent her from fulfilling her duties towards him if he wished to have sexual intercourse. The divine injunction has

[1] Al-Asqalaani, op. cit., Vol.9. p.294.

emphasised this duty since fulfilling one's sexual desires is the primary objective of marriage. Nevertheless, Islamic injunctions have not overlooked the equally essential sexual rights of women.

'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin Al-'As narrated that the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "O 'Abdullah! Have I not been informed that you fast all day and stand in prayer all night?" (Abdullah) said, "Yes, O Allah's Messenger!" He [pbAbuh] said, "Do not do that! Observe fast sometimes and also leave it at other times, stand up for prayer at night and sleep at night. Your body has a right over you, your eyes have a right over you, and your wife has right over you." [1] Imam Ibn Hajar wrote that Ibn Bataal said, "Having emphasised the husband's right over his wife, the Prophet [pbAbuh] emphasises the wife's right over her husband. He says that the husband should not exhaust himself in observing optional acts of worship so as to become unable to provide for his wife and fulfil his sexual duties towards her." [2] The Prophet [pbAbuh] prevented 'Abdullah from exhausting himself so that he could have enough strength to give his wife her due rights, and this is indeed the ultimate manifestation of Islamic justice.

In order to ensure a pleasing and satisfying interchange of this right between husband and wife, divine legislation has set many incentives for it. The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "There is a *Sadaqa* (good deed) in man's sexual intercourse with his wife." So when lawfully satisfying their sexual desires, both husband and wife are rewarded. The wisdom behind this is that each of them should be keen to please the other and give or receive with pleasure, contentment and gratitude.

8- CONCEALING SECRETS

The chaste Muslim woman does not disclose her husband's secrets and talk to anyone about whatever secrets and other matters there may be between him and her. The serious Muslim woman is above that; she would never sink to the level of such

[1] AI-Asqalaani, op. cit., Vol.9. P-153-

[2] Al-Bukhari, op. cit., Vol.6, p.399.

cheap and shameless talk as goes on amongst the lowest type of people. Her time is too precious to be wasted in such discourteous behaviour. She would never accept to be counted as one of those people whom the Prophet described as one of the worst types, "Among the worst type of people in Allah's sight on the Judgement Day is a man who enjoys his wife intimate company, and she enjoys his intimate company, then one goes and discloses the other's secret." [1] Talking about what is private between the husband and wife is one of the most detestable ways of disclosing secrets. Some secrets the worst type of people disclosure are not as bad as revealing this secret, but in any case, telling any secret is disliked and unacceptable. Keeping secrets in itself is a worthy and virtuous deed while disclosing them is a grave error and shortcoming, from which nobody can be immune except the infallible Prophet [pbAbuh]. The disclosure of a secret the Prophet [pbAbuh] had entrusted to Hafsa, who told it to Aisha, led to plotting and intrigues in his household which caused him to keep away from his wives for a whole month because he was so upset with them. [2]

Concerning this, the following verse was revealed, "*When the Prophet disclosed a matter of confidence to one of his consorts and she then divulged it [to another] and Allah made it known to him, he confirmed part thereof and repudiated a part. Then when he told her thereof, she said, 'Who told you this?' He said, 'He told me Who knows and is well-acquainted [with all things]*" [66: 3].

The two women concerned were then confronted with their blunder and called to repent with the intention they might draw closer to Allah after having distanced themselves by their deed. If they did not do this, Allah would be his (the Prophet's) Protector,

[1] Saheeh Muslim, 10/8, Kitab al-nikah, bab tahrim ifsha' sirr al-mar'ah; Al-targhib wa'ttarhib, 3/86, Kitab al-nikah, bab al-tarhib min ifsha' al-sirr bayna al-zawjayn.

[2] The story of the Prophet keeping way from his wives is narrated by Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others. See Fath Al-Bari, 5/116, kitab almalazim, bab al-ghurfah wa'laliyyah al-mushrifah, and 8/656, kitab al-tafsir, Surat al-Tahrim; Saheeh Muslim, 7/195, Kitab al-siyam, bab bayan an al-shahr yakun tis'an wa 'ishrin.

and Gabriel and righteous believers would also support him, *“If you two turn in repentance to Him, your hearts are indeed so inclined; but if you back up on another against him, truly Allah is his Protector, and Gabriel, and [every] righteous one among those who believe—and furthermore, the angels—will back [him] up”* [The Prohibition, 66: 4]. Then they were issued with a stern warning and terrifying prospect; if they persisted in their error, they may lose the honour of being the Prophet’s wives, *“It may be, if he divorced you [all], Allah will give him in exchange consorts better than you, (those) who submit [their wills], believe, are devout, turn to Allah in repentance, worship [in humility], travel [for the faith] and fast—previously married or virgins”* [66: 5]. This incident presents a valuable lesson to a Muslim woman on the importance of keeping her husband’s secret and the effect this has on confidentiality and the stability of the individual and the home. One of the greatest blessings Allah has bestowed on Muslims in particular, and mankind in general, is that He has made the public and private life of His Messenger resemble an open book in which we can read the teachings on *Aqeedah* (faith) and its practical application in real life. Nothing is secret or hidden: matters and events that people usually keep confidential are discussed openly in the Qur’an and Sunnah, even unavoidable human weaknesses. All of these issues are presented to teach people right from wrong.

The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) understood that the Prophet’s life was entirely devoted to Allah and His Message, so why should they keep secret or conceal any aspect of his life? The stories that have been narrated about his life, household and wives represent a practical application of the words he preached. For this reason, the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) transmitted the most precise details of his life [pbAbuh] and did not fail to record any aspect of his daily life, whether it was significant or minor.

This is one way how Allah caused the life of his Prophet [pbAbuh] to be recorded including details of the precise way the Islamic teachings were applied in his life [pbAbuh]. This is in addition to Qur’anic references of the Prophet’s life, which form a record that will remain until heaven and earth pass away.

The wife should not allow anyone to enter the house without her husband's permission. The house belongs to the husband, who is at the same time a maintainer and protector of his family. The wife should show respect for her husband's feelings by not admitting to her house anyone he does not wish her to receive. The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "You have your rights upon your wives, and they have their rights upon you. Your right is that they shall not allow anyone you dislike to step onto your furnishings or allow any you dislike to enter your home, and their right is that you should treat them well in the matter of food and clothing." [1]

"*Furnishings*" in the above narration refers to all kinds of furniture, such as carpets, chairs, mats, cushions...etc. It certainly does not refer to bed or any prohibited intimacy, since the wife is not allowed to offer an opportunity for anyone to do that, regardless of her husband's opinion, whether he is present or absent and whether he likes it or dislikes it. Indeed, the meaning refers to entertaining and receiving ordinary visitors. Imam Al-Nawawi said, "You must not allow anyone in your house whose visit your husband dislikes, whether this person is a man, a woman or one of the wife's *mabrams*; indeed, the prohibition includes them all. "The scholars have said that the wife must not permit anyone (man, woman or *mabram*) to enter her house unless she knew or thought that her husband would not mind them visiting.

9- BE CLEAN, TIDY, PRESENTABLE AND CHEERFUL BEFORE HER HUSBAND

The clever and sensitive Muslim woman does not forget that the most excellent deeds she can do in life, after worshipping Allah, is to be successful in endearing herself to her husband and filling his heart with joy, delight and contentment. She understands the greatest joy of a man in this world, as is stated in the hadith narrated by Abdullah ibn Amr ibn Al-Ass. The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "This world is nothing but temporary conveniences, and the greatest joy in this world is a righteous woman." [2] If she does not

[1] Al-Tirmidhi, op. cit., Vol.3, chap.1, P-458.

[2] Saheeh Muslim, 10/56, Kitab al-rida', bab istihbab nikah al-bikr.

know how to endear herself to him, in most cases she will be a source of unhappiness and misery to her husband, as was confirmed by the Prophet [pbAbuh], “Three things make the son of Adam happy, and three make him miserable. Among the things that make the son of Adam happy are a good wife, a good home and a good means of transport; the things that make him miserable are a bad wife, a bad home and a bad means of transport.” [1]

Hence, being a good wife and endearing oneself to one’s husband is a part of religion, since this offers protection to the man by helping him to remain chaste and strengthens the family foundations, thus bringing happiness to her husband and children. She finds a way of fulfilling her femininity and inclinations to make herself attractive. But for the Muslim woman, the matter goes even further: it entails seeking to win her husband’s heart and earn Allah’s pleasure, Who has made being a good wife a part of the religion about which she will be questioned in the Hereafter. Consequently, she does not spare any effort in her loving treatment with her husband: she presents a pleasing appearance, speaks pleasantly and kindly, and is an innovative and likeable companion.

She makes herself beautiful for her husband by means of make-up, clothing, etc., so that she will appear more beautiful and attractive and thus make her husband happy. This was the practice of the *salaf* righteous women, who used to devote their time to worshipping Allah and reading the Qur’an. Foremost among them were Aisha and others; they used to wear fine clothes and jewellery at home and when they were travelling, to make themselves look beautiful for their husbands. Bakrah bint ‘Uqbah came to Aisha and asked her about henna. Aisha said, “It comes from a good tree and pure water.” She asked her about removing body hair, and she said, “If you have a husband and you could remove your eyes and replace them with something better, then do it.” [2]

[1] Reported by Ahmad, 1/168; its narrators are *rijal al-Sabeeh* (authentic men).

[2] Ibn Al-Jawzi, *Ahkam Al-Nisa'*, 343.

Let those careless women who neglect their appearance in front of their husbands listen to the advice of Aisha and realize that their beauty should be primarily for their husbands, not for their friends and peers. Those women who are failing to make themselves beautiful for their husbands are sinners because they are falling short in one of the most outstanding duties of marriage. Their negligence may be the cause of their husbands staying away from them and looking at other women.

The wife whose husband only ever sees her with unkempt hair, looking pale and wan and wearing shabby old clothes, is a foolish and disobedient wife. It will be of no help to her if she rushes to beautify herself only when receiving guests or to going to women's party, but remains to look shabby most of the time in front of her husband. I think that the Muslim woman who is truly guided by the teachings of Islam will be safe from such shortcomings.

Therefore, it is forbidden for a woman to dress in mourning for more than three days except in the case of her husband's death, when she is permitted to mourn for four months and ten days. We find proof of this in the hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari from Zaynab, the daughter of Umm Salamah, who said that she went to Zaynab bint Jahsh, the wife of the Prophet when her brother had died. Zaynab called for perfume and applied it to herself, then said, "I am not wearing perfume because I need to, but because I heard Allah's Messenger say from the pulpit, 'It is not permitted for a woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day to grieve for more than three days, except for her husband, (for whom she may grieve) four months and ten days.'" [1]

The Muslim woman makes herself attractive to her husband by being happy, cheerful, friendly and gentle, thus flooding her husband's life with joy. When he comes home exhausted from his work, she greets him with a smiling face and kind words. She puts her concerns to one side for a while and helps him to forget some of his worries. She appears as cheerful and serene as she can, and

[1] Fath Al-Bari, 9/484, Kitab al-talaq, bab ihdad al-mutawafa 'anha zawjuha.

expresses her gratitude to him every time he does something good for her. The true Muslim woman is fair-minded and is never ungrateful to any person because the teachings of her religion protect her from falling into the error of bad behaviour and ingratitude for favours. How then could she be ungrateful to her husband, her beloved lifelong companion? She knows well the teaching of the Prophet, “He does not thank Allah who does not thank the people.” [1]

She understands that every person who does good deeds and favours deserves thanks and recognition. So how could she hesitate or fail to show gratitude to her husband? This is especially, when she hears the words of the Prophet [pbAbuh], “Allah will not look at the woman who does not thank her husband at the time when she cannot do without him.” [2] This is one of the main duties that a wife should fulfil. When the Prophet [pbAbuh] described the ideal wife, he [pbAbuh] said, “The best wife is the one who pleases her husband when he looks at her, obeys him when he orders and does not disobey him in anything regarding her person or her wealth.” [3]

In everyday life, a human being perspires and is exposed to dirt, which results in an unpleasant body odour. Islam has therefore emphasised the importance of cleanliness and made it obligatory upon Muslim men and women to have complete baths in certain situations, such as after sexual intercourse and at the end of menstruation, and to wash their limbs at least five times a day.

The Prophet [pbAbuh] encouraged Muslim women always to be clean and even taught them how to wash after the menstrual period.” Thus did the Prophet [pbAbuh] of mercy and guidance teach the women the fundamentals of cleanliness and purification (*Tahaarah*) so that they would always be clean and attractive. As for

[1] Reported by Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, 1/310, Bab man la yashkur al-nas.

[2] Reported by Al-Hakim in Al-Mustadrak, 2/190, Kitab al-nikah; he said it is a hadith whose isnad is Saheeh.

[3] Al-Suyooti, op. cit., Vol.6, p.68.

the attributes of cheerfulness and a smiling face, these are important when greeting friends, family and especially when interacting with one's husband.

Abu Dharr reported that Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] said to him, "Do not consider anything good to be insignificant, even if it is that you meet your brother with a cheerful countenance." In another narration, the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "Even your smile at seeing your brother is considered a *Sadaqah*." [1]

10- SINCERE LOVE AND REFINED MANNERS

Aisha's strength of character became even more prominent when she was tried with the slander (*al-iffk*) which Allah made a test for His Messenger [pbAbuh] and all the Ummah, raising the status of some and lowering that of others, strengthening the faith of those who were guided and increasing the loss of those who were astray. Her strength of character and deep faith in Allah became apparent, and her trust in Him alone to prove her innocence was quite clear. I can find a no more beautiful description of the deep and sincere faith of Aisha and her confidence in Allah's justice than that of Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, who said, "The test was so severe that the revelation ceased for a month, and nothing at all concerning this issue was revealed to Allah's Messenger during that time. This is so that the wisdom behind what had happened might become wholly apparent and sincere believers might be increased in faith, adhere to justice, and think well of Allah, His Messenger, the Messenger's family and those believers who spoke the truth. At the same time, the test was for the *Munāfiqūn*, to increase only in sin and hypocrisy and for their true nature to be exposed to the Prophet [pbAbuh] and the believers. Moreover, during the trials, 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), the one who had spoken the truth, and her parents would be shown to be faithful servants of Allah who had received His full blessing.

The family's need for Allah and their desire to draw closer to Him would increase; they would feel humble before Him and

[1] Al-Tirmidhi, op. cit., Vol.4, p-340.

would put their hope and trust in Him, instead of hoping for the support of other people. Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) would despair of receiving help from any created being, passing this most difficult test when her father said, “Get up and thank him,” after Allah had sent down a revelation confirming her innocence. She replied, “By Allah, I will not get up and thank him; I will only give thanks to Allah, Who has revealed my innocence.” “Another aspect of the wisdom behind the revelation being suspended for a month was so that the people would focus solely on this issue and examine it closely; the believers would wait with eager anticipation to hear what Allah would reveal to His Messenger [pbAbuh] concerning this matter. The revelation came like rain on parched land, when it was most needed by Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] and his family, by Abu Bakr and his family, by the Companions and by the believers, and it brought them great relief and joy. If Allah had revealed the truth from the first instant, the wisdom behind this event would have been obscured and a remarkable lesson would have been lost. Allah wanted to demonstrate the status of His Prophet [pbAbuh] and his family in His sight, and the honour which He had bestowed upon them. He Himself was to defend His Messenger [pbAbuh] and rebuke his enemies in such a way that the Prophet [pbAbuh] did not take any part in it. Allah alone would avenge His Prophet [pbAbuh] and his family.”

“Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] was the target of this slander, and the one who was accused was his wife. It was not appropriate for him to declare her innocence, although he knew that she was indeed innocent, and he never thought otherwise. When he asked the people to avenge him of those who had spread the slander, he [pbAbuh] said, “Who could blame me if I were to punish those who slandered my family? By Allah, I have never known anything but good of my family, and they have told me about a man whom I have never known anything but good, and he never came into my house except with me.” He had more proof of Aisha’s innocence than the believers did. Still, because of his high level of patience, perseverance, and deep trust in Allah, he acted appropriately until

revelation came, made his heart rejoice, and raised his status, showing to his *Ummah* that Allah was taking care of him.” “Whoever examines Aisha’s response, when she replied, ‘No, I will give thanks only to Allah,’ after her father told her to get up and thank Allah’s Messenger, will realize the extent of her knowledge and the depth of her faith. She attributed this blessing to Allah alone and gave thanks only to Him. She had a sound grasp of *Tawhid* and demonstrated great strength of character and confidence in her innocence. She was not curious or anxious about the outcome when she spoke thus, because she was sure that she had done nothing wrong. Because of her faith in the Prophet’s love for her, she said what she said. She became even dearer to him when she said, ‘I will not give thanks except to Allah, for He is the One Who has revealed my innocence.’ She displayed remarkable maturity and stead-fastness when her dearly beloved husband, from whom she could not bear to be apart, kept away from her for a month; then, when the matter was resolved and he wished to come back to her, she did not rush to him, despite her great love for him. This is the highest level of steadfastness and strength of character.”^[1]

The tolerant laws of the *Shari’ah* stipulate that husband and wife should collaborate in managing their everyday familial life. The husband is in charge of the family budget, and to him falls the responsibility of providing sustenance for his family. The wife is endorsed to assist by preparing food, cleaning the house and managing its affairs, or supervising servants who normally carry out these tasks, because she is the guardian of her house and responsible for her household.

“Precisely who does the housework depends on the customs and traditions of a given country or the mutual consent of both husband and wife. It is worth mentioning that the majority of scholars said that the husband cannot oblige his wife to do the housework in his house since she is his wife, and not his servant.

[1] Zad Al-Ma’ad, 3/261-264.

He also has no right to dismiss his wife's servant but should pay him for his services according to the couple's needs.

Imam Ash-Shaafi'ee and the Kufi scholars said that the husband is responsible for his wife's expenditure as well as that of her servants if there are any." [1] We also conclude with a text from an authentic narration, which covered, "The working of a lady in her husband's house," that the wife volunteers to do this to assist her husband in managing their household affairs, or simply to help him when he is unable to employ a servant. Fatima (may Allah be pleased with her), the daughter of the Prophet [pbAbuh], set an example for all women by helping her husband around the house. She kept helping until once she went to the Prophet [pbAbuh] complaining about the painful effects of the stone hand mill on her hand. In another narration, Fatima (may Allah be pleased with her) came to the Prophet [pbAbuh] asking for a servant. He [pbAbuh] said to her, "May I inform you of something better than that? When you go to bed, recite *Subhaan Allah* thirty-three times, *Albamdulillah* thirty-three times, and *Allaahu Akbar* thirty-four times." So when Fatima (may Allah be pleased with her) complained about the injuries on her hand from the stone hand mill, her father, the Prophet [pbAbuh], did not order her husband Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) to spare her such a chore by employing a servant or by carrying out all the work himself. Indeed, if it had been in Ali's capability, the Prophet [pbAbuh] would have ordered him to do so, just as he ordered him to pay Fatima's *Mahr* before the marriage, even though this was not obligatory when the bride consented to a delayed payment. So how could the Prophet [pbAbuh] order him to do what was not mandatory and fail to order him to do what was obligatory if indeed providing a servant for one's wife was obligatory?

Nevertheless, Ibn Battaal narrated that some scholars have said, "We do not find any indication as to the Prophet [pbAbuh] enjoining Fatima to work inside her house; she did so because she was a kind Companion with a noble character." Similarly, Asma

[1] Al-Asqalaani, op.cit. Vol 9, p. 507.

(may Allah be pleased with her), daughter of Abu Bakr, used to also work and care for her husband's property inside and outside the house. Asma narrated, "When As-Zubair (her husband) married me, he had no real property nor any slaves nor anything else except a camel, which drew water from the well, and his horse. I used to feed his horse with fodder, draw water, sew the bucket for drawing it, and prepare the dough, but I did not know how to bake bread. Therefore, our Ansari neighbours used to bake bread for me, and they were honourable ladies. I used to carry the date stones on my head from Zubair's land given to him by Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh], and this land was two third *Farsakh* (about two miles) from my house." [1] Asma (may Allah be pleased with her), the noble woman from Quraish, carried out such exhausting tasks herself in consideration of her husband's difficult financial situation, since "He had no real property nor anything else except a camel, which drew water from the well, and his horse." Indeed, Fatima and Asma (may Allah be pleased with them) are two ideal examples of compassion and kind companionship between the husband and the wife.

It seems that the Prophet [pbAbuh] did not give Fatima a servant lest it became a legal obligation upon the husbands. The Prophet [pbAbuh] intended that the relationship between the husband and the wife should be based on mutual assistance. Therefore, he advised his daughter and his son-in-law to say Subhaan Allah thirty-three times, Alhamdulillah thirty-three times and Allaahu Akbar thirty-four times so that Allah may give them enough strength to work and carry out their everyday tasks. He [pbAbuh] thus guided his daughter and her husband to what was best for them. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) later sent a servant to Asma's house to groom her husband's horse and to relieve her from those chores customarily done by men. By doing so, he has shown how the wife's parents should tolerate the financial situation of their son-in-law and offer their help when necessary.

[1] Al-Asqalaani, op.cit. Vol 9, p.319.

From these examples, we conclude that it is recommended that a woman should work in her house, manage its affairs and try to improve it as much as she can. She should do so willingly, in consideration of her husband's financial situation. In return, the husband must show mercy to his wife and employ a servant if he has the means to do so and leave her the responsibility of supervising and directing the servant. If, however, he cannot afford to do so, then he should follow the example of the Prophet [pbAbuh] by helping out his wife around the house as a way of showing affection and gratitude for her continuous efforts. When Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) was asked, "What did the Prophet [pbAbuh] do at home?" she replied, "He used to work for his family, and when he heard the Adhaan (call for prayer), he would leave." [1]

11- SPENDS FOR ALLAH'S SAKE

Another way in which the true Muslim woman supports her husband is by encouraging him to spend and give charity for the sake of Allah and not to waste money in extravagance and pretentious purchases, as we see so many ignorant and misguided women doing. The sensible and wary Muslim woman always wants goodness and success for her husband, so she urges him to do good deeds and do more of them because she believes that by doing this she will increase her honour in this world and her reward in the next. One of the beautiful stories narrated about a woman encouraging her husband to spend for the sake of Allah is the story of Umm Al-Dahdah. When her husband came to her and told her that he had given in charity the garden in which she and her children used to live, in hopes of receiving a bunch of dates in Paradise, she said, "You have made a good deal. You have made a good deal." The Prophet commented, "How many bunches of dates Abu'l-Dahdah will have in Paradise!" and he repeated this several times. [2]

[1] *ibid*, Vol 9, p.507.

[2] Reported by Ahmad and Al-Tabarani; its narrators are al-Saheeh men. See also *Majma' Al-Zawa'id*, 9/324, *Kitab al-manaqib*, bab ma ja'a fi Abi'l-Dahdah.

12- ASSISTS IN HIS OBEDIENCE TO ALLAH

One of the qualities of a good Muslim wife is that she helps her husband to obey Allah in different ways, especially to stay up and pray at night (*qiyam al-layl*). By doing this, she does him an immense favour, because she reminds him to do something he might otherwise forget or neglect.

Thus, she causes him, and herself, to be covered by the mercy of Allah. What a beautiful picture the Prophet drew of the married couple helping one another to obey Allah and do good deeds, thereby entering into the mercy of Allah together. This comes in the hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah, who said, “Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] said, ‘May Allah has mercy on the man who gets up at night to pray and wakes up his wife to pray; and if she refuses, he sprinkles water on her face. And may Allah have mercy on the woman who gets up at night to pray, and wakes her husband up to pray; and if he refuses, she sprinkles water on his face.’” [1]

13- SUPPORTS AND OFFERS HER ADVICE

One of the laws that Allah has decreed for this life is that men and women should work together to cultivate and populate the earth and run the affairs of life therein. Man cannot do without a woman, and vice versa. Hence, the laws of Islam teach men and women to co-operate in all matters. Islam encourages a man to help his wife, as much as he is able; the Prophet, who is the example for all Muslims, used to help and serve his family until he went out to pray, as the Mother of the Believers Aisha said. [2] Just as Islam expects a man to help his wife with housework and running household affairs, so the woman is also expected to help him in dealing with the outside world and to play her role in life by offering her opinions and advice and supporting him in practical terms.

[1] Reported by Abu Dawud, 2/45, in Kitab al-salah: bab qiyam al-layl, and by Al-Hakim 1/309, Kitab salah al-tatawwu'; he said that it is Saheeh according to the conditions of Muslim.

[2] See Fath Al-Bari, 2/162, Kitab al-adhan, bab man kana fi hajah ahlihi.

History tells us that Muslim women engaged in jihad side by side with men, marching to war with them, bringing water to the thirsty, tending the wounded, setting broken bones, stemming the flow of blood, encouraging the soldiers. They sometimes joined in the actual fighting, running back and forth between swords and spears, standing firm when some of the brave men had fled.

However, women's contribution to public life did not stop on the battlefield; women also stood side-by-side with men at times of peace, offering their valuable opinions, soothing their hearts at times of stress, and supporting them during times of hardship. History has recorded many names of great Muslim men who used to seek and follow the advice of their wives, foremost among whom is the Prophet [pbAbuh] himself who sometimes followed the advice of Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her), Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her), Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), and others among his wives. 'Abdullah ibn Al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him) used to follow the advice of his mother Asma', Al-Walid ibn Abd Al-Malik used to follow the advice of his wife Umm Al-Banin bint Abd Al-'Aziz ibn Marwan, and Harun Al-Rashid used to follow the advice of his wife Zubaydah, and there are many other such examples in the history of Islam.

The true, sincere Muslim woman understands the heavy burden that Islam has placed on her shoulders by obliging her to be a good wife to her husband, surrounding him with care and meeting his every need, giving him enjoyment, and renewing his energy so that he may fulfil his mission in life. Consequently, she does not withhold her advice when she sees that he needs it, and she never hesitates to stand by his side, encouraging him, supporting him and offering advice and consolation.

The first Muslim woman, Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (may Allah be pleased with her) is the best example of a woman who influenced her husband properly. The Prophet [pbAbuh] came to her on the day of the first revelation, anxious, trembling and shaking all over. He told her, "Cover me, cover me!" She hastened

to offer her help and support, advising him and thinking of a practical way to help him. Al-Bukhari and Muslim reported the story told by Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) of how the revelation commenced and the marvellous way in which Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) responded by supporting her husband: The revelation started in the form of a dream that came true; he [pbAbuh] never saw a dream but it would clearly come to pass. Next, he was made to like seclusion, so he would go and stay alone in the cave of Hira', praying and worshipping for many nights at a time, before coming back to his family to collect supplies for another period of seclusion. Then the truth came suddenly when he was in the cave of Hirâ. The angel came to him and said, "Read!" He said, "I am not one who can read." [The Prophet said,] "The angel embraced me and squeezed me until I nearly passed out. Then released me and said, 'Read!' I said, 'I am not one who can read.' The angel embraced me a second time, squeezing me until I nearly passed out, then he released me and said, 'Read!' I said, 'I am not one who can read.' The angel embraced me a third time and squeezed me until I nearly passed out, then he released me and said,

'Read! In the name of your Lord Who created—created man, out of a [mere] clot of congealed blood. Read! And your Lord is Most Bountiful, He Who taught [to write] with the pen, taught man that which he knew not' [The Clot, 96: 1-5].

Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] came back to Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her), trembling all over, and said, "Cover me, cover me!" They covered him up until he calmed down. Then he said to Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her), "O Khadijah, what is wrong with me?" He told her what had happened and then said, "I fear for myself." Khadijah said, "No, rather be of good cheer, for, by Allah, Allah would never forsake you. By Allah, you uphold the ties of kinship, speak the truth, spend money on the needy, give money to the penniless, honour your guests, and help those beset by difficulties." She took him to Waraqah ibn Nawfal ibn Asad ibn 'Abd Al-'Uzza, who was her cousin, the son of her father's brother. He was a man who had become a Christian during

the time of *jabiliyyah* (time of ignorance); he could write the Arabic script and he had written as much of the Gospel in Arabic as Allah willed. He was an elderly man who had become blind. Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) said to him, "O Uncle, listen to your nephew." Waraqah ibn Nawfal said, "O son of my brother, what has happened?" Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] told him what had happened, and Waraqah said to him, "This is Al-Namus (i.e., Gabriel), who was sent down to Musa [pbAbuh]. I wish that I were a young man and could be alive when your people cast you out." Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] asked, "Will they really cast me out?" Waraqah said, "Yes. No man has ever come with what you have brought but his people were hostile towards him. If I live to see that day, I will give you all the support I can." [1]

This report is strong evidence of Khadijah's wifely perfection, wisdom, strength of character, steadfastness, understanding and deep insight. She knew the Prophet's outstanding character, good conduct and purity of heart, and this made her certain that Allah would never forsake a man such as Muhammad [pbAbuh] or permit any bad fate to befall him. She knew that behind this remarkable new event that had overwhelmed Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] lay something great that Allah had prepared for His Messenger [pbAbuh], so she spoke her kind and sweet words of encouragement, filling him with confidence, tranquillity and firm conviction: "Be of good cheer, O cousin, and stand firm. By the One in Whose hand is the soul of Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her), I hope that you will be the Prophet of this nation." [2]

Then she took him to her cousin Waraqah ibn Nawfal, who knew the Torah and Gospel, and told him what had happened to the Prophet.

The first Mother of the Believers, Khadijah, was a sincere adviser to the Prophet [pbAbuh] in the way of Islam. She had

[1] Fath Al-Bari, 1/23, Kitab bad' al-wahy, bab hadith 'A'ishah awwal ma bada'a bihi alwahy; Saheeh Muslim, 2/197, Kitab al-iman, bab bad' al-wahy.

[2] Fath Al-Bari, 1/23, Kitab bad' al-wahy, bab hadith 'A'ishah awwal ma bada'a bihi alwahy; Saheeh Muslim, 2/197, Kitab al-iman, bab bad' al-wahy.

already earned the great status and lasting fame of being the first person to believe in Allah and His Messenger [pbAbuh]. She stood beside her husband, the Prophet [pbAbuh], supporting him and helping him to bear the worst oppression and persecution that he faced at the beginning of his mission; she endured along with him every hardship and difficulty that he was confronted with.

Ibn Hishâm says in his *Sîrah* of the Prophet, “Khadijah had faith and believed in what the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought from Allah. In this way, Allah helped His Prophet. Whenever he heard any hateful words of rejection or disbelief that upset him, Allah would cause his spirits to be lifted when he came back to her. She encouraged him to be patient, believed in him, and made it easier for him to bear whatever the people said or did. May Allah have mercy on her.” [1]

Another of these great stories, which feature correct advice given by a woman, is the reaction of the Muslims to the treaty of Al-Hudeybiyah, and Umm Salâmah’s reaction, which demonstrated her deep insight and great wisdom.

Umm Salâmah (may Allah be pleased with her) was one of those who were with the Prophet [pbAbuh] when he went to Makkah to perform ‘Umrah in 6 AH. This is the journey, which was interrupted by Quraish, who prevented the Prophet [pbAbuh] and his companions from reaching the Ka’ba. The treaty of Al-Hudaybiyyah was drawn up between the Prophet [pbAbuh] and Quraish at that time.

This was a peace treaty which was intended to put an end to the fighting for ten years. It was also agreed that if anyone from Quraish came to Muhammad without the permission of his guardian, he would be returned, but if any of the Muslims came to Quraish, he would not be returned. Moreover, the agreement stated that the Muslims would go back that year without entering Makkah, and more.

[1] *ibid.*, 1/257.

By his deep understanding that was derived from the guidance of Allah, the Prophet [pbAbuh] understood that this treaty, which appeared to be quite unfair to the Muslims, was something good and represented a great victory for Islam and Muslims. The Companions, however, were dismayed when they learned the content of the treaty. They saw it as unfair and unjust, especially as they had the upper hand at that time.

‘Umar ibn al-Khattâb expressed the angry feelings of the Companions when he went to Abu Bakr and asked him, “Is he not Allah’s Messenger?” Abu Bakr said, “Of course.” “Are we not Muslims?” “Yes.” “Are they not *mushrikin*?” “Yes.” “Why should we accept this deal which is so humiliating to our religion?” Abu Bakr warned him, “O ‘Umar, follow his orders. I bear witness that he is Allah’s Messenger.” Umar said, “And I bear witness that he is Allah’s Messenger.” Then ‘Umar went to Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] and asked him questions similar to those he had asked Abu Bakr. However, when he asked, “Why should we accept this deal which is so humiliating to our religion?” the Prophet [pbAbuh] replied, “I am the slave of Allah and His Messenger; I will never disobey His command, and He will never forsake me.”^[1] Then ‘Umar realised that his haste to oppose the treaty was a mistake. He used to say, “I kept giving charity, fasting, praying and freeing slaves because of what I had done and said on that day, until I hoped that ultimately it would be good for me (because it made me perform so many good deeds).”^[2]

When the Prophet [pbAbuh] had ratified the treaty, he commanded his companions to get up, slaughter their sacrificial animals, and shave their heads, but none of them got up.^[3] He

[1] Al-Sirah, 3/331; see also Fath Al-Bari, 6/281, Kitab al-jizyah wa'l-mawadi'ah, bab hadith Sahl ibn Hanif; Saheeh Muslim, 12/141, Kitab al-jihad wa'l-siyar, bab sulh Al-Hudaybiyyah.

[2] Al-Sirah 3/331.

[3] The Prophet (peace be upon him) was telling his companions to end the state of ihram which they had entered in order to perform 'Umrah. They had been prevented from entering Makkah, and were to wait until the following year to perform 'Umrah, but they did not want to abandon their hope of performing 'Umrah on this occasion. They did not want to accept the deal that had been

told them three times to do this, but not one of them responded. He went to his wife Umm Salamah, (may Allah be pleased with her) and told her what he was facing from the people. At this point, the wisdom and intelligence of Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her) become quite clear: she told him, “O Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh], go out and do not speak to any of them until you have sacrificed your animal and shaved your head.”

The Prophet [pbAbuh] took her advice and did as she suggested. When the Companions saw that, they rushed to sacrifice their animals, pushing one another aside, and some of them began to shave one another’s heads until they were almost fighting with one another because of their distress and grief and their regret for having disobeyed the Prophet. ^[1]

After that, the Muslims came back to their senses, and they understood the Prophet’s great wisdom in agreeing to this treaty, which was a manifest victory because many more people entered Islam after it than had entered Islam before it. In Saheeh Muslim, it states that the verse, “*Verily, We have granted you a manifest victory*” [Victory, 48: 1] referred to the treaty of Al-Hudaybiyyah. The Prophet [pbAbuh] sent for ‘Umar and recited this verse to him. ‘Umar said, “O Messenger of Allah, it is a victory?” He said, “Yes,” so then, ‘Umar felt at peace. ^[2]

14- ESTABLISHES PEACE, TRANQUILLITY, TOLERANCE AND FORGIVENESS

The Muslim woman does not only make herself beautiful for her husband and share his work and pastimes, but she also tries to create an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity in the home. Therefore, she tries to keep a clean and tidy home, in which he will see order and good taste, and clean, well-mannered, polite children, a home where good meals are prepared regularly. The clever woman also does whatever else she can based on her knowledge

struck with the Quraysh, hence they were reluctant to end their ihram [Translator].

[1] Zad Al-Ma’ad, 3:295, al-Tabari, 2/124.

[2] Saheeh Muslim, 12/141, Kitab al-jihad wa’l-siyar, bab sulh Al-Hudaybiyyah.

and good taste. All of this is part of being a good Muslim wife, as enjoined by Islam. The true Muslim woman does not forget that, according to Islam, marriage is one of the signs of Allah. Islam has made the wife a source of tranquillity, rest and consolation for her husband: *“And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your [hearts] ...”* [The Romans, 30: 21].

Marriage is the deepest of bonds, which Allah ties between one soul and another, so that they may enjoy peace, tranquillity, stability and permitted pleasures. The wife is a source of refuge, security, and rest for her husband in a marital home, which is filled with sincere love and compassionate mercy. The truly guided Muslim woman is the best one to understand this lofty meaning and to translate it into a pleasant and cheerful reality.

The Muslim woman is tolerant and forgiving, overlooking any errors on the part of her husband. She does not bear a grudge against him for any errors or remind him about them every so often. No quality will endear her to her husband like the quality of tolerance and forgiveness. And there is nothing that will turn her husband against her like resentment, counting faults, and reminding him about his mistakes. The Muslim woman who is following the guidance of Islam obeys the command of Allah: *“... let them forgive and overlook. Do you not wish that Allah should forgive you? ...”* [Light, 24: 22]. This is a woman who deserves to be the queen of her husband’s heart, filling his soul with joy and happiness.

4- HER DUTIES TOWARDS HER CHILDREN

Undoubtedly, children are a source of great joy and light; they make life sweet, bring more *niẓq* into a family's life, and give hope. A father sees his children as a future source of help and support, and that they increase the number and the perpetuation of the family. A mother sees her children as a source of hope, consolation, and joy in life, and as hope for the future. All of these hopes rest on the good upbringing of the children and giving them a sound preparation for life so that they will become active and constructive elements in society and a source of goodness for their parents, community and society as a whole. Then they will be as Allah described them: "*Wealth and sons are adornments of the life of this world ...*" [The Cave, 18: 46].

If their education and upbringing are neglected, they will become bad examples and a burden on their family, community and society as a whole. Allah has enjoined upon parents to bring up their children in a correct manner and to give them all the care they need to grow up into sound and healthy adults. The importance and great impact of early education are stressed in the Prophet's statement, "There is none born but he is created in his true nature, and it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian. This is just as beasts produce their young with their limbs perfect. Do you see anything deficient in them?!"

This hadith draws the attention of psychologists and teachers to the extreme importance that ought to be given to children's education from their earliest ages. Allah has created all children with their true and inherent natures, a nature common to all human beings. They are as malleable as dough in the fingers of the educators, who can shape their minds according to their will. The Prophet [pbAbuh] has made an analogy with the beasts who produce perfect young. It is the human hand that alters or disfigures the perfect and amazing divine creation, and the Prophet [pbAbuh] has attributed this change to the parents of the child. The mother is the one who rocks the cradle, nurses the baby, and moulds the child. She makes him into a Jew, a Christian or a

Magian from an early age, depending on her own religious and educational background. The future inclinations and religious ideology, which is the most important part of the education of a newborn baby, is received from his parents.

This early education becomes a vital factor in the making of a future Muslim or disbeliever. Children have been entrusted to their parents and it is their responsibility to offer them a well-planned upbringing since the Prophet [pbAbuh] has said, "On the day of Judgement every one of you will be held responsible for his dependants." [1] Contrary to what many may think, children's care, development, upbringing, guidance, instruction and education are immensely difficult and extremely important tasks. Each child will go through many different phases, each requiring special attention and different guidance. Each child is born with inherent dispositions liable to both good and bad inclinations, and it is the parents' duty to direct their children to the right path for them to grow up as pious, good and righteous adults.

Children's education must encompass three aspects: physical, intellectual and spiritual. This is the responsibility of both parents, and each of them is expected to fulfil his or her role. Their roles are often determined by the type of education. They overlap each other and one parent may replace the other during a temporary or permanent absence (e.g. death). In such cases, the mother has to fulfil many duties, and it is, therefore, difficult sometimes to differentiate between the duties of the mother and the father. I shall illustrate the various responsibilities which can be undertaken by the mother, even though they are normally assigned to the father, and then those which are exclusive to men (e.g. guardianship at the time of marriage). Children are usually, especially in their early ages, entrusted to their mothers. They are necessarily influenced by her language and manners and will sometimes embody her whole character because she is the mould into which the future generation is shaped. This fact stresses the extreme importance of the mother's role in her children's

[1] Al-Tirmidhi, "Sunan Al-Tirmidhi", (sec #1 p. 226), No. 1705, p.208.

upbringing, especially in the early pre-school years of their lives during which the father's participation, although not unimportant, is more limited.

In Islam, the mother has an independent responsibility: she is the guardian of her husband's house and is responsible for her family's household. Regarding this responsibility, the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "All of you are guardians and responsible for your wards. The ruler is a guardian; the man is a guardian of his family; the lady is a guardian and is responsible for her husband's house and offspring; and so all of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards."

A guardian is usually concerned with his or her dependants' well-being, always trying to make decisions to their advantage. Consequently, she has total responsibility for her husband's household, including relatives, children, servants, furniture, goods and money. This responsibility is far from being easy and demands all her efforts. The mother has to direct her children, nourish them and monitor their growth, teach them the facts of their religion, shield them from evil, and open their eyes to what can harm them. The mother's responsibilities towards her child start while it is still an embryo in her womb and continues throughout his upbringing and education. These responsibilities include the following:

[1] PROTECTION OF THE EMBRYO

The mother-to-be should not consume anything that could harm the embryo or perform any act that could kill it because Allah has imposed a commitment upon every mother not to kill her child. In the verse dealing with the women's pledge of allegiance, Allah says, "*O Prophet [pbAbuh]! When believing women come to you to give you the pledge... that they will not kill their children*" [She That Is to Be Examined, 60: 12]. Imam Al-Qurtubi said, "This verse means that women should not kill their daughters nor abort embryos." ^[1] This refers to the killing of the child after its birth as the pagan Arabs used to do whenever they feared poverty. The

[1] Al-Qurtubi, Al-Juami' Li-Ahkaam AI-Qur'aan, Vol.17, p.72.

prohibition also includes the killing of the embryo as some ignorant women might do for immoral and similar reasons.” [1] If she does so, she will deserve Allah’s punishment, as Allah says, “*And when the female buried alive shall be questioned for what sin was she killed?*” [The Overthrowing, 81: 8-9]. Consequently, the mother has no right to abort the embryo except when her own life is threatened by the pregnancy. In this case, abortion is permitted according to the principle of “choosing the lesser of two evils”. The person who should make this judgement is a trustworthy Muslim doctor. The mother is thus the guardian who is responsible for the embryo’s safety until it comes to this world in which he or she will need further attention and care.

The Muslim woman never forgets that the mother’s responsibility in bringing up the children and forming their characters is greater than that of the father’s because children tend to be closer to their mother and spend more time with her; she knows all about their behavioural, emotional, and intellectual development during their childhood and the difficult years of adolescence. Hence the woman who understands the teachings of Islam and her educational role in life understands completely her responsibility involved in upbringing her children, as is referred to in the Qur’an, “*O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is men and stones ...*” [The Prohibition, 66: 6].

The Prophet [pbAbuh] also referred to this responsibility in his hadith: “Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock. The leader is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock; a man is the shepherd of his family and is responsible for his flock; a woman is the shepherd in the house of her husband and is responsible for her flock; a servant is the shepherd of his master’s wealth and is responsible for it. Each of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock.” [2]

[1] Ibn Katheer, op. cit., Vol. 4, p.354.

[2] (Al-Bukhari and Muslim), See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 10/61, Kitab al-imaharah wa'l-qada', bab al-ra'i mas'ul 'an ri'atihi.

[2] INFANT BREASTFEEDING

Allah says, “*The mothers shall suckle to their children for two whole years, for those who desire to complete the term of suckling*” [The Cow, 2:233]. So the mother should suckle her baby for two whole years. Ibn Katheer said, “This is an instruction from Allah to the mothers to complete the suckling term which lasts for two years.”^[1]

During this period, the mother’s milk is very important for the baby’s healthy physical and psychological development. There are two different opinions regarding the interpretation of “shall suckle”; is it a right or a duty? The majority of the scholars, however, understand it as being a duty to be fulfilled by the mother for her children. Nevertheless, “*for those who desire to complete the term of suckling*” is proof that completing the term of suckling is not obligatory. The mother can shorten or extend the period of breastfeeding as long as no harm is being done to the child.

Whether an obligation or an option, breastfeeding remains very important for the baby. The mother is often guided by instinct and responds with her unique maternal affection. However, in some unusual cases, the mother may refuse to breastfeed her child. These cases should be duly assessed and dealt with accordingly, bearing mind that this is a religious duty and her main duty as a mother for which she will be held accountable on the Day of Judgement unless there is a medical or other major reason that prevents her from doing so, especially after the importance of breastfeeding has been medically and internationally proven.

This has been confirmed by recent medical research which has stressed the importance of the mother’s milk during the first two years of the infant’s life and its consequences on the child’s physical development and psychological balance. Indeed, from the first day of his life, the baby is dependent entirely on his mother’s affection and mercy.

[1] Ibn Katheer, op. cit., Vol. 4, p.284.

[3] EFFECTIVE METHODS OF PARENTING

The intelligent Muslim woman understands the psychology of her children and is aware of their difference in attitudes and inclination. She tries to penetrate their innocent world and plant the seeds of outstanding values and worthy characteristics, using the best and most effective methods of parenting. The mother is naturally close to her children, and she endears herself to them so that they will be open with her and will share their thoughts and feelings with her. She hastens to correct them and refine their thoughts and feelings, taking into account each child's age and mental level.

She plays and jokes with them sometimes, complimenting them and letting them hear words of love, affection, compassion and self-denial. Thus, their love for her increases, and they will accept her words of guidance and correction eagerly. They will obey her out of love for her, for there is a great difference between sincere obedience that comes from the heart, which is based on love, respect and trust, and insincere obedience that is based on oppression, violence and force. The former is lasting obedience, strong and fruitful, while the latter is shallow and baseless and will quickly vanish when the violence and cruelty reach extreme levels.

[4] SHOW LOVE AND AFFECTION TO HER CHILDREN

The child needs his mother's affection as much as he requires food and drink. The mother normally recognises and responds to this need instinctively. The Prophet [pbAbuh] described maternal affection as a virtue, when he [pbAbuh] said, "The best women are those who ride camels, the righteous among the women of Quraish. They are the kindest women to their children in their childhood and the most careful of the property of their husbands."^[1]

Islam is indeed a merciful religion and encourages mutual mercy among the Muslims, as demonstrated by the following hadith: "Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated

[1] Al-Bukhari, "Saheeh Al-Bukhari", Vol 6, p. 130.

that Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] kissed Al-Hassan bin Ali while Al-Aqra' bin Haabis At-Tameemi was sitting beside him. Al-Aqra' said, "I have ten children and I have never kissed anyone of them." Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] cast a look at him and said, "Whoever is not merciful to others will not be treated mercifully."^[1]

The Prophet [pbAbuh] thus showed that children need love, affection and mercy. He [pbAbuh] also taught his companions how to do so, as well as how to kiss, cuddle and play with their children. 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that a Bedouin came to the Prophet [pbAbuh] and said, "You (people) kiss the boys! We don't kiss them." The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "I cannot put mercy in your hearts after Allah has taken it out of them." The Prophet [pbAbuh] himself would play with his grandchildren as well as with the children of his companions.

Usama bin Zaid narrated, "Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] used to put me on one thigh and put Al-Hassan bin Ali on his other thigh, and then embrace us and say, "O Allah! Please be merciful to them, as I am merciful to them."^[2]

Allah will be merciful to his slaves because of them being merciful to their children and will grant Paradise to the mother who cares for and shows affection to her daughters. 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) reported," A poor woman came to me with her two daughters. I gave her three dates. She gave a date to each of them and then brought the last date to her mouth to eat it, but her daughters expressed their desire for it. She then divided that date between them. This kind of treatment of hers impressed me and I mentioned the incident to Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh]. He said, 'Verily, Allah has assured Paradise for her because of this act of hers, or He has rescued her from Hell-Fire.'" ^[3] By receiving affection from their parents, children will learn to be merciful and benevolent to others and will grow up as healthy and sound adults.

[1] *ibid*, Vol.7, P.75.

[2] *ibid*

[3] Al-Nawawi, *op. cit.* Vol.16. "Al-Birr was-Sila wal-Adab". p.180.

The Muslim woman is not ignorant of the fact that her children need her warm lap, deep love and sincere affection to develop soundly with no psychological problems, crises or complexes. This sound upbringing will fill them with optimism, trust, hope and ambition. Thus, the caring Muslim mother demonstrates her love and affection for her children on every occasion, flooding their lives with joy and happiness and filling their hearts with confidence and security.

The true Muslim woman is compassionate towards her children, for compassion is a basic Islamic characteristic, one that was encouraged by the Prophet [pbAbuh] in word and deed, as Anas has told us, "I never saw anyone who was more compassionate towards children than Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh]. His son Ibrahim was in the care of a wet nurse in the hills around Madinah. He would go there, and we would go with him, and he would enter the house, pick up his son and kiss him, then come back." [1]

The Prophet's [pbAbuh] compassion and love towards Muslim children included little ones at play. He would flood them with his compassion and affection. Anas reported that whenever the Prophet [pbAbuh] passed by a group of boys, he would smile fondly and greet them. [2]

[5] NAMING THE NEW-BORN CHILD

The mother and father should share the task of choosing a nice and appropriate name for their baby. Abi Al-Dardaa' narrated that the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "On the Day of Resurrection you will be summoned by your names and the names of your fathers, so let your names be beautiful." [3] Choosing a pleasant and agreeable name for the baby is the responsibility of both parents, although it would be sufficient if only one of them did so. It is

[1] Saheeh Muslim, 15/75, Kitab al-fada'il, bab rahmatih (peace be upon him) wa awadu'ih.

[2] (Al-Bukhari and Muslim), See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 12/264, Kitab al-isti'dhan, bab al-taslim 'ala'l-subyan.

[3] Abittayeb Muhammad Abaadi, "Awn Al-Ma'bood...", (same as note #47 on p. 197) Vol. 13, p.296.

stated in the Qur'an that the wife of Imran chose her daughter's name. Allah says, "Then when she delivered her child (Mary), she said, 'O My Lord! I have delivered a female child,' and Allah knew better what she had delivered. 'And the female is not like the male. And I have named her Mary, and I seek refuge with You for her and for her offspring from Satan, the outcast'" [The Family of 'Imran, 3:36].

A mother who wishes to make the right choice regarding her child's name should follow the Sunnah by choosing the recommended names in Islam and avoiding the disliked ones.^[1]

Abu Wahab Aj-Jasha'ee (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "Name (your children) after the prophets; the most pleasing names to Allah are Abdullah and Abdurrahman, the most truthful names are Haarith and Humaam, and the ugliest names are Harb (war) and Murrah (bitter)." ^[2] Abdullah and Abdurrahman both mean the slaves of Allah; Ar-Rahman (The Most Beneficent) is one of Allah's ninety-nine most beautiful names. The best names after these are the names of the Prophets. The prohibited names include Malik Al-Amlaak (The King of Kings).

Abu Hurairah reported Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] as saying, "The vilest name in Allah's sight is Malik Al-Amlaak (The king of kings)." The narration transmitted on the authority of Shaiba contains these words: "There is no king but Allah, the Exalted and Glorious." Sufyan said, "Similarly, the word Shahin Shaah is also the vilest appellation." ^[3] The name Abu Al-Qaasim is also prohibited as it was the *kunya* [title] of the Prophet [pbAbuh].

Jabir bin 'Abdullah reported, "A child was born in the house of a person among us, and he gave him the name of Qaasim. We said we will not call you by your kunya until we ask the Prophet [pbAbuh] about it. Whereupon he [pbAbuh] said, "You may call yourselves by my name, but not by my kunya." ^[4] This companion

[1] Al-Nawawi, op.cit. Al-Adab, Vol. 14, P113

[2] Abittayeb Muhammad Abaadi, op. cit., Vol. 13, p.293.

[3] Al-Nawawi, op.cit. Vol.14, p.1222. "Al-Adab".

[4] Al-Bukhari, op. cit., Vol 7, p.116.

wanted to call his son Qaasim and thus adopt the *kunya* of Abu-Al-Qaasim for himself, but the Prophet [pbAbuh] prohibited him from doing so. Jabir narrated, "A boy was born to one of our men, and the man named him Al-Qaasim. We said to him, 'We will not call you Abu Al-Qaasim nor will we respect you for that.' The Prophet [pbAbuh] was informed about that, and he said, 'Name your son Abdur-Rahmaan.'" [1]

The mother should be aware of this prohibition in order not to commit the mistake of calling her child Al-Qaasim, especially as many people do call themselves Abu-Al-Qaasim because they are unaware of the legal judgement regarding this kunya. My objective has been to clarify this issue so that the mothers may follow the Sunnah in naming their sons and daughters.

The Sunnah encourages parents to choose the most beautiful names for their children, and the Prophet [pbAbuh] used to change ugly names to better ones. Ibn 'Umar reported, "Umar had a daughter who was called 'Aasiya (disobedient), and Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] gave her the name of Jamila (beautiful)." [2]

These hadith prove the responsibility involved in naming children and the importance of choosing suitable names. The age at which the baby is named is to be decided by the parents. This can be immediately after birth since the Prophet [pbAbuh] has been reported to have said, "This evening I had a child whom I have called Ibrahim." [3]

Or they can wait until the seventh day, as the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "The new-born is pledged by three things: "An '*Aqeeqah* to be slaughtered for him on the seventh day, a name to be given to him, and the shaving of his head." [4] It is also recommended that the *Adhaan* should be called in the newborn's ear and that his mouth should be sweetened [*Tahneek*].

[1] Ibid.

[2] Al-Nawawi, op.cit. Vol.13. "Al-Adab", P.119.

[3] Abittayeb Muhammad Abaadi, op. cit., Vol. 8, p.398.

[4] Al-Tirmidhi, op. cit., Vol.4, P-101

[6] CALLING THE ADHAAN & TAHNEEK

It is the Prophet's [pbAbuh] tradition to call the *Adhaan* in the ear of the newborn baby just after his birth. Abi Raafi' narrated, "I saw the Prophet [pbAbuh] calling the *Adhan* in the ear of Al-Hassan (the Prophet's grand-child) as soon as Fatima gave birth to him."^[1]

According to Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jawziya, the wisdom behind this tradition is that "The sublime words of the *Adhaan*, which celebrate the glory and majesty of Allah as well as the *Shahadah* by which Islam is embraced, should be the first thing to reach the ears of a human being. It seems as if the newborn is being taught the slogan of Islam when he or she first enters this world, in the same way as he is taught the word of *Tawhid* when he leaves this world. It is not improbable that the *Adhan* reaches and affects his heart, even though the newborn may not realise it."^[2]

It is also the Prophet's Sunnah to perform *Tabneek* of the newborn's mouth with a date. Abu Musa reported, "A child was born in my house and I brought him to Allah's Prophet [pbAbuh], who gave him the name of Ibrahim and rubbed the palate of his mouth with dates."^[3] Imam Al-Nawawi said, "This hadith teaches us that *Tabneek* should be performed for the newborn child. This is indeed a Sunnah with unanimity (of the scholars). This Sunnah also requires that the act of *Tabneek* should be carried out by a pious man or woman."

Imam Al-Nawawi added, "The scholars are unanimous upon the fact that the *Tabneek* of the newborn, just after birth, should be performed by the use of dates or some other sweet substance."^[4] It is thus possible to use honey instead of dates.

[1] Ibid, p.97. This hadith is weak [Editor].

[2] Ibn-Qayyim Al-Jawziah (691-751 AH), "Tuhfat al-Wadood bi Ahkaam Al-Mawlood", (A Gift from the Loving (Lord) Regarding the Rights of Newborns), Cairo, Al-Matabah Al-Qayyimah, p.25.

[3] Al-Nawawi, op.cit. Vol.14. Al-Adab, p135.

[4] ibid.

Tahneek consists of chewing some dates and putting a little bit on the tip of the finger (or dipping the finger in honey) and then putting it inside the baby's mouth. He or she will start to lick the dates and suck the finger. The person who is performing *Tahneek* should then gently rub the palate of the child with it. The wisdom behind this seems to be that the newborn infant will be prepared to suck his or her mother's breast and absorb her milk.

[7] 'AQEEQAH

The '*Aqeeqah* ceremony involves the sacrifice of two sheep on the seventh day after the birth of a male child and one sheep after the birth of a female child. The '*Aqeeqah* ceremony after the birth of a baby is a duty upon the parents towards their newly born infant.

Salmaan bin 'Amir Ad-Dabbi narrated that he heard Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] saying, "*Aqeeqah* is to be offered for a newly born, so slaughter for him and remove harm from him." [1] "Remove harm from him" refers to the shaving of the baby's head. This is confirmed by many other hadith in the books of tradition (Sunnah), including the following saying quoted earlier, "The newborn is safeguarded by three things: An '*Aqeeqah* to be sacrificed for him or her on the seventh day, a name to be given to him or her, and the shaving of his head." [2]

The tradition of the Prophet [pbAbuh] has also confirmed that one sheep should be slaughtered for the girl and two for the boy. Aisha narrated, "When the Prophet [pbAbuh] was asked about '*Aqeeqah*, he [pbAbuh] ordered two sheep of similar shape and age for a boy and one sheep for a girl." [3]

The scholars have different opinions about the religious verdict concerning '*Aqeeqah*. Some said that "It is a confirmed tradition" and others said, "It is obligatory." The majority opinion is that '*Aqeeqah* is a Sunnah, based on the statement of the Prophet

[1] Al-Bukhari, op. cit., Vol 6, p.217

[2] Al-Tirmidhi, op. cit., Vol.4, p.101.

[3] ibid, p. 96.

[pbAbuh], "If a child is born to one of you and he wishes to sacrifice (an animal) for him or her, let him do so." Those who say that the '*Aqeeqah*' is a duty based their opinion on the hadith quoted earlier: "The new-born is safeguarded by three things: An '*Aqeeqah*' to be sacrificed..." This narration suggests that the new-born infant is held until the '*Aqeeqah*' ceremony and other rituals have taken place. Such an interpretation leads us to the conclusion that this tradition is obligatory.

Whether an obligatory or recommended act, the '*Aqeeqah*' should be performed in compliance with the tradition of the Prophet [pbAbuh]. The mother should therefore celebrate the birth of her baby on the seventh day and ask her husband or the guardian of the baby to arrange the sacrifice. She should also have the baby's head shaved and give in charity the equivalent of the weight of the hair in gold or silver. When Fatima (may Allah be pleased with her) gave birth to Al-Hassan, the Prophet [pbAbuh] told her, "O Fatima! Shave his head and give charity the equivalent of the weight of his hair in gold." [1]

The mother should not forget to invite guests to eat from the meat of the '*Aqeeqah*', and the sheep organs should be separated without breaking bones. This is because 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) has been reported to have said, "The meat should be cooked in whole pieces; it can be eaten, offered to guests, and given in charity." [2]

By fulfilling these rites, the mother will hope that Allah may bless her child, and the Prophet's Sunnah will be established instead of the innovations that are continuously invented by many mothers while celebrating the birth of their children.

[8] CIRCUMCISION

Circumcision is a religious duty. Abu Hurairah reported, "There are five natural acts: Circumcision, shaving the pubes, cutting the nails, plucking the hair under the armpits, and clipping

[1] *ibid*, p.99.

[2] Ibn Qudaamah, *Al-Mughni*, Vol.3, P-589.

the moustache.”^[1] Imam Al-Nawawi said, “Circumcision means that the foreskin of the male sexual organ is cut away so that the organ becomes entirely visible. The guardian of the baby boy should have him circumcised before puberty, but the correct way is to do it on the seventh day after the birth.”^[2]

Circumcision does not need to be explicitly performed on the seventh day. It is, however, recommended that the boy should be reasonably young so that he may not be physically or psychologically affected by the operation. The scholars have different opinions regarding the religious verdict of circumcision.^[3] Is it an obligatory command (*wajib*) or is it Sunnah? Imam Maalik, Ash-Shaafi’ee and Ahmad ibn Hanbal said that circumcision is *wajib*, basing their opinion on the following narration: A man came to the Prophet [pbAbuh] and said, “I have embraced Islam.” The Prophet [pbAbuh] told him, “Then shave off the hair of disbelief and get circumcised.”^[4]

Imam Abu Haneefah and some companions of Ahmad ibn Hanbal said that circumcision is a Sunnah, basing their opinion on the statement of the Prophet [pbAbuh]: “Circumcision is a Sunnah for men. For women, it is an act that honours them.”

This is the legal verdict regarding the circumcision of men. Circumcision for women is allowed but it is not an order because the aforementioned hadith is weak. When the Prophet [pbAbuh] prescribed circumcision for the Muslim nation, he specifically referred to Muslim men. There is no proven or authentic evidence that the Prophet [pbAbuh] ever ordered a woman to be circumcised—and Allah knows best.

[9] EQUAL TREATMENT OF HER SONS AND DAUGHTERS

The wise Muslim woman treats all her children fairly and equally. She does not prefer one of them over another in any way,

[1] Al-Nawawi, op.cit. Vol.4. "Al-Tahaarah". p. 146.

[2] ibid

[3] Ibn-Qayyim Al-Jawziah, op. cit., p.127.

[4] Abittayeb Muhammad Abaadi, op. cit., Vol.2, "Al-Tahaarah", Abu Daawood said "This is a weak hadith".

because she knows that Islam forbids such actions on the part of the parents, and because of the negative psychological impact that this may have over the child whose sibling is preferred over him. The child who feels that he is not treated equally with his brothers and sisters will grow up with complexes and anxiety, eating his heart out with jealousy and hatred. In contrast, the child who grows up feeling that he and his siblings are treated equally will grow up healthy and free from jealousy and hatred; he will be content, cheerful, tolerant and willing to put others before himself.

This is what Islam requires of parents and urges them to do. Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others reported that the father of Al-Nu'man ibn Bashir brought Al-Nu'man to the Prophet [pbAbuh] and said, "I have given this son of mine a slave I have." The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "Have you given each of your children the same?" He said, "No." The Prophet [pbAbuh] told him, "Then take the slave back." According to another report, the Prophet [pbAbuh] asked, "Have you done the same for all your children?" [My father] said, "No," so the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "Fear Allah and treat all of your children equally." According to a third report, the Prophet [pbAbuh] asked, "O Bishr, do you have any other children?" He said, "Yes." The Prophet [pbAbuh] asked, "Will you give a similar gift to each of them?" He said, "No." So the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "Do not ask me to witness this, because I do not want to witness unfairness." Then he added, "Would you not like all your children to treat you with equal respect?" [Bishr] said, "Of course." The Prophet [pbAbuh] told him, "So do not do this." [1]

The true Muslim woman does not discriminate between her sons and daughters in her affection and care, as do some women who are not free from the effects of a *jahiliyyah* mentality. She is fair to all her children, boys and girls alike, and cares for them all with compassion and love. She understands that children are a gift from Allah and that Allah's gift, be it of sons or daughters, cannot be rejected or changed. Allah (Glorified be He) says,

[1] (Al-Bukhari and Muslim), See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 8/296, Kitab al-'ataya wa'l-hadaya, bab al-ruju' fi hibbah al-walad wa'l-taswiyyah bayna al-awlad fi'l-nahl.

“...He bestows [children] male or female according to His will [and plan], or He bestows both males and females, and He leaves barren Whom He wills: for He is full of knowledge and power” [Counsel, 42: 49-50].

[10] PRAYING AGAINST CHILDREN

The wise Muslim woman does not pray against her children, heeding the words of the Prophet [pbAbuh] who forbade such prayers lest they are offered at a time when prayers are answered. This was stated in the lengthy hadith narrated by Jabir in which the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “Do not pray against yourselves, or against your children, or against your wealth, in case you say such words at a time when Allah will answer your prayer.” ^[1]

[11] ALERTED TO WHAT INFLUENCES THEM

The Muslim mother keeps her eyes open, as far as her children are concerned. She knows what they are reading and writing, the hobbies and activities they pursue, friends they have chosen, and places they go to in their free time. She knows all of this without her children feeling that she is watching them. If she finds anything objectionable in their hobbies, reading materials, etc. or if she sees them hanging around with undesirable friends, she hastens to correct her children gently and wisely and persuades them to return to the straight and narrow path. This is also the case if she sees them going to unsuitable places, taking up bad habits such as smoking, or wasting time and energy on haram games that teach them to get used to trivialities. The mother is more able to do this than the father is because she spends much more time with the children and they are more likely to open up and share their thoughts and feelings with her than with their father. Hence, it is quite clear that the mother has a great responsibility to bring up her children properly and soundly about their characters, in accordance with Islamic principles, values and traditions. Every child is born in a state of *fitrah* [the natural, good disposition of mankind], and it is the parents who make him a Jew, Christian or Magian, as the Prophet [pbAbuh] said in the saheeh

[1] Saheeh Muslim, 18/139, Kitab al-zuhd, bab hadith Jabir al-tawil.

(authentic) hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari. Parents leave an enormous impact on the personality and psychological development of their children, from the earliest years until maturity.

[12] INSPIRING GOOD BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES

The Muslim woman tries hard to implant in her children's hearts the best of qualities. These include loving others, upholding the ties of kinship, caring for the weak, respecting elders, showing compassion to little ones, deriving satisfaction from doing good, being sincere in word and deed, keeping promises, judging fairly, and all other good and praiseworthy characteristics.

The wise Muslim woman knows how to reach her children's hearts and implant these worthy qualities, using the best and most effective methods. This is by setting a good example, communicating with them at their level, treating them well, encouraging them, advising and correcting them, and being compassionate, kind, tolerant, loving and fair. She is gentle without being too lenient and is strict without being harsh. Thus, the children receive a proper upbringing and grow up open-minded, mature, righteous, sincere, good and able to give, preparing them to make a constructive contribution in all aspects of life. Not surprisingly, the Muslim mother's upbringing produces the best results, for she is the first school and the first teacher, as the poet said, "The mother is a school: if you prepare her properly, you will prepare an entire people of good character. The mother is the first teacher, the foremost among them, and the best of teachers."^[1]

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

This phase focuses on the overall education of the child during which he or she should be physically, intellectually and spiritually prepared.

Physical education: The objective is to keep the child healthy and strong and protect him or her from various diseases and ailments.

[1] Diwan Hafiz Ibrahim, 282. Published by Dar Al-Kutub Al-Misriyyah

Intellectual education: The mother should communicate correct, useful and diverse knowledge to her child so as he or she may develop a sharp mind and profound observation. This will allow him to interact with society, attain self-confidence, and become an active member of the nation.

Spiritual education

This involves teaching the child the correct religious ideology and principles. The child should get used to different acts of worship, acquire the virtues of Islam, and adopt the excellent manners of true believers. This is so that he or she may grow up as a righteous Muslim, enjoining good and forbidding evil.

In his book “Ihya’ ‘Uloom Ad-Deen,” Imam Al-Ghazali said, “Note that the spiritual education of children is one of the most important duties of parents. The child has been entrusted to his parents; at this stage, the child will receive whatever the parents dictate and will follow whatever he or she is taught to follow. If the child is directed to the right path, he or she will continue in it and win the good of this world and the hereafter. The parents, teacher or educator will share the reward with the child. On the other hand, if the child is ignored or taught that which is evil, he or she will be ruined indeed, and his educator or his guardian will also be held responsible for the offence which has been done to the child. Allah says, *“O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire”* [The Prohibition, 66: 6].

It does not matter how much the father protects his child from the fire of this world if he does not protect him from the Fire of the hereafter. To do so, he should refine and educate his child by teaching him good morals and keeping him or her away from bad company.” [1] These three issues will be discussed in detail below.

[1] Al-Imaam Abi Haamed Muhammad bin Muhammad Al-Ghazaali, (died in 505 AH), *Ihya’-Uloom Al-Deen* ("The Revival of the Religious Sciences") with *Kitab Al-Mughni An Haml Al-Asfaar Fi Takhreej Ma fi Al-Ihya’ Min Al-Akhbaar*, by Al-Iraqi, Vol.3, Cairo, Egypt: Matba’at Al-Istiqamah, p.72.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION:

For her child to become a strong and healthy adult, every mother should apply the relevant teachings of the Prophet [pbAbuh], which can be summarised as follows:

[1] Keeping the body, surroundings and clothes clean.

Good health relies mainly on good hygiene. The Glorious Qur'an has actually dealt with one of the main principles of a good and healthy way of life, which is cleanliness and has paid attention to both individual and public hygiene. *Tahaarah* (cleanliness and purity) is a basic condition of worship in Islam. Prayers cannot be offered unless the person who is praying, his clothes and the place where the prayer is being performed are pure and clean. The importance of purity and cleanliness is further manifested in the saying of the Prophet [pbAbuh]: "Cleanliness is half of one's faith."^[1] The Muslim mother should therefore keep her house clean and free from impurities and dirt so that the members of her family can pray in it. Moreover, the house of a woman is her mosque, and Allah says, "*We commanded Abraham and Ishmael that they should purify My House (the Ka'ba at Makka) for those who are circumambulating it, or staying, or bowing or prostrating themselves (in prayer in it)*" [The Cow, 2: 125]. Imam Al-Qurtubi said, "The command in this verse applies to all houses of Allah [mosques], and since the mosque of a woman is in her house, she should keep it clean. Allah has specifically mentioned the Ka'ba because it is the greatest place of sanctity."^[2]

Children should be taught *Tahaarah* fundamentals, such as *istinjaa'*, *wudoo* and *ghusl*, from a very early age. They should be trained and supervised by their mothers in order to ensure a thorough implementation of Islamic hygiene. Girls should be given separate and additional lessons in the rulings related to *haid* [menstruation] when she is about to reach puberty. She should also be taught *Tahaarah* fundamentals which are specific to *haid*, such as

[1] *ibid.*

[2] Al-Qurtubi, *op.cit*, Vol.1, p. 500.

how to keep her clothes clean, the best methods of hygiene during the menstruation period, and how to perform *ghusl* at the end, in compliance with the tradition of the Prophet [pbAbuh]. Indeed the Prophet [pbAbuh] himself used to teach the female Companions, and his wives would help him by communicating their knowledge to inquiring women whenever he [pbAbuh] felt shy of going into detail. This part of a young woman's education is very important because it depends on her health, general hygiene and physical well-being. If children are brought up knowing the manners of *Tahaarah*, they would continue to practise them throughout their lives. *Tahaarah* includes several areas of concern.

TOILET MANNERS:

Including how to relieve oneself and how to cleanse oneself afterwards. If the child is not taught to do this properly, he or she will fail to comply with the standards of *Tahaarah* during adulthood, thus being liable to severe punishment. Ibn Abbas reported that Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] passed by two graves and said, "They (their occupants) are being tormented, but they are not being tormented for grievous sins. One of them used to spread gossip and the other did not avoid being defiled by urine. He then called for a fresh twig, split it into two, and planted it on each grave, saying, "Perhaps their punishment will be mitigated as long as these twigs remain fresh."^[1]

Failing to clean and purify oneself after answering the call of nature will invalidate the prayer. The mother needs to pay special attention to teaching *Tahaarah* manners to her children. It has been authenticated that the Prophet [pbAbuh] cleaned his private parts with water after answering the call of nature. Anas bin Malik narrated, "Whenever Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] went to answer the call of nature, I, along with another boy, used to carry a jug full of water (for cleaning the private parts)."^[2]

[1] Al-Nawawi, op.cit. Vol.3. "Al-Tahaarah". p.200.

[2] Al-Bukhari, op. cit., Vol 1, p.250.

He [pbAbuh] also taught toilet manners to his companions, telling them, “None of you should hold his private parts with his right hand while urinating or wipe himself with his right hand in the privy. And he should not breathe into the vessel from which he drinks.” [1]

[2] The mother should teach her children how to use the siwaak (tooth stick or toothbrush) several times during the day in order to keep their teeth clean and healthy and in order to comply with the Sunnah of the Prophet [pbAbuh], who said, “The use of *Siwaak* is purifying for the mouth and pleasing to Allah.” [2] Islam has paid special attention to mouth hygiene, and the Prophet [pbAbuh] stressed the importance of using the *Siwaak*, saying, “Were it not that I might over-burden the believers, I would have ordered them to use the *Siwaak* at every prayer.” [3] Imam Al-Nawawi said, “This hadith reflects the importance and the excellence of using the *Siwaak* at all times, regularly and repeatedly.”[4]

Modern science has finally explained the wisdom behind the use of the *Siwaak*. Under the title “Hygienic Importance of *Siwaak*”, we note the following: “Good dental care and hygiene contribute to the improvement of our overall health and protect and guard us against various diseases. The fact that the mouth is the gateway to the digestive system as well as the respiratory system and is in permanent contact with the environment makes it an ideal and perfect target for many bacteria. These bacteria are harmless for a healthy person. They can, however, become dangerous if mouth hygiene is neglected or if the person falls ill and his immunity system becomes weak. This shows the importance of regular dental care and effective mouth hygiene.

Below are some of the infections and diseases, which are the result of poor dental care and mouth hygiene:

[1] Al-Nawawi, op.cit. Vol.3. "Al-Tahaarah". P.159.

[2] Al-Suyooti, "Sunan Al-Nasaa'i", Vol.1. (Same as note #50 on p. 169) p.10.

[3] Al-Nawawi, op.cit. Vol.3. "Al-Tahaarah".P.143

[4] ibid.

[1] Tooth Decay. [2] Plaque. [3] Tartar. [4] Mouth & Gum Infection. [5] Thrush. [6] Ulcerous infection.

These diseases are dangerous; they affect the teeth and the mouth and can also affect the body as a whole due to dangerous inter-mixing of digestive, respiratory, hormonal and eye secretions.”^[1] Based on these arguments, we conclude the importance of using the *siwaak*, keeping the teeth clean, and the many advantages of complying with the tradition of the Prophet [pbAbuh] in every aspect of our lives.

[3] The mother should teach her children how to perform wudoo (ablution) because prayers are prescribed for them from the age of seven. *Wudoo* reflects the importance of cleanliness in Islam. *Wudoo* includes washing the face, hands, forearms and feet five times a day. These parts of the body are constantly exposed and most used in our daily activities, and therefore most likely to become dirty. Allah thus orders Muslims to perform *wudoo*, saying, “*O you who believe! When you intend to offer prayer, wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, wipe over your heads, and wash your feet up to ankles*” [The Table Spread, 5:6].

The following tradition explained this verse and described the ablution of the Prophet [pbAbuh]. Abdullah bin Zaid bin ‘Asim Al-Maazini reported that he saw Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] perform ablution. He rinsed his mouth, cleaned his nose, washed his face three times, and then washed his right forearm thrice and then the left forearm thrice. He then took fresh water and wiped his head and finally washed his feet till he had cleaned them.”^[2] “And ‘freshwater’ means with water other than the water left on his hands.”^[3]

[4] The mother should also teach her children how and when to perform *ghusl* (a complete bath).

[1] Salaahuddeen Al-Hanafi, (The Arak (Al-Siwaak, Toothbrush)). Unpubl-ished PhD dissertation, University of Damascus, 1382 AH/ 1962, p.24.

[2] Al-Nawawi, op.cit. Vol.3. "Al-Tahaarah". P.124.

[3] *ibid*.

Ghusl is important for both our health and our well-being. For this reason, we find that in Islam *ghusl* is an obligation in some cases and *Sunnah* in others. In order for the Muslims to stay clean, the Prophet [pbAbuh] has stressed the importance of having a complete bath before the weekly congregational prayer and established this as a minimum, so that the people should not become slack in this respect. Abdullah bin Amr narrated that the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "When anyone of you comes for Friday prayer, he should take a bath." [1]

Abu As-Sa'id Al-Khudri related that the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "(Taking) A bath on Friday is obligatory upon every adult person." [2]

The mother should thus encourage her children to take regular baths and to keep clean at all times so that this becomes part of their daily routine. In addition to this, Islam is also concerned with the cleanliness and purity of the garments; Allah says, "*And your garments purify!*" [The Cloaked One, 74: 4].

The purity of one's garments is a basic condition for different acts of worship, a fact that calls for special and constant attention regarding the clothes being worn.

A Muslim does not only clean and spruce himself up for only special occasions, but he should always keep his garments tidy, clean and free of impurities. Special attention should be paid to social events, congregational prayers and festival occasions. Allah says, "*O Children of Adam! Take your adornment (by wearing clean clothes) for every place of prayer*" [The Heights, 7: 31].

The Prophet [pbAbuh] took care of his appearance. He [pbAbuh] always appeared at his best and paid special attention to the cleanliness and appearance of his garments. He [pbAbuh] would regularly mend his clothes and polish his shoes, and tell his companions to keep their garments tidy and clean and to wear the best ones on public occasions. Whenever one of them would

[1] *ibid*, Vol.6, "Al-Juma'a", p. 132.

[2] *ibid*.

attend Friday prayers in his working garment, he [pbAbuh] would say, “What if every one of you bought two garments, other than the clothing of his profession, to wear on Fridays!” [1]

He [pbAbuh] also encouraged them to use perfume so that the other Muslims who were praying or who had gathered for social events in public places or the streets would smell only pleasant smells. He [pbAbuh] strongly urged them to comply with these etiquettes and said, “If a person takes a bath on Friday, purifies himself well, uses such perfume as is available, and goes to the mosque, where he does not thrust himself between two persons already sitting there, his sins committed since the previous Friday are forgiven.” [2]

In general, the verses of the Qur'an and many of the traditions strongly urge the Muslims to use their garments as a means of adornment and concealment at the same time and to use oils and perfume as a manifestation of their internal purity and beauty.

NUTRITION

This refers to the compliance with the tradition of the Prophet [pbAbuh] in everything concerning eating and drinking. The mother needs to be aware of the following guidelines:

[1] The food should be nutritional, not harmful, and contain all the required nutrients necessary for the development of the child. Allah says, “*O you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided for you*” [The Cow, 2: 172].

[2] The food should be lawful. Allah says, “*O mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and good on the earth...*” [The Cow, 2: 168].

The mother should insist that the family's food should be obtained lawfully. Jaabir (may Allah be pleased with him) reported the Prophet [pbAbuh] as saying, “No [human] flesh produced by unlawful earnings will enter Paradise; the flesh which has been thus

[1] Ibn Maajah, "Sunan Ibn Majah", Vol.1, (same as note #8 on p.ig6) p.248.

[2] *ibid.*

produced is more deserving of Hell-Fire.”^[1] The Muslim woman should fear unlawful earnings and urge her husband not to bring home the equivalent of even a mustard seed of such earnings, even if this means going to sleep on an empty stomach.

[3] Meals should be taken at regular intervals to stay healthy and to allow enough time for the body to absorb the food, as well as in compliance with the tradition of the Prophet [pbAbuh] and his companions who ate only when hungry and stopped eating before their stomachs were full, thus allowing enough place for the intake of drink and air. They followed the advice of the Prophet [pbAbuh], who said, “If he (man) wants to fill his stomach, he should fill one third with food, another third with drink, and leave one-third empty to breathe easily.”^[2] In fact, it has been medically proven that the stomach needs four to six hours to digest the food fully, so we should all comply with the health rule that says, “Eat at regular intervals, and chew your food well.”^[3]

[4] To eat and drink in moderation.

Allah (Glorified be He) says, “...and eat and drink but be not excessive. Certainly, He (Allah) does not like extravagance” [The Heights, 7:31]. This verse invites mankind to eat and drink with moderation and exhorts them not to be extravagant by overeating and drinking. Allah describes the faithful believers as being moderate and non-extravagant, saying, “And those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly, but hold a medium between those” [The Criterion, 25:67].

One of the characteristics of faithful believers is that they adopt a medium way between extremes in everything, including eating and drinking. Therefore, the Muslim should not eat until full, as doing so will cause indigestion and other complications.

[1] Al-Khateeb Al-Tabreezi, "Mishkaat Al-Masaabeeh", (The Niche of Lanterns), compiled by Muhammad Naaser Al-Albaani, Vol.2 "Al-Buyoo", 2nd edition, Beirut: Al-Maktab Al-Islami, 1399 AH /1979-, P.845.

[2] Al-Tirmidhi, op. cit., Vol.4, "Az-Zuhd", P-590.

[3] Sabri Al-Qabbani, Al-Ghidhaa laa at Dawaa, (Food., not Medicine), 6th edition, Beirut: Daar Al-Ilm li Al-Malaayeen, no date, p.572. 7:31 25:67.

As for the Prophet's words, "For a person, a few mouthfuls are sufficient to keep his back straight," they attest to his prophethood since modern science has discovered only recently that our average daily need is not measured by its quantity but by its nutritional value and whether it contains a good and balanced proportion of the main nutritive elements, such as proteins, fat, carbohydrates, minerals and vitamins. A heavy meal becomes a burden on the stomach that is difficult to digest. ^[1]

If the mother follows these health rules and teaches her children to do so, she will protect them from obesity, a problem that limits their abilities and activities and leads to many dangerous diseases. Consequently, the children will stay healthy, active and strong.

Regarding this subject, Umar bin Al-Khattâb, the second righteous caliph, said, "Beware of the feeling of satiety; it slows you down for prayer, harms your bodies, and provokes illness. Eat and drink in moderation, it is better than extravagance, healthier for the body, and makes you better worshippers." ^[2] The Arabs also used to say, "Satiety takes away perspicacity."

By following these rules, the mother will keep her children healthy and strong and also as please Allah and the Prophet [pbAbuh].

Indeed, the Muslim woman who fears Allah and abides by the guidance of His Messenger [pbAbuh] knows exactly her duties towards her family. She is moderate and not extravagant, follows the example of the Mothers of the Believers (the Prophet's wives) (may Allah be pleased with them) in managing her household, is content with what is little and lawful, and avoids what is extravagant and unlawful. In this way, she saves herself and her husband from the punishment of the Hell-Fire.

The mother's responsibilities are indeed great, and on her depend the happiness of her family in this world and her place in

[1] Abdul-Hameed Diyaab and Ahmad Qarmooz, op. cit., p. 129.

[2] Ali Fikri, Ahsan Al-Qissas, Vol.3., P.134.

Paradise in the hereafter. Her main duty in this world is to look after her small kingdom, that is to say, her family. Among her many other duties is to teach her children the etiquettes of eating and drinking, which are taken from the tradition of the Prophet [pbAbuh]. She should do so while her children are still young, as soon as they start to help themselves from the table. The Prophet [pbAbuh] did so with his children, teaching them, advising them and observing them while they were eating.

EATING & DRINKING ETIQUETTES

The children must remember Allah by saying “*Bismillab*” at the beginning of every meal and eat with their right hands. Many hadith urge Muslims to comply with these rules. ‘Umar bin Salama reported that he was under the care of Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh], and as my hand used to roam about in the dish, he said to me, “Boy, mention the name of Allah and eat with your right hand, and eat from what is near to you.” [1]

The Prophet [pbAbuh] stressed the importance of teaching children these etiquettes while still young so that they become a natural and permanent part of their eating habits. This is suggested in the following hadith. Hudhaifa reported, “When we attended a dinner with Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] we did not extend our hands to the food until Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] had extended his hand and commenced eating. Once we went with him to dinner when a girl came rushing in as if someone had been pursuing her. She was about to lay her hand on the food when Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] caught her hand. Then a desert Arab came there as if someone was pursuing him. He [pbAbuh] caught his hand and then said, ‘Satan considers that food on which Allah’s name is not mentioned as lawful (for him). He has brought this girl so that the food might be made lawful for him and I caught her hand. Then he brought a desert Arab so that the food might be lawful for him, so I caught his hand. By Him, in Whose hand is my life, it was Satan’s hand that was in my hand along with her

[1] Al-Nawawi, op.cit. Vol.n. "Al-Ashriba", Vol.11, p.193.

hand.”^[1] So the Prophet [pbAbuh] did not allow anybody, young child or adult, to eat without remembering Allah and saying *Bismillah*. The importance of this was demonstrated for his companions in a practical manner. The reason behind it is that Satan considers the food on which Allah’s name has not been mentioned as lawful for him. Therefore, it is very important that the mother should observe and teach her children the etiquette of eating and drinking and implement the tradition of the Prophet [pbAbuh] in her house.

The mother has to teach her children to drink while sitting because the Prophet [pbAbuh] forbade that a person should drink while standing. Anas reported that Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] forbade that a person should drink while standing. Qataadah reported, “We said to him (Anas), ‘What about eating?’ Thereupon, he (Anas) said, ‘That is even worse and more detestable.’”^[2]

It is, therefore, better to eat and drink while sitting, because even though the Prophet [pbAbuh] drank while standing, there is a consensus of opinion among the scholars that the prohibition of drinking water while standing is not absolute but is a disapproved act. Ibn ‘Abbas reported, “I served the water of Zamzam to Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh], and he drank it while standing.”^[3] The prohibition in the first hadith shows disapproval of the act. However, by drinking the water of Zamzam while standing, the Prophet [pbAbuh] demonstrated the permissibility of the act. Hence, there is neither ambiguity nor contradiction between the two hadiths.^[4]

Among the etiquettes of drinking is that one should not breathe into the vessel from which one is drinking. Imam Al-Nawawi said, “Abu Qatada reported on the authority of his father

[1] *ibid.*

[2] *ibid.*

[3] *ibid.*

[4] *ibid.*

that Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] forbade breathing in a vessel."^[1] Furthermore, the Prophet [pbAbuh] used to drink in three sips so that he [pbAbuh] could breathe outside the vessel three times while drinking. Anas reported that Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] breathed three times in the course of a drink and said, "It quenches the thirst better, and is healthier and more wholesome."^[2]

PHYSICAL TRAINING

In order for the child to be fit and strong, his parents should ensure that he or she gets the best physical training possible, including different physical exercises. In doing so, the parents will be submitting to Allah's order, which says, "*And make ready against them all you can of power, including steeds of war...*" [Spoils of War, 8:60].

So everything that could help the children attain physical strength should be done. It is a duty upon the Muslim to keep fit; to do so, he should exercise regularly and choose the type of exercise which builds up his muscles and develops his endurances, such as archery, horse racing, riding and swimming. On one occasion, the Prophet [pbAbuh] recited the above verse and then said, "Verily, this power is archery! Verily, this power is archery!"^[3]

Islam encourages the Muslim to aim high, to perfect his skills, and to achieve moral and physical strength. The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "The strong believer is better and more pleasing to Allah than the weak believer; persist in doing what benefits you, seek the help of Allah, and never despair."^[4] This hadith encourages young people to benefit from their spare time and to turn it to their advantage by learning and practising what is useful and beneficial. The Companions were well-aware of the importance of physical training and encouraged their children to acquire different skills which strengthened their bodies and improved their physical abilities.

[1] ibid.

[2] ibid.

[3] Al-Tirmidhi, op. cit., Vol.5, P-270 and Ibn Maajah, op. cit., Vol.2, p.940.

[4] Ibn Maajah, op. cit., Vol.2, "Al-Zuhd", p.1395- No. 4168.

MEDICAL TREATMENT

The mother should pay special attention to her children's health by treating them as soon as possible when they are ill, bearing in mind that failing to do so can sometimes lead to fatal consequences. Indeed, seeking medical treatment when necessary is a legal duty upon every Muslim. Jaabir reported Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] as saying, "There is a remedy for every malady, and when the remedy is applied to the disease, it is cured with the permission of Allah, the Exalted and Glorious."^[1]

Usama bin Shareek narrated that he was with the Prophet [pbAbuh] when the Arabs of the desert came and asked him, "O Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh]. Should we seek treatment?" Upon that the Prophet [pbAbuh] replied, "Yes, O servants of Allah, seek treatment! Indeed, Allah has not created a disease without creating its cure, except for one, which is old age."^[2]

However, it is prohibited, whatever the illness may be, to seek treatment through magicians, charlatans and fortune-tellers. This is a form of *Shirk* [associating partners with Allah], which has severe consequences and a great punishment from Allah. If the mother finds one of her children in desperate need of help, she should take him or her to a specialised doctor who will prescribe adequate medication.

INTELLECTUAL EDUCATION

Allah has favoured mankind over all other living beings and has blessed us with the human mind which has vast intellectual abilities. It is important that the mother should stimulate her children's existing abilities and talents at a very early stage and help them to develop other skills.

The mother who ignores this important part of her children's education will deform the creation of Allah and hand over to our society what is nearer to an animal than a human being.

[1] Al-Nawawi, op.cit. Vol. 14. "Al-Salaam", p.191.

[2] Al-Tirmidhi, op. cit., Vol.4, "Al-Tibb", e4 p.383, No. 2038.

Indeed, what differentiates us from animals is our mind and its amazing capacities, a fact which should be understood and appreciated by every mother so that she may be able to help and encourage her children to develop their intellectual abilities.

[1] Teaching children reading and writing

In the first verses that were revealed of the Qur'an, Allah ordered his Messenger [pbAbuh] to: *"Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created, Has created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, Who has taught [to write] with the pen"* [The Clot, 96:1-4].

By reading and writing, human beings are able to acquire new knowledge and develop their minds. Ibn Katheer said, "Among His blessings is that Allah has taught the human being that about which he had no knowledge. By this knowledge, Allah has dignified Adam and distinguished him and his kind from the angels. Knowledge can be abstract, stored in the human mind; it can also be manifested by the tongue when we speak or be written down, hence it can be mental, verbal or graphic. Traditionally (by the tradition of the Prophet [pbAbuh] and his followers), knowledge was preserved in manuscripts."^[1] Reading constitutes the first stage of intellectual education, so to read was the first divine order directed to the Messenger [pbAbuh] and the Muslim nation after him. Writing constitutes the second stage of acquiring and transmitting knowledge, therefore Allah has bestowed upon His servants the ability to write with the pen. Sa'eed reported Qatadah as saying, "The pen [knowledge of writing] is a great divine gift, without which no religion would have been preserved and our own situation would have been far from good."

"Allah's generosity is manifested in the fact that He has taught mankind that about which they had no knowledge and He has taken them from the obscurity of ignorance to the light of knowledge. Allah has also stressed the importance of writing skills because of their various advantages which He only knows. Indeed,

[1] Ibn Katheer, op. cit., Vol. 4, p.528.

without this skill, no scientific knowledge would have been transmitted, no legislation would have been recorded, and no tradition, or books revealed by Allah, would have been preserved. Consequently, we would never have been guided to the straight path.”^[1]

The Prophet [pbAbuh] therefore insisted that Muslims should learn to read and write, and we learn from the tradition that the ransom of some of the captives in the conquest of Badr was to teach ten Muslims to read and write.^[2] Furthermore, seeking knowledge is a religious duty and an obligation upon every Muslim.

The Prophet [pbAbuh] has been reported as saying, “Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim.”^[3] The mother thus needs to pay special attention to her children’s education. She should teach them their religion and introduce them to the different sciences that would help them achieve a satisfactory and respectable academic level and allow them to benefit the Muslim nation in the future. A Muslim is not content with one kind of knowledge but seeks any knowledge which will be beneficial and advantageous to him and the Muslim community in general. Indeed, Allah has praised the knowledge and those who seek knowledge, saying,

“Allah, the angels and those having knowledge bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but He. He maintains His creation in justice. None has the right to be worshipped but He, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise” [The Family of ‘Imran, 3:18].

“Say, “Are those who know equal to those who know not?” It is only men of understanding who will remember” [The Troops, 39:91].

[1] AI-Qurtubi, op.cit, Vol.2, p. 120.

[2] Ameen Duwaidar, Suwar Min Hayaat Al-Rassool, (Pictures from the Prophet's Life), Cairo, Egypt: Daar Al-Maarif, 1968. P.322. op. cit., Vol.10. "Al-Nikaah", p.54.

[3] Ibn Maajah, op. cit., Vol.1. No.17, p.80.

[2] The Muslim never tires of seeking knowledge, and like the Prophet [pbAbuh], he always says, *“My Lord! Increase me in knowledge”* [Ta Ha, 20:114].

The Prophet [pbAbuh] would teach his companions sound knowledge of the religion and then order them to pass this knowledge on to their families and relatives. Abu Sulaimaan, Maalik bin Huwairith narrated, “We were a few young men of about equal age. We came to the Prophet [pbAbuh] stayed with him for twenty nights. After that, he thought that we were anxious about our families, and he asked us who we had left behind to look after them. We told him. He was kind-hearted and merciful, so he said, “Return to your families, teach them and order them, and offer your prayers in the way you saw me offering my prayers. When the stated time for the prayer arrives, one of you should pronounce its call and the eldest of you should lead the others in prayers.”^[1]

So, the mother should ensure that her children are receiving a valuable amount of knowledge. To do so, she is advised to organise their time wisely, so that they may get enough sleep and be able to get up and go to school early every morning. The mother should also cooperate with the school by explaining to her children what seems difficult for them to understand, by monitoring their progress in the different subjects, and by keeping the father informed of their school results. She is also advised to visit her children’s school as regularly as possible to inquire about their academic results as well as about their general moral behaviour, the latter being as important as the former.

[3] Guiding and encouraging her children to contemplate and reflect

The mother should draw her children’s attention to the surrounding environment and the various signs which attest to the presence and mightiness of Allah. This will help the children to develop their observation and deduction skills. Contemplation and

[1] Al-Bukhari, Vol 7, "Al-Adab".

reflections are two acts that have been praised in the Qur'an since they enable mankind to increase their knowledge about their Lord and to recognise the manifestations of Allah's mightiness and glory at every moment of their lives.

Allah says, "*Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding. Those who remember Allah standing, sitting and lying down on their sides, and think deeply about the creation of the heavens and the earth, saying: 'Our Lord! You have not created all this without purpose, glory to You! Give us salvation from the torment of the Fire'*" [The Family of Imran, 3: 190-191].

Throughout history, Muslim mothers have paid great attention to the physical and intellectual education of their children. This was especially obvious in the way Bedouin mothers used to bring up their children in the desert. It has been narrated that once Al-Fadl bin Zaid met the son of a Bedouin woman and was very impressed by him. He went to the mother of the child and asked her about the education he had received. Upon this, the woman said, "When he was five years old I handed him over to the teacher. There, he was taught the Qur'an and its recitation as well as poetry. He was also introduced to his ancestor's exploits and instructed in the glorious feats of his fathers and grandfathers. When he reached puberty, I transferred him to the back of the horse until he became an accomplished rider, took up arms, and went among the houses of the neighbourhood, carefully listening to the cries of those who called out." [1] This is indeed a beautiful example that expresses the ultimate concern of the Bedouin mother about her son's education, and I hope that it will serve as a guide for the mothers of today.

In addition to all this, the mother should familiarise her children with the transmitted supplications that the Prophet [pbAbuh] used to recite, such as those on going to sleep and

[1] Abdullah Nasseh Ulwaan, "Tarbiyat Al-Awlaad fi Al-Islam", (The Upbringing of Children in Islam), Beirut/Aleppo, Daar Al-Salaam Publications, no date, p.151.

getting up from bed, leaving and entering the house, before and after a meal, entering and leaving the toilet, and getting into and out of transport. These supplications will benefit the child in this world and the hereafter; he should be asked to repeat them as often as possible in order for his or her tongue to always be engaged in the remembrance of Allah, thus following the guidance and the example of the Prophet [pbAbuh].

SPIRITUAL EDUCATION OR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Islam takes great interest in the spiritual aspect of human education since mankind is created with a body and a soul. Describing the creation of Adam, Allah said to the angels, *“So, when I have fashioned him completely and breathed into him of My spirit (the soul which I created for him), then fall prostrating yourselves before him”* [The Rocky Tract, 15:29].

When a human being devotes most of his efforts to his physical training at the expense of his spiritual education, he will lose the main characteristic which differentiates humans from animals. It is therefore important that parents should pay special attention to the spiritual part of their child’s education to create a righteous person who devotes his skills to the promotion of good and the welfare of his community. Spiritual education is indeed what makes the child capable of differentiating between virtue and vice, good and evil. Scientists and reformists have recently been calling for a revival of spiritual and religious education.

Western sociologists, educationalists and psychologists have finally realised the importance of religion and spirituality in human education and in achieving a healthy society. This recognition follows much disappointment after years of attempting to exclude any form of religious belief (spirituality) from their lives. Such secular thrust only increased social problems and moral decay.

[1] The mother should start by teaching her children the fundamentals of faith from their earliest youth to help them become righteous adults, faithful believers with the correct

understanding of the religion, and devoted members of the Islamic nation who enjoin good and forbid evil. The correct *Aqeedah* (religious belief) is the origin of all virtues, the incentive for all perfections, and most importantly, it is the pivot of Islam.

The mother needs to teach her children the facts of the religion, including such concepts as Iman (true belief) in Allah, the angels, the divine books, the Messengers, especially the last Messenger Prophet Muhammad [pbAbuh], the questioning by the angels in the grave, the torment of the grave, and the Day of judgement, punishment and reward, and Paradise and Hell-Fire. The mother needs to begin by teaching her children to say the words *Laa Ilaaha illallaah* (there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah). These words should be the first heard by the newborn baby and the first uttered by him later.

Secondly, she should explain to her children the meaning of these words by simply and progressively drawing their attention to the manifestation of Allah's glory and mightiness in their surroundings, according to their level of understanding. As the children grow older, she can allow herself to go into further details and more depth in her explanation, until they comprehend and assimilate the full concept of *Iman*. Thirdly, she should implant the love of Allah and His Messenger [pbAbuh] in their hearts. She needs to teach them to be conscious of Allah, to fear Him, to rely on Him, to depend on Him, to seek His help, to obey none except Him, and to fear none except Him. She should also develop the awareness of Allah's glory and greatness in their hearts and minds through various stories from the Qur'an as well as through the natural elements and daily activities. The most successful approach to a child's spiritual education is the narration of heroic stories, which are popular among children because they satisfy their vivid and extraordinary imaginations.

Stories of the prophets and their miracles are easily found in the Qur'an, and similarly, interesting stories can also be found in the biography of the Prophet [pbAbuh]. These readings will satisfy not only the child's imagination but will also teach him the facts of

his religion. Taught through this medium, these lessons will forever be implanted in his mind.

After this preliminary phase, the mother should offer her children regular advice and permanent guidance concerning devotion in worship as well as reliance on and complete submission to Allah. The Prophet [pbAbuh] used to protect and educate the young Companions by offering them regular advice and counsel.

Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, “One day I was behind the Prophet [pbAbuh] and he said to me, ‘Young man, I shall teach you some words of advice: Be mindful of Allah, and Allah will protect you. Be mindful of Allah, and you will find him in front of you. If you (have a need to) ask, ask of Allah. If you seek help, seek the help of Allah. Know that if the nations were to gather together to benefit you with anything, they would benefit you only with something that Allah had already predestined for you and that if they were to gather together to harm you with anything, they would harm you only with something Allah had already predestined for you. The pens have been lifted, and the pages have dried.’” [1]

If implanted properly in the child’s mind and heart, these fundamentals of faith will forever shield him from disbelief and apostasy; the mother must be able to differentiate between lawful and unlawful matters in every aspect of life so that she may prevent evil ideologies from staining the child’s beliefs. She also passes her knowledge on to her children and helps to integrate this into their everyday lives, according to the rules and regulations of the *Shariah*.

[2] Familiarise her children with the various acts of worship, such as fasting, praying, paying alms-tax and pilgrimage. She should slowly, patiently and progressively introduce her children to the prescribed five daily prayers, until they become used to them. This is because Allah says, “*And enjoin prayer on your family, and be*

[1] Al-Tirmidhi, op. cit., Vol.4, "Sifat Al-Qiyaamah", p.667.

patient in that” [Ta Ha, 20:132]. Although addressed directly to the Prophet [pbAbuh], these commands are addressed to all the Muslims of the world. In his explanation, Imam Al-Qurtubi said, “In this verse Allah orders the Prophet [pbAbuh] to enjoin prayer on his family and to observe them patiently and regularly.” [1]

Patience and perseverance are necessary when introducing children to daily prayers. The mother should start when her children reach seven years of age, in compliance with the Prophet’s order [pbAbuh]. ‘Amr bin Shu’aib narrated that the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “Order your children to offer the prayer at the age of seven and strike (i.e., discipline) them at the age of ten if they do not (pray), and let them sleep in separate beds.”

This hadith clearly indicates that parents should start teaching their children to offer their daily prayers at the age of seven to make them accustomed to them as early as possible. Moreover, at seven the child is still malleable, uncorrupted and easily directed by his or her parents. If introduced gently, the prayer will become an integral part of the child’s routine and a cherished act of worship. He or she will then discover the pleasure of obeying, praising and thanking Allah for His many bounties and experience the many other advantages of prayer.

If the child reaches ten years of age and refuses to observe prayer after three years of training, his parents are then allowed to resort to some form of punishment. If the child is not made to pray at this stage, it will be very difficult to get him to pray as the years go by. For the same reason, the child should be encouraged to fast a few days in Ramadan, starting from the age of ten, according to his or her abilities. It is also wise that he or she should be introduced to other forms of worship at this stage, such as pilgrimage and the lesser pilgrimage. Note that the second part of the Prophet’s [pbAbuh] command is “let them sleep in separate beds”.

[1] Al-Qurtubi, op.cit, Vol.7, p.263.

Children over the age of ten are no longer allowed to share their beds. This is moral guidance and an important aspect of children's psychological education which ought to be observed by all Muslim parents. In addition, the mother should teach her daughter to be modest by urging her to wear decent clothes, making her realise that her body is to be covered and not to be displayed.

This is so that when she grows older, she will find no difficulty in observing the *hijab*. If she has been gently and progressively introduced to the *hijab*, she will be pleased to comply with its rules if the mother follows this strategy, she will happily discover that it is her daughter's modesty, even before the prescribed *hijab*, which will prevent her from displaying herself before people.

[3] Raise her children according to the excellent morals and behaviour of Islam. To do so, she should teach her child the importance of virtuous deeds in a simple manner, according to his level of understanding. Good manners, true belief in Allah and religious worship are closely related, as the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "I have been sent to perfect righteous character."^[1]

The excellence and importance of a righteous character and good manners are clear in the Prophet's [pbAbuh] following statement: "On the Day of Judgement, the dearest and closest to me, as regards my company, will be those persons of the best moral character."^[2] Many hadiths urge Muslims to acquire good manners and praise the excellence and superiority of the people who have them.

The Prophet [pbAbuh] has also urged parents to give their children moral education and to teach them good behaviour.

[1] Al-Mautaqob/Sharh Muwatta Al-Imam Maalik Al-Buaji, Vol 7, p.213.

[2] Ibn Al-Atheer Al-Jazari, Jaami Al-Ussool fi Ahaadeeth Al-Kasool, (The Compiled Fundamentals of the Messenger's Traditions), compiled and commented by: Abdul-Qaader Arndoot, Vol.4, 1st Edition, published and distributed by: Maktabat Al-Halawaani, printed by Al-Malaakh, Maktabat Daar Al-Bayaan, p.6.

Hence Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported the Prophet [pbAbuh] as saying, “Be generous towards your children; teach them good behaviour!”^[1]

The best gift that the parents can offer to their child is good character and excellent behaviour. Ayub bin Musa narrated that the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “There is no better gift a father can offer to his child than good manners.^[2] Islam has gone even further to consider that giving a decent moral education to one’s children is better than giving *sadaqah* (charity).

Samaak bin Harb narrated that the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “It is better for a man to refine his child than to give a measure in charity.”^[3] Indeed, Islam has insisted upon good manners and behaviour as regards children’s education because it is at this particular stage that these qualities are best acquired. The mother is the main person responsible for her children’s manners and behaviour. She is their first school in which they receive their first and most important lessons. She is the focus of their attention in her speech, manners and general behaviour. Therefore, it is important that she should teach them Islamic morals and ethics, starting with the Islamic way of greeting and asking permission before leaving or entering somebody else’s room or house. Then she should teach them to be truthful and righteous, honest and unselfish, kind to their neighbours and helpful to the weak, loving and caring to others, generous towards the poor and the needy, and caring of relatives and kinship.

Similarly, the mother should prevent her children from acquiring bad habits and characteristics, such as lying, stealing, backbiting, gossiping, swearing, abusing, mocking, showing off, thinking badly about people, pride, vanity, depravity and selfishness. She should do so using every possible educational strategy, such as gifts and punishment, praise and condemnation. Given the great influence which the mother has on her children,

[1] Ibn Maajah, op. cit., Vol.i, "Al-Adab", p.1211.

[2] Al-Tirmidhi, op. cit., Vol.4, "Al-Birr aas-Sila", p.338.

[3] ibid, p.337.

the Prophet [pbAbuh] insisted that Muslim women should set the perfect example for their children's moral education. He [pbAbuh] therefore never failed to advise and instruct the female Companions on that matter. Abdullah bin 'Aamir narrated that his mother called him while the Prophet [pbAbuh] was sitting in their house. She said, "Come here and I will give you something!" The Prophet [pbAbuh] then asked her, "What did you want to give him," and she replied, "I wanted to give him some dates." The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "If you had not given him something, your statement would have been recorded as a lie." ^[1] Even this little incident did not escape the attention of the Prophet [pbAbuh]. He feared that the mother had been lying to call the child, which was the wrong thing to do. Unfortunately, some mothers do this, and the child then begins to imitate his mother, eventually learning to construct bigger and bigger lies.

Telling lies is the biggest vice and every statement which involves the slightest distortion of the truth is absolutely forbidden in Islam, even in the form of a joke. The aforementioned hadith has been intended as a lesson for the mother who lies to her children or undermines their Islamic morals and ethics by any other form of misconduct. Moreover, when the mother constantly tells lies to quiet her children, occupy them with something, force their obedience or simply please them, her children will learn not to trust her and will never take her guidance and advice seriously. "During the first years of their lives, children develop most of their habits and moral characteristics through copying and imitation. Therefore, they need an ideal, a model and a good example to follow that combines all the virtues of Islam.

The Islamic view is that setting a good example is the best and the most successful way of educating others, and without a living example, Islamic teachings cannot be illustrated. To be understood, these teachings ought to be reflected in the feelings, behaviour, and way of thinking of a human being. For this reason, parents should set a good example for their children so that they

[1] Abittayeb Muhammad Abaadi, op.cit, Vol.13, "Al-Adab", p.335.

may be able to comprehend and assimilate Islamic morals and ethics. The child who hears his father telling lies will never learn to be truthful, and the child who sees his mother cheating his father, sister or brother will never learn to be honest.” [1]

Consequently, every mother should strive to set a good example for her children and to follow the guidance of the Prophet [pbAbuh] in educating them. As the child grows older, the mother should teach him to ask permission before entering the rooms of other members of the family. Allah has ordered Muslims to do so when He says,

“O you who believe! Let those among your legal slaves and slave-girls and those among you who have not come to the age of puberty ask your permission on three occasions: before morning prayer, when you put off your clothes for the noonday (rest), and after the ‘Isha (late night) prayer. These three times are times of privacy for you. Other than these times, there is no sin for you or for them to move about, attending each other. Thus Allah makes clear the verses [of this Qur’an] to you. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise” [Light, 24:58].

Allah thus commands parents to teach their young children and their servants to ask for leave on three occasions:

[1] Before morning prayer: When the members of the family are still or could still be in night clothes or undressed.

[2] After the noonday prayer: When many people rest, relax and put on light clothes.

[3] After the late-night prayer: When people take off their day clothes and get ready to go to bed.

Allah has called these moments, the “three times of privacy.” However, He has not prohibited the members of the families from attending each other at other times lest it causes hardship and inconvenience for them. Parents should pay special attention to this divine command and teach their children to ask for permission

[1] Muhammad Qutb, Manhaj Al-Tarkiyah Al-Islaamiya, (Method of Islamic Education), 2nd Edition, Beirut, Cairo, Jeddah: Daar Al-Shruooq, p.221.

before entering their rooms at the three stated times of privacy. Sayyed Qutb said, "Many people fail to implement these etiquettes in their households, thus ignoring serious psychological, moral and nervous repercussions. They think that servants will not look at their masters' uncovered parts or that young children who have not yet reached puberty will fail to take notice. Nevertheless, psychologists have discovered that adults are extremely influenced by childhood images. Allah, the All-Knowing, is teaching His slaves' good manners and noble behaviour so that their hearts, minds and feelings may remain healthy, pure and unstained." [1] Note that when the children reach puberty, they are expected to ask for permission to enter at all times.

In educating her children, the mother should, in addition to her maternal love, mercy and affection, make use of various educational strategies, such as rewards, punishments and gifts, and she should be affectionate but firm. The mother should also be just when dealing with her children and should never favour one above the other, since the Prophet [pbAbuh] has been reported as saying, "Fear Allah and treat your children equally." [2]

Even though this particular statement refers to giving the children equal gifts, it also implies that equality of treatment should be observed at all times and in all matters. Favouring one child over the other will arouse feelings of jealousy, envy and resentment, and cause deep psychological problems, whereas justice and equity help the children to be kind, loving and merciful to one another.

Excellent spiritual and moral education is to be found in the advice given by Luqman to his son. Allah says,

"And when Luqman said to his son when he was advising him, 'O my son! Do not join in worship others with Allah. Verily! Joining others in worship with Allah is a great injustice, indeed.' And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and

[1] Sayyed Qutb, Fi Dhilaal Al-Qur'aan, Vol.4,

[2] Al-Bukhari, op. cit., Vol 3, "Al-Mibah", P.133.

hardship upon weakness and hardship, and his weaning is in two years. Give thanks to Me and to your parents, unto Me is the final destination. But if they both strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others about whom you have no knowledge, then obey them not, but behave with them in the world kindly, and follow the path of him who turns to Me in repentance and obedience. Then to Me will be your return, and I shall tell you what you used to do. [And Luqman said,] 'O, my son! If it be (anything) equal to the weight of a grain of mustard-seed, and though it be in a rock, or the heavens or the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Verily, Allah is Subtle, Well-Aware. O, my son! Offer prayer, enjoin good, and forbid evil, and bear with patience whatever befalls you. Verily, these are some of the important commandments [ordered by Allah]. And do not turn your face away from men in pride, nor walk in insolence through the earth. Verily, Allah does not like the arrogant boaster. And be moderate in your walking, and lower your voice. Verily, the harshest of all voices is the braying of the ass.'" [Luqman, 31:13-19].

This is the best advice a mother can offer to her children, hoping that Allah will guide them and reward her efforts with success. Finally, the mother should personally fulfil her obligations towards her family rather than delegating her responsibilities to strangers, such as educationalists, servants and baby-sitters.

The Prophet [pbAbuh] clearly said, "Every woman is a guardian in her husband's house and she is responsible for her wards." [1] Indeed, her responsibilities towards her family are hers, exclusively. However, there is no harm in employing servants to whom she can delegate worldly tasks, such as housework and cooking, so that she may have more time to devote to her children and thus the opportunity to fulfil her role to the best of her abilities.

[1] Al-Asqalaani, op. cit., Vol, 9, "Al-Nikaah", p. 299.

5- DUTIES TOWARDS HER NEIGHBOURS

The Muslim woman is kind and friendly towards her neighbours

One of the attributes of the Muslim woman who understands the teachings of her religion is that she treats her neighbours well and respects them.

Adheres to the Islamic teachings of treating neighbours well

The true Muslim woman understands the teachings of Islam which strongly urge good treatment of neighbours and gives the neighbour such high status in the scale of human relationships, such as has never been equaled in any other religion or system before or since. Allah has commanded the good treatment of neighbours in the Qur'an:

“Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him, and do good to—parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer [you meet], and those whom your right hands possess...” [Women, 4:36].

The “neighbour who is near” is one with whom one shares ties of kinship or religion; the “neighbour who is a stranger” is one with whom one shares no such ties; and the “companion by your side” is a friend, colleague or travelling companion. Everyone whose home neighbours your home has the right of a neighbour over you, even if you are not connected by kinship or religion. This honouring of the neighbour is an example of the tolerance promoted by Islam. There are many hadiths of the Prophet [pbAbuh] which enjoin good treatment of neighbours in general, regardless of kinship or religious factors and confirm the importance of the neighbourly relationship in Islam. For example: “Gabriel kept on enjoining the good treatment of neighbours to such an extent that I thought he would include neighbours as heirs.” [1]

[1] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 13/71, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah, bab haqq al-jar.

Likes for her neighbours what she likes for herself

The Muslim woman who is truly open to the teachings of her religion is softhearted, easy-going and tolerant. She is loving towards her neighbours, sensitive to everything that could disturb, annoy or offend them. She wishes them well, just as she wishes herself well, and she shares their joys and sorrows, in accordance with the teachings of the Prophet [pbAbuh]: “None of you truly believes until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself.” [1]

According to a report given by Muslim from Anas, the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “By the One in Whose hand is my soul, no servant truly believes until he likes for his neighbour [or he said, ‘his brother’] what he likes for himself.” [2]

The true Muslim woman does not fail to think of her neighbours, who may be faced with difficulties from time to time, so she occasionally gives them gifts. She recognizes that they may be affected by the smell of cooking or barbecues emanating from her house and she understands their desire for delicious food which they may not be able to afford, so she sends some of it to them. In this way she fulfils the spirit of social responsibility which the Prophet [pbAbuh] encouraged in his words to Abu Dharr, “O Abu Dharr, if you cook some broth, add extra water to it and take care of your neighbour.” [3]

Treats her neighbour in the best way that she can

The Muslim woman who truly understands the teachings of her religion never thinks that any favour is too small to be worth doing for her neighbour; she does whatever favours she can for her, no matter how insignificant they may appear. She does not let shyness or her desire to show off prevent her from doing the little that she can afford or make her withhold it on the basis that it is

[1] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 13/60, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah, bab haq aljar.

[2] Saheeh Muslim, 2/18, Kitab al-iman, bab min khidal al-iman an tuhibb li akhika ma tuhibbu li nafsika.

[3] Saheeh Muslim, 2/188, Kitab al-adab, bab al-wasiyah bi'l-jar wa'l-ihsan ilayhi.

not good enough, waiting until she is able to offer more. Such an attitude deprives both her and her neighbour of much good because by waiting for some hoped-for bounty that may never arrive, she wastes the opportunity to do good. The Prophet [pbAbuh] drew the attention of women in particular to the importance of even the smallest gifts and favours between neighbours: “O Muslim women, do not think that any gift is too insignificant to give to a neighbour, even if it is only a sheep’s foot.”^[1]

Treats her neighbours well even if they are not Muslim

The true Muslim woman does not restrict her good treatment only to neighbours who are related to her or who are Muslims, but she extends it to non-Muslim neighbours too. This is in accordance with the tolerant teachings of Islam which encourage kindness towards all people, regardless of their race or religion, so long as they do not commit any acts of hostility or aggression towards Muslims. Allah says,

“Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who do not fight you for [your] faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loves those who are just” [She That Is to Be Examined, 60:8].

Based on this, the great Companion ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr asked his slave, after slaughtering a sheep, “Did you give some to our Jewish neighbour? Did you give some to our Jewish neighbour? For I heard Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) say, ‘Gabriel kept on enjoining good treatment of neighbours to such an extent that I thought he would include neighbours as heirs.’”^[2]

How great is the mercy of Islam towards all people, and how kind is its concern towards those who live under its shade! History bears witness to the fact that the People of the Book have lived

[1] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 6/141, Kitab al-zakat, bab al-tasadduq bi'lshay' al-yasir.

[2] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-sunnah, 13/71, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah, bab haqq al-jar.

alongside Muslims in many regions of the Islamic world, secure in the knowledge that they, their honour and their wealth were safe, enjoying a good neighbourly relationship, good treatment and freedom of worship. Their ancient churches still exist in Muslim villages clinging to mountaintops, surrounded by thousands of Muslims who uphold the well-being of their Jewish and Christian neighbours.

Starts with the neighbour whose home is closest to her own

The true Muslim woman does not forget the precise system that Islam has set out when it enjoined the good treatment of neighbours. Islam has told her to give priority to the one whose house is closest, then the next closest one, and so on. This takes into account the closeness of the neighbours whose homes are beside one another, the issues that may frequently arise between them, and the importance of maintaining friendship and harmony. Aisha said, “O Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh], I have two neighbours, so to which one should I send a gift?” He said, “To the one whose door is closest to yours.”^[1]

The true Muslim woman is the best neighbour

It comes as no surprise that the Muslim woman who truly understands the teachings of her religion is the best of neighbours because good treatment of neighbours is a basic Islamic attitude that is deeply ingrained in the conscience of the Muslim woman who has been brought up with the teachings of Islam. These teachings state that the one who is kindest to her neighbour is the best neighbour in the sight of Allah: “The best of companions in the sight of Allah is the one who is best to his companion, and the best of neighbours in the sight of Allah is the one who is best to his neighbour.”^[2] The Prophet [pbAbuh] stated that a good neighbour is one of the joys of a Muslim’s life because he or she guarantees comfort, security and safety: “Among the things that

[1] Reported by Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, 1/198, Bab tahdi ila aqrabihim baban.

[2] Reported with a *Sabeeh isnad* (authentic chain) by Tirmidhi, 3/224, Abwab al-birr wa'l-silah, bab ma ja'a fi haqq al-jiwar.

bring happiness to a Muslim in this life are a righteous neighbour, a spacious house and a good steed.”^[1]

Bad neighbours

Having a bad neighbour is so appalling that the sensitive Muslim woman cannot think of it without shuddering and being filled with a sense of fear, loathing and dread.

A bad neighbour is a person who is deprived of the blessing of faith

It is sufficient misery for a bad neighbour to know that she is deprived of the blessing of faith, which is the greatest blessing in a person's life. The Prophet [pbAbuh] confirmed the fact that this blessing is stripped away from every person who persists in mistreating his or her neighbour to the extent that he or she is counted as a bad neighbour. He stated this in no uncertain terms when he swore by Allah three times that such a person is stripped of the blessing of faith: “By Allah, he does not believe. By Allah, he does not believe. By Allah, he does not believe.” He was asked, “Who, O Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh]?” He said, “The one from whose evils [or troubles] his neighbour does not feel safe.” ^[2] According to a report given by Muslim: “He will not enter Paradise, the one whose neighbour is not safe from his evil [or trouble].” ^[3]

Good deeds of a bad neighbour are not accepted

A bad neighbour is a person who has lost her faith, as stated in the hadith quoted above; she is also a person whose good deeds are all cancelled, so that from now on no act of obedience or righteousness will be of any benefit to her, so long as she persists in her mistreatment of her neighbour. Good deeds are essentially based on faith in Allah, and faith in Allah is not a matter of mere words: what counts is the practical implementation of that which

[1] Reported with a *Saheeh isnad* by Al-Hakim, 4/166, in *Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah*.

[2] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See *Riyad Al-Salihin*, 185, *Bab fi haq al-jar wa'l-wasiyah bihi*.

[3] *Saheeh Muslim*, 2/18, *Kitab al-iman*, *bab bayan tahrir idha' al-jar*

Allah requires of His slaves. If a bad neighbour has lost her faith by persisting in her mistreatment of her neighbour, then there is no hope that Allah will accept her good deeds, no matter how great or how many they may be. They will be utterly wiped out, even if she spends her nights and days performing good deeds. The Prophet [pbAbuh] was asked, “O Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh], such-and-such a woman spends her nights in prayer, fasts during the day, and so on, and she gives in charity, but she offends her neighbours with her sharp tongue.” The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “Her good deeds will be of no avail: she is among the people of Hell.” They said, “And so-and-so prays only the obligatory prayers, gives charity in the form of left-over curds, but does not offend anyone.” The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “She is among the people of Paradise.”^[1]

Gives good treatment to her neighbour

Not only does the Muslim woman refrain from harming or disturbing her neighbour, but she also does not spare any effort to help her neighbour, opening wide the doors of care, friendship and generosity. She is careful not to fall short in her duties whenever she is called upon to take care of her neighbours and to honour them and treat them well. This is lest the words of the Prophet [pbAbuh] concerning the miserly, unhelpful neighbour become applicable to her: “How many people will be hanging on to their neighbours on the Day of Judgment, saying, ‘O my Lord! He shut his door in my face and denied me his kind treatment and help!’”^[2]

What a miserable position the miserly, uncaring neighbour will be in on the Day of Judgement! According to Islam, the Muslim men and women are like a high wall, whose bricks are the people of this *ummah*. Each brick must be sound and strongly bonded with the others to make this wall sturdy and durable, otherwise, it will become weak and prone to collapse. Thus, Islam surrounds this wall with strong spiritual ties to preserve its integrity and

[1] Reported by Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, 1/210, Bab la yu'dhi jarahu.

[2] Reported by Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, 1/200, Bab man aghlaqa al-bab 'ala'l-jar.

strength so that it will not be shaken, no matter what events may befall it. The Prophet [pbAbuh] gave a marvelous metaphor of the solidarity and mutual support among Muslim men and women: “Believers are like a structure, parts of which support other parts.”^[1]

Puts up with her neighbour’s mistakes and bad treatment

The Muslim woman who is guided by her religion is patient with her neighbour and does not get angry or bear a grudge if she makes a mistake or has some shortcomings. She is tolerant and forgiving towards her, thus hoping to earn reward from Allah and to attain His love and pleasure. This is proven by the hadith of Abu Dharr when Mutarrif ibn ‘Abdullah met him. Mutarrif said, “O Abu Dharr, I heard about what you have said and wanted to meet you.” Abu Dharr said, “Your father was a great man! Now you have met me.” Mutarrif said, “I heard that you have said that the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, ‘Allah loves three and hates three.’” Abu Dharr said, “I do not think that I would tell lies about Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh].” Mutarrif said, “Then who are the three whom Allah loves?” Abu Dharr [quoting the Prophet [pbAbuh]] said, “A man who fights for the sake of Allah, with perseverance and hoping for a reward from Him and fights until he is killed. And you find this in the Book of Allah.” Then he recited, “*Truly, Allah loves those who fight in His cause in battle array as if they were a solid cemented structure*” [Al-Saff 61:4]. Mutarrif asked, “Then who?” He said, “A man who has a bad neighbour who annoys and disturbs him, but he bears this with patience and forbearance until Allah ends the matter either during his lifetime or upon the death of either of them.”^[2]

[1] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 13/47, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah, bab ta'awun al-mu'minin wa tarahumuhum.

[2] Reported with a *Saheeh isnad* (authentic chain) by Ahmad and Al-Tabarani. See Majma' Al-Zawa'id, 8/171.

6- DUTIES TOWARDS HER RELATIVES

The Muslim woman who is guided by the teachings of her religion never forgets that her relatives have rights over her and that she is required to uphold the ties of kinship and to treat them well. The relatives [in Arabic arham, which literally means “wombs”] are those to whom a person is linked by ties of blood, whether they are his heirs or not.

KINSHIP RELATIONS

Islam has recognized the ties of kinship in a way that is unparalleled in other religions or “isms”; it enjoins Muslims to uphold the ties of kinship and condemns the one who breaks this tie. There is no greater proof of the emphasis placed by Islam on the ties of kinship than the vivid picture painted by the Prophet [pbAbuh], who described kinship [rahm] as standing in the vast arena of creation and seeking refuge with Allah from being cut off. Allah answers its prayer, taking care of those who maintain the ties of kinship and cutting off those who cut off these ties.

This is seen in the saheeh (authentic) hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah who said that the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “Allah created the universe. And when He had finished, kinship [rahm] stood up and said, ‘This is the standing up of one who seeks Your protection from being cut off.’ Allah said, ‘Yes, would it please you if I were to take care of those who take care of you and cut off those who cut you off?’ It said, ‘Of course.’ Allah said, ‘Then your prayer is granted.’”

Then the Prophet [pbAbuh] said,

“Recite, if you wish, *‘Then, is it to be expected of you, if you were put in authority, that you will do mischief in the land and break your ties of kith and kin? Such are the men whom Allah has cursed for He has made them deaf and has blinded their sight’* [Muhammed, 47: 22-23].” [1]

[1] Al-Bukhari and Muslim, See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 13/20, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah, bab thawab silah al-rahm wa ithm man qata'aha.

Upholding kinship ties based on the teachings of Islam

The Muslim woman who is truly guided by the teachings of her religion does not neglect to uphold the ties of kinship; she never lets the responsibilities of motherhood or the burden of caring for her house and husband distract her from always upholding these ties. Consequently, she organizes her time so that she may visit her relatives, following the Islamic teachings which regulate these relationships and rank them in order of priority and degree of closeness, starting with the mother, moving on to the father, and then other relatives, from the most closely related to others who are more distantly related. A man came to the Prophet [pbAbuh] and asked, “O Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh], who is most deserving of my good company?” He said, “Your mother, then your mother, then your mother, then your father, and then those who are most closely related to you.”^[1]

Maintains ties of kinship with non-Muslims

When the Muslim woman looks into the guidance of Islam, she sees that it reaches new heights of gentleness and humanity as it enjoins its followers to uphold the ties of kinship even if one’s relatives follow a religion other than Islam. ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn Al-’As said, “I heard the Prophet [pbAbuh] saying openly, ‘The family of Abu so-and-so are not my friends, for my friends are Allah and the righteous believers. However, they have ties of kinship with me, which I will recognize and uphold.’”^[2]

Meaning of upholding ties of kinship

For the Muslim woman, the tie of kinship is multi-faceted. Sometimes, it may involve spending money to ward off poverty and relieve hardship. At other times, it may mean making visits to strengthen the ties of love, speaking and smiling kindly and offering a warm welcome, giving advice, showing compassion or

[1] Al-Bukhari and Muslim, See Riyad Al-Salihin, 189, Bab birr al-walidayn wa silah alrahm.

[2] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 13/29, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah, bab thawab silah al-rahm.

making a selfless gesture ..., i.e., acts of goodness. The aim of all these is to awaken and increase human feelings of love, compassion and mutual support between those who are related to one another. Hence, the Prophet [pbAbuh] urged Muslims to uphold the ties of kinship, even in the simplest of ways: “Maintain your ties of kinship, even if it is merely with a greeting [i.e., saying al-salam ‘alaykum].” [1]

Maintains ties of kinship even if her relatives fail to do so

The Muslim woman whose soul is infused with the true teachings of this religion upholds the ties of kinship and does not break them. She does not treat like with like, upholding the ties if her relatives uphold it and breaking them if they break them. The Muslim woman is one who always upholds the ties of kinship because by doing so she is seeking the pleasure and reward of Allah, not equal treatment in return. In this way, she sets the highest example of that refined human behaviour which Islam is always keen to instil in the souls of Muslim men and women. It is, in fact, a most difficult level to achieve, except for those whom Allah has guided and who have devoted themselves to seeking His pleasure. The Muslim woman who is truly guided by the teachings of her religion is among this noble group of women who are eager to treat their relatives well, in accordance with the teachings of the Prophet [pbAbuh]: “The one who maintains a relationship with his relatives only because they maintain a relationship with him is not truly upholding the ties of kinship. The one who truly upholds those ties is the one who does so even if they (the relatives) break off the relationship.” [2]

[1] Reported by Al-Bazzar from Ibn 'Abbas, as stated by Al-Haythami in *Kashf al-astar*, 2/373; its *isnads* (different chains) strengthen one another, as stated by Al-Sakhawi in *al-maqasid al-hasanah*, 146.

[2] Fath Al-Bari, 10/423, *Kitab al-adab*, bab *laysa al-wasil bi'l-mukafi'*.

7- DUTIES TOWARDS HER MUSLIM SISTERS AND FRIENDS

Loves her friends for the sake of Allah

How the true Muslim woman relates to her friends and sisters in Islam is different from how other women conduct their social affairs. Her relationship with her sisters is based on *ta'akhi* [brotherhood or sisterhood] for the sake of Allah. This love for the sake of Allah is the highest bond that may exist between one human being and another, whether man or woman. It is the bond of faith in Allah which Allah established between all believers when He said, "*The Believers are but a single brotherhood ...*" [The Inner Apartments, 49:10].

The brotherhood of faith is the strongest of bonds between hearts and minds. It comes as no surprise to see that Muslim sisters enjoy a strong, enduring relationship that is based on love for the sake of Allah, which is the noblest and purest form of love between human beings. This is a love that is untainted by any worldly interest or ulterior motive. It is the love in which Muslim men and women find the sweetness of faith.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "There are three things that whoever attains them will find the sweetness of faith: if Allah and His Messenger are dearer to him than anyone or anything else; if he loves a person solely for the sake of Allah; and if he would hate to return to kufr after Allah has rescued him from it as much as he would hate to be thrown into the Fire." [1]

The status of two who love one another for the sake of Allah

Many Al-hadith describe the status of two people who love another for the sake of Allah, whether they are men or women. They also describe the high position in Paradise which Allah has prepared for them and the great honour which He will bestow upon them on the Day when mankind is resurrected to meet the

[1] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 1/49, Kitab al-iman, bab halawat al-iman.

Lord of the Worlds. It is sufficient honour for those who love one another for the sake of Allah, men and women alike, to know that their almighty Lord will take care of them on the Day of Judgement and will say, “Where are those who loved one another for My glory? Today I will shade them in My shade on the Day when there is no shade but Mine.” [1]

The effect of love for the sake of Allah on the life of Muslim men and women

Islam came to build an ideal society based on sincere love and brotherhood, so it had to plant the seeds of love in the hearts of the individuals of which society is composed. Therefore, it made this love among believing men and among believing women one of the conditions of faith that will grant admittance to Paradise. This is mentioned in the hadith narrated by Imam Muslim from Abu Hurairah in which the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “By the One in Whose hand in my soul, you will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I not tell you of something if you do it, you will love one another? Spread *Salam* amongst yourselves.”[2]

Shuns forsaking or abandoning her sister

The Muslim woman who truly understands the teachings of Islam does not ignore the fact that Islam, which encourages brotherly love and mutual affection, is also the religion that has forbidden brothers and sisters in faith to hate or abandon one another. Islam has explained that two people who truly love one another for the sake of Allah will not be separated by the first minor offence that either of them may commit, because the bond of love for the sake of Allah is too strong to be broken by such minor matters. The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “No two people who

[1] Saheeh Muslim, 16/123, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah wa'l-adab, bab fadl al-hubb fi Allah.

[2] Saheeh Muslim, 2/35, Kitab al-iman, bab bayan annahu la yadkhul al-jannah illa'lmu'minin.

love one another for the sake of Allah, or the sake of Islam, will let the first minor offence of either of them come between them.”^[1]

Anger may strike a woman in moments of human weakness, and she may hurt her sister, which could provoke harsh feelings and conflicts. In such cases, the Muslim woman should not forget that Islam does not ignore human nature and its vulnerability to changing emotions. For this reason, Islam has defined the length of time during which anger may subside. This time is considered to be three days. After this time has passed, the two conflicting parties are forbidden from refusing to seek reconciliation. The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “It is not permissible for a Muslim to be estranged from his brother for more than three days, both of them turning away from one another when they meet. The better of them is the one who is first to greet the other.”^[2]

Tolerates and forgives them

The Muslim woman who is truly guided by Islam is tolerant towards her friends and sisters and does not bear grudges against them. If she becomes angry with one of her sisters, she restrains her anger and freely forgives the one who has committed an error, without seeing any shame in doing so. She sees this as a good deed which will bring her closer to Allah: “... *[those] who restrain anger and pardon [all] men—for Allah loves those who do good*” [The Family of ‘Imran, 3: 134]. If a person harbours his or her seething anger and does not forgive, that anger will turn into resentment and malice, which are more dangerous than anger. When a person forgives and forgets, the flames of anger are extinguished and his or her soul is cleansed of the effects of anger and hatred. This is the level of *Ihsan* (excellence in worship), which earns Allah’s love for those who attain it. Allah says, “... *for Allah loves those who do good*” [The Family of ‘Imran, 3:134].

[1] Reported by Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, 1/493, Bab hijrah al-Muslim.

[2] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 13/100, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah, bab alnahy 'an hijran al-ikhwan.

The Muslim woman who truly adheres to the teachings of Islam is one of this group of muhsinin (those who have *Ihsan*). She does not allow anger to continue boiling in her heart, because harboured resentment is a very heavy burden on the soul; rather, she hastens to forgive and forget, thus freeing herself from this burden and filling her soul with tranquillity and peace of mind. Something that may help the Muslim woman reach this difficult level of *Ihsan* is the knowledge that forgiving one's sister is not a source of humiliation or shame, rather it will raise her in status and honour in the sight of Allah. The Prophet [pbAbuh] explained, "Allah will not increase His slave when he forgives (others) except in honour. No one humbles himself for the sake of Allah but Allah will raise his status." [1]

Meets them with a smiling face

The true Muslim woman has a cheerful countenance, always greeting her sisters with warmth and smiles. The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "Do not think little of any good deed, even if it is just greeting your brother with a cheerful countenance." [2] Having a cheerful and friendly face is a good character which Islam encourages and considers to be a good deed that will bring reward because a cheerful face mirrors a pure soul. This inward and outward purity is one of the distinguishing features of the sincere Muslim. Hence, the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "Your smiling at your brother is an act of charity [sadaqah]." [3]

Sincere towards them

One of the virtues of the true Muslim woman is that she is completely sincere towards Allah, His Prophet [pbAbuh], and to the leaders and the masses of the Muslims. This is stated in the

[1] Saheeh Muslim, 16/141, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah wa'l-adab, bab istihbab al-'afuw wa'l'tawadu'.

[2] Saheeh Muslim, 16/177, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah wa'l-adab, bab istihbab talaqah al-wajh 'ind al-liqa'.

[3] Reported by Tirmidhi, 3/228, Abwab al-birr, 36. He said it is *hassan gharib* (a good hadith, with only one narrator).

saheeh (authentic) hadith: "Religion is sincerity." [1] We [the Companions] asked, "To whom?" He [the Prophet [pbAbuh]] said, "To Allah [by obeying Him, attributing to Him what He deserves, and performing jihad for His sake]; to His Book [by reading it, understanding it, and applying it to one's daily life]; to His Prophet [pbAbuh] [by respecting him greatly, fighting on his behalf both in his lifetime and after his death, and by following his sunnah]; to the rulers of the Muslims [by helping them in their task of leading Muslims to the right path and alerting them if they are heedless]; and to their common folk [by being merciful towards them]." [2]

Faithful and kind towards them

Islam does not stop at encouraging its followers to respect and be kind to their friends; it also encourages them to be kind to their parents' friends too, in recognition of the virtues of kindness and loyalty and to establish these values as an essential part of Islamic life. The books of our heritage are filled with reports of loyalty and kindness that the righteous salaf (predecessors) embodied in their daily lives so that they became a fine example for all of mankind. An example of this is the hadith narrated by Imam Muslim in his Saheeh from Ibn 'Umar, in which the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "The best kind of goodness is that a man should keep in touch with and respect his father's friend." [3]

Refrains from gatherings which gossip about them

The alert Muslim woman does not allow herself to be drawn into gossip or to attend gatherings where gossip takes place. She restrains her tongue, refrains from gossiping in general, and avoids

[1] *Nasihah* is an Arabic word that may be translated by a number of words in English. The most common translation is "good advice", but it also carries connotations of sincerity, integrity and "doing justice to a person or situation" [Translator].

[2] Saheeh Muslim, 2/37, Kitab al-iman, bab bayan an al-din nasihah. The explanations in brackets are adapted from those given in the English translation of Saheeh Al-Bukhari by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Vol. 1, p. 48) [Translator].

[3] Saheeh Muslim, 16/110, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah wa'l-adab, bab fadl silah asdiqa' al-abb wa'l-umm.

backbiting about her friends and sisters in particular. She regards it as her duty to prevent gatherings from sinking to the level of cheap gossip because gossip is haram, according to the words of the Qur'an: *"...Nor speak ill of each other behind their back. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, you would abhor it. But fear Allah, for Allah, is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful"* [The Inner Apartments, 49:12].

The Muslim woman always refrains from indulging in any talk that could lead to gossip. From her understanding of Islam, she knows that the tongue may lead its owner to Hell, as stated in the hadith in which the Prophet [pbAbuh] warned Mu'adh ibn Jabal. The Prophet (peace be upon him) took hold of his tongue and said, "Restrain this." Mu'adh said, "O Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh], will we be held responsible for what we say?" The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "May your mother be bereft of you! Is there anything that causes people to be thrown into Hell on their faces [or he said, 'on their noses'] but the harvest of their tongues?" [1]

Avoids arguing, hurtful jokes and breaking promises

Among the good manners of the true Muslim woman is a sense of moderation, wisdom and tact. She does not exhaust her friends with irritating arguments, she does not annoy them with hurtful jokes, and she does not break a promise that she has made to them. In this, she follows the guidance of the Prophet [pbAbuh], "Do not argue with your brother, do not joke excessively with him, do not make a promise to him and then break it." [2]

Generous and honours her sisters

The Muslim woman who understands the teachings of her religion is generous and gives freely to her friends and sisters. Her approach is friendly and sincere when she invites them, she welcomes them warmly and offers them food generously. Friendly

[1] A *Sabeeh hassan* hadith narrated by Ibn Majah, 2/1315, Kitab al-fitan.

[2] Reported by Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, 1/485, bab la ta'id akhaka shay'an fa tukhlifahu.

gatherings over food strengthen the ties of sisterhood and friendship between sisters. Such gatherings fill their lives with the sense of noble human emotions that have been lost by the Western woman raised in a materialistic culture, who thereby has been filled with the spirit of opportunism, selfishness and individualism. The Western woman is suffering from spiritual emptiness and emotional dryness, which results in a feeling of being deprived of true friendship and sincere friends. This is the situation of Westerners in general and Western women in particular, and they compensate for it by devoting themselves to caring for their dogs, to make up for the lack of human emotional warmth drained from them by their materialistic philosophy. A French report states that there are seven million dogs in France, a country whose population is fifty-two million. These dogs live with their owners like one of the family. It is no longer strange in French restaurants to see a dog and its owner eating together at the same table. When an official of the animal welfare organization in Paris was asked, "Why do the French treat their dogs like they treat themselves?" he answered, "Because they want someone to love, but they cannot find any person to love."^[1]

Prays for her sisters in their absence

The sincere Muslim woman whose heart is filled with the sweetness of faith likes for her Muslim sister what she likes for herself. Therefore, she never forgets to pray for her in her absence, a dua'a that is filled with the warmth of sincere love and sisterhood. She knows that such dua'as are the quickest to be answered because of their sincerity and warmth of feeling and the noble intention behind them. This is confirmed by the words of the Prophet [pbAbuh]: "The quickest prayer to be answered is a man's supplication for his brother in his absence."^[2]

[1] Prof. Wahid Al-Din Khan, *Wujub tatbiq al-shari'ah alislamiyyah fi kulli zaman wa makan* ("The necessity of applying the Islamic Shari'ah at every time and in every place"), in *Al-Mujtama'*, No. 325, Kuwait, 24 Dhu'l-Qi'dah 1396/16 November 1976.

[2] Reported by Al-Bukhari in *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad*, 2/83, Bab du'a' al-akh bi zahr al-ghayb.

8- OBLIGATIONS TOWARDS HER COMMUNITY OR SOCIETY

Introduction

When it comes to Islamic duties, the Muslim woman is just like a man: she has a mission in life, and so she is required to be as effective, active and social as her particular circumstances and capabilities allow. She mixes with other women as much as she can and deals with them in accordance with the worthy Islamic attitudes and behaviour that distinguish her from other women.

Wherever the Muslim woman is found, she becomes a beacon of guidance and a positive source of correction and education through both her words and her deeds. The Muslim woman who has been truly guided by the Qur'an and Sunnah has a refined social personality of the highest degree.

This qualifies her to undertake her duty of calling other women to Islam, opening their hearts and minds to the guidance of this great religion which elevated the status of women at a remarkably early stage in their history and furnished them with a vast range of the best of characteristics which are outlined in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Islam has laid down these characteristics as a religious duty for which a person will be rewarded and be called to account for if he or she fails to attain them. These texts succeeded in making the personality of the woman who is sincere towards Allah into a brilliant example of a decent, chaste, polite, God-fearing, refined, sociable woman.

The Muslim woman who understands the teachings of Islam stands out in every women's gathering she attends, as she demonstrates the true values of her religion and the practical application of those values by her attaining those worthy attributes. The make-up of her distinct social character represents a huge store of those Islamic values, which can be seen in her social conduct and dealings with people. From this rich, pure source, the

Muslim woman draws her customs, habits and ways of dealing with others. She cleanses her soul and forms her own Muslim, social personality from the same source.

Has a good attitude towards others and treats them well

The Muslim woman is of good and noble character, friendly, humble, gentle of speech and tactful. She likes others and is liked by them. By doing so, she is following the example of the Prophet [pbAbuh] who, as his servant Anas reported, was “the best of people in his attitude and dealings towards others”^[1]

Anas saw, more than anyone else, the Prophet’s good dealings with others and witnessed such good deals that no one imagined could exist in any human being. He told us of one aspect of the noble dealings of the Prophet [pbAbuh]: “I served Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] for ten years, and he never said to me ‘Uff!’ [The smallest word of contempt]. If I did anything, he never said, ‘Why did you do that?’ And if I did not do something, he never said, ‘Why did you not do such and such?’”^[2]

Truthful

The Muslim woman is truthful with all people because she has absorbed the teachings of Islam, which encourages truthfulness and regards it as the chief of virtues, whilst lying is forbidden and regarded as the source of all evils and bad deeds.

The Muslim woman believes that truthfulness naturally leads to goodness, which will admit the one who practices it to Paradise, while falsehood leads to iniquity, which will send the one who practices it to Hell.

The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “Truthfulness leads to piety [birr], and piety leads to Paradise. A man continues to speak the truth until he is recorded in the sight of Allah as a sincere lover of truth [siddiq]. Falsehood leads to iniquity and iniquity leads to Hell.

[1] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah 13/235, Kitab al-fada'il, bab husn khalqih.

[2] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Riyad Al-Salihin, 336, Bab husn al-khalq.

A man will continue to speak falsehood until he is recorded in the sight of Allah as a liar.”^[1]

Avoids giving false statements

The true Muslim woman whose personality has been molded by the teachings and guidance of Islam does not give false statements, because to do so is haram: “... *And shun the word that is false*” [The Pilgrimage, 22:30]. Bearing false witness (*shahadat al-Zur*),^[2] besides being haram, does not befit the Muslim woman. It damages her honour and credibility and marks a person as being twisted and worthless in the sight of others.

So the Qur’an completely forbids this attitude for the chosen servants of Allah, men and women alike, just as it forbids other major sins: “*Those who witness no falsehood and, if they pass by futility, they pass it by with honourable [avoidance]*” [The Criterion, 25:72].

Gives sincere advice

The true Muslim woman does not only strive to free herself of negative characteristics, she also seeks to offer sincere advice to every woman she comes into contact with who has deviated from the guidance of Allah. And how many women are there who have wronged themselves and are in great need of someone to offer them sincere advice and guide them back towards the straight path which Allah has commanded all of us to follow!

For the true Muslim woman, offering sincere advice is not just a matter of volunteering to do good out of generosity; it is a duty enjoined by Islam, as the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “Religion is sincerity [or sincere advice].” The Companions asked, “To whom?” He said, “To Allah, to His Book, to His Messenger, to the leaders of the Muslims and their common folk.”^[3]

[1] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Riyad Al-Salihin, 50, Bab al-sidq.

[2] *Shahadat al-zur* may be interpreted in the following ways: bearing false witness by giving evidence that is false; assisting in something which implies fraud or falsehood; attending the gatherings of the kuffar on the occasion of their festivals [Translator].

[3] Saheeh Muslim, 2/37, Kitab al-iman, bab bayan an al-din al-nasihah.

Guides others to righteous deeds

The Muslim woman whose soul has been purified by Islam and cleansed of the stains of selfishness and the love of showing off guides others to righteous deeds when she knows of them, so that goodness will become known and people will benefit from it. It is all the same to her whether the good deed is done by herself or by others because she knows that the one who guides others to do righteous deeds will be rewarded like the one who does the actual deed. The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “Whoever guides others to do good will have a reward like that of the person who does the good deed.”^[1]

Refrains from cheating, deceiving or stabbing others in the back

The sincere Muslim woman for whom truthfulness has become a deeply rooted characteristic does not cheat, deceive or stab others in the back because these worthless characteristics are beneath her. They contradict the values of truthfulness and do not befit the Muslim woman. Truthfulness requires an attitude of sincerity, straightforwardness, loyalty and fairness, which leaves no room for cheating, lying, trickery, deceit or betrayal. The Muslim woman who is filled with the guidance of Islam is truthful by nature and has a complete aversion to cheating, deceiving and backstabbing; she sees these traits as a sign of a person being beyond the pale of Islam.

The Prophet [pbAbuh] stated in the hadith narrated by Muslim, “Whoever bears arms against us is not one of us, and whoever cheats us is not one of us.”^[2] The Muslim woman who has been truly guided by Islam avoids all forms of deceit and backstabbing. They exist in many forms in the world of modern women, but the Muslim woman values herself too highly to include herself among those cheating, deceiving women whom the

[1] Saheeh Muslim, 13/38, Kitab al-imarah, bab fadl i'annah al-ghazi fi sabil-Allah.

[2] Saheeh Muslim, 2/108, Kitab al-iman, bab qawl Al-Nabi man ghashshana fa laysa minna.

Prophet [pbAbuh] considered to be hypocrites. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “There are four features, whoever has all of them is a true hypocrite and whoever has one of them has one of the qualities of a hypocrite until he gives it up: when he is trusted, he is unfaithful; when he speaks, he tells lies; when he makes a promise, he proves treacherous; and when he disputes, he resorts to slander.” [1]

Keeps her promises

One of the noble traits of a true Muslim woman is that she keeps her promises. This trait is the companion of truthfulness and indeed stems naturally from it. Keeping promises is a praiseworthy trait, one that indicates the high level of civility attained by the woman who exhibits it. It helps her to succeed in life and earns her the love, respect and appreciation of others. The effects of this character in instilling moral and psychological virtues in girls and boys are not unknown; if they see their mothers always keeping their promises, this is the best example that they can be given. For the Muslim woman, keeping promises is not just a matter of social niceties, something to boast about among her friends and peers; it is one of the basic Islamic characteristics and one of the clearest indicators of sound faith and true Islam.

Many texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah emphasize the importance of this quality: “*O you who believe! Fulfil all obligations*” [The Table Spread, 5:1], “*And fulfil every engagement, for [every] engagement will be enquired into [on the Day of Reckoning]*” [The Night Journey, 17:34].

Not a hypocrite

The true Muslim woman is frank and open in her words and opinions and is the furthest removed from hypocrisy, flattery and false praise. This is because she knows from the teachings of Islam that hypocrisy is haram and does not befit the true Muslim.

[1] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh al-Sunnah, 1/74, Kitab al-iman, bab 'alamat al-nifaq.

The Prophet [pbAbuh] has protected us from falling into the mire of hypocrisy and flattery. When Banu ‘Amir came to him and praised him, saying, “You are our master,” he said, “The only Master is Allah.” When they said, “You are the most excellent and greatest of us,” he said, “Say what you want, or some of it, but do not speak like agents of Satan. I do not want you to raise me above the status to which Allah has appointed me. I am Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah, His slave and Messenger.”^[1]

Well-known for her modesty [*haya*]

Women are shy and modest by nature, and what I mean here by shyness is the same as the definition of the ‘ulama’: the noble attitude that always motivates a person to keep away from what is abhorrent and to avoid falling short in his/her duties towards those who have rights over him/her.

The Prophet [pbAbuh] was the highest example of modesty, as the great Companion Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri described him: “The Prophet [pbAbuh] was more modest than the virgin hiding away in her room. If he saw something he disliked, we would know it only from his facial expression.” ^[2]

Has self-respect and does not beg

One of the features that distinguish the Muslim woman who has truly understood the guidance of Islam is the fact that she has self-respect and does not beg. If she is faced with difficulties or is afflicted with poverty, she seeks refuge in patience and self-respect, whilst redoubling her efforts to find a way out of the crisis of poverty that has befallen her. It never occurs to her to put herself in the position of begging and asking for help, because Islam thinks too highly of the true Muslim woman to allow her to put herself in such a position.

The Muslim woman is urged to have self-respect and be independent and patient; then Allah will help her and give her

[1] Hayat Al-Sahabah 3/99.

[2] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Riyadh Al-Salihin, 364, Kitab al-adab, bab al-haya' wa fadlulu.

independence and patience. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Whoever refrains from asking from people, Allah will help him. Whoever tries to be independent, Allah will enrich him. Whoever tries to be patient, Allah will give him patience, and no one is given a better or vaster gift than patience.”^[1]

Avoids interfering in matters that are none of her concern

The true Muslim woman is wise and discerning; she does not interfere in that which does not concern her, nor does she concern herself with the private lives of the women around her. She does not stick her nose into their affairs or force herself on them in any way because this could result in sin or blame on her part. By seeking to avoid interfering in that which does not concern her, she protects herself from vain and idle talk. This is because she is adhering to a sound Islamic principle that raises the Muslim above such foolishness, furnishes him with the best of attitudes, and guides him towards the best way of dealing with others.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “A sign of a person being a good Muslim is that he should leave alone that which does not concern him.” ^[2]

Refrains from slandering others’ honour and seeking their faults

The God-fearing Muslim woman restrains her tongue and does not seek out people’s faults or slander their honour, and she hates to see such talk spread in the Muslim community. She acts in accordance with the guidance of the Qur’an and Sunnah, which issued a severe warning to those corrupt men and women who indulge in slandering the honour of others. Such people will suffer a terrible punishment in this world and the next. Allah (Glorified be He) says,

[1] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Riyad Al-Salihin, 35, Bab al-sabr.

[2] Reported by Tirmidhi, 3/382, Abwab al-zuhd, 8; Ibn Majah, 2/1316, Kitab al-fitan, bab kaff al-lisan ‘an al-fitnah.

“Those who love [to see] scandal published broadcast among the Believers will have a grievous penalty in this life and the Hereafter: Allah knows, and you know not” [Light, 24:19].

The one who indulges in the slander of people's honour and spreads news of scandal throughout the community is just like the one who committed the scandalous deed. 'Ali ibn Abi Talib stated, “The one who tells the news of scandal and the one who spreads the news is equally sinful.”^[1]

Refrains from showing off or boasting

The Muslim woman does not slip into the error of being proud, boasting and showing off because her knowledge of Islam protects her from such errors. She understands that the very essence of this religion is sincerity towards Allah in word and deed; any trace of a desire to show off will destroy rewards, cancel out good deeds, and bring humiliation on the Day of Judgement.

Worshipping Allah is the goal behind the creation of mankind and jinn, as the Qur'an says, *“I have created jinns and men only that they may serve Me”* [The Winnowing Winds, 51:56].

But this worship cannot be accepted unless it is done sincerely for the sake of Allah. Allah says, *“And they have been commanded no more than this: to worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion, being True [in faith]...”* [The Clear Proof, 98:5].

When a Muslim woman's deeds are contaminated with the desire to boast, show off, or seek fame and reputation, the good deeds will be invalidated. Allah will show what is truly in his heart.^[2]

Unbiased in her judgements

The Muslim woman may be put in a position where she is required to form an opinion or judgement on some person or

[1] Reported by Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, 1/419, Bab man sami'a bi fahishah fa afshaha.

[2] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 10/323, Kitab al-ri'aaq, bab al-ri'ya' wa'lsam'ah.

matter. This is where her faith, common sense and taqwa reveal themselves. The true Muslim woman judges fairly and is never unjust, biased or influenced by her whims, no matter what the circumstances may be. This is because she understands, from the teachings of Islam, that being just and avoiding unfairness are at the very heart of her faith, as stated by clear and unambiguous texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah and expressed in commandments that leave no room for prevarication. Allah says,

"Allah commands you to render back your trusts to whom they are due, and when you judge between man and man, that you judge with justice..." [Women, 4:58].

Justice as known by the Muslim and the Islamic society is absolute and pure justice. It is not influenced by friendship, hatred or blood ties. The Qur'an states,

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealings, and do not let the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just, that is next to piety, and fear Allah, for Allah is well acquainted with all that you do" [The Table Spread, 5:8], and, *"...Whenever you speak, speak justly, even if a near relative is concerned..."* [The Cattle, 6:152].

The Prophet [pbAbuh] set the highest example of justice when Usamah ibn Zayd came to intercede for the Makhzumi woman who had committed theft after the Prophet [pbAbuh] had decided to cut off her hand. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Do you intercede concerning one of the punishments decreed by Allah, O Usamah? By Allah, even if Fatimah the daughter of Muhammad had committed theft, I would have cut off her hand." [1]

Refrains from oppressing or mistreating others

To the extent that the Muslim woman is keen to adhere to justice in all her words and deeds. She also avoids oppression

[1] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah 10/328, Kitab al-hudud, bab qat' yad alsharif wa'l-mar'ah wa'l-shafa'ah fi'l-hadd.

[zulm], for oppression is darkness in which all oppressors will become lost, as the Prophet [pbAbuh] explained, “Keep away from oppression, for oppression is darkness on the Day of Resurrection.”^[1]

The following hadith *Qudsi* definitively and eloquently expresses Allah’s prohibition of oppression in a way that leaves no room for prevarication: “O My slaves, I have forbidden oppression for Myself and have made it forbidden amongst you, so do not oppress one another.”^[2] Life sometimes imposes on a Muslim woman the burden of having to live or mix with women whom she does not like, such as living in the same house with one of her in-laws or other women with whom she has nothing in common and does not get along well.

This is something which happens in many homes and a fact that cannot be denied, for souls are like conscripted soldiers: if they recognize one another, they will become friends, and if they dislike one another, they will go their separate ways, as the Prophet [pbAbuh] explained in the hadith whose authenticity is agreed upon. How should the Muslim woman who has received sound Islamic education conduct herself in such a situation? Should she be negative in her dealings, judgements and reactions, or should she be gentle, tactful, fair and wise, even with those whom she does not like? The answer is that the Muslim woman who is truly guided by Islam should be fair, wise, gentle and tactful. She should not expose her true feelings towards those she dislikes or expose her cold feelings towards them in the way she behaves towards them and reacts to them. She should greet such women warmly, treat them gently and speak softly to them. This is the attitude adopted by the Prophet [pbAbuh] and his companions. Abu’l-Darda’ said, “We smile at people (being gentle with them) even if in our hearts we are cursing them (their actions).”^[3]

[1] Saheeh Muslim, 16/143, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah wa'l-adab, bab tahrir al-zulm.

[2] Saheeh Muslim, 16/132, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah wa'l-adab, bab tahrir al-zulm.

[3] Fath Al-Bari, 10/528, Kitab al-adab, bab al-madarah ma'a al-nas.

Avoids rejoicing on others' misfortunes

The sincere Muslim woman who is truly infused with Islamic attitudes does not rejoice in the misfortunes of anyone, because Schadenfreude [malicious enjoyment of others' misfortunes] is a vile, hurtful attitude that should not exist in the God-fearing woman who understands the teachings of her religion. The Prophet [pbAbuh] forbade this attitude and warned against it: "Do not express malicious joy at the misfortune of your brother, for Allah will have mercy on him and inflict misfortune on you."^[1]

Shuns suspicion

Another attribute of the true Muslim woman is that she does not form unfounded suspicions about anybody. She avoids suspicion as much as possible, as Allah has commanded in the Qur'an, "*O you who believe! Avoid suspicion as much [as possible]: for suspicion in some cases is a sin...*" [The Inner Apartments, 49:12]. She understands that by being suspicious of others she may fall into sin, especially if she allows her imagination free rein to dream up possibilities and illusions and accuses them of shameful deeds of which they are innocent. This is the evil suspicion that is forbidden in Islam. The Prophet [pbAbuh] issued a stern warning against suspicion and speculation that has no foundation in reality. He said, "Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the falsest of speech."^[2]

Shuns backbiting and spreading malicious gossip

The Muslim woman who truly understands the teachings of Islam is conscious of Allah, fearing Him in secret and in open. She carefully avoids uttering any word of slander or malicious gossip that could anger her Lord and include her among those spreaders of malicious gossip who are severely condemned in the Qur'an and Sunnah. When she reads the words of Allah:

[1] Reported by Tirmidhi, 4/662, Kitab sifat al-qiyamah, 54. He said it is a *hassan Saheeh* hadith.

[2] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 13/109, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah, bab ma la yajuz min al-zann.

“...Nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, you would abhor it...But fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful” [The Inner Apartments, 49:12], she is filled with revulsion for the hateful crime of gossip, which is likened to the eating of her dead sister’s flesh.

Therefore, she hastens to repent, as Allah commands at the end of the verse, encouraging the one who has fallen into the error of backbiting to repent quickly from it. She heeds the words of the Prophet [pbAbuh], who said, “The Muslim is the one from whose tongue and whose hand the Muslims are safe.” ^[1] So she feels that gossip is a sin which does not befit the Muslim woman who has uttered the words of the Shahadah and that the woman who is used to gossip in social gatherings is not among the righteous Muslim women.

Aisha said, “I said to the Prophet [pbAbuh], ‘It is enough for you that Safiyyah is such-and-such.’” The narrators said that she meant she was short of stature. The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “You have spoken a word that, if it were to mix with the waters of the sea, it would contaminate them.”^[2]

Shuns cursing and foul language

The Muslim woman who has absorbed the good manners taught by Islam never utters obscene language or foul words or offends people with curses and insults. This is because she knows that the moral teachings of Islam completely forbid all such talk. Cursing is seen as a sin that damages the quality of a person’s adherence to Islam, and the foul-mouthed person is intensely disliked by Allah.

Ibn Mas’ud said, “The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, ‘Cursing a Muslim is a sin and killing him is kufr (unbelief).’” ^[3] The Prophet

[1] Saheeh Muslim, 2/12, Kitab al-iman, bab bayan tafadul Al-Islam.

[2] Reported by Abu Dawud, 4/371, Kitab al-adab, bab fi'l-ghibah; Tirmidhi, 4/660, Kitab sifat al-qiyamah, 51; he said it is a hassan Saheeh hadith.

[3] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 1/76, Kitab al-iman, bab 'alamat al-nifaq.

[pbAbuh] said, “Allah does not love anyone who is foulmouthed and obscene.” [1] “Allah hates the disgusting, foul-mouthed person.” [2] It is a quality that does not befit the Muslim woman who has been guided by the truth of Islam and whose heart has been filled with the sweetness of faith. Consequently, she keeps far away from disputes and arguments in which cheap insults and curses are traded. The alert Muslim woman is further encouraged to avoid such moral decadence whenever she remembers the beautiful example set by the Prophet [pbAbuh] in all his words and deeds. It is known that he never uttered any words that could hurt a person’s feelings, damage his reputation or insult his honour.

Anas ibn Malik, who accompanied the Prophet [pbAbuh] closely for many years, said, “The Prophet [pbAbuh] never used foul language, cursed or swore. When he wanted to rebuke someone, he would say, “What is wrong with him? May his forehead be covered with dust!” [3]

Shuns ridiculing anybody

The Muslim woman whose personality has been infused with a sense of humility and resistance to pride and arrogance cannot make fun of anybody. The Qur’anic guidance which has instilled those virtues in her also protects her from scorning or despising other women. Allah says,

“O you who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: it may be that the [latter] are better than the [former]. Nor let some women laugh at others: it may be that the [latter] are better than the [former]. Nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by [offensive] nicknames: ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness, [to be used by one] after he has believed. And those who do not desist are [indeed] doing wrong” [The Inner Apartments, 49:11].

[1] Reported by Ahmad and Al-Tabarani; the men of its *isnad* (chain) are *thiqat* (reliable). See Majma' Al-Zawa'id, 8/64.

[2] Reported by Al-Tabarani; the men of its *isnad* are *thiqat* (reliable). See Majma' Al-Zawa'id, 8/64.

[3] Fath Al-Bari, 10/452, Kitab al-adab, bab lam yakun Al-Nabi fashishan wala mutafahhishan.

Gentle and caring towards people

It is in the nature of women to be gentle and kind, which is more befitting to them. This is why women are known as the “fairer sex”. The Muslim woman who has truly been guided by Islam is, even more, kind and gentle towards the women around her because gentleness and kindness are characteristics that Allah loves in His believing servants and which make the one who possesses them dear to others. Allah says,

“Nor can goodness and evil be equal. Repel [evil] with what is better. Then will he between whom and you was hatred become as he were your friend and intimate! And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint—none but persons of the greatest good fortune” [Explained in Detail, 41:34-35].

Many verses and hadiths reinforce the message that gentleness and kindness are to be encouraged and that they are glorious virtues that should prevail in the Muslim community and characterize every Muslim member of that community who truly understands the guidance of Islam. It is sufficient for the Muslim woman to know that kindness is one of the attributes of Allah that He has encouraged His servants to adopt in all their affairs. “Allah is Kind and loves kindness in all affairs.” [1]

Compassionate and merciful

The Muslim woman who truly understands the teachings of Islam is compassionate and merciful, for she understands that the compassion of people on earth will cause the mercy of heaven to be showered upon them. She knows that the one who does not show compassion towards others will not receive the mercy of Allah and that the mercy of Allah is not withheld except from the one who is lost and doomed.

The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “Have compassion on those who are on earth so that the One Who is in heaven will have mercy on

[1] Al- Bukhari and Muslim. See Riyad Al-Salihin, 340, Bab al-hilm wa'l-anah wa'l-rifq.

you.” [1] “Whoever does not show compassion to people, Allah will not show mercy to him.” [2] “Compassion is not taken away except from the one who is doomed.” [3] The true Muslim woman does not limit her compassion only to her family, children, relatives and friends, but she extends it to include all people.

This is in accordance with the teachings of the Prophet [pbAbuh] which include all people and make compassion a condition of faith: “You will not believe until you have compassion towards one another.” They said, “O Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh], all of us are compassionate.” He said, “It is not the compassion of any of you towards his friend, but it is the compassion towards all people and the compassion towards the common folk.” [4]

Strives to benefit people and seeks their protection from harm

The Muslim woman who has been truly guided by Islam is keen to be constructive and active in good and beneficial deeds, not only for herself but for all people. So she always looks for opportunities to do good and hastens to do as much as she can, in obedience to the words of the Qur’an: “...*And do good, that you may prosper*” [The Pilgrimage, 22:77].

She knows that doing good to others is an act of worship, so long as it is done purely for the sake of Allah. The door to good deeds is open to all Muslims, to enter whenever they wish and earn the mercy and pleasure of Allah.

There are many aspects to goodness and piety, and they take many forms. Goodness includes all those who work for the sake of Allah, and any good deed that is done for the sake of Allah will be

[1] Reported by Al-Tabarani; the men of its *isnad* are *rijal al-Sabeeh* (authentic and reliable men). See Majma' Al-Zawa'id, 8/187, Bab rahmat al-nas.

[2] Reported with a *bassan isnad* (a good chain) by Al-Tabarani. See Majma' Al-Zawa'id, 8/187, Bab rahmat al-nas.

[3] Reported by Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, 1/466, Bab irham man fi'l-ard.

[4] Reported by Al-Tabarani; the men of its *isnad* are *rijal al-Sabeeh*. See Majma' Al-Zawa'id, 8/186, Bab rahmat al-nas.

rewarded as an act of charity [sadaqah] in the record of their deeds: "Every good deed is a sadaqah," ^[1] and, "A good word is sadaqah."^[2]

Helps to alleviate the burden of the debtor

The true Muslim woman is distinguished by the nature of her moral and psychological make-up and by her tolerant and easy-going personality. Therefore, if she is owed anything by her sister and her sister is in difficulty when the time comes to pay the debt, she postpones payment until another time, until the period of hardship is over, in obedience to the words of the Qur'an. Allah says, "*If the debtor is in difficulty, grant him time till it is easy for him to repay...*" [The Cow, 2:280]. Postponing debts is a generous attitude, one that is encouraged by Islam because it brings about humane standards in one's dealing with one's brother, even if he is in debt. The Muslim woman who is infused with this humane attitude of postponing the payment of her sister's debts is acting in obedience to the commands of Allah.

In this way, she stores up righteous deeds for her Hereafter that will save her from affliction on the Day of Judgement and shade her in the shade of Allah's Throne on the Day when there is no other shade. Abu Qutadah said, "I heard Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] say, 'Whoever would like Allah to save him from the hardship of the Day of Resurrection, let him alleviate the burden of a debtor or write off [part of the debt].'"^[3] Abu [Hurairah said, "Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] said, 'Whoever allows a debtor to postpone payment or writes off part of the debt, Allah will place him under the shade of His Throne on the Day of Resurrection, the Day when there will be no shade except His.'"^[4]

[1] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 6/142, Kitab al-zakat, bab kullu ma'ruf sadaqah.

[2] From a hadith whose authenticity is the conditions of Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 6/145, Kitab al-zakat, bab kullu ma'ruf sadaqah.

[3] Saheeh Muslim, 10/227, Kitab al-musaqah wa'l-muzari'ah, bab fadl inzar al-mu'sir.

[4] A *bassan Saheeb* hadith, narrated by Tirmidhi, 3/590, in Kitab al-buyu', bab ma ja'a fi inzar al-mu'sir.

Generous

One of the characteristics of the Muslim woman who adheres to the teachings of Islam is that she is generous and gives freely; her hands are always stretched forth to give to those who are in need. Whenever she hears the call of one who is in difficulty or whenever it is appropriate to give generously, she responds to the need. She is certain that whatever she gives will not go to waste, for it is recorded with One Who has full knowledge of all things. He says,

“...And whatever good you give, be assured that Allah knows it well” [The Cow, 2:273]. She also believes, when she spends her money generously, that whatever she spends will come back to her manifold, and that Allah will multiply its return in this world and the next. Allah (Glorified be He) says,

“The parable of those who spend their substance in the way of Allah is that of a grain of corn: it grows seven ears, and each ear has a hundred grains. Allah gives manifold increase to whom He pleases, and Allah cares for all and He knows all things” [The Cow, 2:261], and,

“...And nothing do you spend in the least [in His Cause] but He replaces it...” [The City of Saba, 34:39], as well as,

“...Whatever good you give benefits your own souls, as long as you only do so seeking the ‘face’ (pleasure) of Allah. Whatever good you give, shall be rendered back to you, and you shall not be dealt with unjustly” [The Cow, 2:272].

She also knows that if she is not saved from the meanness of her own nature and her desire to hoard wealth and treasure, she will eventually lose her wealth and it will be wasted, as the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “Every morning that the slaves of Allah get up, two angels come down. One of them says, ‘O Allah, give compensation to the one who spends,’ and the other says, ‘O Allah, cause loss to the one who is stingy.’”^[1]

[1] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 6/155, Kitab al-zakat, bab ma yukrah min imsak al-mal.

Responds to the Prophet's teachings:

“Protect yourselves from the Fire, even if it is with half a date”^[1] “O Aisha, protect yourself from the Fire, even if it is only with half a date, for it can benefit a hungry person as much as one who has enough to eat.”^[2]

The Muslim woman may give charity with whatever she possesses of the food she has at home or her husband's money, so long as he is happy about her doing so. In this case, she will be rewarded for what she spends and her husband will be rewarded for what he has earned. The same applies to a trustee, as is stated in several hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others. For example: “If a woman gives in charity from the food of her house [according to a report given by Muslim: from the house of her husband] without spending in such a way as could cause ruin to her husband, she will be rewarded for what he earns. The same applies to a trustee. The reward of any one of them will not detract from the reward of another.”^[3]

Islam wants the Muslims, men and women, to be constructive, beneficial members of their societies, always helping those who are deprived and destitute to the best of their abilities. Every good deed is described as an act of charity [*sadaqah*], as the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “Every Muslim must give charity.” They said, “O Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh], what if he cannot do that?” He said, “Then let him help one who is in desperate need.” And he said, “Then let him do good and refrain from doing evil, and that will be an act of charity on his part.”^[4]

Shuns reminding beneficiaries of her charity

If Allah enables the Muslim woman to give generously, she should not fall into the sin of reminding people of her generosity

[1] See Fath Al-Bari, 3/283, Kitab al-zakat, bab ittaqu al-nar wa law bi shiqq tamarah.

[2] Reported with a *Saheeh isnad* by Ahmad, 6/79.

[3] Fath Al-Bari, 3/293, Kitab al-zakat, bab man amara khadimahu bi'l-sadaqah.

[4] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 6/143, Kitab al-zakat, bab kullu ma'rufin sadaqah.

or harming them. She should be keen to keep her gifts pure and sincerely for the sake of Allah so that she will be one of those whom Allah has described in the Qur'an. Allah says, *"Those who spend their substance in the cause of Allah and follow not up to their gifts with reminders of their generosity or with injury—for them their reward is with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve"* [The Cow, 2:262].

The Muslim woman does not forget that there is nothing more likely to cancel out good deeds and destroy the reward of charity than reminding others of the charity or harming them. Allah warns the believers against these deeds in such a way that the believer is shaken and would not even think of reminding others of his charity or harming them: *"O you who believe! Cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury..."* [The Cow, 2:264].

Patient

The Muslim woman who is truly guided by Islam and who is infused with its noble characteristics trains herself to be patient, to control her anger, to forgive and to respond to an evil deed with something better, in accordance with the words of the Qur'an: *"...Who restrain anger and pardon [all] men—for Allah loves those who do good"* [The Family of 'Imran, 3:134], and *"Nor can goodness and evil be equal. Repel [evil] with what is better, then will be between whom and you was hatred become as he were your friend and intimate! And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint—none but persons of the greatest good fortune"* [Explained in Detail, 41:34-35].

Self-restraint at the time of anger and adopting a calm and patient attitude are among the most beautiful qualities of Muslim men and women that Allah loves to see in His believing slaves. This is what was stated by the Prophet [pbAbuh] in the hadith narrated by Ibn 'Abbas: "The Prophet [pbAbuh] said to Ashajj 'Abd al-Qays, 'You have two qualities that Allah loves: patience and deliberation.'" [1]

[1] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 6/142, Kitab al-zakat, bab kullu ma'rufin sadaqah.

Tolerant and does not bear hatreds

The Muslim woman does not bear grudges and resentment has no room in her heart. This is because Islam has uprooted hatred from her heart, extinguished the flames of anger, cleansed her soul of enmity, and planted the seeds of sisterly love, tolerance and forgiveness. Islam has uncompromisingly declared war on ignorance, tribalism, hostility, enmity and revenge, and has made forgiveness, tolerance, love and kindness dear to the hearts of Muslim men and women. Allah says, “...*Who restrain anger and pardon all men—for Allah loves those who do good*” [The Family of ‘Imran, 3:134].

Shuns envy

How often does the ordinary woman fall into the sin of envy when she sees many of those who are superior to her in beauty, knowledge, land or intelligence or wallowing in riches and luxury when she does not even have the smallest part of what they enjoy. The alert, truly-guided Muslim woman, however, is saved from stumbling into such error because she has learned from the teachings of Islam that everything that happens in life happens according to the will and decree of Allah. The pleasures of this life, no matter how great they may be, are nothing in comparison to the reward that Allah has prepared for those believing women who are content with what Allah has given them. The true value of a woman rests in her level of *taqwa* and good deeds, not in her transient worldly earnings. The more these values are reinforced in the woman’s soul, the purer and more tranquil her soul becomes, and she will become one of the people of Paradise who have earned the pleasure of Allah, even if her acts of worship are few.

Imam Ahmad reported, with a saheeh isnad from Anas ibn Malik, “We were sitting with the Prophet [pbAbuh] and he said, ‘One of the people of Paradise will now come to you,’ and a man of the Ansar came along, his beard dripping from his wudu’ and carrying his sandals in his left hand. The next day, the Prophet [pbAbuh] said the same thing, and the same man appeared, looking the same as he had on the previous day. On the third day,

the Prophet [pbAbuh] again said the same thing, and the same man appeared again. When the Prophet [pbAbuh] left, ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn Al-’As followed the man and said, ‘I have fallen out with my father and sworn that I will not enter his house for three [days], and I thought that I could stay with you until the time is up.’ He said, ‘That’s fine.’” Anas said, “Abdullah used to tell us how he stayed with him for those three nights and never saw the man get up to pray at night, but when he woke and turned over in his sleep, he would mention Allah and say ‘Allahu akbar,’ until he got up for salat al-fajr. ‘Abdullah said, ‘But I never heard him say anything but good. When the three days were over and I had begun to think that his deeds were nothing remarkable, I said, ‘O slave of Allah! There was no quarrel between me and my father, but I heard the Prophet [pbAbuh] say three times, “One of the people of Paradise will come to you,” and you appeared each time, so I wanted to come and stay with you to see what you did so that I could follow your example. However, I did not see you do anything out of the ordinary. What is it that has raised you to such a great status as the Prophet [pbAbuh] said?’ The man said, ‘It is only what you have seen.’ When I turned away, he called me back and said, ‘It is only what you have seen, but I do not hold anything against any Muslim in my heart, and I do not envy anyone for the blessings that Allah has bestowed on him.’ ‘Abdullah said, ‘This is what raised you to that great status, and this is what we could not achieve.’” [1]

An amiable personality

The Muslim woman is keen to be liked by others, through her good deeds and through the positive effect she has on them, as well as by having a good reputation in society. People’s love for her is a sign that Allah loves her too because in this case He opens people’s hearts to her and makes her accepted and well-liked by everyone she meets or hears about her. Concerning this, the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “When Allah loves a person, He calls Gabriel and says, ‘I love so-and-so, so love him.’ So Gabriel will love him and will call out in the heavens, ‘Allah loves so-and-so, so

[1] Musnad Ahmad, 3/166.

love him.' Then the people of heaven will love him, and he will be well accepted on earth. If Allah hates a person, He calls Gabriel and says, 'I hate so-and-so, so hate him.' So Gabriel will hate him and will call out in the heavens, 'Allah hates so-and-so, so hate him.' Then the people of heaven will hate him, and he will be despised on earth." [1]

Keeps secrets

It is obvious to the mature, wise Muslim woman that keeping secrets is one of the best characteristics that a person, man or woman, can have. Keeping secrets is a sign of a person's maturity, moral strength, wisdom and balanced personality. Therefore, the true Muslim woman keeps those secrets that Islam urges her to keep. This was the attitude of the best personalities of Islam and was one of their most beautiful characteristics. One of the best examples of this virtue and the determination to adhere to it among the most prominent Companions was the attitude of Abu Bakr and 'Uthman towards 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) when he offered them his daughter Hafsa's hand in marriage after she was widowed. They concealed the secret of the Prophet [pbAbuh] from him.

Imam Al-Bukhari reported from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar that 'Umar said, concerning events after his daughter Hafsa was widowed, "I met 'Uthman ibn 'Affan and offered him Hafsa's hand in marriage. I said, 'If you wish, I will marry Hafsa to you.' He said, 'I will think about it.' A few days passed, then he met me and said, 'I think that I do not wish to get married just now.' Then I met Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq and said, 'If you wish, I will marry Hafsa bint 'Umar to you.' Abu Bakr remained silent and gave no reply, and I was more upset with him than with 'Uthman. A few days passed and then the Prophet [pbAbuh] asked for her hand, and I gave her to him in marriage. Abu Bakr met me and said, 'Perhaps you were angry with me when you offered me Hafsa's hand and I did not reply.' I said, 'Yes, I was.' He said, 'Nothing

[1] Saheeh Muslim, 16/184, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah wa'l-adab, bab idha ahabba Allah 'abdan.

kept me from answering you except the fact that I knew the Prophet [pbAbuh] had mentioned her, and I could not disclose the secret of Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh]. If he had decided not to marry her, then I would have married her.”^[1]

Cheerful and humorous

The true Muslim woman is lighthearted and has a sense of humour; she is kind in her treatment of others and gentle in her speech. She does not disdain to joke with her sisters and friends on appropriate occasions. But the Muslim woman's jokes are distinguished by their legitimate Islamic nature, never sinking to the level of being cheap, dirty or stupid. The Prophet [pbAbuh] used to joke with his companions, but his jokes never went beyond the bounds of truth. It was narrated that the Companions said to the Prophet [pbAbuh], “You joke with us.” He said, “But I never say anything except the truth.”^[2] The Companions took the same approach to humour. There are many delightful and entertaining reports about the jokes exchanged between the Prophet [pbAbuh] and his companions.

Among the reports related in the books of hadith and *Sirah* (the Prophet's biography) is that which tells of how the Prophet [pbAbuh] used to joke with the small child of one of his companions, a boy called Abu 'Umayr, who had a little bird he used to play with. One day he saw the child looking sad, so he asked, “Why do I see Abu 'Umayr looking sad?” The companions told him, “The nughar^[3] which he used to play with has died, O Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh].” The Prophet [pbAbuh] began to gently joke with the child, saying, “O Abu 'Umayr, what happened to the nughayr?”^[4]

[1] Fath Al-Bari, 9/175, Kitab al-nikah and 7/317, Kitab al-baghazi, bab 'ard al-insan ibnatahu 'ala ahl al-khayr

[2] Reported by Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, 1/365, Bab al-mazah.

[3] Nughar: a small bird, like a sparrow [Author].

[4] Nughayr: diminutive of nughar [Author]. In Arabic, this is play on words because of the rhyme between the boy's name and that of the bird [Translator]. This story was narrated in Hayat Al-Sahabah, 3/149.

Avoids being over strict

Another of the qualities of the true Muslim woman is that she is not over strict and does not go to extremes concerning matters that Islam has permitted on certain occasions. Such examples include the singing that is permitted on Eid and at weddings or watching some entertaining games or sports, so long as they are not accompanied by any form of corruption that may lead to *fitnah* (temptation). Although she may accept to watch or join in entertainment on certain occasions, she does not make this her main concern in life. She follows the teachings of Islam, which permit fun and entertainment on some occasions, as is reported in several *sabeeh* hadith.

In Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Aisha is reported to have arranged a marriage for a woman who was an orphan under her care to a man of the Ansar. The Prophet [pbAbuh] asked her, “O Aisha, what sort of fun and entertainment do you have? For the Ansar love fun and entertainment.” [1]

Moderate in clothing and appearance

The Muslim woman who understands the teachings of Islam adheres to the principle of modesty in all things, and especially in the way she dresses and looks. She is keen to look smart, but without any extravagance, excess or conceit. She does not blindly follow those who throw aside new clothes after wearing them only once and exhaust themselves trying to keep up with the latest fashion, which is forever changing, as is the habit of some foolish, ignorant women who have nothing better to do. On the other hand, she does not neglect her clothes or appearance, and she tries to look smart in moderation. She abides by the limits of moderation set out in the Qur'an, which describes moderation as one of the qualities of the believing servants of Allah, men and women alike: “*Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just [balance] between those [extremes]*” [The Criterion, 25:67].

[1] Fath Al-Bari, 9/225, Kitab al-nikah, bab al-niswah allati yahdina al-mar'ah ila zawjiha.

The Muslim woman is careful not to fall victim to the enslavement of fashion and those behind it, who are people who have no fear of Allah and do not have the best interests of women, especially Muslim women, at heart. She is careful to avoid this enslavement which the Prophet [pbAbuh] warned against and told us is a source of great misery, “Wretched is the slave of the dinar, dirham and fancy clothes of velvet and silk! If he is given (something), he is pleased, and if he is not given, he is displeased.”^[1]

Concerned about Muslims affairs

The Muslim woman who truly understands the teachings of Islam is not concerned only with her own household, husband and children; she takes an interest in the affairs of the Muslims in general. By doing so, she is following the guidance of Islam which counts all Muslims as a single brotherhood and compares them, because of their mutual love, affection and compassion, to a single body; if one part of it suffers, the rest of the body will stay awake in pain. ^[2] Islam also likens the believers to a solid structure, in which some bricks support others. ^[3]

Honours her guests

The true Muslim woman is happy to welcome guests and hastens to honour them, in response to the call of faith in Allah and the Last Day. This is because the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honour his guest.” ^[4] The Muslim woman who honours her guest thus confirms that she is a believer in Allah and the Last Day. Therefore, this honouring of the guest is referred to as a reward that is given to the guest as if thanking him for the opportunity he has given to his host to do a good deed, put his faith into practice,

[1] Fath Al-Bari, 6/81, Kitab al-jihad, bab al-hirasah fi'l-ghazu fi sabil-Allah.

[2] Saheeh Muslim, 16/140, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah wa'l-adab, bab tarahum al-mu'minin wa ta'atufihim.

[3] Saheeh Muslim, 16/139, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah wa'l-adab, bab tarahum al-mu'minin wa ta'atufihim.

[4] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 14/312, Kitab al-riqaq, bab hifz al-lisan.

and please Allah. This hadith states: “The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ‘Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honour his guest by giving him his reward.’ They (the Companions) asked, ‘What is his reward, O Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh]?’ He said, ‘One day and one night. The right of hospitality is three days, and anything beyond that is an act of charity.’”^[1]

Prefers others to herself

The true Muslim woman prefers others to herself, even if she is poor and does not have much, because Islam teaches its followers to be like this. Such selflessness is a basic characteristic of a true Muslim, which distinguishes him or her from other people. The Ansar, (may Allah be pleased with them) were the first pioneers in selflessness, after the Prophet [pbAbuh] himself. A verse of the Qur’an was revealed commending their unique selflessness, which remains for all time a shining example to humanity of how generosity and selflessness should be. They welcomed their *Muhajir* brothers, who had nothing, and gave them everything. Allah (Glorified be He) says, “*But those who before them, who had homes [in Madinah] and had adopted the Faith, show their affection to such as came to them for refuge. They entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the [latter], but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their [own lot]. And those who are saved from the covetousness of their own souls, they are the ones that achieve prosperity*” [The Exile, 59: 9].

Keeps Islamic standards in her customs and habits.

The Muslim woman who has insight into the rulings of Islam does not accept every tradition and custom that is widely accepted by others, for there may be customs that are derived from ancient or modern *jahiliyyah* (times of ignorance) traditions which go against Islam. These are unacceptable to Muslim women, even if everybody else unanimously accepts them. The Muslim woman does not decorate her house with statues or pictures [of animate objects], neither does she keep a dog at home, unless it is a guard

dog because the Prophet [pbAbuh] has forbidden all of that. The saheeh hadith on this matter is very emphatic in their prohibition, and there is no room for prevarication or excuses: Ibn 'Umar reported that the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, "Those who make these images will be punished on the Day of Resurrection and will be told, 'Give life to that which you have created.'" [1]

Follows Islamic manners in eating and drinking

The alert Muslim woman is distinguished by her keenness to follow Islamic etiquette in the way she eats and drinks. If you were to see her at the table eating food or if you saw the way she sets the table, you would know her by the Islamic manners that she has adopted in the way she eats drinks and sets the table. She does not begin to eat until she has mentioned the name of Allah, and she eats with her right hand from the food directly in front of her, according to the teaching of the Prophet [pbAbuh]: "Mention the name of Allah, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is directly in front of you." [2]

If she forgets to mention the name of Allah at the beginning of her meal, she will rectify that by saying: "*Bismillahi awwalahu wa akhirahu* [in the name of Allah at its beginning and at its end]," as is taught in the hadith narrated by Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her). Aisha related that Allah's Messenger [pbAbuh] said, "Whenever any of you eats, let him mention the name of Allah, may He be glorified. If he forgets to mention the name of Allah at the beginning, let him say, '*Bismillahi awwalahu wa akhirahu*.'" [3]

Spreads the greeting of Islam

One of the distinctive aspects of the Muslim woman's social conduct is her insistence on the greeting of Islam, which she gives to every Muslim man and woman she meets. This is following the

[1] (Al-Bukhari and Muslim), See Riyad Al-Salihin, 741, Kitab al-umur al-munhi 'anha, bab tahrir al-suwar.

[2] (Al-Bukhari and Muslim), See Riyad Al-Salihin, 394, Kitab adab al-ta'am, bab al-tasmiyah fi awwalihi al-hamd fi akhirihi.

[3] Reported by Abu Dawud, 3/475, Kitab al-at'imah, bab al-tasmiyah; Tirmidhi, 4/288, Kitab al-at'imah, bab ma ja'a fi'l-tasmiyah 'ala'l-ta'am.

rules of giving salam outlined by Islam, which commands us in several verses and hadith to spread salam.

In Islam, greeting with salam is a clearly defined etiquette which has been commanded by Almighty Allah in His Book, and rules and regulations concerning this greeting have been set out in numerous hadith to which the scholars of hadith devoted entire chapters called *kitab al-salam* or *bab al-salam*. Allah commanded the Muslims to greet one another with salam in clear, definitive terms in the Qur'an, "*O you who believe! Do not enter houses other than your own until you have asked permission and saluted those in them...*" [Light, 24:27].

Shuns entering a house without permission

The Muslim woman who is truly guided by Islam does not enter a house other than her own without seeking permission and saying salam to the people who live there. This seeking permission is a divine commandment which is not to be evaded or ignored:

"O you who believe! Do not enter houses other than your own until you have asked permission and saluted those in them, that is best for you, so that you may heed [what is seemly]. If you find no one in the house, do not enter until permission is given to you. If you are asked to go back, go back, that makes for greater purity for yourselves. And Allah knows well all that you do...But when the children among you come of age, let them [also] ask for permission, as do those senior to them [in age] ..." [Light, 24:27-28, 59].

Sits in a gathering wherever she finds room

Another aspect of the manners of the true Muslim woman is that she sits wherever she finds room when she joins a gathering where other women have arrived before her and found a place to sit. This is a refined social etiquette that is derived from the example, in word and deed, of the Prophet [pbAbuh] and is a sign of good taste, sensitivity and politeness in the person who adopts it. Such a refined Muslim woman does not force her way through the group of women who are sitting or push them aside to force them to make space for her.

This politeness is following the teachings of the Prophet [pbAbuh] which he taught his companions to adopt when they joined his gathering. Jabir ibn Samurah said, “When we came to the Prophet [pbAbuh] we would sit wherever we found room.” [1]

Avoids conversing privately with another woman when a third is present

Islam came to form human beings who are sensitive and civil, with an awareness and understanding of the feelings of others. Therefore, Islam has set out social and moral guidelines that are at the heart of this religion, and we are commanded to follow these guidelines and apply them in our own lives.

One of the guidelines laid down by the Prophet [pbAbuh] is that two people should not talk between themselves when a third person is present: “If you are three, two should not converse privately to the exclusion of the other until more people join you, because that will make him (the third) sad.”[2]

Respects elders and eminent people

Islam brought a host of fine social rules, which instil an attitude of chivalry, nobility, good manners and politeness in the heart of the Muslim. One of the most prominent of these teachings is to give due respect to elders and those who deserve respect (such as scholars, etc.).

The Muslim woman who is truly guided by Islam does not neglect to follow this most essential, basic Islamic ruling, which gives the Muslim woman her genuine identity in the Islamic society. Whoever lacks this quality forfeits his or her membership in this community and no longer has the honour of belonging to the ummah of Islam, as the Prophet [pbAbuh] stated, “He does

[1] Reported by Abu Dawud, 5/164, in Kitab al-isti'dhan, 16, and Tirmidhi, 5/73, Kitab al-isti'dhan, 29. Tirmidhi said it is a *hassan Saheeb gharib* (stronger than a good hadith, with only one narrator) hadith.

[2] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 13/90, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah, bab la yunaja ithnan duna al-thalith.

not belong to my ummah who does not honour our elders, show compassion to our young ones, and pay due respect to our scholars.” [1]

Abstains from looking into other people's houses

Another of the qualities of the well-mannered Muslim woman is that she does not look around the home of her host or seek to inspect its contents. This is not the behaviour that befits the wise, decent Muslim woman; it is a hateful, undesirable trait. The Prophet [pbAbuh] warned those who let their gaze wander in gatherings and try to see things that are none of their business, and he said that it was permissible to push their eyes out: “For whoever looks into someone's home without their permission, it is permissible for the people of the house to put their eyes out.”[2]

Shuns yawning in a gathering as much as she can

The Muslim woman who is sensitive and well mannered does not yawn in a gathering if she can help it. If the urge to yawn overtakes her, then she tries to resist it as much as possible. This is what the Prophet [pbAbuh] advised, “If any of you wants to yawn, let him suppress it as much as possible.” [3] If the urge to yawn cannot be resisted, then she should cover her mouth with her hand, as the Prophet [pbAbuh] commanded, “If any of you yawns, let him cover his mouth with his hand so that the Satan does not enter.”[4]

Avoids encouraging another to divorce his wife to take her place

The true Muslim woman feels that she is living in a Muslim community, whose members are her brothers and sisters. In such a divinely guided community, cheating, deceit, treachery and all the

[1] Reported with a *hassan isnad* by Ahmad and Al-Tabarani. See Majma' Al-Zawa'id, 8/14, bab tawfir al-kabir wa rahmat al-saghir.

[2] Saheeh Muslim, 14/138, Kitab al-adab, bab tahrir al-nazr fi bayt ghayrihi.

[3] Fath Al-Bari, 10/611, Kitab al-adab, bab idha 'tatha'ab fa layada' yadahu 'ala fih; Saheeh Muslim, 18/123, Kitab al-zuhd, bab kirahah al-tatha'ub.

[4] Saheeh Muslim, 18/122, Kitab al-zuhd, bab kirahah al-tatha'ub.

other vile attitudes that are rampant in societies that have deviated from the guidance of Allah are forbidden. One of the worst of these traits is that of the woman who looks at a married man with the intention of snatching him from his wife once they are divorced so that he will be all hers.

The true Muslim woman is the furthest moved from this vile plot, which the Prophet [pbAbuh] forbade when he forbade several other, similarly evil habits and practices. We see this in the hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim from Abu Hurairah, who said, “Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] said, ‘Do not outbid one another [to raise prices artificially]; ^[1] do not undercut one another; ^[2] a town-dweller should not sell something on behalf of a Bedouin; ³a man should not propose to a woman to whom his brother has already proposed; and a woman should not ask for the divorce of another so that she might deprive her of everything that belongs to her.’”^{[4][5]}

Chooses the work that suits her feminine nature

Islam has spared women the burden of having to work to earn a living and has made it obligatory on her father, brother, husband or other male relatives to support her. So the Muslim woman does not seek work outside the home unless there is a pressing financial need due to the lack of a relative or spouse to maintain her honourably, or her community needs her to work in a specialised area such as befits her feminine nature and will not compromise her honour or religion. Islam has made it obligatory for a man to

[1] . i.e., a person should not raise the price of something he has no intention of buying in order to mislead another [Author].

[2] i.e., do not ask a person to return something he has bought so that you may sell him something similar for a lower price [Author].

[3] i.e., he should not act as an agent for him, controlling prices in a way that harms the community [Author].

[4] i.e., she should not ask a man to divorce his wife and marry her instead, so that she will enjoy all the comforts and good treatment that were previously enjoyed by the one who is divorced [Author].

[5] Fath Al-Bari, 4/352, 353, Kitab al-buyu', bab la yabi' 'ala bay' akhihi; Saheeh Muslim, 9/198, Kitab al-nikah, bab tahrim khutbah al-rajul 'ala khutbah akhihi. This version is the one narrated by Muslim.

spend on his family and has given him the responsibility of earning the costs of living, so that his wife may devote herself to being a wife and mother and creating a joyful and pleasant atmosphere in the home, organising and running its affairs.

This is the Islamic view of women and the family, and this is the Islamic philosophy of marriage and family life. The Western philosophy of women's role, the home, the family and children is based on the opposite of this. When a girl reaches a certain age, usually seventeen years old, neither her father, her brother nor any of her male relatives are obliged to support her. She has to look for work to support herself, and to save whatever she can to offer to her future husband. If she gets married, she has to help her husband with the expenses of the home and children. When she gets old, if she is still able to earn, she must continue to work to earn a living, even if her children are rich.

No doubt, the wise Muslim woman understands the huge difference between the position of the Muslim woman and the position of women in the West. The Muslim woman is honoured, protected, and guaranteed a decent living; the Western woman works hard and is subjected to exhaustion and humiliation, especially when she reaches old age. Since the end of the last century, Western thinkers have continually complained about the plight of Western women. They have warned their people about the impending collapse of Western civilization due to women going out to work, the disintegration of the family, and the neglect of the children.

Shuns imitating men

The Muslim woman who is proud of her Islamic identity does not imitate men at all, because she knows that a woman imitating men or a man imitating women is forbidden by Islam. The wisdom and eternal law of Allah dictate that men have a character distinct from that of women, and vice versa.

This distinction is essential for both sexes because each of them has its own unique role to play in life. The distinction

between the basic functions and roles of each sex is based on the differences in character between them; in other words, men and women have different characters and personalities.

Islam put things in order when it defined the role in the life of both men and women and directed each to do that for which they were created. Going against this divinely-ordained definition is a rebellion against the laws of nature according to which Allah created man and is a distortion of the sound, original nature of man. This is surely abhorrent to both sexes, and nothing is more indicative of this than the fact that women despise those effeminate men who imitate women, and men despise those coarse, rough women who act like men. The universe cannot be cultivated and populated properly, and humanity cannot achieve true happiness unless the sexes are clearly differentiated so that each may appreciate and enjoy the unique character of the other and both may work together to achieve those aims.

For all these reasons, Islamic teachings issue a severe and clear warning to men who imitate women and women who imitate men. Ibn ‘Abbas said, “Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] cursed the men who act like women and the women who act like men.” [1]

Calls people to the truth

The true Muslim woman understands that mankind was not created in vain but was created to fulfil a purpose, which is to worship Allah: “*I have only created Jinns and men that they may serve Me*” [The Winnowing Winds, 51:56]. Worshipping Allah may be done through any positive, constructive action undertaken to cultivate and populate the world, to make the word of Allah supreme on earth, and to apply His laws in life. All of these constitute part of that truth to which Muslim men and women are required to call people.

Hence, the true Muslim woman is aware of her duty to call as many other women as possible to the truth in which she believes,

[1] See Fath Al-Bari, 10/332, Kitab al-libas, bab al-mutashabbihin bi'l-nisa' wa'lmutashabbihat bi'l-rijal.

seeking thereby the great reward which Allah has promised those who sincerely call others to the truth. The Prophet [pbAbuh] said to Ali, “By Allah, if Allah were to guide just one man through you, it would be better for you than red camels.” [1]

Enjoins the good and forbids the evil

The duty of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil [*al-amr bi'lma' ruf wa'l-nahy 'an al-munkar*] is not confined only to men; it applies equally to men and women, as is stated in the Qur'an,

“The Believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another. They enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil; they observe regular prayers, practise regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His Mercy, for Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise” [Repentance, 9:71].

Islam gave women a high social standing when it gave them this great social responsibility of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil. For the first time in history, women were to be the ones issuing instructions, whereas everywhere else, except in Islam, they had been the ones that received instructions.

In response to this responsibility, which is a great honour, the Muslim woman rises to carry out the duty of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, within the limits of what suits her feminine nature. Within the limits of her specialised field, she confronts evil—which is no small matter in the world of women—whenever she sees it, and she opposes it with reason, deliberation, wisdom and a clever, good approach. She tries to remove it with her hand, if she can and if doing so will not lead to worse consequences. If she cannot remove it by her actions, then she speaks out to explain what is right, and if she is not able to do so, then she opposes it in her heart and starts to think of ways and means of opposing and eradicating it.

These are the means of opposing evil that were set out by the Prophet [pbAbuh]: “Whoever of you sees an evil action, let him

[1] Fath Al-Bari, 7/476, Kitab al-maghazi, bab ghazwah Khaybar.

change it with his hand, and if he is not able to do so, then with his tongue, and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart—and that is the weakest of faith.” [1]

Intelligent and persuasive in her Dawah

The Muslim woman who seeks to call others to Allah is eloquent and clever in her Dawah, speaking wisely and without being pushy to those whom she calls and taking into account their intellectual levels and social positions. With this wise and good preaching, she can reach their hearts and minds. She takes the steps just as the Qur'an advises, *“Invite [all] to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching...”* [The Bee, 16:125].

The sister who is calling others is careful not to be long-winded or boring, and she avoids over-burdening her audience. She does not speak for too long or discuss matters that are difficult to understand. She introduces the idea that she wants to convey briefly and clearly, using attractive and interesting methods and presenting the information in stages so that her audience will understand it easily and will be eager to put their new knowledge into practice.

This is what the Prophet [pbAbuh] used to do in his preaching, as the great Companion ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud tells us. ‘Abdullah used to preach a little at a time to the people, every Thursday. A man said to him, “I wish that you would teach us every day.” He said, “What prevents me from doing so is the fact that I would hate to bore you. I show consideration towards you by choosing a suitable time to teach you, just as the Prophet [pbAbuh] used to do with us, for fear of making us bored.” [2]

Mixes with righteous women

In her social life, the Muslim woman seeks to make friends with righteous women. This is so that they will be close friends and

[1] Saheeh Muslim, 2/22, Kitab al-iman, bab bayan kawn al-nahy 'an al-munkar min aliman.

[2] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Riyad Al-Salihin, 374, Kitab al-adab, bab fi'l-wa'z wa'l-iqtisad fihi.

sisters to her, and she will be able to co-operate with them in righteousness, taqwa and good deeds, and in guiding and teaching other women who may have little awareness of Islam. Mixing with righteous women always brings goodness, benefits and a great reward, and deepens women's sound understanding of Islam. For this reason, it was encouraged in the Qur'an,

"And keep your soul content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face. And let not your eyes pass beyond them, seeking the pomp and glitter of this Life; nor obey any whose heart We have permitted to neglect the remembrance of Us, one who follows his desires, whose case has gone beyond all bounds" [The Cave, 18:28].

The true Muslim woman only makes friends with noble, virtuous, righteous, pious women, as the poet said, "Mixing with people of noble character, you will be counted as one of them. So do not take anyone else for a friend." The true Muslim woman does not find it difficult to mix with righteous women, even if they are apparently below her socio-economic level.

What really counts is a woman's essential personality, not her physical appearance or wealth. Musa, the Prophet of Allah [pbAbuh], followed the righteous servant so that he might learn from him, saying with all good manners and respect,

"May I follow you on the footing that you teach me something of the [higher] truth which you have been taught?" [The Cave, 18:66].

When the righteous servant answered, *"Verily, you will not be able to have patience with me!"* [Qur'an 18:67], Musa said, with all politeness and respect, *"You will find me, if Allah so wills, [truly] patient: nor shall I disobey you in aught"* [The Cave, 18:69].

When choosing friends from among the righteous women, the Muslim woman does not forget that people are like metals, some of which are precious while others are base. The Prophet [pbAbuh] explained, when describing different types of people, "People are metals, like gold and silver. The best of them at the time of *jahiliyyah* will be the best of them in Islam if they truly understand it. Souls are like conscripted soldiers: if they recognise

one another, they will become friends, and if they dislike one another, they will go their separate ways.”^[1]

Reconciles between Muslim women

The Muslim community is distinguished by the fact that it is a community in which brotherhood prevails, a society that is filled with love, communication, understanding, tolerance and purity. However, it is still a human society, and as such, it cannot be entirely free of occasional disputes and conflicts which may arise among its members from time to time and lead to division and a breaking of ties. But these disputes, which emerge sometimes in the Muslim community, soon disappear. This is because of the divine guidance that the members of this community have received, which reinforces the feelings of brotherhood, love and closeness among them and destroys the roots of hatred and enmity, and because of the good efforts for reconciliation that Islam urges its followers to make whenever there is a dispute between close friends, where Satan has caused conflict and division between them. We have seen above how Islam forbids two disputing Muslims to forsake one another for more than three days: “It is not permitted for a believer to forsake another for more than three days. If three days have passed, let him meet him and greet him with salam. If he returns the greeting, then they will both share in the reward, and if he does not return the greeting, then the one who initiated the greeting will be free of blame.”^[2]

Grateful and repays favours

One of the characteristics of the true Muslim woman is that she is faithful and loyal: she appreciates favours and thanks to the one who does them, following the command of the Prophet [pbAbuh]: “Whoever has a good turn done to him should return

[1] Saheeh Muslim, 16/185, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah wa'l-adab, bab al-arwah junud mujannadah.

[2] Reported by Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, 1/505, Bab inna al-salam yujzi min alsawm.

the favour.”^[1] “Whoever seeks refuge with Allah, then grant him protection ...and whoever does you a good turn, then return the favour.” ^[2]

Visiting the sick is one of the Islamic social customs that was established and encouraged by the Prophet [pbAbuh], who made it a duty on every Muslim man and woman and made it a right that one Muslim may expect from another. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “The rights of a Muslim over his brother are five: he should return his salam, visit the sick, attend funerals, accept invitations, and ‘bless’ a person [by saying *yarhamuk* Allah] when he sneezes.” ^[3] According to another report, the Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “The rights of the Muslim over his brother are six.” It was asked, “What are they?” The Prophet [pbAbuh] said, “When you meet him, greet him with salam; when he invites you, accept his invitation; when he seeks your advice, advise him; when he sneezes and says *alhamdu-lillah*, ‘bless’ him [by saying, ‘*Yarhamuk Allah*’]; when he is ill, visit him; and when he dies, accompany him [to his grave].” ^[4] When the Muslim woman visits the sick, she does not feel that she is merely doing a favour or trying to be nice; she feels that she is doing an Islamic duty that the Prophet [pbAbuh] urged Muslims to do: “Feed the hungry, visit the sick, and ransom the prisoners of war.” ^[5] Al-Bara’ ibn ‘Azib said, “Allah’s Messenger [pbAbuh] commanded us to visit the sick, to attend funerals, to ‘bless’ someone when he sneezes, to fulfil all oaths, to come to the aid of the oppressed, to accept invitations, and to greet everyone with *salam*.” ^[6]

[1] A *hassan jayyid gharib* (a good reliable hadith with one narrator) hadith narrated by Tirmidhi, 4/380, Kitab al-birr wa'l-silah, 87.

[2] Reported by Abu Dawud, 2/172, Kitab al-zakah; Ahmad, 2/68. Its isnad is Saheeh.

[3] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Riyad Al-Salihin, 452, Bab 'iyadah al-marid.

[4] Saheeh Muslim, 14/143, Kitab al-salam, bab min haqq Al-Muslim li'l-Muslim radd alsalam.

[5] Fath al-Bari, /517, Kitab al-at'imah, bab kulu min tayyibat ma razaqnakum.

[6] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Riyad Al-Salihin, 451, Kitab 'iyadah al-marid, bab 'iyadah almarid.

Avoids wailing over the dead

The Muslim woman who knows the teachings of her religion has insight and is balanced and self-controlled. When she is stricken by the death of one of those whom she loves, she does not let grief make her lose her senses, as is the case with shallow, ignorant women who fall apart with grief. She bears the loss with patience, hoping for the reward from Allah, and follows the guidance of Islam in her behaviour at this difficult time. She never wails over the deceased, because wailing is not an Islamic deed; it is the practice of the *kuffar* (unbelievers) and one of the customs of *jabiliyyah* (times of ignorance).

The Prophet [pbAbuh] was very explicit in his emphatic prohibition of wailing, to the extent that it was regarded as *kufur* (disbelief): “There are two qualities in people that are indicative of *kufur*: casting doubts on a person’s lineage and wailing over the dead.”^[1] The Prophet [pbAbuh] effectively excluded from the Muslim community those men and women who wail and eulogize the dead, when he said, “He is not one of us who strikes his cheeks, tears his garment, or speaks the words of *jabiliyyah*.”^[2]

Shuns attending the burial of the deceased

The Muslim woman who truly understands the teachings of Islam does not attend the burial of the deceased. This is in obedience to the command of the Prophet [pbAbuh] as reported by Umm ‘Atiyah (may Allah be pleased with her): “We were forbidden to follow the deceased to the grave (for burial), but not strictly.”^[3]

In this case, women’s position is the opposite of men’s position. Islam encourages men to attend funeral services and to

[1] Saheeh Muslim, 2/57, Kitab al-iman, bab itlaq al-kufur 'ala al-ta'an fi'l-nasab wa'l-niyahah.

[2] Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Sharh Al-Sunnah, 5/436, Kitab al-jana'iz, bab al-nahy 'an al-niyahah wa'l-nadab.

[3] Fath Al-Bari, 3/144, Kitab al-jana'iz, bab ittiba' al-nisa' al-jana'iz; Saheeh Musli, 7/2, Kitab al-jana'iz, bab nahy al-nisa' 'an ittiba' al-jana'iz

accompany the body until it is buried, but it dislikes women to accompany the body until it is buried because their presence could result in inappropriate situations that would compromise the dignity of death and the funeral rites. Accompanying the deceased until the burial offers a great lesson to those who do it. It makes them seek forgiveness for the deceased and think of the meaning of death, which touches every living thing:

“Wherever you are, death will find you, even if you are in towers built up strong and high!” [Women, 4:78].

The Prophet [pbAbuh] discouraged women from following the deceased (to bury in the grave) [made it *makruh*] but did not forbid it outright, because his discouraging it should be enough to make the obedient Muslim woman refrain from doing it. This is a sign of the strength of her Islam, her sincere obedience to Allah and His Messenger, and her willingness to adopt the attitude, which is better and more appropriate.

TRUE BELIEVERS

THEIR MANNERS AND CHARACTERS
AS DESCRIBED IN THE QUR'AN

The Glorious Qur'an describes the Muslims, i.e. the true believers, as being those who fear Allah and fear nothing else, [3:102]. They hold fast, all together, to Allah's cord, and are not divided [into sects], [3: 103]. Their lives, honour and property are sacred, [4: 92]. They do not sit (in gatherings) when Allah's attributes are being ridiculed, [4: 140]. They prefer their co-religionists when taking true friends; they do not take the unbelievers for guardians [true friends] rather than the believers, [4: 144]. Their behaviour, when giving witness, is to be upright and bear witness with justice, and they do not let hatred of a people incite them to act inequitably, [5:8]. Believers are not to ask inquisitive questions and not to put questions about things which, if declared to them, may give them trouble; but they should wait until things are revealed to them through the Qur'an, [5: 101].^[1]

Their duties to Allah are given in the following verses:

"O you who believe! Be careful of your duty to Allah and seek means of nearness to Him and strive hard in His way that you may prosper" [5: 35]. *"O you who believe! Turn sincerely to Allah [from your own passions] so that He will pardon your past evil-doings and will cause you to enter Paradise in the hereafter"* [66: 8]. Believers' exalted grades are described as follows: *"They are true believers whose hearts become full of loyalty when Allah is mentioned, and when His communications are recited to them they increase them in faith, and in their Lord, they wholly put their trust; those who keep up prayer and spend benevolently out of what the Almighty Allah has granted them. These are they who are true believers; they shall have from their Lord exalted grades and forgiveness and an honourable sustenance"* [8: 2-4].

[1] Just as Islam discouraged rigorous practices such as a monastic life, it also prohibited asking questions relating to details on many points which would make this or that practice obligatory and was left to individual will or circumstances of time or place.

The righteous are described as they: *“The slaves of the Beneficent are they who walk on the earth in humbleness, and when the ignorant [i.e. the foolish] address them, they say [nothing but], ‘Peace!’ And they are those who pass the night prostrating themselves before their Lord [in love, fear and hope]”* [25: 63-64].

“And they are those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, but keep always on the moderate and middle way. And they who do not worship or bow down to any but Allah and they who do not kill any soul, except in the requirement of justice” [25: 67-68]. *“And they are those who do not commit fornication”* [25: 68].

“And they are those who do not give false witness or bear witness to what is false. And when they pass by vain scenes, they pass by nobly and gentlemanly” [25: 72], i.e. they take no part in such vain sceneries.

“And they are those who, when reminded of the enjoiments of their Lord, do not fall down deaf and blind. And they who say, ‘O Our Lord! Grant us in our wives and our offspring the joy of our eyes, and make us guides to those who seek to be ‘righteous’” [25: 73, 74].

The above Qur’anic description of the righteous shows how great the transformation wrought by the advent of the Prophet was, with a people who used to be at the depth of degradation being converted into such righteous servants of the only true God, Allah. True believers are also they who should be firm against the enemies and not lose heart, but should rely on Allah for victory: *“O you who believe! When you meet a party [of the enemies] then be firm and keep remembering Allah to help you and make you victorious. And obey Allah and His Apostle and do not quarrel between yourselves, for if you do, you will be weak in heart and your power will depart; so be patient, as Allah supports those who are patient”* [8: 45, 46].

And also they are those who are not cowardly, nor weary or faint-hearted against their enemies: *“Be not slack so as to cry for peace when fighting against the enemies while you have the upper hand and Allah is with you. And He will not bring your struggle to naught”* [47: 35].

And they are those who should help each other and give asylum to those who adopt exile for the cause of Allah: *“Surely,*

those who believed and fled their homes and struggled hard in Allah's way with their property and their souls, and those who give [them] shelter and help—these are guardians of each other” [8: 72].

And they are those who do not ask for an exemption from joining the army of the Muslims when at war: “*And who do not ask leave to stay away from striving hard against the offending enemies with their property and their persons” [9: 44].*

And they are those who unite with those who are true in words and deeds: “*O you who believe! Be careful of your duty to Allah and be only with those who are truthful” [9: 119].*

And they are those who should never despair or exult: “*No evil or anything disliked befalls on the earth nor in your own souls but it is predestined and recorded before Allah brings it into existence.....so that you may not despair [of Allah's mercy] or grieve over what has escaped you. Nor should you be exultant at what Allah has granted you: Allah does not love any arrogant boaster” [57: 22, 23].*

And they are those who make peace and act equitably: “*If two parties of the believers should quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to submit to Allah's command! Then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably. Surely, Allah loves those who act equitably. The believers are but brethren—therefore, make peace between your brethren and adopt righteous conduct so that the Almighty Allah showers His blessings and mercy upon you” [49: 9-10].*

And they are those who avoid suspicion and spying: “*O you believers! Avoid most of the suspicion; for sure, suspicion is a sin, and do not spy nor let some of you backbite others” [49: 12].*

“*And they are those who remember Allah in humility” [57:16].* And they are those who are sincere lovers of truth: “*Those who believe in Allah and His Messengers are the lovers of truth and are themselves truthful and faithful” [57: 19].* And they are those who do what they say: “*O you who believe! It is most hateful in the sight of Allah that you say what you will not put into action” [Al-Saff, 61:2-3].*

Believers are those who fulfil their promise and do not simply talk without confirming by deeds what they say by their lips. And they are those who are helpers of Allah's ordinances: "*O Believers! Be helpers of Allah*" [Al-Saff, 61:14].^[1]

And they are those who put their trust wholly in Allah: "*There is no deity but Allah; therefore, let the believers put their trust in only Allah*" [64: 13].

"And who do righteous deeds" [85:11].

[1] If we seek Allah's help, we must first help Allah's cause, i.e. dedicate ourselves entirely to Him and without reserve by obeying His ordinances and forbidding what He has declared forbidden.

PRACTICAL MORALS

EXTRACTS FROM THE QUR'AN

PERSONAL MORALS

1. GENERAL INSTRUCTION:

“Ask the followers of the Remembrance, if you do not know!” [16:43].

MORAL INSTRUCTION:

“And the believers should not all go out to fight. Among every troop of them, a party only should go forth, that they (who are left behind) may gain sound knowledge in religion and that they may warn their folk when they return to them, so that they may beware....” [9: 122].

MORAL EFFORT:

“But he has not attempted the Ascent—Ah, what will convey unto you what the Ascent is! (It is) to free a slave, and to feed in the day of hunger an orphan near of kin, or some poor wretch in misery, and to be of those who believe and exhort one another to perseverance and exhort one another to pity” [90:11-17],

“As for those who strive in Our way, We will surely guide them to Our paths. And lo! Allah is with the good” [29: 69], “While as for those who walk aright, He adds to their guidance and gives them their protection (against evil)” [47: 17].

“Lo! Your effort is dispersed (toward diverse ends). As for him who gives and is dutiful (toward Allah) and believes in goodness, surely, We will ease his way unto the state of ease. But as for him who hoards and deems himself independent and disbelieves in goodness, surely, We will ease his way unto adversity” [92: 4-10],

“Allah loves the purifiers” [9: 108].

PURITY OF THE SOUL:

“And a soul and Him who perfected it, and inspired it (with the conscience of) what is wrong for it and (what is) right for it. He is indeed successful who causes it to grow, and he is indeed a failure who stunts it” [91: 9-10],

“Recite unto them the story of Abraham: When he said, ‘And abase me not on the day when they are raised, the day when wealth and sons avail not (any man) except him who brings to Allah a whole heart” [26: 72, 87-89],

“And the Garden is brought nigh for those who kept from evil, no longer distant. (And it is said), ‘That is that which you were promised. (It is) for every penitent and heedful one. Who fears the Beneficent in secret and comes with a contrite heart” [50: 31-3].

UPRIGHTNESS:

“Say (unto them O Muhammad), ‘I am only a mortal like you. It is inspired in me that your God is One God, therefore take the straight path to Him and seek forgiveness of Him. And woe unto the idolaters” [41: 6],

“So you tread the straight path as you are commanded, and those who turn (unto Allah) with you, and do not transgress. Lo! He is Seer of what you do” [11: 112].

CHASTITY, DECENCY AND AVERTING THE GAZE:

“Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and be modest. That is purer for them. Lo! Allah is Aware of what they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest and to display of their adornment only that which is apparent and to draw their veils over their bosoms and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands or fathers or husbands’ fathers, or their sons or their husbands’ sons, or their brothers or their brothers’ sons or sisters’ sons, or their women, or their slaves, or male attendants who lack vigour, or children who know nothing of women’s nakedness. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what

they hide of their adornment. And turn unto Allah altogether, O believers, so that you may succeed..." [24: 30-31],

"And let those who cannot find a match keep chaste till Allah gives them independence by His grace" [24: 33]. "As for women past child-bearing, who have no hope of marriage, it is no sin for them if they discard their (outer) clothing in such a way as not to show adornment. But to refrain is better for them. Allah is the Hearer, Knower..." [24: 60].

"Successful indeed are the believers; who are humble in their prayers; and who shun vain conversation; and who are payers of the poor-due; and who guard their modesty, except from their wives or the (slaves) that their right hands possess, for then they are not blameworthy. But whoever craves beyond that, such are transgressors" [23: 1-7].

"O you wives of the Prophet! You are not like any other woman. If you keep your duty (to Allah), then be not soft of speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease aspire (to you), but utter customary speech. And stay in your houses. Do not bedizen yourselves with the bedizenment of the time of ignorance. Be regular in prayer and pay the poor-due and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah's wish is only to remove uncleanness far from you, O folk of the household, and to cleanse you with a thorough cleansing" [33: 30-33].

RESTRAINT OF DESIRES:

"But as for him who feared to stand before his Lord and restrained his soul from lust, Lo! The Garden will be his home" [79: 40-41], "...and do not follow desire so that it beguiles you from the way of Allah" [38: 26], "So do not follow passion lest you lapse (from the truth), and if you lapse or fall away, then lo! Allah is ever Informed of what you do" [4: 135].

PERIODICAL ABSTENTION FROM FOOD AND SEX:

"O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may ward off evil; (Fast) a certain number of days, and (for) him who is sick among you or

on a journey, (the same) number of other days; and for those who can afford it, there is a ransom: the feeding of a man in need. But whoever does good of his own accord, it is better for him. And that you fast is better for you, if you did but know. The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion (of right and wrong). And whoever of you is present, let him fast the month. And whoever of you is sick or on a journey, (let him fast the same) number of other days. Allah desires for you ease; He does not desire hardship for you" [2: 183-5]. "Then strictly observe the fast till nightfall and touch them not, but be at your devotions in the mosques. These are the limits imposed by Allah, so approach them not" [2: 187].

"They question you (O Muhammad) concerning menstruation. Say, 'It is an illness, so let women alone at such times and go not in unto them till they are cleansed. And when they have purified themselves, then go in unto them as Allah hath enjoined upon you. Truly Allah loves those who turn unto Him and loves those who have a care for cleanness'" [2: 222].

RESTRAINT OF ANGER:

"A Paradise as wide as are the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who ward off (evil), those who spend (of that which Allah has given them) in ease and in adversity, those who control their wrath and are forgiving toward mankind; Allah loves the good" [3: 133-4].

SINCERITY:

"O ye who believe! Be careful of your duty to Allah and be with the truthful" [9: 119], "O ye who believe! Guard your duty to Allah and speak words straight to the point" [3370], "And whoever brings the truth and believes therein, such are the dutiful" [39: 33].

MODESTY AND GENTLENESS:

"Be modest in your bearing and subdue your voice. Lo! the harshest of all voices is the voice of the ass" [31: 19].

“The (faithful) slaves of the Beneficent are they who walk upon the earth modestly, and when the foolish ones address them, they answer, ‘Peace’” [25: 63].

CIRCUMSPECTION OF JUDGEMENT:

“O you who believe! Shun much suspicion; for lo! some suspicion is a crime” [49: 12],

“O you who believe! If a deviator brings you tidings, verify it; lest you smite some folk in ignorance and afterward repent of what you did” [49: 6].

“O you who believe! When you go forth (to fight) in the way of Allah, be careful to discriminate, and say not to one who offers you peace, ‘You are not a believer,’ seeking the chance profits of this life (so that you may despoil him). With Allah are plenteous spoils. Even thus (as he now is) were you before; but Allah has since then been gracious to you. Therefore, take care to discriminate. Allah is ever Informed of what you do” [4: 94].

FORBEARANCE WHEN IN DOUBT:

“(O man), do not follow that whereof you have no knowledge. Lo! the hearing and the sight and the heart, each of these will be questioned...” [17: 36].

CONSTANCY AND ENDURANCE:

“For the sake of Your Lord, be patient!” [74: 7], “Endure patiently (O Muhammad). Your endurance is only by (the help of) Allah” [16: 127],

“O you who believe! Endure, outdo all others in endurance, be prepared, and observe your duty to Allah, in order that you may succeed” [3: 200],

“Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while yet there has not come unto you the like of (that which came to) those who passed away before you?” [2: 214],

“Lo! We tested those who were before you. So Allah knows those who are sincere and knows those who lie” [29: 3].

“Among mankind is he who says, ‘We believe in Allah,’ but if he be made to suffer for the sake of Allah, he mistakes the persecution of mankind for Allah’s punishment” [29: 10],

“Assuredly, you will be tried in your property and in your persons, and you will hear much wrong from those who were given the Scripture before you and from the idolaters. But if you persevere and ward off (evil), then that is of the steadfast heart of things” [3: 186].

“And surely We shall try you with something of fear and hunger and loss of wealth and lives and crops, but give glad tidings to the steadfast” [2: 155].

CONFORMITY WITH GOOD EXAMPLES:

“Then have patience (O Muhammad), even as the stout of heart among the Messengers (of old) had patience” [46: 35],

“Verily, in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example for him who looks to Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much” [33: 21],

“O you who believe! Be Allah’s helpers, even as Jesus son of Mary said to the disciples, ‘Who are my helpers for Allah?’ They said, ‘We are Allah’s helpers’” [61: 14].

KEEPING TO THE MIDDLE WAY: “And you (Muhammad), do not be loud-voiced in your worship nor yet silent therein, but follow a way between” [17: 110],

“(The (faithful) slaves of the Beneficent are) those who, when they spend, are neither prodigal nor grudging; and there is ever a firm station between the two” [25: 67],

“And let not your hand be chained to your neck nor open it with a complete opening, lest you sit down rebuked, denuded...” [17: 29].

“...and He hath set the measure, that you do not exceed the measure, but observe the measure strictly, nor fall short thereof” [55: 7-9].

GOOD DEEDS:

“And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days—and His Throne was upon the water - that He might try you, which of you is best in conduct” [11: 7],

“Lo! We have placed all that is in the earth as an ornament thereof that we may try them: which of them is best in conduct” [18: 7].

“Blessed is He in Whose hand is the sovereignty, and He is able to do all things. (He) Who has created life and death that He may try you, which of you is best in conduct” [67: 1-2].

COMPETING TO DO GOOD:

“And each one has a goal toward which he turns; so vie with one another in good works” [2: 148],

“For each, We have appointed a divine law and a traced out way. Had Allah willed, He could have made you one community. But that He may try you by that which He has given you (He has made you as you are). So vie one with another in good works. Unto Allah you will all return, and He will then inform you of that wherein you differ” [5: 48].

THE ABILITY TO LISTEN AND CHOOSE THE BEST ADVICE:

“Therefore, give good tidings (O Muhammad) to My bondmen. Who hear advice and follow the best thereof” [39: 17-18].

PURITY OF INTENTION:

“And whatever good thing you spend, it is for yourselves, when you do not spend except in search of Allah’s pleasure” [2: 272].

“There is no good in much of their secret conferences, except (for) him who enjoins alms-giving and kindness and peacemaking among the people. Whoever does that, seeking the good pleasure of Allah, We shall bestow on him a vast reward” [4: 114].

2. PROHIBITIONS

SUICIDE, SELF-MUTILATION AND DISFIGURING ONE'S OWN BODY:

“...and be not cast by your own hands to ruin...” [2: 195], “...and kill not one another...” [4: 29],

“There is no altering (the laws of) Allah’s creation” [30: 30],

“(Satan said,) ‘And surely, I will command them and they will change Allah’s creation.’ Whoever chooses Satan for a patron instead of Allah is verily a loser, and his loss is manifest” [4: 119].

LYING:

“...and shun lying speech” [22: 30], “It is those who believe not in Allah’s revelations that invent falsehood; and it is they who are the liars” [16: 105].

HYPOCRISY:

“And of mankind there is he whose conversation on the life of this world pleases you (Muhammad), and he calls Allah to witness as to that which is in his heart; yet he is the most rigid of opponents. And when it is said to him, ‘Be careful of your duty to Allah,’ pride takes him to sin. Hell will settle his account, an evil resting place” [2: 204-6].

ACTIONS THAT CONTRADICT WORDS:

“Do you enjoin righteousness upon mankind while you yourselves forget (to practise it)? And you are readers of the Scripture! Have you then no sense?” [2: 44],

“O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not? It is most hateful in the sight of Allah that you say that which you do not” [61: 2-3].

AVARICE: “And whoever is saved from his own avarice, such are they who are successful” [59: 9],

“The devil promises you destitution and enjoins on you lewdness. But Allah promises you forgiveness from Himself with bounty.

Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing” [2: 268], “Lo! Allah does not love such as are proud and boastful. (Those) Who hoard their wealth and enjoin avarice on others” [4: 36-7].

PRODIGALITY:

“...squander not (your wealth) in wantonness. Lo! The squanderers are ever brothers of the devils” [17: 26-7].

OSTENTATION:

“Lo! Allah does not love such as are proud and boastful, ...And (also) those who spend their wealth in order to be seen of men” [4: 36, 38], “Ah, woe unto worshippers who are heedless of their prayer; who want to be seen (at worship)” [107: 4-6].

HAUGHTINESS:

“Turn not your cheek in scorn toward folk, nor walk with pertness on the land. Lo! Allah does not love each braggart boaster” [31: 18], “And walk not on the earth exultant. Lo! You can not rend the earth nor can you stretch to the height of the mountains” [17: 37].

PRIDE, VANITY AND ARROGANCE:

“Lo! He does not love the proud” [16: 23], “Have you not seen those who praise themselves for being pure? Nay, Allah purifies whom He will” [4: 49],

“He is Best Aware of you (from the time) when He created you from the earth, and when you were hidden in the bellies of your mothers. Therefore, ascribe not purity to yourselves” [53: 32].

PRIDE IN PERSONAL POWER OR KNOWLEDGE:

“Coin for them a similitude: Two men, unto one of whom We had assigned two gardens of grapes, and We had surrounded both with date-palms and had put between them tillage. Each of the gardens gave its fruit and withheld naught thereof. And We caused a river to gush forth therein. And he had fruit. And he said unto his comrade when he spoke with him, ‘I am more than you in wealth and stronger in respect of men.’ And he went into his garden, while he (thus) wronged himself. He said, ‘I do not think that all

this will ever perish. I do not think that the Hour will ever come. And if indeed I am brought back to my Lord I surely shall find better than this as a resort.' And his comrade, when he (thus) spoke with him, exclaimed, 'You disbelieve in Him Who created you of dust, then of a drop (of seed), and then fashioned you a man? But He is Allah, my Lord, and I ascribe unto my Lord no partner. If only, when you entered your garden, you had said, "That which Allah wills (will come to pass)! There is no strength save in Allah!" Though you see me as less than you in wealth and children, yet it may be that my Lord will give me better than your garden, and will send on it a bolt from heaven, and some morning it will be a smooth hillside or some morning the water thereof will be lost in the earth so that you can not search for it.' And his fruit was beset (with destruction). Then he began to wring his hands for all that he had spent upon it, when (now) it was all ruined on its trellises, and (he began) to say, 'Would that I had ascribed no partner to my Lord!"' [18: 32-42].

"He said, 'I have been given it only on account of knowledge I possess.' Did he not know that Allah had already destroyed of the generations before him men who were mightier than him in strength and greater in respect of following?" [28: 78].

"And when their Messengers brought them clear proofs (of Allah's Sovereignty), they exulted in the knowledge they (themselves) possessed. And that which they were wont to mock befell them" [40: 83].

ATTACHMENT TO THIS WORLD:

"Restrain yourself along with those who cry unto their Lord at morn and evening, seeking His pleasure; and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp of the life of the world" [18: 28],

"And strain not your eyes toward that which We cause some groups among them to enjoy, the flower of the life of the world, that We may try them thereby. The provision of your Lord is better and more lasting" [20: 131].

JEALOUSY AND COVETOUSNESS:

“Or are they jealous of mankind because of that which Allah of His bounty has bestowed upon them?” [4: 54],

“And covet not the thing in which Allah has made some of you excel others. Unto men a fortune from that which they have earned, and unto women a fortune from that which they have earned. (Envy not one another) but ask Allah of His bounty” [4: 32].

POINTLESS REGRET OR EXCESSIVE REJOICING:

“...not to sorrow either for that which you missed or for that which befell you” [3: 153],

“That you grieve not for the sake of that which has escaped you, nor yet exult because of that which has been given” [57: 23].

DEBAUCHERY:

“And come not near unto adultery. Lo! It is an abomination and an evil way” [17: 32],

“The adulterer and the adulteress, scourge you each one of them (with) a hundred stripes” [24: 2].

THE USE OF WINE AND OTHER IMPURE PRACTICES:

“O you who believe! Strong drink and games of chance and idols and divining arrows are only an infamy of Satan’s handiwork. Leave them aside in order that you may succeed. Satan seeks only to cast among you enmity and hatred by means of strong drink and games of chance, and to turn you from the remembrance of Allah and from (His) worship. Will you then relinquish?” [5: 90-1].

“Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write, whom they find described in the Torah and the Gospel (which are) with them. He enjoins on them that which is right and forbids them that which is wrong” [7: 157].

“He has forbidden you only carrion, blood, swine flesh, and that which has been immolated to (the name of) any other than Allah” [2: 173].

ANY MORAL OR PHYSICAL POLLUTION:

“Allah loves the purifiers” [9: 108]. “You raiment purify, pollution shun!” [74: 4-5].

THE USE OF ILL-GOTTEN GAINS:

“O you who believe! Squander not your wealth among yourselves in vanity, but it should be trade by mutual consent, and kill not one another. Lo! Allah is ever Merciful unto you” [4: 29].

“And eat not up your property among yourselves in vanity, nor seek by it to gain the hearing of the judges that you may knowingly devour a portion of the property of others wrongfully” [2: 188].

“Those who swallow usury cannot rise up except like he who arises being deranged by the devil’s touch. That is because they say, ‘Trade is just like usury’; whereas Allah permits trade and forbids usury. He unto whom an admonition from his Lord comes and (he) refrains (in obedience thereto), he shall keep (the profits of) that which is past, and his affair (henceforth) is with Allah. As for him who returns (to usury), such are the rightful owners of the Fire. They will eternally abide therein. Allah has blighted usury and made almsgiving fruitful” [2: 275-6].

“Prove orphans till they reach the marriageable age; then, if you find them of sound judgment, deliver over unto them their fortune; and devour it not squandering and in haste lest they should grow up. Whoever (of the guardians) is rich, let him abstain generously (from taking of the property of orphans), and whoever is poor, let him take thereof in reason (for his guardianship)” [4: 6].

“Lo! Those who devour the wealth of orphans wrongfully, they do [nothing] but swallow fire into their bellies, and they will be exposed to the burning flame” [4: 10].

“Lo! Those who hide any of the Scripture which Allah has revealed and purchase a small gain therewith, they eat into their bellies nothing but Fire. Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He make them grow. Theirs will be a painful doom” [2: 174].

“Force not your slave-girls to whoredom that you may seek enjoyment of the life of the world, if they would preserve their chastity” [24: 33].

BAD MANAGEMENT:

“Give not unto the foolish (what is in) your (keeping of their) wealth which Allah has given you to maintain” [4: 5].

3. PERMISSIBLES

AUTHORISATION OF THE MODERATE USE OF GOOD THINGS:

“O you who believe! Forbid not the good things which Allah has made lawful for you, and transgress not. Lo! Allah does not love transgressors. Eat of that which Allah has bestowed on you as food, lawful and good.” [5: 87-8].

“O you who believe! Eat of the good things wherewith We have provided you, and render thanks to Allah if it is (indeed) He whom you worship” [2: 172]. “O Children of Adam! We have revealed unto you raiment to conceal your shame and splendid vesture, but the raiment of restraint from evil, that is best” [7: 26].

“O Children of Adam! Look to your adornment at every place of worship and eat and drink, but do not be prodigal. Lo! He (Allah) does not love the prodigals” [7: 31].

4- DEROGATION AT TIMES OF NECESSITY

“...when He has explained to you that which is forbidden to you, except what you may be compelled to [eat]” [6: 119].

“He has forbidden you only carrion, blood, swine flesh, and that which has been immolated to (the name of) any other than Allah. But he who is driven by necessity, neither craving nor transgressing, it is no sin for him. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful” [2: 173].

FAMILY MORALS

1. DUTIES TOWARDS FOREBEARS AND OFFSPRING: BENEVOLENCE, HUMILITY AND OBEDIENCE TO ONE'S PARENTS:

“(Show) kindness to parents and near kindred” [4: 36]. “Your Lord has decreed that you worship none except Him and (that you show) kindness to parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age with you, do not say, “Fie” to them nor repulse them, but speak to them a gracious word. And lower unto them the wing of submission through mercy, and say, ‘My Lord! Have mercy on them both as they did care for me when I was little’” [17: 23-4].

“And We have enjoined upon man concerning his parents—His mother bears him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years—Give thanks to Me and to your parents. Unto Me is the journeying. But if they strive with you to make you ascribe to Me as partner that of which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them; (but) keep their company kindly in this world” [31: 14-15].

RESPECT FOR THE LIVES OF CHILDREN:

“...and that you do not slay your children because of penury—We provide for you and for them” [6: 151].

“Do not slay your children, fearing a fall to poverty. We shall provide for them and for you. Lo! the slaying of them is a great sin” [17: 31].

“And when the girl child that was buried alive is asked for what sin she was slain, (Then) every soul will know what it has made ready” [81: 8-14].

THE MORAL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND THE FAMILY IN GENERAL:

“O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks close round them (when they go out)” [33: 59]. “O you who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire for which the fuel is men and stones” [66: 6].

2. DUTIES TOWARDS ONE'S SPOUSE

A. THE CONSTITUTION OF PROHIBITED MARRIAGE UNIONS:

“And do not marry those women whom your fathers married” [4: 22], “Forbidden unto you are your mothers, and your daughters, and your sisters, and your father’s sisters, and your mother’s sisters, and your brother’s daughters, and your sister’s daughters, and your foster mothers, and your foster sisters, and your mothers-in-law, and your stepdaughters who are under your protection (born) of your women unto whom you have gone in but if you have not gone in unto them, then it is no sin for you (to marry their daughters), and the wives of your sons who (spring) from your own loins. And (it is forbidden unto you) that you should have two sisters together, except what has already happened (of that nature) in the past. Lo! Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful. And all married women (are forbidden to you) except those) whom your right hands possess” [4: 23-4].

“Do not wed idolatresses till they believe; for Lo! a believing bondwoman is better than an idolatress though she pleases you; and do not give your daughters in marriage to idolaters till they (the idolaters) believe, for Lo! a believing slave is better than an idolater though he pleases you. These invite unto the Fire and Allah invites unto the Garden and unto forgiveness, by His grace, and He clarifies His signs for the people so that they may take admonition” [2: 221].

“The adulterer shall not marry except an adulteress or an idolatress, and the adulteress none shall marry except an adulterer or an idolater. All that is forbidden unto believers” [24: 3].

PERMISSIBLE UNIONS:

“And all married women (are forbidden to you) except those whom your right hands possess. It is a decree of Allah for you. Lawful to you are all beyond those mentioned, so that you seek them with your wealth in honest wedlock, not debauchery. And those of whom you seek union with (by marrying them), give to them their dowries as a duty. And there is no sin for you in what

you do by mutual agreement after the duty (has been done). Lo! Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. And whoever is not able to afford to marry free, believing women, let them marry from the believing maids whom your right hands possess. Allah knows best (concerning) your faith. You (proceed) one from another; so wed them by permission of their folk, and give unto them their portions in kindness, they being honest, not debauched nor of loose conduct. And if when they are honourably married they commit lewdness, they shall incur half of the punishment (prescribed) for free women (in that case). This is for him among you who fears to commit sin. But to have patience would be better for you” [4: 24-5].

“This day are (all) good things made lawful for you. And so are the virtuous women of the believers and the virtuous women of those who received the Scripture before you (lawful for you) ...” [5: 5]

REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED QUALITIES:

“So good women are obedient, guarding in secret that which Allah has guarded” [4: 34]. “It may happen that his Lord, if he divorces you, will give him in your stead wives better than you, submissive (to Allah), believing, pious, penitent, inclined to fasting, widows and maids” [66: 5].

“O Prophet! Say to your wives, ‘If you desire the life of the world and its adornment, come! I will make you content and will release you with a fair release. But if you desire Allah and His Messenger and the abode of the Hereafter, then lo! Allah has prepared for the good among you an immense reward” [33: 28-29].

FREE AND MUTUAL CONSENT:

“O you who believe! It is not lawful for you to forcibly inherit the women (of your deceased kinsmen)” [4: 19].

“And when you have divorced women and they reach their term, place not difficulties in the way of their marrying their husbands if it is agreed between them in kindness” [2: 232].

DOWRY:

“And give to the women (whom you marry), the gift of their marriage portions; but if they of their own accord remit to you a part thereof, then you are welcome to absorb it (in your wealth)” [4: 4].

“And so are the virtuous women of the believers and the virtuous women of those who received the Scripture before you (lawful for you), when you give them their marriage portions...” [5: 5].

“And those of whom you seek union with (by marrying them), give to them their dowries as a duty. And there is no sin for you in what you do by mutual agreement after the duty (has been done)” [4: 24].

CONDITIONS FOR POLYGAMY:

“And if you fear that you will not deal fairly with the orphans, marry of the women who seem good to you, two or three or four; and if you fear that you cannot do justice (to so many), then (only) one or (the captives) that your right hands possess. Thus, it is more likely that you will not do injustice” [4: 3].

B. MARRIED LIFE

SACRED AND VENERATED BONDS:

“O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain has spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward Allah, in Whom you claim (your rights) of one another, and toward the wombs (that bare you). Lo! Allah is watchful over you” [4: 1].

THE AIMS OF MARRIAGE

INNER PEACE, AFFECTION AND COMPASSION:

“And of His signs is this: He created for you helpmates from yourselves that you might find rest in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. Lo, herein indeed are portents for folk who reflect” [30: 21].

PROPAGATION OF THE SPECIES:

“Your women are a tilth for you (to cultivate)” [2: 223]. “And Allah has given you wives of your own kind, and has given you, from your wives, sons and grandsons...” [16: 72].

EQUITY OF RIGHTS AND DUTIES:

“And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them, in kindness, and men have a degree above them” [2: 228],

“Men are in charge of women, because of the advantage Allah has granted some of them over others, and because they spend of their property (in the support of women)” [4: 34].

DISCUSSION AND MUTUAL AGREEMENT:

“Mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years; (that is) for those who wish to complete the suckling. The duty of feeding and clothing nursing mothers in a seemly manner is upon the father of the child. No one should be charged beyond his capacity. A mother should not be made to suffer because of her child, nor should he to whom the child is born (be made to suffer) because of his child. And on the (father’s) heir is incumbent the like of that (which was incumbent on the father). If they desire to wean the child by mutual consent and (after) consultation, it is no sin for them; and if you wish to give your children out to nurse, it is no sin for you, provided that you pay what is due from you in kindness” [2: 233].

HUMANE CONSULTATION: “...and consult together in kindness...” [65: 6].

CONSORT IN KINDNESS, EVEN AT TIMES OF HATRED:

“...But consort with them in kindness, for if you hate them it may happen that you hate a thing wherein Allah has placed much good” [4: 19]. “You will not be able to deal equally between (your) wives, however much you wish (to do so): But turn not altogether away (from one), leaving her as in suspense. If you do good and keep from evil, Lo! Allah is ever All-Forgiving, All-Merciful” [4: 129].

RECONCILIATION IN CASES OF CONFLICT:

“If a woman fears ill-treatment from her husband or desertion, it is no sin for them twain if they make terms of peace between themselves. Peace is better. But greed has been made present in the minds (of men)” [4: 128].

ARBITRATION:

“And if you fear a breach between them twain (the man and wife), appoint an arbiter from his folk and an arbiter from her folk. If they desire amendment, Allah will make them of one mind” [4: 35].

C. DIVORCE

SEPARATION AS A LAST RESORT:

“Those who forswear their wives must wait four months; then, if they change their mind, Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. And if they decide upon divorce, (let them remember that) Allah is Hearer, Knower” [2: 226-7].

WAITING PERIOD:

“Women who are divorced shall wait, keeping themselves apart, three (monthly) courses. And it is not lawful for them that they should conceal that which Allah has created in their wombs. if they are believers in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands would do better to take them back in that case, if they desire a reconciliation” [2: 228].

ACCOMMODATION AND FAIR TREATMENT, FOR HOPE OF RECONCILIATION:

“O Prophet! When you (men) put away women, put them away for their (legal) period and reckon the period, and keep your duty to Allah, your Lord. Do not expel them from their houses nor let them go forth unless they commit open immorality. Such are the limits (imposed by) Allah; and whoever transgresses Allah’s limits, he verily wrongs his soul. You do not know, it may be that Allah will afterward bring some new thing to pass” [65: 1].

“Lodge them where you dwell, according to your wealth, and harass them not so as to straiten life for them. And if they are with child, then spend for them till they bring forth their burden. Then, if they give suck for you, give them their due payment and consult together in kindness; but if you make difficulties for one another, then let some other woman give suck for him (the father of the child)” [65: 6].

THERE IS NO OBLIGATORY WAITING PERIOD FOR A WOMAN DIVORCED BEFORE COHABITATION:

“O you who believe! If you wed believing women and divorce them before you have touched them, then there is no period that you should reckon. But make them content and release them handsomely” [33: 49].

AFTER THE WAITING PERIOD, RECONCILE WITH GOOD INTENTIONS:

“When you have divorced women and they have reached their term, then retain them in kindness or release them in kindness. Do not retain them to their hurt so that you transgress (the limits). He who does that has wronged his soul. Make not the revelations of Allah a laughing stock (by your behaviour), but remember Allah’s grace upon you and that which He has revealed to you of the Scripture and of wisdom whereby He does exhort you. Observe your duty to Allah and know that Allah is Aware of all things” [2: 231].

OR GRANT SEPARATION TO ALLOW RE-MARRIAGE:

“And when you have divorced women and they reach their term, do not place difficulties in the way of their marrying their husbands if it is agreed between them in kindness” [2: 232].

DO NOT MAKE DEMANDS ON YOUR EX-WIFE:

“And if you wish to exchange one wife for another and you have given to one of them a sum of money (however great), take nothing from it. Would you take it by the way of calumny and open wrong?” [4: 20].

DIVORCE IS NOT BINDING UNTIL THE THIRD TIME:

“Divorce must be pronounced twice and then (a woman) must be retained in honour or released in kindness...And if he has divorced her (the third time), then she is not lawful unto him thereafter until she has wedded another husband. Then, if he (the other husband) divorces her, there is no sin for both of them that they come together again if they think that they are able to observe the limits of Allah” [2: 229-30].

COMPENSATION FOR DIVORCEES WITH NO DOWRIES:

“It is no sin for you if you divorce women while you have not yet touched them nor appointed unto them a portion. Provide for them, the rich according to his means and the straitened according to his means, a fair provision. (This is) a bounden duty for those who do good. If you divorce them before you have touched them and you have appointed to them a portion, then (pay) half of that which you appointed, unless they (the women) agree to forgo it or he agrees to forgo it in whose hand is the marriage tie. To forgo is nearer to piety. And do not forget kindness among yourselves. Allah is the Seer of what you do” [2: 236-7].

COMPENSATION FOR ALL DIVORCEES:

“For divorced women, a provision in kindness: a duty for those who ward off (evil)” [2: 241].

3. DUTIES TOWARDS CLOSE RELATIVES

SHARING ONE’S BLESSINGS:

“So give to the kinsman his due, and the needy, and the wayfarer. That is best for those who seek Allah’s pleasure. And such are they who are successful” [30: 38].

BEQUESTS:

“It is prescribed for you when death approaches one of you (and) if he leaves wealth, that he bequeaths to parents and near relatives in kindness. (This is) a duty for all those who ward off (evil)” [2: 180].

4. INHERITANCE

INHERITANCE RIGHTS ARE NOT RESERVED FOR ONLY MALES, ELDEST SONS, OR DIRECT DESCENDANTS:

“Unto the men (of a family) belongs a share of that which parents and near kindred leave, and unto the women a share of that which parents and near kindred leave, whether it be little or much, a legal share” [4: 7].

RULES OF DISTRIBUTION:

“Allah charges you concerning (the provision for) your children: to the male the equivalent of the portion of two females, and if there be women more than two, then theirs is two-thirds of the inheritance and if there be one (only) then the half. And to his parents a sixth of the inheritance, if he has a son; and if he has no son and his parents are his heirs, then to his mother appertains the third; and if he has brethren, then to his mother appertains the sixth, after any legacy he may have bequeathed or debt (has been paid). Your parents or your children, you do not know which of them is nearer to you in usefulness. It is an injunction from Allah. Lo! Allah is Knower, Wise” [4: 11].

“And unto you belongs a half of that which your wives leave, if they have no child; but if they have a child, then unto you the fourth of that which they leave, after any legacy they may have bequeathed or debt (they may have incurred has been paid). And unto them belongs the fourth of that which you leave, if you have no child; but if you have a child, then the eighth of that which you leave, after any legacy you may have bequeathed or debt (you may have incurred has been paid). And if a man or a woman have a distant heir (having left neither parent nor child) and he (or she) has a brother or a sister (only on the mother's side), then to each of them twain (the brother and the sister) the sixth, and if they be more than two, then they shall be sharers in the third, after any legacy that may have been bequeathed or debt (contracted), not injuring (the heirs by willing away more than a third of the heritage), has been paid. This is a commandment from Allah, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Forbearing” [4: 12].

“If a man dies childless and he has a sister, hers is half the heritage; and he would have inherited from her had she died childless. And if there be two sisters, then theirs are two-thirds of the heritage, and if they be brethren, men and women, to the male is the equivalent of the share of two females. Allah expounds to you so that you err not. Allah is the Knower of all things” [4: 176].

FINALLY, INHERITANCE IS A GIFT FROM ALLAH, NOT A RIGHT:

“And covet not the thing in which Allah has made some of you excel others. Unto men a fortune from that which they have earned, and unto women a fortune from that which they have earned” [4: 32].

SOCIAL MORALS

1- PROHIBITIONS

HOMICIDE:

“.... And that you do not slay the life which Allah has made sacred, except in the course of justice” [6: 151]. “For that cause We decreed for the Children of Israel that whoever kills a human being, for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind; and whoever saves the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind” [5: 32].

“It is not for a believer to kill a believer unless (it be) by mistake. He who has killed a believer by mistake must set free a believing slave and pay the blood money to the family of the killed, unless they remit it as a charity...Whoso slays a believer of set purpose, his reward is Hell, forever. Allah is wroth against him and He has cursed him and prepared for him an awful doom” [4: 92-3].

“O you who believe! Retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the murdered; the freeman for the freeman, and the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. And for him who is forgiven somewhat by his (injured) brother, prosecution according to usage and payment to him in kindness. This is an alleviation and a mercy from your Lord” [2: 178-9].

“And there is life for you in retaliation, O men of understanding, that you may ward off (evil)” [2: 179].

THEFT:

“As for the thief, both male and female, cut off their hands” [5: 38].

FRAUD:

“Woe unto the defrauders: Those who when they take the measure from mankind, demand it full, but if they measure or weigh for them, they cause them loss” [83: 1-3].

LENDING WITH INTEREST:

“O you who believe! Observe your duty to Allah and give up what remains (due to you) from usury, if you are (in truth) believers. And if you do not, then be warned of war (against you) from Allah and His Messenger. And if you repent, then you have your principal (without interest). Wrong not, and you shall not be wronged” [2: 278-9].

CHEATING OF ANY KIND:

“...do not wrong mankind in their goods...” [7: 85].

ILLEGAL GAIN OF ANY KIND:

“O you who believe! Do not squander your wealth among yourselves in vanity, but it should be a trade by mutual consent” [4: 29].

EMBEZZLING ORPHANS' PROPERTY:

“Give to orphans their wealth. Do not exchange the good for the bad (in your management thereof) nor absorb their wealth into your own wealth. Lo! that would be a great sin” [4: 2]. “...and do not devour it, squandering and in haste lest they should grow up...” [4: 6].

BETRAYAL OF TRUST AND CONFIDENCE:

“O you who believe! Do not betray Allah and His Messenger, nor knowingly betray your trusts” [8: 27].

UNJUSTIFIED INSULTS:

“And those who malign believing men and believing women undeservedly, they bear the guilt of slander and a manifest sin” [33: 58].

INIQUITY:

“And he who bears (a burden of) wrongdoing is indeed a failure (on that Day)” [20: 111]. “Lo! He does not love wrong-doers” [42: 40]. “And whoever among you does wrong, We shall make him taste great torment” [25: 19].

COMPLICITY IN SIN:

“Do not help one another in sin and transgression, but keep your duty to Allah” [5: 2].

DEFENCE OF THE GUILTY:

“And do not be a pleader for the treacherous...And plead not on behalf of (people) who deceive themselves. Lo! Allah does not love one who is treacherous and sinful” [4: 105,107].

BREAKING OF COVENANTS:

“.... and break not your oaths after the asseveration of them and after you have made Allah surety over you” [16: 91]. “Among the People of the Scripture there is he who, if you trust him with a weight of treasure, will return it to you. And among them, there is he who, if you trust him with a dinar, will not return it to you unless you keep standing over him. That is because they say, ‘We have no duty to the Gentiles.’ They knowingly speak a lie concerning Allah. Yes, (the chosen of Allah is) he who fulfils his pledge and wards off (evil), Allah loves those who ward off (evil). Lo! Those who purchase a small gain at the cost of Allah’s covenant and their oaths have no portion in the Hereafter. Allah will neither speak to them nor look upon them on the Day of Resurrection nor will He make them grow. Theirs will be a painful doom” [3: 75-77].

PERFIDY AND DECEPTION:

“Lo! Allah does not love one who is treacherous and sinful. They seek to hide from men and do not seek to hide from Allah” [4: 107-8].

DECEPTION AND CORRUPTION OF JUDGES:

“And do not consume your property among yourselves in vanity, nor seek by it to gain the hearing of the judges that you may knowingly devour a portion of the property of others wrongfully” [2: 188].

FALSE WITNESS:

“...and shun lying speech” [22: 30].

DISSIMULATION:

“Do not hide testimony. He who hides it (a testimony), verily his heart is sinful” [2: 283]. “Lo! Those who hide the proofs and the guidance which We revealed, after We had made it clear to mankind in the Scripture, such are the accursed of Allah and the accursed of those who have the power to curse” [2: 159].

ABUSE:

“Allah does not love the utterance of harsh speech except by one who has been wronged. Allah is ever Hearer, Knower. If you do good openly or keep it secret or forgive evil, Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Powerful” [4: 148-9].

MALTREATMENT OF THE POOR AND ORPHAN:

“Therefore, the orphan do not oppress. Therefore, the beggar do not drive away” [93: 9-10].

DERISION:

“O you who believe! Let not a folk deride a folk who may be better than they (are), nor let women (deride) women who may be better than they are; neither defame one another nor insult one another by nicknames. Bad is the name of lewdness after faith. And who turns not in repentance, such are evil-doers” [49: 11].

HAUGHTY BEHAVIOUR:

“Turn not your cheek in scorn toward folk, nor walk with pertness in the land. Lo! Allah does not love each braggart boaster” [31: 18].

SPYING: “...And spy not...” [49: 12].

FALSE WORDS AND CALUMNY:

“Woe unto every slandering traducer,” [104: 1], “...And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you love to eat the flesh of his dead brother?” [49: 12].

“O you who believe! When you talk privately together, do not hold private talks together [imbued] with crime, wrongdoing and disobedience toward the Messenger, but talk privately together in [a spirit of] righteousness and piety” [58: 9].

MALICIOUS RUMOURS AND COMPLICITY IN BELIEVING THEM:

“O you who believe! If a deviator brings you tidings, verify it, lest you smite some folk in ignorance and afterward repent of what you did” [49: 6].

SLANDER:

“And those who accuse honourable women but do not bring four witnesses, scourge them (with) eighty stripes and never (afterwards) accept their testimony. They indeed are evildoers—except those who afterwards repent and make amends. (For such) Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful” [24: 4-5].

“When you welcomed it with your tongues and uttered with your mouths that whereof you had no knowledge, you counted it a trifle. In the sight of Allah, it is very great. And why did you not, when you heard it, say, ‘It is not for us to speak of this. Glory be to You (O Allah); This is awful calumny.’ Allah admonishes you that you repeat not the like thereof ever, if you are (in truth) believers” [24: 15-17].

“Lo! Those who love that slander should be spread concerning those who believe, theirs will be a painful punishment in the world and the Hereafter” [24: 19]. “On the day when their tongues and

their hands and their feet testify against them as to what they used to do, on that day Allah will pay them their just due and they will know that Allah, He is the Manifest Truth” [24: 24-5].

HARMFUL INTERVENTION:

“Whoever intervenes in a good cause will have the reward thereof, and whoever intervenes in an evil cause will bear the consequence thereof. Allah oversees all things” [4: 85].

INDIFFERENCE TO PUBLIC WICKEDNESS:

“Those of the children of Israel who went astray were cursed by the tongue of David and Jesus, son of Mary. That was because they rebelled and used to transgress. They did not restrain one another from the wickedness they did. Verily, evil was that they used to do” [5: 78-9].

2. COMMANDS

RESTORE DEPOSITS:

“Lo! Allah commands you that you restore deposits to their owners” [4: 58]. “And if one of you entrusts to another, let him who is trusted deliver up that which is entrusted to him (according to the pact between them)” [2: 283].

LEGALISE TRANSACTIONS TO PREVENT DOUBT:

“O you who believe! When you contract a debt for a fixed term, record it in writing. Let a scribe record it in writing between you in (terms of) equity. No scribe should refuse to write as Allah has taught him, so let him write, and let him who incurs the debt dictate, and let him observe his duty to Allah his Lord and diminish naught thereof. But if he who owes the debt is of low understanding, weak, or unable himself to dictate, then let the guardian of his interests dictate in (terms of) equity. And call to witness, from among your men, two witnesses. And if two men be not (at hand), then a man and two women, of such as you approve as witnesses, so that if the one errs (through forgetfulness) the other will remember. And the witnesses must not refuse when they are summoned. Be not averse to writing down (the contract),

whether it be small or great, with (the record of) the term thereof. That is more equitable in the sight of Allah and more sure for testimony, and the best way of avoiding doubt between you, except only for the case when it is actual merchandise which you transfer among yourselves from hand to hand. In that case, there is no sin for you if you do not write it. And have witnesses when you sell one to another, and let no harm be done to scribe or witness. If you do (harm them), lo! It will be sinful of you. Observe your duty to Allah. Allah is teaching you. And Allah is Knower of all things. If you be on a journey and cannot find a scribe, then a pledge in hand (shall suffice). And if one of you entrusts to another, let him who is trusted deliver up that which is entrusted to him (according to the pact between them) and let him observe his duty to Allah” [2: 282-3].

FULFIL UNDERTAKINGS AND PROMISES:

“O you who believe! Keep your agreements” [5: 1], “...and keep the covenant. Lo! all covenants are accountable” [17: 34], “...but righteous is he who believes in Allah. And those who keep their treaty when they make one...” [2: 177], “But only men of understanding heed, such as keep the pact of Allah and break not the covenant” [13: 20].

GIVE TRUTHFUL TESTIMONY:

“And if you give your word, do justice thereunto, even though it be (against) a kinsman” [6: 152], “O you who believe! Be staunch in justice, witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or (your) parents or (your) kindred, whether (the case be of) a rich man or a poor man, for Allah is nearer unto both (than you are)” [4: 135].

ESTABLISH PEACE BETWEEN PEOPLE:

“The believers are naught else than brothers. Therefore, make peace between your brethren and observe your duty to Allah that haply you may obtain mercy” [49: 10]. “...so keep your duty to Allah and adjust the matter of your difference” [8: 1].

“There is no good in much of their secret conferences except (in) him who enjoins alms-giving and kindness and peace making among the people” [4: 114].

INTERCEDE ON THE BEHALF OF OTHERS IN DISPUTES:

“Whoever intervenes in a good cause will have the reward thereof...” [4: 85].

BUT NOT IN FAVOUR OF CRIMINALS:

“...And do not be a pleader for the treacherous...And plead not on behalf of (people) who deceive themselves. Lo! Allah does not love one who is treacherous and sinful” [4: 105, 107].

MUTUAL COMPASSION AND HUMILITY:

“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those with him are hard against the disbelievers and merciful among themselves” [48: 29], “Allah will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him, humble towards believers, stern towards disbelievers” [5: 54], “And to be among those who believe and exhort one another to perseverance and exhort one another to pity. Their place will be on the right hand” [90: 17-18].

GENEROSITY, ESPECIALLY TO THE WEAK:

“They ask you (O Muhammad) what they shall spend. Say, ‘That which you spend for good (must go) to parents and near kindred and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer. And whatever good you do, Lo! Allah is Aware of it’” [2: 215].

“(Show) kindness to parents and to near kindred and orphans and the needy, and to the neighbour who is of kin (to you) and the neighbour who is not of kin, and the fellow traveller and the wayfarer and (the slaves) whom your right hands possess” [4: 36].

MANAGE ORPHANS’ ESTATES:

“And they question you concerning orphans. Say, ‘To improve their lot is best. And if you mingle your affairs with theirs, they are (of course) your brothers. Allah knows him who spoils from him who improves’” [2: 220].

EMANCIPATE SLAVES:

“...but righteous is he who believes in Allah...and gives wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free” [2: 177]. “Ah, what will convey to you what the Ascent is! (It is) to free a slave” [90: 12-13].

OR FACILITATE THEIR EMANCIPATION:

“And such of your slaves as seek a writing (of emancipation), write it for them if you are aware of aught of good in them, and bestow on them of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed on you” [24: 33].

FORGIVE:

“Those who control their wrath and are forgiving towards mankind” [3: 133-4], “...when they are wroth, forgive” [42: 37].

OR AT LEAST DO NOT EXCEED THE OFFENCE IN RESPONSE:

“And those who, when great wrong is done to them, defend themselves; the requital of an ill-deed is an ill the like thereof. But whoever pardons and amends, his wage is the affair of Allah. Lo! He [Allah] does not love wrongdoers. And whoever defends himself after he has suffered wrong, for such, there is no way (of blame) against them. The way (of blame) is only against those who oppress mankind and wrongfully rebel on the earth. For such, there is a painful doom. And verily, whoever is patient and forgives—lo! That, verily, is (of) the steadfast heart of things” [42: 39-43].

REPAY EVIL WITH GOOD:

“...and overcome evil with good. Theirs will be the sequel of the (heavenly) home” [13: 22],

“The good deed and the evil deed are not alike. Repel the evil deed with one which is better, then lo! He, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a bosom friend” [41: 34].

EXHORT TO DO GOOD AND DISSUADE FROM EVIL:

“...but help you one another in righteousness and pious duties” [5: 2], “And there may spring from you a nation who invite to goodness, enjoin right conduct, and forbid indecency. Such are they who are successful” [3: 104]. “I swear by the declining day that man is running towards his ruin, except for those who believe, do good deeds, urge one another to the truth, and urge one another to steadfastness” [103: 1-3].

DISSEMINATE KNOWLEDGE:

“O, Messenger! Make known that which has been revealed to you from your Lord” [5: 67], “And the believers should not all go out to fight. From every troop of them, a party only should go forth, that they (who are left behind) may gain sound knowledge in religion and that they may warn their folk when they return to them, so that they may take warning” [9: 122].

“And (remember) when Allah laid a charge on those who had received the Scripture. (He said), ‘You are to expound it to mankind and not hide it’” [3: 187].

“Lo! Those who hide the proofs and the guidance which We revealed, after We had made it clear to mankind in the Scripture, such are accursed of Allah and accursed of those who have the power to curse” [2: 159].

FRIENDLINESS AND HOSPITALITY:

“Those who entered the city and the faith before them love these who flee to them for refuge, and find in their breasts no need for that which has been given them” [59: 9].

LOVE FOR OTHERS:

“You are those who love them, though they do not love you” [3: 119].

JUSTICE AND CHARITY EXHIBITED TOGETHER:

“Lo! Allah enjoins justice and kindness and giving to kinsfolk” [16: 90]. There are three more or less acceptable attitudes:

A) INSIST ON ONE'S RIGHTS:

“Wrong not, and ye shall not be wronged” [2: 279].

B) GENEROSITY IN TIMES OF EASE:

“To forgo is nearer to piety, and do not forget kindness among yourselves. Allah is Seer of what you do” [2: 237], “And if the debtor is in straitened circumstances, then (let there be) postponement to (the time of) ease; and that you remit the debt as almsgiving would be better for you, if you did but know” [2: 280].

C) HEROIC ALTRUISM:

“...but prefer (the fugitives) above themselves, though poverty become their lot. And whoever is saved from his own avarice, such are they who are successful” [59: 9].

THE STRICT DUTY IS TO TAKE THE MIDDLE WAY:

“And they ask you what they ought to spend. Say, “That which is superfluous” [2: 219].

GIVING IS A UNIVERSAL DUTY:

“Let him who has abundance spend of his abundance, and he whose provision is measured, let him spend of that which Allah has given him” [65: 7].

CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR GIVING CHARITY:

A) ITS BENEFICIARIES: “Say, “That which you spend for good (must go) to parents and near kindred and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer” [2: 215], “(Alms are) for the poor who are straitened for the cause of Allah, who cannot travel in the land (for trade). The unthinking man accounts them wealthy because of their restraint. You shall know them by their mark: They do not beg of men with importunity” [2: 273].

“The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and those who collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and the debtors, and for the cause of Allah, and (for) the wayfarers; a duty imposed by Allah. Allah is the Knower, Wise” [9: 60].

B) ITS INTENTION:

“And whatever good thing you spend, it is for yourselves, when you do not spend except in searching Allah’s pleasure; and whatever good thing you spend, it will be repaid to you in full, and you will not be wronged” [2: 272],

“And the likeness of those who spend their wealth in search of Allah’s pleasure and for the strengthening of their souls is as the likeness of a garden on a height. The rainstorm smites it and it brings forth its fruit twofold. And if the rainstorm smites it not, then the shower” [2: 265].

“And feed with food the needy wretch, the orphan and the prisoner, for love of Him, (saying), ‘We feed you only for the sake of Allah. We wish for no reward nor thanks from you’ [76: 5-9], ‘Far removed from it will be the righteous. Who gives his wealth that he may grow (in goodness), and none has with him any favour for reward, he only seeks the pleasure of his Lord, the Most High. He [this person] verily will be content’ [92: 17-21].

C) THE QUALITY OF THE GIFT:

“O you who believe! Spend of the good things which you have earned and of that which we bring forth from the earth for you, and seek not the bad (with intent) to spend thereof (in charity) when you would not take it for yourselves except with disdain” [2: 267]. “You will not attain to piety until you spend of that which you love” [3: 92].

D) THE MANNER OF GIVING:

I) SECRETLY IS BETTER:

“If you publish your almsgiving, it is well, but if you hide it and give it to the poor, it will be better for you, and will atone for some of your ill deeds” [2: 271].

II) WITHOUT HUMILIATING THE BENEFICIARY:

“Those who spend their wealth for the cause of Allah and afterwards make not reproach and injury to follow that which they have spent, their reward is with their Lord and there shall no fear

come upon them neither shall they grieve. A kind word with forgiveness is better than almsgiving followed by injury. Allah is Absolute, Clement. O you who believe! Do not render vain your almsgiving with reproach and injury, like him who spends his wealth only to be seen of men and believes not in Allah and the Last Day. His likeness is as the likeness of a rock whereon is the dust of the earth; a rainstorm smites it, leaving it smooth and bare. They have no control of aught of that which they have gained. Allah guides not the disbelieving folk” [2: 262-4].

“Would any of you like to have a garden of palm-trees and vines, with rivers flowing underneath it, with all kinds of fruit for him therein, and old age has stricken him and he has feeble offspring, and a fiery whirlwind strikes it, and it is (all) consumed by fire. Thus Allah makes plain His revelations to you in order that you may give thought.” [2: 266]

EXHORTATION TO LIBERALITY:

“Take alms of their wealth wherewith you may purify them...” [9: 103], “But he has not attempted the Ascent. Ah, what will convey to you what the Ascent is! (It is) to free a slave and to feed in the day of hunger an orphan near of kin or some poor wretch in misery” [90: 11-16].

“O you who believe! Spend of that wherewith We have provided you before a day comes when there will be no trafficking, nor friendship, nor intercession” [2: 254].

“And spend of that wherewith We have provided you before death comes unto one of you and he says, ‘My Lord! If only You would relieve me for a little while, then I would give alms and be among the righteous.’ But Allah relieves no soul when its term comes, and Allah is Informed of what you do” [63: 10-11].

“Who is it that will lend to Allah a goodly loan so that He may give it increase manifold?” [2: 245],

“Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and spend of that whereof He has made you trustees; and such of you as believe and spend (aright), theirs will be a great reward.” [57: 7],

“And whoever is saved from his own greed, such are the successful” [64: 16], “Those who spend their wealth by night and day, secretly and openly, verily their reward is with their Lord and there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve” [2: 274].

“The likeness of those who spend their wealth in Allah’s way is as the likeness of a grain which grows seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains. Allah gives increase manifold to whom He wills. Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing” [2: 261].

“...for Lo! Aforetime they were doers of good...And in their wealth, the beggar and the outcast had a due share” [51: 16-19].

CONDEMNATION OF HOARDING:

“Woe unto every slandering traducer, Who has gathered wealth (of this world) and arranged it. He thinks that his wealth will render him immortal. Nay, but verily he will be flung to the consuming one” [104: 1-4].

“Have you observed him who belies the religion? That is he who repels the orphan and urges not the feeding of the needy. Ah, woe unto worshippers Who are heedless of their prayer; Who would be seen (at worship) yet refuse small kindnesses!” [107: 1-7],

“And let not those who hoard up that which Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty think that it is better for them. Nay, it is worse for them. That which they hoard will be their collar on the Day of Resurrection. Allah’s is the heritage of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is Informed of what you do” [3: 180].

“Lo! you are those who are called to spend in the way of Allah, yet among you, there are some who hoard. And as for him who hoards and is stingy, he is stingy only to his soul. Allah is the Rich, and you are the poor. And if you turn away He will exchange you for some other folk, and they will not be the likes of you” [47: 38].

“They who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, unto them give tidings (O Muhammad) of a painful doom, on the day when it will (all) be heated in the fire of Hell, and their

foreheads and their flanks and their backs will be branded therewith (and it will be said to them), ‘Here is that which you hoarded for yourselves. Now taste of what you used to hoard’” [9: 34-5].

“(It will be said) ‘Take him and fetter him and then expose him to Hell-fire and then insert him in a chain whose length is seventy cubits. Lo! He used not to believe in Allah, the All-Supreme and urged not the feeding of the wretched’” [69: 30-4].

“In Gardens they will ask one another, concerning the guilty, ‘What has brought you to this burning?’ They will answer, ‘We were not among those who prayed, nor did we feed the wretched’” [74: 40-4].

“As for man, whenever his Lord tries him by honouring him and is gracious unto him, he says (puffed up), ‘My Lord honours me.’ But whenever He tries him by straitening his means of life, he says, ‘My Lord despises me.’ Nay, but you (for your part) honour not the orphan and urge not the feeding of the poor. And you devour heritages with devouring greed and love wealth with abounding love” [89: 15-20].

“Lo! We have tried them as We tried the owners of the garden when they vowed they would pluck its fruit next morning. And made no exception (for the will of Allah); then a visitation came upon it while they slept and in the morning it was as if plucked. And they cried out one to another in the morning, saying, ‘Run to your field if you would pluck (the fruit).’ So they went off, saying one to another in low tones, ‘No needy man shall come to you in it today.’ They went out early in the morning, strong in (this) purpose. But when they saw it, they said, ‘Lo! We have lost our way! Nay, but we are deprived!’ The best among them said, ‘Did I not say to you, “Why do you not glorify (Allah)?”’ They said, ‘Glorified be our Lord! Lo! We have been wrongdoers.’ Then some of them drew near to others, self-reproaching. They said, ‘Alas for us! In truth, we were outrageous. It may be that our Lord will give us better than this in place thereof. Lo! We beseech our

Lord.’ Such was the punishment. And verily the punishment of the Hereafter is greater, if they only knew” [68: 17-33].

3. ETIQUETTE

ASK PERMISSION BEFORE ENTERING SOMEONE’S HOUSE:

“O you who believe! Do not enter houses other than your own without first announcing your presence and invoking peace upon the folk thereof. That is better for you, that you may be heedful. And if you find no one therein, still do not enter until permission has been given. And if it be said to you, “Turn away,’ then go away, for it is purer for you. Allah knows what you do. (It is) no sin for you to enter uninhabited houses wherein is comfort for you. Allah knows what you proclaim and what you hide” [24: 27-29].

“O you who believe! Let your slaves and those of you who have not come to puberty ask leave of you at three times (before they come into your presence): Before the prayer of dawn, when you lay aside your raiment for the heat of noon, and after the prayer of night. Three times of privacy for you...And when the children among you come to puberty, then let them ask leave even as those before them used to ask it” [24: 58-9].

LOWER THE VOICE, AND NOT CALL OUT TO ONE’S SUPERIORS FROM OUTSIDE:

“O you who believe! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor shout when speaking to him as you shout one to another, lest your works be rendered vain while you perceive not. Lo! They who subdue their voices in the presence of the Messenger of Allah, those are they whose hearts Allah has tested for righteousness. Theirs will be forgiveness and immense reward. Lo! Those who call out to you from outside your private quarters, most of them have no sense” [49: 2-4].

EXTEND GREETINGS UPON ENTERING:

“But when you enter houses, salute one another with a greeting from Allah, blessed and sweet” [24: 61].

REPLY TO A GREETING WITH A BETTER ONE:

“When you are greeted with a greeting, greet with better than it or return it. Lo! Allah takes count of all things” [4: 86].

MAKE ROOM:

“O you who believe! When you are told, ‘Make room,’ in assemblies, then make room; Allah will make room for you (thereafter). And when you are told, ‘Raise up,’ do raise up” [58: 11].

CHOOSE DECENT SUBJECTS FOR CONVERSATION:

“...conspire together for righteousness and pity and keep your duty towards Allah, to Whom you will be gathered” [58: 9].

CHOOSE THE KINDEST WORDS:

“Tell My bondmen to speak that which is kindlier. Lo! The devil sows discord among them. Lo! The devil is for man an open foe” [17: 53].

ASK PERMISSION BEFORE LEAVING AN ASSEMBLY:

“They only are the true believers who believe in Allah and His Messenger and, when they are with him on some common errand, do not go away until they have asked leave of him” [24: 62].

STATE MORALS

1. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HEAD OF STATE AND THE PEOPLE

A. DUTIES OF THE HEAD OF STATE TO CONSULT WITH THE PEOPLE:

“It was by the mercy of Allah that you were lenient with them (O Muhammad), for if you had been stern and fierce of heart they would have dispersed from round about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs” [3: 159].

IMPLEMENT THE FINAL DECISION VIGOROUSLY:

“And when you are resolved, then put your trust in Allah. Lo! Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him)” [3: 159].

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RULE OF JUSTICE:

“Lo! Allah commands you that you restore deposits to their owners, and if you judge between mankind that you judge justly. Lo! Comely is this which Allah admonishes you. Lo! Allah is ever Hearer, Seer” [4: 58].

ESTABLISH ORDER:

“The only reward of those who make war upon Allah and His Messenger and strive after corruption in the land will be that they will be killed or crucified, or have their hands and feet on alternate sides cut off, or will be expelled out of the land. Such will be their degradation in the world, and in the Hereafter, theirs will be an awful doom, except those who repent before you overpower them. Know that Allah is Forgiving, Merciful” [5: 33-4].

SAFEGUARD, AND NOT MISAPPROPRIATE, PUBLIC FUNDS:

“It is not for any Prophet to embezzle. Whoever embezzles will bring what he embezzled with him on the Day of Resurrection. Then every soul will be paid in full what it has earned; and they will not be wronged” [3: 161].

NOT TO USE THEM TO BENEFIT THE RICH:

“That which Allah gives as spoil to His Messenger from the people of the townships, it is for Allah and His Messenger and the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, so that it does not become a commodity between the rich among you” [59: 7].

ALLOW OTHER RELIGIONS THEIR JUDICIAL FREEDOM:

“...If they have recourse to you (Muhammad), judge between them or disclaim jurisdiction. If you disclaim jurisdiction, then they cannot harm you at all. But if you judge, judge between them with equity. Lo! Allah loves the equitable. How come they go to you for judgment when they have the Torah, wherein Allah has delivered judgment (for them)? Yet even after that, they turn away. Such (folk) are not believers...Whoever does not judge by that which Allah has revealed, such are disbelievers...Let the People of the Gospel judge by that which Allah has revealed therein. Whoever

does not judge by that which Allah has revealed, such are deviators...So judge between them by that which Allah has revealed, and follow not their desires away from the truth which has come to you” [5: 42-8].

B. THE DUTIES OF THE PEOPLE

DISCIPLINE:

“...And whatever the Messenger gives you, take it. And whatever he forbids, abstain (from it). And keep your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is stern in reprisal” [59: 7].

INFORMED OBEDIENCE:

“O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in authority; and if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you are (in truth) believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more seemly in the end” [4: 59].

BEING UNIFIED ON ALLAH'S PATH:

“And hold fast, all of you together, to the cable of Allah, and do not separate” [3: 103], “... and be not among those who ascribe partners (to Him), those who split up their religion and became schismatics, each sect exulting in its tenets” [30: 31-2].

DELIBERATION OVER PUBLIC AFFAIRS:

“...and that which Allah has is better and more lasting for those who believe...and whose affairs are a matter of counsel” [42: 36-38].

AVOID CREATING DISRUPTION AND VANDALISM:

“Do not work corruption on the earth after the fair ordering (thereof)” [7: 56], “And those who break the covenant of Allah after ratifying it, and sever that which Allah has commanded should be joined, and make mischief in the earth: theirs is the curse and theirs the ill abode” [13: 25], “And when he turns away (from you), his effort in the land is to make mischief therein and to destroy the crops and the cattle; and Allah does not love mischief” [2: 205].

PREPARE FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE COMMUNITY:

“Make ready for them all you can of (armed) force and horses tethered, that thereby you may dismay the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others beside them whom you do not know. Allah knows them. Whatever you spend in the way of Allah, it will be repaid to you in full, and you will not be wronged” [8: 60].

ETHICAL CENSORSHIP (NOT TO SPREAD DEFEATIST RUMOURS OR EXAGGERATED RUMOURS, BUT TO WAIT FOR THE OFFICIAL STORY):

“And if any tidings, whether of safety or fear, come to them, they noise it abroad, whereas if they had referred it to the Messenger and such of them as are in authority, those among them who are able to think out the matter would have had proper knowledge about it” [4: 83].

AVOID COLLUSION AND ALLIANCE WITH THE ENEMY:

“O you who believe! Do not choose My enemy and your enemy for allies. Do you show them affection when they disbelieve in that truth which has come to you, driving out the Messenger and you because you believe in Allah, your Lord? If you have come forth to strive in My way and seeking My good pleasure, (do not show them friendship). Do you show friendship to them in secret, when I am Best Aware of what you hide and what you proclaim? And whoever does it among you, he verily has strayed from the right way” [60: 1].

“Allah does not forbid you, in regard to those who did not war against you on account of religion and did not drive you out from your homes, that you should show them kindness and deal justly with them. Lo! Allah loves the just dealers. Allah forbids you only in regard to those who warred against you on account of religion and have driven you out from your homes and helped to drive you out, that you make friends with them. Whoever makes friends with them, (all) such are wrong-doers” [60: 8-9].

“You will not find a folk who believe in Allah and the Last Day loving those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though

they be their fathers or their sons or their brethren or their clan. As for such, He has written faith upon their hearts and has strengthened them with a spirit from Him, and He will bring them into Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide. Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him. They are Allah's party. Lo! Is it not Allah's party who are the successful?" [58: 22].

"The believers should not take the faithless for allies instead of the believers. Whoever does that, Allah has no relation with him, unless (it be) that you are only guarding yourselves against them (the faithless)" [3: 28].

2. FOREIGN AFFAIRS

A. UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, CONCERN FOR PUBLIC WELFARE:

"There has come to you a Messenger, (one) of yourselves, to whom anything with which you are overburdened is grievous: full of concern for you, for the believers full of pity, merciful" [9: 128].

PROMULGATE THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION:

"Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way" [16: 125], "And argue not with the People of the Scripture unless it be in (a way) that is better, except with such of them as do wrong. And say, 'We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you; our God and your God is One, and to Him we surrender'" [29: 46].

WITHOUT COMPULSION:

"There is no compulsion in religion" [2: 256], "Remind them, for you are only one who reminds, you are not at all a warder over them" [88: 21-2].

OR PROVOKING HATRED:

"Revile not those to whom they pray beside Allah lest they wrongfully revile Allah through ignorance. Thus, unto every nation

have We made their deed seem fair. Then to their Lord is their return and He will tell them what they used to do” [6: 108].

ABSTAIN FROM OPPRESSING OTHERS OR SPREADING UNREST:

“As for that Abode of the Hereafter, We assign it to those who do not seek oppression on the earth nor corruption. The sequel is for those who ward off (evil)” [28: 83].

NOT HARMING THE SECURITY OF NEUTRALS:

“So, if they hold aloof from you and wage not war against you and offer you peace, Allah allows you no way against them” [4: 90].

GOOD NEIGHBOURLINESS, JUSTICE AND KINDNESS:

“Allah does not forbid you in regard to those who did not war against you on account of religion and did not drive you out from your homes, that you should show them kindness and deal justly with them. Lo! Allah loves the just dealers” [60: 8].

B. IN THE CASE OF HOSTILITIES

ABSTAIN FROM INITIATING ARMED CONFLICT:

“And let not your hatred of a folk who (once) stopped your going to the Inviolable Place of Worship seduce you to transgress; but cooperate in righteousness and pious duty. Do not cooperate in sin and transgression, but keep your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is severe in punishment” [5: 2].

ABSTAIN FROM FIGHTING DURING THE SACRED MONTHS:

“Lo! The number of the months with Allah is twelve months by Allah’s ordinance in the day that He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are sacred. That is the right religion. So do not wrong yourselves in them” [9: 36].

OR IN THE SACRED PRECINCTS:

“And do not fight with them at the Inviolable Place of Worship until they first attack you there” [2: 191].

CASES IN WHICH WAR IS LEGITIMATE:

I) SELF-DEFENCE:

“If they keep not aloof from you nor offer you peace nor hold their hands, then take them and kill them wherever you find them. Against such, We have given you a clear warrant” [4: 91], “Sanction is given to those who fight because they have been wronged; and Allah is indeed Able to give them victory” [22: 39].

II) TO PROTECT THE WEAK:

“How should you not fight for the cause of Allah and of the feeble among men and of the women and the children who are crying, ‘Our Lord! Bring us out from this town whose people are oppressors! Oh, give us from Your presence some protecting friend! Oh, give us from Your presence some defender!’” [4: 75].

FIGHT ONLY COMBATANTS:

“Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo! Allah does not love aggressors” [2: 190].

NOT TO FLEE BEFORE THE AGGRESSOR:

“O you who believe, when you meet those who disbelieve in battle, turn not your backs to them” [8: 15].

EXHIBIT STEADFASTNESS AND UNITY:

“O you who believe! When you meet an army, hold firm and think of Allah much, that you may be successful. And obey Allah and His Messenger, and dispute not one with another lest you falter and your strength departs from you” [8: 45-6].

HAVE PATIENCE AND HOPE:

“O you who believe! Endure, outdo all others in endurance, be ready, and observe your duty to Allah, in order that you may succeed” [3: 200], “Faint not nor grieve, for you will overcome them if you are (indeed) believers” [3: 139].

NOT TO FEAR DEATH, WHICH ONLY COMES AT ITS APPOINTED TIME: “O you who believe! Be not as those who disbelieved and said of their brethren who went abroad in the land

or were fighting in the field, 'If they had been (here) with us they would not have died or been killed'; that Allah may make it anguish in their hearts. Allah gives life and causes death; and Allah is Seer of what you do" [3: 156].

"Say, 'Even though you had been in your houses, those appointed to be slain would have gone forth to the places where they were to lie'" [3: 154].

"...but when fighting was prescribed for them, behold, a party of them fear mankind even as their fear of Allah or with greater fear, and say, 'Our Lord! Why have you ordained fighting for us? If only you would give us respite for a while!' Say (to them, O Muhammad), 'The comfort of this world is scant; the Hereafter will be better for him who wards off (evil). And you will not be wronged the down upon a date stone. Wherever you may be, death will overtake you, even though you were in lofty towers'" [4: 77, 78].

"...and that Allah wastes not the wage of the believers...Those to whom men said, 'Lo! the people have gathered against you, therefore fear them.' (But the threat of danger) only increased their faith, and they cried, 'Allah is sufficient for us! Most Excellent is He in Whom we trust!' So they returned with grace and favour from Allah and no harm touched them. They followed the good pleasure of Allah, and Allah is of Infinite Bounty" [3: 171-4].

FEAR, INSTEAD, THE TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS OF THE UNBELIEVERS:

"And slay them wherever you find them, and drive them out of the places whence they drove you out, for persecution is worse than slaughter" [2: 191],

"...for persecution is worse than killing. And they will not cease from fighting against you till they have made you renegades from your religion if they can. And whoever becomes a renegade and dies in his disbelief, such are they whose works have fallen both in the world and the Hereafter. Such are rightful owners of the Fire, they will abide therein eternally" [2: 217].

NOT TO CAPITULATE:

“So do not falter and cry out for peace when you (will be) the uppermost and Allah is with you, and He will not grudge (the reward of) your actions” [47:35].

BUT ACCEPT PEACE AND DO NOT PURSUE THE ENEMY WHO CAPITULATES:

“But if they desist, then lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. And fight them until persecution is no more and religion is for Allah. But if they desist, then let there be no hostility except against wrong-doers” [2: 192-3].

“And if they incline to peace, you incline also to it, and trust in Allah. Lo! He is the Hearer, the Knower. And if they would deceive you, then Lo! Allah is Sufficient for you. He is the One Who supports you with His help and with the believers. And has attuned (for the believers) their hearts” [8: 61-3],

“...And do not say to one who offers you peace, ‘You are not a believer,’ seeking the chance profits of this life (so that you may despoil him)” [4: 94].

COMPLIANCE WITH AGREED TREATIES:

“O you who believe! Fulfil your agreements” [5: 1].

ANNOUNCE THE DISSOLUTION OF TREATIES WITH THE TREACHEROUS, DO NOT MEET TREACHERY IN KIND:

“And if you fear treachery from any folk, then throw back fairly to them (their treaty). Lo! Allah does not love the treacherous” [8: 58].

COMMITMENT TO PLEDGES, HOWEVER, DISADVANTAGEOUS IT MAY BE, EVEN TO YOUR AIMS!

“Fulfill the covenant of Allah when you have covenanted and do not break your oaths after the asseveration of them and after you have made Allah surety over you. Lo! Allah knows what you do. And be not like her who unravels the thread, after she has made it strong, to thin filaments, making your oaths a deceit between you because of a nation being more numerous than (another) nation.

Allah only tries you thereby, and He verily will explain to you on the Day of Resurrection that wherein you differed” [16: 91-2].

THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

1- THE SACRED LINK, ABOVE RACIAL OR GENDER PREJUDICE:

“O mankind! be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain has spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward Allah in Whom you claim (your rights) of one another, and toward the wombs (that bare you). Lo! Allah is watchful over you” [4: 1]. “O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made `you nations and tribes that you may know one another” [49: 13].

2- THE CRITERION FOR MERIT:

“Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct” [49: 13].

RELIGIOUS MORALS

DUTIES TO ALLAH

TO BELIEVE IN HIM AND HIS REVEALED TRUTHS:

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East and the West, but righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Scripture and the Prophets, and gives wealth” [2: 177].

“O you who believe! Believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Scripture which He has revealed to His Messenger, and the Scripture which He revealed formerly. Whoever disbelieves in Allah and His angels and His Scriptures and His Messengers and the Last Day, he verily hath wandered far astray” [4: 136].

OBEY HIM UNCONDITIONALLY:

“And if We had decreed for them: Lay down your lives or go forth from your dwellings, only a few of them would have done it; though if they did what they are exhorted to do, it would be better for them and more strengthening” [4: 66].

MEDITATE ON THE QURAN VERSES:

“And when the Qur’an is recited, give ear to it and pay heed, that you may obtain mercy” [7: 204]. “O you who believe! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor shout when speaking to him as you shout one to another, lest your works be rendered vain while you perceive not” [49: 2].

“(This is) a Scripture that We have revealed to you, full of blessings, that they may ponder its revelations and that men of understanding may reflect” [38: 29]. “Will they then not meditate on the Qur’an, or are there locks on the hearts?” [47: 24].

“Will they not then ponder on the Qur’an? If it had been from other than Allah, they would have found therein much incongruity” [4: 82].

AND MEDITATE ON ALLAH’S CREATION:

“And in the earth are portents for those whose faith is sure, and (also) in yourselves. Can you then not see?” [51: 20-1].

“Have they not considered the dominion of the heavens and the earth and what things Allah has created, and that it may be that their own term has drawn near? In what fact after this will they believe?” [7: 185].

“Have they not pondered upon themselves? Allah did not create the heavens and the earth and that which is between them except with truth and for a destined end” [30: 8].

“Say (to them, O Muhammad), ‘I exhort you to only one thing: that you awake, for Allah’s sake, by twos and singly, and then reflect: There is no madness in your comrade. He is nothing but a warner to you in the face of a terrible doom” [34: 46].

ACKNOWLEDGE ALLAH’S BLESSINGS (TO RENDER HIM THANKS):

“And whatever of comfort you enjoy, it is from Allah” [16: 53].

“Have you seen that which you cultivate? Is it you who make it grow, or are We the grower? If We willed, We verily could make it

chaff, then you would not cease to exclaim:, ‘Lo! We have suffered loss! Nay, but we are deprived!’ Have you observed the water which you drink? Is it you who bring it down from the rain cloud, or are We Who bring it down? If We willed, We verily could make it bitter. Why, then, do you give no thanks? Have you observed the fire which you kindle. Was it you who caused the tree to grow, or were We the grower? We, even We, appointed it a reminder, and a comfort for the dwellers in the wilderness. Therefore (O Muhammad), praise the name of your Lord, the All-Supreme” [56: 63-74].

“Say, ‘Tell me, if Allah made the night everlasting for you till the Day of Resurrection, who is the god besides Allah who could bring you light? Will you not then hear?’ Say, ‘tell me, if Allah made the day everlasting for you till the Day of Resurrection, who is the god besides Allah who could bring you night wherein you rest? Will you not then see?’” [28: 71-2].

“He who created all the pairs and appointed for you ships and cattle whereupon you ride; That you may mount upon their backs and may remember your Lord’s favour when you mount thereon and may say, ‘Glorified be He Who has subdued these to us, we were not capable (of subduing them); and Lo! To our Lord we are returning’” [43: 12-14].

“And Allah brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers knowing nothing and gave you hearing and sight and hearts that haply you might give thanks” [16: 78].

BEAR TRIALS WITH CONTENTMENT:

“And surely We shall try you with something of fear and hunger and loss of wealth and lives and crops, but give glad tidings to the steadfast, Who say, when a misfortune strikes them, ‘Lo! We are Allah’s and lo! Unto Him, we are returning’” [2: 155-6].

“Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while yet there has not come to you the like of (that which came to) those who passed away before you? Affliction and adversity befell them, they were shaken as with an earthquake, till the Messenger (of Allah) and

those who believed along with him said, ‘When will Allah’s help come?’ Now, surely, Allah’s help is nigh” [2: 214].

“Do men imagine that they will be left (at ease) because they say, ‘We believe,’ and will not be tested with affliction? Lo! We tested those who were before you. Thus Allah knows those who are sincere and knows those who feign” [29: 2-3].

TRUST AND RELY ON HIM:

“If Allah is your helper, none can overcome you, and if He withdraws His help from you, who is there who can help you? In Allah, let believers put their trust” [3: 160]. “Now, if they turn away (O Muhammad), say, ‘Allah is sufficient for me. There is no God except Him. In Him have I put my trust, and He is Lord of the Tremendous Throne’” [9: 129].

“Say, ‘Have you considered about those you worship besides Allah, if Allah willed some hurt for me, could they remove from me His hurt; or if He willed some mercy for me, could they restrain His mercy?’ Say, ‘Allah is sufficient for me. In Him do (all) the trusting put their trust’” [39: 38].

NEITHER DESPAIR OF HIS GRACE:

“...[Jacob said,] ‘And despair not of Allah’s mercy. Lo! None despairs of Allah’s mercy except disbelieving folk’” [12: 87], “He said, ‘And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord, except those who are astray?!’” [15: 56].

NOR BE TOO COMPLACENT ABOUT HIS PLANS:

“Are the people of the townships then secure from the coming of Our wrath upon them as a night-raid while they sleep? Or are the people of the townships then secure from the coming of Our wrath upon them in the daytime while they play? Are they then secure from Allah’s scheme? None deems himself secure from Allah’s scheme except folk that perish” [7: 97-9].

SUBMIT ALL PLANS FOR THE FUTURE TO HIS WILL:

“And do not say of anything, ‘Lo! I shall do that tomorrow,’ without [adding], ‘If Allah wills’” [18: 23-4].

FULFIL VOWS AND PROMISES MADE TO ALLAH:

“And of them is one who made a covenant with Allah (saying), ‘If He gives us of His bounty, we will give alms and become of the righteous.’ Yet when He gave them of His bounty, they hoarded it and turned away, averse; so He has made the consequence (to be) hypocrisy in their hearts until the day when they shall meet Him because they broke their word to Allah that they promised Him and because they lied” [9: 75-7].

NOT PROVOKE IRREVERENT TALK ABOUT ALLAH:

“Revile not those to whom they pray beside Allah lest they wrongfully revile Allah through ignorance” [6: 108].

AVOID ANY COMPLICITY IN IMPIOUS TALK:

“And when you see those who meddle with Our revelations, withdraw from them until they meddle with another topic. And if the devil causes you to forget, sit not, after remembering, with the congregation of wrongdoers” [6: 68].

“He has already revealed to you in the Scripture that, when you hear the revelations of Allah rejected and derided, do not sit with them (who disbelieve and mock) until they engage in some other conversation. Lo! In that case (if you stayed), you would be like them. Lo! Allah will gather hypocrites and disbelievers all together into Hell” [4: 140].

NOT TAKE HIS NAME IN VAIN:

“And make not Allah, by your oaths, a hindrance to your being righteous and observing your duty to Him and making peace among mankind. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing” [2: 224].

RESPECT AN OATH ONCE IT HAS BEEN TAKEN:

“...and keep your oaths” [5: 89].

REMEMBER ALLAH CONSTANTLY:

“O you who believe! Remember Allah with much remembrance” [33: 41]. “And do not be like those who forgot Allah, therefore He caused them to forget their souls. Such are the evil-doers” [59: 19].

“And he whose sight is dim to the remembrance of the Beneficent, We assign to him a devil who becomes his comrade” [43: 36].

SANCTIFY AND GLORIFY HIM:

“Lo! We have sent you (O Muhammad) as a witness and a bearer of good tidings and a warner, that you (mankind) may believe in Allah and His Messenger and may honour Him and may revere Him and may glorify Him at early dawn and at the close of day” [48: 8-9].

RENDER HIM DAILY WORSHIP:

“Worship at fixed hours has been enjoined on the believers” [4: 103], “So glorify Allah when you enter the night and when you enter the morning. To Him be praise in the heavens and the earth, and at the sun’s decline and at the noonday” [30: 17-18].

“Establish worship at the going down of the sun until the dark of night and (the recital of) the Qur’an at dawn. Lo! (The recital of) the Qur’an at dawn is ever witnessed” [17: 78].

“Be guardians of your prayers and the midmost prayer, and stand up with devotion to Allah” [2: 238].

“And (Muhammad), do not be neither loud-voiced in your worship nor yet silent therein, but follow a way between” [17: 110].

VISIT HIS HOUSE (AT LEAST ONCE DURING ONE’S LIFETIME):

“Lo! the first House appointed for mankind was that at Becca, a blessed place, a guidance to the peoples, wherein are plain memorials (of Allah’s guidance): the place where Abraham stood up to pray. And whoever enters it is safe. And pilgrimage to the House is a duty to Allah for mankind, for him who can afford the journey to it. As for him who disbelieves, (let him know that) Lo! Allah is Independent of (all) creatures” [3: 96-7].

“The pilgrimage is (in) the well-known months, and whoever decides to perform the pilgrimage therein (let him remember that) there is (to be) no lewdness nor abuse nor angry conversation on the pilgrimage. And whatever good you do, Allah knows it. So

make provision for yourselves (hereafter), for indeed the best provision is God wariness” [2: 197].

“And proclaim to mankind the Pilgrimage. They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine. That they may witness things that are of benefit to them and mention the name of Allah on appointed days over the beast of cattle that He has bestowed upon them. Then eat thereof and feed therewith the poor unfortunate. Then let them make an end of their unkemptness and pay their vows and go around the ancient House. That (is the command). And whoever magnifies the sacred things of Allah, it will be well for him in the sight of his Lord” [22: 27-30].

“Their flesh and their blood do not reach Allah, but the devotion from you reaches Him” [22: 37].

INVOKE HIM FREQUENTLY, IN FEAR AND HOPE:

“Say (O Muhammad, to the disbelievers), ‘My Lord would not concern Himself with you if you do not call on Him’ [25: 77].

“(O mankind!) Call upon your Lord humbly and in secret. Lo! He does not love aggressors. Do not cause corruption on the earth after the fair ordering (thereof), and call on Him in fear and hope. Lo! The mercy of Allah is close to the virtuous” [7: 55-6].

“And your Lord has said, ‘Pray to me and I will hear your prayer’” [40: 60].

RETURN TO HIM AND BEG HIS FORGIVENESS:

“And turn to Allah every one of you, O believers, in order that you may succeed” [24: 31], “Yet whoever does evil or wrongs his own soul and then seeks pardon of Allah will find Allah Forgiving, Merciful” [4: 110].

FINALLY, LOVE HIM:

“... Allah will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him, humble towards believers, stern towards disbelievers, striving in the way of Allah and fearing not the blame of any blamer. Such is

the grace of Allah which He gives to whom He wills. Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing” [5: 54].

AND LOVE HIM ABOVE ALL ELSE:

“Yet among mankind are some who take to themselves (objects of worship which they set as) rivals to Allah, loving them with a love like (that which is the due) of Allah (only)—but those who believe are stauncher in their love for Allah” [2: 165].

SUMMARY:

**SOME CATEGORIES OF VIRTUES BY WHICH THE QUR'AN
DEFINES THE TRUE MUSLIM**

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East and the West, but righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Scripture and the Prophets, and gives wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free and observe proper worship and pay the poor-due; and those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and at times of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the Allah-fearing” [2: 177].

“They only are the (true) believers whose hearts feel fear when Allah is mentioned, and when the revelations of Allah are recited unto them they increase their faith, and who trust in their Lord, who establish worship and spend of that We have bestowed on them. Those are they who are in truth believers” [8: 2-4].

“And give good tidings (O Muhammad) to the humble, whose hearts fear when Allah is mentioned and are patient during whatever may befall them, and those who establish worship and who spend of We have bestowed on them” [22: 34-5].

“Successful indeed are the believers who are humble in their prayers and who shun vain conversation and who are payers of the poor-due and who guard their modesty, except from their wives or the (slaves) that their right hands possess, for then they are not blameworthy, but whoever craves beyond that, such are

transgressors and those who keep their trusts and their covenant, and who pay heed to their prayers. These are the heirs who will inherit Paradise. There they will abide” [23: 1-11].

“Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth...Allah guides to His light whom He wills. (This light is found) in houses which Allah has allowed to be exalted and that His name shall be remembered therein. He is glorified therein, morning and evening, by men whom neither merchandise nor sale distract from the remembrance of Allah and constancy in prayer and paying to the poor their due. (Those) who fear a day when hearts and eyeballs will be overturned” [24: 35-7].

“The (faithful) slaves of the Beneficent are those who walk upon the earth modestly, and when the foolish ones address them, they answer, ‘Peace,’ and who spend the night before their Lord, prostrating and standing, and who say, ‘Our Lord! Avert from us the doom of Hell; Lo! The doom thereof is anguish; Lo! It is a wretched abode and station. And (the slaves of the Beneficent are) those who, when they spend, are neither prodigal nor grudging; and there is a firm station between the two, and those who cry not to any other god along with Allah, nor take the life which Allah has forbidden except in (course of) justice, nor commit adultery—and whoever does this shall pay the penalty, the doom will be doubled for him on the Day of Resurrection and he will abide therein disdained forever, except him who repents and believes and does righteous work; as for such, Allah will change their evil deeds to good deeds. Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful. And whoever repents and does good, he verily repents towards Allah with true repentance. And (the slaves of the Beneficent are) those who do not witness vanity, but when they pass near senseless play, pass by with dignity, and those who, when they are reminded of the revelations of their Lord, fall not deaf and blind thereat, and who say, ‘Our Lord! Grant us comfort in our wives and our offspring, and make us patterns for (all) those who ward off (evil).’ They will be awarded the high place forasmuch as they were steadfast, and they will be met therein with welcome and the word

of peace, abiding there forever. Happy is it as an abode and station!" [25: 63-76].

"Only those believe in Our revelations who, when they are reminded of them, fall down prostrate and hymn the praise of their Lord, and they are not scornful. (Those) who forsake their beds to cry to their Lord in fear and hope and spend of what we have bestowed on them. No soul knows what is kept hid for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do" [32: 15-17].

"Lo! Men who surrender to Allah, and women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and men who speak the truth and women who speak the truth, and men who persevere (in righteousness) and women who persevere, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their modesty and women who guard (their modesty), and men who remember Allah much and women who remember, Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward" [33: 35].

"Allah has (now) revealed the fairest of statements, a Scripture consistent with itself as it repeats, (promises of reward) paired (with threats of punishment), whereat do creep the flesh of those who fear their Lord, so that their flesh and their hearts soften to Allah's reminder. Such is Allah's guidance, by which He guides whom He wills. And him whom Allah sends astray, for him there is no guide" [39: 23].

"Now whatever you have been given is but a passing comfort for the life of the world, and that which Allah has is better and more lasting for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord: Those who shun the worst of sins and indecencies and when they are wroth, forgive, and those who answer the call of their Lord and establish worship, and whose affairs are a matter of counsel, and who spend of what We have bestowed on them, and those who, when great wrong is done to them, defend themselves, the guerdon of an ill-deed is an ill the like thereof. But whoever

pardons and amends, his wage is the affair of Allah. Lo! He does not love wrong-doers” [42: 36-40].

“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those with him are hard against the disbelievers and merciful among themselves. You (O Muhammad) see them bowing and falling prostrate (in worship), seeking bounties from Allah and (His) acceptance. The mark of them is on their foreheads from the traces of prostration. Such is their likeness in the Torah and their likeness in the Gospel” [48: 29].

“The (true) believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger and afterwards doubt not but strive with their wealth and their lives for the cause of Allah. Such are the sincere” [49: 15]. “Taking that which their Lord gives them; for lo! Aforetime they were doers of good; they used to sleep but little of the night, and at dawn of each day they would seek forgiveness, and in their wealth, the beggar and the outcast had a due share. And in the earth are portents for those whose faith is sure” [51: 16-20].

“Lo! Man was created anxious. Fretful when evil befalls him and, when good befalls him, grudging, except worshippers who are constant at their worship, and in whose wealth there is a right acknowledged for the beggar and the destitute: those who believe in the Day of Judgment and those who are fearful of their Lord’s doom. Lo! The doom of their Lord is that before which none can feel secure. And (man is anxious except) those who preserve their chastity, except with their wives and those whom their right hands possess, for thus they are not blameworthy. But whoever seeks more than that, those are they who are transgressors. And (man is anxious except) those who keep their pledges and their covenant, and those who stand by their testimony, and those who are attentive at their worship. These will dwell in Gardens, honoured” [70: 19-35].

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