

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Western Concept of a Women's Life	6
Consequences of Western Liberation	9
Emancipation of Women	11
Status of Women	15
Equal in bearing responsibilities	16
Freedom of expression	16
Inheritance	17
Polygamy	18
Polyandry	19
Marriage	20
Organisation of the family	22
Kindness to wives	23
Economic rights	25
Social rights	26
HIJĀB	27
Urge of display	28
The voice	28
The sound	29
Perfume	29
Covering the face	30
The veil	33
Conclusion	36

INTRODUCTION

“She was the embodiment of beauty capable of enslaving the attention of the spectators. She was the young woman I had seen on the seashore that evening.

I pitied her, telling myself! ‘The girl who should be behind the veil, is unfortunately exhibiting her exquisite to the public gaze!’ I also started reflecting on the thought that if only she had been behind the veil the fascinating image of beautiful figure, would not be lingering in my breast disturbing its peace unnecessarily! The very next moment, the same young and beautiful woman appeared before the eyes of my mind and started firing those hot words at me!

The embodiment of emotions that she was, she had levelled certain very serious charges at me before my mind. Were those charges reasonable? My mind started thinking on this question, keeping in view the general welfare of society.”

THE ALL DESTRUCTIVE POWER

In the case of petrol, there is danger only if fire comes into contact with it; but in the case of men and women, even though they stand far away from one another, if they could merely recognise that the person belongs to the opposite sex, a more serious danger is created.

Speaking about women, Tiruvalluvar says that while intoxicating liquor can cause mischief only to those who have actually taken it, the mischief of lust is sure to descend on man and woman even if they merely see each other.

UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED

Further, history reveals that since early as five thousand years ago, women had been leading the secluded life of modesty in separate units with honour and dignity in many parts of the world - like ancient Babylonia, Persia, Palestine, Parthia, Roman Empire, Rumania, Egypt, Assyria and Arabia.

Women who did not adopt Hijāb were given severe punishment in Assyria.

That those women who had discarded Hijāb, were considered to be prostitutes in the land, is recorded by AlTaker in his book 'The Ancient World'.

The Jews had been used to Hijāb as early as 2000 years before the dawn of Muslim civilisation in Arabia. It was the custom of the Jewish women to cover themselves completely from head to foot when they moved out.

The words in the Bible "Behold thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair! Thou hast dove's eyes within thy locks; thy hair is as a flock of goats...", is an eloquent testimony to a society which adopted the veil for its women.¹

This world had realised thousands of years ago that women possess a natural power, which is capable of reducing men to ashes. It is the unanimous opinion of all learned men of wisdom that the system of Hijāb as instituted by Islām is fit for all periods and good from all points of view.

Dr Sigmund Freud, the noted psychologist, has stated that if a pair of totally strange man and woman were to be allowed to come into direct personal contact with each other five times a day without any inhibition or restriction whatsoever, they are bound to be drowned in the ocean of immorality. Huxely, the

¹ Song of Solomon 4:1

famous sociologist, is also of the same view regarding baneful effect of free contact between men and women.

We allow men and women to mingle without any restriction and then you pour on them such words of advice as “Be pure at heart!”, “Keep down your gaze!”, and “Do not exhibit your beauty- your Zeenat to men!”. This is meaningless as placing before a starving person an array of food varieties and then calmly preaching to him to control his hunger and not to become a slave to it!

The foremost among the attractive places in the body of a woman is her face. Some medical books carry pictures of the human body. In such pictures, the face is deliberately omitted though such pictures are photo-based re-productions of human beings. This confirms the importance of the female face. The woman, who succeeds in hiding her face from men, is able to guard her chastity. The beauty of such a woman is never misused to cause the fire of immorality in society. Through Hijāb, the opportunity for immorality is totally eliminated.

WHAT IS HIJĀB?

If a woman covers the beauty of her body from head to foot, she is in Hijāb. If for any legitimate object or need, a woman goes out in such a robe of Hijāb, there is no harm in it since female factors of attraction which serve as stimuli for rousing human passion, are completely hidden behind such Hijāb. Therefore, Islām has laid down very strict injunctions regarding the observance of Hijāb.

Some women dress and behave in a shocking way these days. It will not be an exaggeration to state that all such obscenity started with the relaxation first allowed in the matter of the covering the head and the face. This relaxation has ultimately lead to a gradual decline in the modesty of women.

A DANGEROUS FRIEND

There are some who present themselves as the protagonists of Hijāb and declare: *“Who says that Hijāb is not necessary? It is absolutely essential, because, if it were not there the morality of women will be spoilt.”* And in the very next breath they say, *“While Hijāb is absolutely essential, it is not necessary to cover the face.”*

What a shocking statement! It reveals the dangerous friends among us! To these innocent people, Hijāb means nothing more than merely the dress with another long piece of cloth!

The face is the target of the spectators. By advocating for a ‘Hijāb with open face’ they are delivering a deathblow to the very fundamental Hijāb system which they pretend to uphold. To these people we say; **A HIJĀB, WHICH DOES NOT COVER THE FACE, IS NO HIJĀB AT ALL. IT IS A DELIBERATE FRAUD ON THE VERY SYSTEM!**

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WESTERN CONCEPT OF A WOMAN'S LIFE

The West claims that it wants to improve the life of a women by a) granting them freedom, b) financial independence and c) allow them to mix freely with men at all levels and in all departments of life. Let us just scratch the surface and peep to analyse these claims. With regard to the freedom of women a non-Muslim white Australian woman was employed in a Muslim School of necessity but the condition of wearing a cloak and even veiling her face. She complied and when asked after some time how she felt in this garb, since their lifestyle is one of semi-nudity, her spontaneous reply is an eye opener to reality. She said Islāmic lifestyle has given me freedom from western slavery. In their culture a person is enslaved to wearing a certain colour of shoe to match the dress. Then the nail polish, lipstick, blush, etc. all have to match as well. In Islām simplicity is the rule and by donning the cloak there is no need for this matching culture.

On the other hand Islām has taught basic hygiene and cleanliness.

Firstly let us understand that women and money are those basic things which if used correctly will guarantee stability and progress to any family, community or nation and if these same are used wrongly they will put that family, community or nation down the slippery road of destruction.

A medical doctor writes in a medical journal that the west is 1400 years behind the east in basic toilet hygiene. He says in the west toilet paper is used to polish oneself with excreta while in the east clean water is used to cleanse oneself.

Shaikh Ashraf Ali Thānwi (R) said that with that filth they get into a tub to 'bath'. They pollute all the water with that filth and some of it even enters the mouth in the process.

In many cases a number of people use the same tub of water – all adding to the pollution and delighting in its drinking, however little.

A famous resort's swimming pool tested for urine that showed it contained 60% urine that just kept sparkling with chemicals!

What filth! O Muslims, are we going to opt for such a lifestyle?

With regard to financial independence, if it is worked out what a woman earns and in order to go out and work what her wardrobe costs her, in most cases there will be no gain but rather a deficit! Of course there can be no monetary figures that can be put on the moral, social, religious and femininity losses when a woman leaves her natural precincts and opts to work in an alien place to her exclusive biological, moral, social and religious build-up.

From a psychological point of view a woman is not meant to go out and work. When she does she has to impress her bosses/superiors with her job. To achieve this she has to give off more than she has for which she has to draw on her reserves. Consequently when she returns home she is totally exhausted and dehydrated, her children run up to her seeking love from 'mummy' but what can a tired working woman offer them.

She gets irritated, pushes the one out of the room, and slaps the other into silence and sprawls on to the bed.

The husband returns, also tired and hungry and a hungry man is an angry man. Two negatives meet and the natural result is a dispute.

An Islāmic lifestyle is a balanced one, the husband returns to a ready meal and a fresh family awaiting him.

As far as the intermingling of sexes is concerned, let some statistics suffice to show what results this produced. From 1943 to the present date, 18 million people have been killed in different wars raging around the world. This is paltry when one considers 1 billion babies that are aborted in the past 20 years

only. In America, the 2 million babies that are aborted annually are more than the total of all those who had died in all the wars America has fought in (from the Civil to the Gulf).

When Islām commands the taking of a life for a crime committed, it is barbaric. When millions of innocent infants are killed in the most savage way, it is medical advancement, culture and civilisation. Islām's law of justice guarantees every citizen safety and protection.

The single factor, which causes girls to drop out of schools, is pregnancies. A woman confesses that 90% of girls are first 'used' by their fathers, the majority of them before reaching the age of 6. She herself was 'used' by her father at the age of 5. M.H. Jamaluddin writes that the only reason for bringing out women into the male dominated modern merry-go-round (the commercial world) is to satisfy the lust of men. The unwritten law of this evil merry-go-round is: no sex no employment, no sex no promotion. He further states that women are humiliated, enslaved, dehydrated and dehumanised. When this princess or queen leaves the palace of the father or husband and goes into the vicious world, she is like a sheep that enters the den of the wolves that pounce on her naiveté and unawareness. It is narrated in a Hadith that when a woman steps out of her fort, Shaitān is waiting in ambush for her. It is also narrated that when she emerges Shaitān beautifies her in the eyes of other men and she becomes the cause of driving a wedge between husband and wife.

The Western culture encourages the exposure and exhibition of the female body regarding it a great art. Public displays of female bodies in magazines like 'Vogue' are considered artistic developments. Careers like modelling, acting, singing, and dancing are shortcuts for women to become famous and rich. They design clothes for fashion, which hints at the femininity of the lady, and emphasis's her figure. In other words, a non-

Muslim lady should 'dress to kill' at all times. Perfume and make-up should be her constant companions. She is dolled up to attract the attention of the people around her, so that she can be noticed, admired and desired.

CONSEQUENCES OF WESTERN LIBERATION

The Kuffār say that Islām has enslaved its women by forcing them to stay in their homes and cover themselves when they come out. How very wrong they are! What have the Kuffaar given their women? Prizes for displaying their bodies and exposing them to the risk of rape and molestation, insecurity of losing their husbands to beautiful mistresses, constant battle with nature to look young and pretty enough to keep your man hooked to you? On the contrary, Islam elevates its women to the peak of respect and saves a woman from disgrace and humiliation, giving her a chance to be treated like an honourable human being and not a mere sex object for the lustful desires of bestial miscreants.

A Sociologist will say that wealthy men of lust for sexual exploitation first lured women into employment. Basically, it is still the motivating factor for employing young girls in certain establishments. Many reports of sexual harassment by employers and male staff appear in the media every now and again.

Referring to such conditions for employment as "No sex, no Job" and "No sex no promotion", one feminine writer remarks: "It is slavery of women and blackmail and a refined way of playing the game with women as that in the field of prostitution."

The writer, in her book, 'Women and Islamic Law', states: "The indignity and humiliation heaped on woman today in the name

of individuality is sickening and worse than Satan's scheme could possibly be. Woman is patiently brainwashed and taught that her personality and identity can be preserved and enriched only by flying out of the house into the outdoor world, and the greatest impediment in this 'stepping out' is the fulfillment of her duties termed as 'drudgery' at home. Yes, the catchword to fool her is "Out of the house." Why is she told that personality development and individuality lie outside only and not elsewhere? The answer is obvious, plain as the day. To bring her out and expose her to abuse and misuse her is the aim of the male-dominated, modernist merry go round. One wonders how she can preserve or enhance her personality by toiling in subordinate positions in offices and by being put on display at shops, by making tea for the boss, by serving food in planes and hotels, by attending personally to male patients in hospitals, by noting that which man dictates, by dressing as he wishes, by attending to his phone-calls, by being a flower-pot or door mat in his office!"

The modern woman has been humiliated, enslaved, degraded and de-humanized. This industrial age has turned woman into a piece of merchandise. No advertisement is eye-catching unless it has a woman's body in it, exposed in various degrees of nudity. Films and television are a flop unless they have sex appeal and plenty of it. Magazines and books flourish on the lustful desire of man by providing a lot of erotic material in written word and printed photos. Hotels and restaurants in bygone days used to boast their excellent food and superb service. Now they arrange dances and striptease performances to satisfy their customers. Commercial firms expressly request that their receptionists must have a presentable appearance. Even in political life a modest wife is considered a liability. As a consequence of this trend, there is an unemployment crisis everywhere and women are fast replacing men as the breadwinners of the families. This reversal role is not countenance by Islām.

The twin role of woman as a housewife and a working slave is a strange concept repugnant to the noble principles of Islām. Her joining the rat race for employment has put her safety, chastity and natural modesty in a state of danger. Her entry into the sphere of employment is like the entry of a sheep into a den of wolves. She has to work in a libido charged atmosphere.

Today's working environment is corrupted by an abundance of atheists, polytheists, homosexuals, sodomites, Casanovas and profligates.

Everyone with a darkened soul is a potential molester (a Shaitān) awaiting the time and opportunity to pounce on her unawares.

About such situations, our Noble Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

“When a woman emerges from the precincts of the home Shaitān lies in ambush for her.”

EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

One of the most revolutionary movements of our times has been the movement for the 'emancipation' of woman. It has been so dynamic in character, so cataclysmic in effects and so tragic in results that it deserves a careful study by all.

The movement rose with the emergence of capitalism and spread like wild fire. It tore asunder the bonds of custom and religion. It set fire to the curtains, which separated the male and female. In the present century the movement has reached its zenith. The results this movement has produced are now crystal clear. They are alarming and baffling and appalling. Even those who once paddled the movement now stand dumb-founded at

the sight of the wretchedness and depravity, which it has created.

But true to our traditions of slavery, we are now embracing the movement, which has been proved in Europe to be a bear's embrace. It seems as if we are always behind the march of time. We believe in what Europe believed half a century ago and what its saner elements have already begun to spurn. We only wear thought-garments, which seems to be Europe's refuse!

Now in the Muslim world this movement of women's so-called emancipation is firmly afoot. Efforts are being made to smuggle women into the rough and tumble of socio-economic life. They are being made to leave their hearth and home. Hijāb is being discarded and free mingling of both the sexes is encouraged. It is time that the conscientious men and women of our country give thought to the problem. We invite them to know the tree by the fruits it has already brought forth. The effects of this movement are only too clear on the European way of life.

Let us not play with fire, like a blind man. Let us think, for:
"Moral sense is almost completely ignored by the modern society. We have, in fact suppressed its manifestations. All are imbued with irresponsibility. Those who discern good and evil, those who are industrious and provident remain poor and are looked upon as backwards. The woman who has several children who devotes herself to their education instead of her own career, is considered weak-minded...Robbers enjoy prosperity in peace. Gangsters are protected by politicians and respected judges...Homosexuality flourishes. Sexual morals have been cast aside...(and thus) despite the marvels of scientific civilisation, human personality tends to dissolve." ²

² Dr. Alex Carrel; Man the unknown.

Imposing upon woman the obligation of earning her bread by working laboriously in mills, in factories and in offices has proved to be a great liability. It has struck a fatal blow to the family life. An acute disintegration has set in. The once noble institution of the family, the guardian of culture and the protector of civilisation, has collapsed like a house of cards. Women abandoned it. Men disliked it. Streets became the centres of activities. Restaurants and parks became the places of romantic ventures. This further fanned the flames of sexual fire. And today we have come to such a stage that even George Ryley Scott has to say: "Today by far more than ever before in the world's history there are for the finding large numbers of girls of respectability who are willing for all sorts of reasons to meet men halfway for sexual excitement and satisfaction. These are the amateur prostitutes of modern civilisation."³

This emancipation has not stopped here. The Kinsey Report is even more revealing. About American male population the findings are:

95 percent of the population is corrupt according to the current moral standard.

Children are caught in the whirlpool of sexual immorality even at the age of four and five.

Pre-martial sex relations have assumed baffling proportions. The Doctors say:

"Among the males going to college about 67 percent have such experience before marriage. Among those who go to high school, about 84 percent have such intercourse's, and among the boys who do not go beyond the grade school, the accumulative incidence is 98 percent."⁴

³ A History of Prostitution.

⁴ Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male, P. 552.

Some of the Western thinkers are themselves condemning this new mad craze for immorality. They have become doubtful of their own ideology and standards, and they have now started saying what the Muslims have been saying all along. Thus, for instance, Bertrand Russel says:

“Within the classes that are dwindling, it is the best element that is dwindling most rapidly. It seems unquestionable that if our moral standards remain unchanged, there will be in the next two or three generations a rapid change for the worse in the character of the population in all civilized countries. The problem is one which applies to the whole Western civilization.”⁵

Professor Arnold J. Toynbee proclaims that:

“In history the ages of disintegration were usually the ages in which the woman had left the home.”⁶

These are the views of some of the learned thinkers of the Western world. Their reaction against their own sex culture is now too manifest. They are baffled at the menace of sex-anarchy, the natural offshoot of the so called movement of feminine emancipation which instead of restoring woman to her natural status ‘emancipation’ her by driving her out of home and the family-life, by auctioning her femininity in the streets and the bazaar’s and by making her a social toy.

The West is realising the folly. But, alas! The westernised Muslim is still lost in the vagaries. He now wants to sexualise the society and to establish a sex Dictatorship in our society. It is time we open our eyes and learn to call a spade a spade.

⁵ The Principles of Social Reconstruction.

⁶ World Review.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN ISLĀM

The rights of woman of modern times were not granted voluntarily or out of kindness to the female. Modern woman reached her present position by force, and not through natural processes or Divine teachings. She had to force her way, and various circumstances came to her aid. Shortage of manpower during wars, pressure of economic needs and requirements of industrial developments forced woman to get out of her home-to work, to learn, to struggle for her livelihood, to appear as an equal to man, to run her race in the course of life side by side with him. She was forced by circumstances and in turn she forced herself through and acquired by her new status. Whether all women were pleased with these circumstances being on their course is a different matter. But the fact remains that whatever rights modern woman enjoys fall short of those of her Muslim counterpart. What Islām has established for woman is that, which suits her nature, gives her full security and protects her against disgraceful circumstances and uncertain channels of life. We do not need here to elaborate on the status of modern woman and the risks she runs to make her living or establish herself. We do not even need to explore the miseries and setbacks that encircle her as a result of the so-called rights of woman. Nor do we intend to manipulate the situation of many unhappy homes which break up because of the very 'freedom' and 'rights' of which modern woman is proud. Most woman today exercise the right of freedom to go out independently, to work and earn, to pretend to be equal to man, but alas to man, but this, sadly enough, is at the expense of their families. This is all known and obvious. What is not known is the status of woman in Islām.

An attempt will be made in the following passages to sum up the attitude of Islām with regard to woman.

EQUAL IN BEARING RESPONSIBILITIES

Islām has made women equal to man in bearing personal and common responsibilities and in receiving rewards for her deeds. She is acknowledged as an independent personality, in possession of human qualities and worthy of spiritual aspirations. Her human nature is neither inferior to nor deviant from that of man. Both are members of one another.

Woman is recognised by Islām as a full and equal partner of man in the procreation of the human kind. He is the father, she is the mother, and both are essential for life. Her role is no less than his. By this partnership she has an equal share in every aspect; she is entitled to equal rights; she undertakes equal responsibilities, and in her there are as many qualities and as much humanity as there are in her partner. To this equal partnership in the reproduction of human kind.

Allah Ta'āla says:

“O mankind! Verily We have created you from a single (pair) of a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other. (49:13).

She is equal to man in the pursuit of education and knowledge. When Islām enjoins the seeking of knowledge upon Muslims, it makes no distinction between man and woman. Almost fourteen centuries ago, Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) declared that the pursuit of knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim male and female. This declaration was very clear and was implemented by Muslims throughout history.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

She is entitled to freedom of expression as much as man is. Her sound opinions are taken into consideration and cannot be

disregarded just because she happens to belong to the female sex.

There were occasions when Muslim woman expressed to Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) their views and also stood in opposition to the Caliphs, who then accepted the sound arguments of these women.

A specific example took place during the Caliphate of Sayyidina Umar ibn Al-Khattāb (R.A.). Umar (R.A.) said during a Friday sermon, "O, people! Do not make the dowry of women dear. Had it been a cause of honour in the world and piety near Allah, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) would have been the first to act in accordance. I do not know whether the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) married any of his wives for more than 12 Awqiyah's." Hearing this a Sahābiyah (female Companion) stood up and said, "O, Umar! This is not for you to decide because Allah says:

"And you have given unto one of them a sum of money (however great) take nothing from it."

Umar (R.A.) said: "Verily, a woman has argued with Umar and defeated him."⁷

INHERITANCE

Apart from recognition of woman as an independent human being acknowledged as equally essential for the survival of humanity, Islām has given her a share of inheritance. Before Islām, she was not only deprived of that share but was herself considered as property to be inherited by man. Out of that transferable property Islām made an heir, acknowledging the inherent human qualities in woman. Whether she is a wife or mother, a sister or daughter, she receives a certain share of the deceased kin's property, a share that depends on her degree of relationship to the deceased and the number of heirs.

⁷ Durrul-Manthoor.

This share is hers, and no one can take it away or disinherit her. Even if the deceased wishes to deprive her by making a will to other relations or in favour of any other cause, the law will not allow him to do so. Any proprietor is permitted to make his will within the limit of one-third of his property, so he may not affect the rights of his heirs, men and women. In the case of inheritance, the question of equality and sameness is fully applicable.

In principle, both man and woman are equally entitled to inherit the property of the deceased relations but the portions they get may vary.

POLYGAMY

Much harsh and unthinking criticism has been levelled against Islām for having permitted polygamy. It is not realised that the Islāmic permission for polygamy was and remains conditional. It arose out of the circumstance that Islām found itself engaged in an almost unending series of wars with its deadly foes. This naturally led to the progressive reduction of the male population. The problem of surplus women left in such circumstances could not be solved except by permitting men to marry more than one wife in order to provide for helpless women and save them from falling into the evil of prostitution. Moreover, in Arabia before the advent of Islām, polygamy was unlimited. A man could marry as many women as he liked, there being no restriction as to the number of marriages he could contract. Islām could not have abolished such a deep-rooted custom with its far-reaching economic effects at a sudden stroke. Therefore, as in the case of slavery, it proceeded by gradual steps. First, it limited to four the number of wives a man could have. Then it laid down that a second or third marriage could not be resorted to unless the husband felt he could do justice to all his wives in the matter of economic sustenance and general treatment.

Even in the modern West there are a considerable number of thinkers and sociologists that recognise that polygamy is not an unmitigated evil and that in certain circumstances it may become desirable, even necessary. In England proposals were made in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to legalise polygamy as a means of restraining infanticide, adultery, prostitution and the evils of sexual relations outside marriage.

According to Havelock Ellis, James Hinton declared that although monogamy be a good, nay even the only good, order, if of free choice, a law for it is another thing. He says: "We have arrived at it as a legal and universal form to carry it out in its entirety and so actually called into being more licentiousness than would be possible under an open polygamy. A forced monogamy is responsible for many of the evils of prostitution, and leads to hatred and quarrels, to intense jealousy in women, and to an insistence on mere physical relationship which turns spontaneity and purity into corruption. The woman's natural jealousy is not at a man's loving another, but at his forsaking her."

J.S. Clear McFarlane states: "Whether the question is considered socially, ethically or religiously, it can be demonstrated that polygamy is not contrary to the highest standards of civilisation...The suggestion offers a practical remedy for the problem of destitute and unwanted female; the alternative is continual and increased prostitution, concubinage and distressing spinsterhood."⁸

POLYANDRY

Islām allows polygamy in certain cases but it does not allow polyandry, that is a woman having more than one husband, in

⁸ The Case for Polygamy P.30

any case. This is the legal position. The question arises why is this so?

First, sociologically speaking, the institution of a family in a patriarchal set-up can operate effectively in case of polygamy but it would simply disintegrate under polyandry. For argument's sake, it is possible to have polyandrous families in a matriarchal set-up, but this would mean a change in the entire social matrix.

Secondly, from a sexo-sociological viewpoint, it is possible for a man to have sexual relations with his wives, if he has more than one, and impregnate them. But if a wife has more than one husband, she can, even in that case, be impregnated only by one.

This should also be kept in view that once a woman is pregnant she is not available for sexual relations for some time. If the possibilities of a properly married second wife are denied, the dangers of illicit sex become very real. If this is the situation in a one - husband - one - wife question, what would be the predicament in a many - husband - one - wife polygon?

Islām has forbidden polyandry not for any partiality towards man, but for the good of man and woman and of the entire human society.

MARRIAGE

Islām has ordained that the sexual desire must be satisfied, not by unlawful sexual liaison nor secretly, nor openly and immodestly, but through the prescribed course so that the whole society comes to know, and it is established beyond doubt, that such and such a man and woman are now meant for each other. The sexual relation, which was forbidden and unlawful outside marriage, has not only been declared lawful within marriage but

also has been commended as good. It is enjoined on the Muslims and its avoidance is regarded with disfavour. Marriage is looked upon as a virtuous deed, so much so that if a woman observes a non-obligatory fast, or busies herself in worship or recitation of the Qur'ān with a view to evading the lawful desire of her husband, she commits a sin.

Here are a few sayings of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that amply illustrate the point:

1. "You should marry, for that is the best way of saving yourself from casting evil eyes, and of safeguarding yourself against sexual immorality. The one who does not possess the means to marry should fast, because fasting curbs sexuality."⁹
2. "By Allah, I am the best among you in the matter of fearing Allah and avoiding His displeasure. But in spite of that I observe fast and break it, offer prayers and sleep at night, and marry women. This is my way, and whosoever shuns my way does not belong to me."¹⁰
3. "The woman should not observe a non-obligatory fast without the permission of her husband."¹¹
4. "When one of you happens to see a woman and is attracted by her, should go to his wife, for she has the same as she (the other woman) had."¹²

The Shar'iah, by enjoining these injunctions, wants to close all the ways leading to sexual anarchy, and intends to restrict sexual relation to marriage only. It does not like any sexual feelings to be aroused outside marriage. If, however, such feelings are aroused naturally or incidentally, they should be satisfied mutually between the husband and the wife. This is the only way for man to protect himself against all sorts of unnatural,

⁹ Tirmizi.

¹⁰ Bukhāri.

¹¹ Bukhāri.

¹² Tirmizi.

self-created sexual excitements and to conserve his energy for the service of society.

ORGANIZATION OF THE FAMILY

In this organisation the woman has been made queen of the house. Earning a living for the family is the responsibility of the husband, while her duty is to keep and run the house with his earnings.

“The woman is the ruler over the house of her husband, and she is answerable for the conduct of her duties.”¹³

She has been exempted from all outdoor religious obligations. For instance, it is not obligatory on her to offer the Jumu’ah prayers.¹⁴

It is also not obligatory on her to go for Jihād, though, if the occasion demands, she may go and serve the fighters in the cause of Allah. She is also not required to join the funeral prayer; she has rather been forbidden to do so.¹⁵

She has been exempted from attending the mosques and joining in congregational prayers. Though under certain conditions she may visit the mosque, yet as a principle it has not been approved by the Shar’iah.

The woman has not been allowed to go on a journey except in company with a mahram.¹⁶

In short, Islām has not approved that a woman should move out of her house without a genuine need. The most appropriate place for her, according to the Islāmic law is her home.

¹³ Bukhāri.

¹⁴ Abu Dā’ud.

¹⁵ Bukhāri.

¹⁶ Tirmizi.

The Qur'ānic verse, "*Stay in your houses* " clearly points to the commandment. But in this regard no restriction has been imposed, because sometimes it becomes really necessary for women to go out of their homes. For instance, a woman may have nobody to look after her, or she may have to go out for earning a living on account of the poverty, insufficient income, and sickness, infirmity or such other handicaps afflicting the male protector of the family. For all such cases, the law has been made sufficiently flexible. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has told women:

"Allah permitted you to go out of your houses for genuine needs."¹⁷

But such a permission, which has been granted under special circumstances and genuine need, cannot alter the basic principles of the social system of Islām, which restricts the woman's sphere of activity to her home.

This permission indeed is a sort of concession, which must per force be treated as such.

KINDNESS TO WIVES

Nowadays men think that it is very correct for them to keep fear and awe upon their wives, and keep them under pressure. Outside with their friends they are in a jovial and happy mood, but when they step into the house they become serious and do not laugh or smile, or even a joke or two with the wife who was waiting for him the whole day, thinking that when her husband comes home in the evening, she will tell him this and that. Those who do not have Deen in them enter the house like a Pharaoh with big red eyes and those who have Deen in them come in like some pious saint in meditation with eyes closed as if they are living in the heavens. Husbands should go to their wives smiling and speaking to her, they will get more Thawāb (reward) for

¹⁷ Bukhāri.

fulfilling her rights than reading that tasbeeh at that moment. Laughing, joking and talking with the wife is also Ibādat. To stay awake the whole night for Ibādat and not talking to the wife is contrary to the Sunnah practices.

Hakeemul Ummah Shaykh Ashraf Ali Thānwi (R), says it is wrong to reject the intercession of Allah, when He is commanding to treat a wife well. She is weak and far from her parents, she is at your mercy. After giving birth to a few children she becomes weak and the husband takes out all his anger on her because she did not do some work of his. O! Why have you thought her to be like a maid (servant), how about you doing it yourself for a change. You were not given a wife to work for you. If she does any work for you it is her kindness.

Allah Ta'āla is interceding for His bonds women, "*And treat your wives with compassion.*"

By Allah Ta'āla interceding on their behalf is a sign that they are of lofty status.¹⁸

Whether she is young or old, even if her teeth have fallen and her face is wrinkled. Not that when she is young and beautiful you did everything for her and now that she has grown old you treat her degradedly. This is not correct. Think of this old lady who has grown old with you.

BE CONTENT WITH YOUR PARTNER:

Many men get sorry later in life, that why did they marry this woman and not that one. Remember, what has been predestined by Allah must come to pass. So be happy with your lot which Allah has chosen for you.

¹⁸ Rights of Women, Shaykh Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar (D.B.).

HOW THE RIGHTEOUS TREAT THEIR WIVES:

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was not hard or harsh to his wives; he also treated them with kindness.

Our mother Ummāhatul Mu'mineen Ā'isha (RA) used to recite this couplet when Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) came to her in the evening;

*“One sun is mine and one sun is the sky’s
But my sun is better than the sun of the sky,
Because the sky’s sun rises after Fajr,
And my sun rises after Isha.”*

She says “When Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) came into the house, he came in smiling and greeted the house folk.”

Nowadays these Sunnats have been left out. Although Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had the whole Ummat’s grief and concern at heart, yet he did not leave out this wonderful practice.

Many men have become Allah’s friends (Wali-Allah) by just treating their wives with good character. Just think for a moment, if ones daughter is bad tempered and cheeky, and her husband tolerates her, will one not praise this son-in-law. So one should tolerate the bad-temper of the wife and see what great rewards will be earned from this small action.

REMEMBER! As my (author) Honoured Shaykh, Shaykh Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar (MZ) says:

“TREAT YOUR WIFE HOW YOU DESIRE YOUR SON-IN-LAW TO TREAT YOUR DAUGHTER.”

ECONOMIC RIGHTS

Man’s economic stability is the foremost factor that gets him a status in society and through it he is able to maintain that status. All laws, except the law of Islām, have weakened the economic

position of woman, and this economic helplessness is the chief factor that has reduced her to virtual slavery in the society. Europe wanted to change her condition, but the result was that she was made an earning hand like the man, which led to a still greater evil.

Islām grants the woman very extensive rights of inheritance. She gets her share of inheritance from her father, husband, offspring and other near relatives. Besides, she is entitled to receive is her own property and she possesses full proprietary rights over it without any right of inheritance by her father, husband, or any other relative. Then, if she invests her money in business, or earns with her own hand, she is the sole owner of the fruits of her labour. In spite of all this, her husband is under obligation to support her.

Thus, the economic position of the woman has become so secure in Islām that more often than not she is economically better off than the husband himself.

SOCIAL RIGHTS

1. The woman has been granted full freedom in the choice of her husband. Nobody has got the right to give her away in marriage without her wish and consent. And if she marries a Muslim by her free choice, nobody can stop her doing so. If, however, she selects a man who is not her equal in the family status, the elders reserve their right to object.
2. She has been given vast legal rights to obtain separation from a husband who is cruel impotent or whom she abhors.
3. The husband has been instructed to use the authority granted to him over the wife with discretion in a large hearted and magnanimous manner. Islām does not give only moral instructions. If the husband abuses his authority the wife reserves every right to have recourse to the law.
4. Widows and divorced women and all such women whose marriage has been annulled by law, or who have been legally

separated from their husbands, have been granted an unfettered right to remarry. Their previous husbands, or any relative, do not retain any right whatever over them. This is a right which women in most of the European and American countries have not yet been able to get.

5. Absolute equality has been established between the man and the woman in so far as civil and penal laws are concerned. The Islāmic law does not recognise any distinction between them in so far as protection of life and property, honour and reputation is concerned.

HIJĀB

In the eyes of law, adultery implies physical union only, but from the, moral point of view every evil inclination towards a member of the opposite sex outside marriage amounts to adultery. Thus, enjoying the beauty of the other woman with the eyes, relishing the sweetness of her voice with the ears, drawing pleasure of the tongue by conversing with her, and turning of the feet over and over again to visit her street, all are the preliminaries of adultery, nay, adultery itself. Law cannot have jurisdiction over such an act, for it springs from the hidden motives of man. It can only be detected by his own conscience.

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has elucidated this point as follows:

“Eyes commit adultery, and their adultery is the evil look, hands commit adultery, and their adultery is moving towards sin, the adultery of the tongue is (lustful) talk, and the adultery of the heart is the evil desire. In the end, the sexual organs either confirm all this (by their action) or disapprove it.”¹⁹

¹⁹ Bukhāri.

URGE FOR DISPLAY

The urge of display is not always prominent; it is generally hidden in the depths of the heart. It often finds expression in the selection of pleasing, gauzy and bright clothes, fancy hairdos and such other apparently insignificant aspects of the female behaviour as cannot be enumerated. The Qur'ān has comprehensively termed them all as Tabarrujal Jāhiliyyah. No law can be made to check and control this tendency, as it springs from the woman's own heart. She herself can only search her heart to detect any hidden evil desire. If it is there it has to be eradicated according to the following Divine commandment:

"And do not go about displaying your fineries as women used to do in the days of ignorance." (33:33).

Only that decoration is Islāmic, which is free from the element of the evil motive. But as soon as it is corrupted by the evil motive it becomes un-Islāmic.

THE VOICE

The voice is another agent of the evil spirit. These are countless mischief's, which are caused and spread by the voice. A man and a woman may apparently be absorbed in innocent talk, but the hidden motive of the heart is at work, it is rendering the voice more and more sweet, and the accent and the words more and more appealing.

The Qur'ān detects this hidden motive:

"If you are God-fearing, do not talk in a soft voice, lest the man of the unhealthy heart should cherish false hopes from you. If you have to speak (to the other men), speak in an unaffected way." (33:32).

Shaykh Ashraf Ali Thānwi (R) says, "Speech referred here is that speech which is said out of necessity to a strange man."²⁰
Shaykh Daryābādi (R) says, "The very sound of a female voice is sometimes sufficient to excite passion in man, and he is in many instances, sexually attracted through the sense of hearing."²¹
It is further stated in the same Tafseer, "Sexual stimulation through the ears is greater than is usually believed."²²

It is stated in Shāmi (a widely used and accepted reference for Islāmic jurisprudence), "It is not lawful for her to raise her voice nor to make her voice tender nor to punctuate, because in these acts there is a danger of men being attracted to her thereby exciting lust in them. It is precisely for this reason that it is not permissible for a woman to recite Azān."²³

THE SOUND

Sometimes attention is attracted not by the word of mouth but by some other device. Such devices also spring from the evil motive and Islām disapproves of them all.

"...And they should not stamp the ground in walking, so as to reveal their hidden decoration (ornaments etc., by their jingle or high heel shoes)." (24:31).

PERFUME

Perfume also acts as a messenger between two evils spirits. This is the finest and most subtle means of communication, which may be trivial in the eyes of others but the Islāmic shame, is too

²⁰ Bayānul Qur'ān

²¹ Tafseer Daryābādi.

²² Havelock, Ellis, Psychology of sex. P. 61.

²³ Shāmi Vol.1 P. 274.

sensitive to let slip undetected. It does not allow a Muslim woman to wear scented clothes or pass on the ways or sit in gatherings, for even if her beauty and make-up are hidden, her perfume is spreading about and causing emotional stimulation.

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

“The woman who uses perfume and passes through the people is promiscuous.”²⁴

COVERING THE FACE

Allah Ta’āla mentions in the Qur’ān:

“O Prophet, enjoin your wives and daughters and the women of the Muslims to draw their outer-garments close round them, it is expected that they will thus be recognised and not molested.” (33:59).

This verse especially enjoins the covering of the face. This may be done either by drawing a part of the outer-garment in front of the face, or by a veil, or in some other way. The Qur’ān says that when the Muslim women go out thus covered, they will be considered as respectable women, and not as lewd ones, and therefore nobody will think of molesting them.

All the commentators of the Qur’ān have given this same meaning to this verse.

Ibn Abbās (RA), commenting on this verse says:

“Allah has enjoined on the Muslim women that when they go out of their houses under some necessity, they should cover their faces by drawing a part of their outer-garment over their heads.”²⁵

Imām Muhammad bin Sireen (R) asked Ubaidah bin Sufyān bin al-Hārith (R) how one should follow and practise the command of covering the face. Ubaidah (R) put on an outer-garment

²⁴ Tirmizi.

²⁵ Ahkāmul Qur’ān, Vol. 3 P. 457.

himself and gave a demonstration by covering his forehead and nose and an eye, leaving only the other eye uncovered.²⁶

Allāmah Naishāpuri (R) says in his 'Gharā'ibul Qur'ān':

"In the beginning of the Islāmic era, women used to come out in a shirt and loose robe only as the women of the days of ignorance did. The dress of the respectable women was not any different from that of the women of inferior status. Then they were enjoined to put on the outer-garments and cover the head and face so that people might recognise that they were respectable women, and not immodest ones."²⁷

Imām Rāzi (R) says:

"In the days of ignorance, women of the Arab nobility and the slave-girls moved about freely and they were teased by the evildoers. Allah enjoined on the respectable women to cover themselves up with the outer-garment, and said, "*...it is expected that they will thus be recognised and molested.*" This may have two meanings; first, they will be recognised as respectable women from their dress, and will not be teased. Second, it will be known that they are not promiscuous.²⁸

Qādhi Baidhāwi (R) says:

"...To draw their outer-garment close to them," means that they should draw a part of their outer-garment in front of their face and cover themselves up with the rest of it.²⁹

These quotations clearly show that right from the time of the Companions of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) down to

²⁶ Ahkāmul Qur'ān, Vol. 3 P. 457.

²⁷ Ahkāmul Qur'ān, Vol. 3 P. 458.

²⁸ Tafseer Kabir, Vol. 6 P. 591.

²⁹ Tafseer Baidhāwi, Vol. 6 P. 168.

the eight-century (A.H.) the one and the same meaning has been attached to this verse, that has been given above. Then from the Ahādith also we come to know that after the revelation of this verse, Muslim women of that period had started wearing the veil, and the practice of moving about with the uncovered face had been discarded.

In Mu'tta and other collections of Hadith by Abu Dā'ud, Tirmizi, etc. it has been related that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had forbidden the women to wear the veil over the face and gloves on the hands while in Ihrām. But this did not mean that women should make an open show of their faces during the course of Hajj

From other Ahādith we learn that the wives of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and the common Muslim women concealed their faces from other people even without the veil during the Hajj.

According to Abu Dā'ud, Ā'isha (R.A.) says:

“We, the women, were with the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), in Ihrām, and the riders passed by us. So, when they appeared before, us, we drew our outer-garments from the head in front of the face, and when they rode past us, we uncovered our faces.”

According to Mu'tta of Imām Mālik, Fatimah, daughter of Munzir says:

“We used to cover our faces with the outer-garment while in Ihrām. Once Asma (R.A.) the daughter of Abu Bakr (R.A.), was with us, but she did not prohibit us from this.”

According to a tradition related by Ā'isha (R.A.) in Fathul Bāri, Kitābul Hajj:

“A woman dressed in Ihrām should draw her outer-garment over her head in front of her faces.”

THE VEIL

A person who considers carefully the words of the Qur'ānic verse, their well-known and generally accepted meaning and the practice during the time of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), cannot dare deny the fact that the Islāmic Shar'iah enjoins on the woman to hide her face from other people, and this has been the practise of the Muslim women ever since the time of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) himself.

The Muslim women living at the time of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to whom the Qur'ān was revealed had made the veil a regular part of their dress outside the house, and even at that time it was called Niqāb, the veil.

Yes! This is the same 'veil', which Europe loathes and detests, and the very vision of which weighs heavily on the Western conscience, and which is regarded as a mark of oppression, narrow-mindedness and barbarism. Yes, this is the same thing that is mentioned first of all in pointing out the ignorance and backwardness of an Eastern nation. So much so that when a person has to describe the cultural and social advancement of an Eastern nation, the first thing that he mentions with great satisfaction is that it has discarded the 'veil'.

Now if the Muslim so feels, let him hang his head with shame. For it is not something that was devised and adopted later, it was indeed devised by the Qur'ān itself and established by Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) himself as a social custom. But the mere hanging of the head will be of no avail. If the ostrich buries its head in sand, it cannot do away with the hunter. Likewise, even if the Muslim hanged his head, he cannot cancel the Qur'ānic verse nor blot out the established facts of history.

If he tries to cover it up with misinterpretation, this 'shameful blot' will become all the more glaring. When under the influence

of 'Westernism', he has begun to look upon it as something shameful, the only honourable course for him will be to discard Islām itself which enjoins the covering of the face with such a 'loathsome' thing as the veil.

People enamoured of 'progress' and 'civilisation' cannot sincerely follow a religion that prohibits the respectable women from becoming society women, which inculcates Haya, modesty and chastity, and which forbids the queen of the house to become the 'object of beauty' for others outside the house. How can such a religion as Islām allow such 'progress' and 'civilisation'? For the object of 'progress' and 'civilisation' cannot be achieved unless the woman can spare couple of hours every time she wants to move out of the house and applies herself exclusively to self-decoration and make-up by perfuming her body, putting on highly attractive matching clothes, enhancing the glamour of the face and arms, using lip-stick and other beauty aids, and setting her eyebrows and blackening her eye-lids, so that when she goes out thus equipped she may bewitch all and sundry.

As has been repeatedly pointed out, the objectives of Islām and Western civilisation are poles apart. Therefore, the person who interprets the Islāmic injunctions from the Western point of view commits a blunder, for the Western criterion of judging the value of things is radically opposed to that adopted by Islām. The things which are held as highly important and valuable in the West are indeed of little or no value in the eyes of Islām, and vice versa. Thus, the person who believes in the Western criterion will feel that every Islāmic thing needs to be altered and modernised.

One may ask; why has Islām allowed uncovering of the face under genuine need? The reply is that the law of Islām is not a one-sided, irrational law. On one hand, it safeguards the morals of man; on the other, it takes into account his genuine need also,

and thus strikes a balance between the two sides of life. It intends to eradicate immorality, but at the same time it does not restrain a person from satisfying his genuine needs. That is why it has not given women an absolute command in respect of covering the face as in respect of covering the Satr and hiding the decoration, because this does not restrain her from attending to the needs of life. But, on the other hand, if the hand and the face are kept permanently covered, she may find it extremely difficult to attend to her daily needs. Therefore, it was enjoined on the woman to cover the face with the veil, and this command has been relaxed by the exception “except what is unavoidable”, so that she may uncover the face if required under necessity, provided that she does not mean to display her charms. Then, on the other side, men were enjoined to “restrain their eyes”, so that if a modest woman uncovered her face under necessity, they would cast their looks down and refrain from staring at her in an indecent way.

If one carefully considers these injunctions for Hijāb, one will find that the Islāmic Hijāb is not a custom of ignorance, but it is a rational law. A custom of ignorance is something rigid; it does not permit of modification or change under any circumstances. If it covers a thing, it covers it forever, and it cannot be uncovered whatever may happen. In contrast to this, a rational law is flexible. It permits of strictness and laxity according to the circumstances; it permits of exceptions in its rules according to the time and occasion. Such a law cannot be followed blindly, it demands discrimination. A sensible follower can decide for himself where he should obey the general rule and where under the law he is allowed to avail himself of the exceptions in view of “genuine needs”. Then he himself can settle the question; how far in a particular situation can he make use of the exception and how can he keep in view the object of law? In all such matters, the conscience of an honest, sincere Believer alone can be the true judge.

That is why Islām cannot be properly followed without knowledge. It is a rational law, and to follow it rightly one needs to exercise reason and understanding at every step.

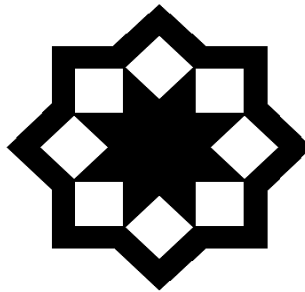
CONCLUSION

After reading these few pages one has to conclude realising that the rights given to women by Islām and the honour that lies behind the veil are unparalleled in history.

Islām has given both sexes equal rights. Women enjoy all the rights that men do. But the distribution of rights and duties is different. The criterion of rights distributed is based on their physical attributes.

Everything in the universe is made for a particular function and everything is functioning and developing in its fixed place. This also applies to human relationships. Social harmony will result only when men and women carry on their responsibilities well.

May Allah Ta'āla grant all our Muslim women the guidance to act according to the manner ordained for them in the Shar'iah. And may Allah Ta'āla grant us all love of the Shar'iah and make us submit to it whole heartily. Āmeen.



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