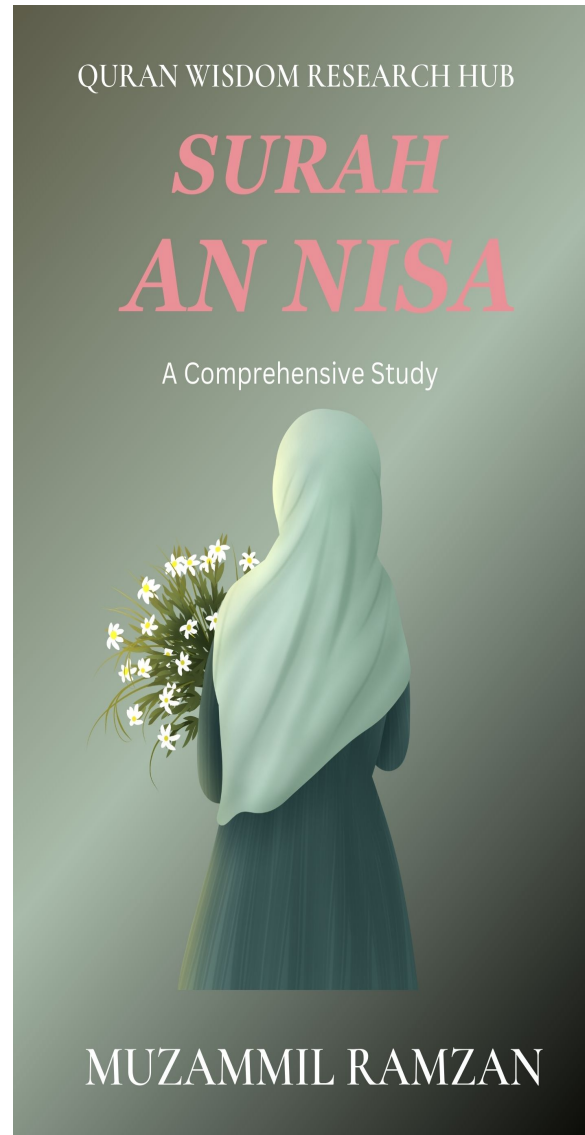


Understanding Surah An Nisa

A Comprehensive Study

29 Rabi ul Awwal 1445
Quran Wisdom Research Hub
Muzammil Ramzan



Preface to this edition

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

I am deeply honored and humbled to present this edition of "Understanding Surah An-Nisa" to you. In the course of my life's journey, I have been fortunate to be exposed to the profound wisdom and guidance contained within the Quran, and in particular, the chapters within it.

Among them, Surah An-Nisa has always held a special place in my heart.

This book is a labor of love, a culmination of years of studying and reflecting on the Quran, with a particular focus on Surah An-Nisa. It has been my endeavor to provide a comprehensive and accessible exploration of this chapter, not as a distant historical relic, but as a vibrant and living guide for our times.

The chapters within this book take you on a journey through the themes and teachings of Surah An-Nisa, unraveling the depth of its insights and the breadth of its relevance. It is my hope that these pages will serve as a bridge between the timeless wisdom of the Quran and the challenges we face in the modern world.

The Quran is a source of light and guidance for all of humanity, transcending boundaries of time, culture, and faith. The teachings of Surah An-Nisa offer solutions to many of the issues faced by women in the West, and they also provide valuable lessons for building stronger and more compassionate societies worldwide.

As you embark on this journey through the chapters of this book, I encourage you to engage with an open heart and a curious mind. The Quran's teachings are a source of perpetual discovery, and its wisdom has the power to transform our lives and our world.

I hope that this book will not only be a valuable resource but also a source of inspiration for you. May it inspire you to explore the teachings of Surah An-Nisa, understand its relevance in your life, and contribute to a more just and compassionate world.

I extend my gratitude to all those who have supported and encouraged me in this endeavor, and I pray that this work is accepted as a humble contribution to the ongoing conversation on faith, understanding, and progress.

May Allah guide us and grant us wisdom as we embark on this journey.

With sincere regards,

Muzammil Ramzan [29 Rabi ul awwal 1445]

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Chapter 1

Introduction to Surah An Nisa

A Medinan sura which takes its title from the many references to women throughout the sura (verses 3-4, 127-30). It gives a number of instructions, urging justice to children and orphans, and mentioning inheritance and marriage laws. Verses 5-12 of the sura give rulings on property and inheritance, and so does the verse which concludes the sura. The sura also talks of the tensions between the Muslim community in Medina and some of the People of the Book (verses 44, 61), moving into a general discussion of war: it warns the Muslims to be cautious and to defend the weak and helpless (verses 71-6). Another similar theme is the intrigues of the hypocrites (verses 88-91, 138-46).

The Noble Prophet MUHAMMAD (P.B.U.H) has said "Whoever recites surah Nisa, it is as though he has given alms for all the believers who have left an inheritance, and its reward is like freeing a slave, such a person will be distanced from polytheism and shirk and GOD will forgive him his sins".

Family and Social Ethics

O humanity! Be mindful of your Lord Who created you from a single soul, and from it He created its mate, and through both He spread countless men and women. And be mindful of Allah—in Whose Name you appeal to one another—and 'honour' family ties. Surely Allah is ever Watchful over you.

(Al Quran, 1:4)

In Surah Ra'd Allah says

As for those who break the covenant of Allah after firmly confirming it, who cut asunder the ties that Allah has commanded to be joined, and who create corruption in the land: Allah's curse shall be upon them and theirs shall be a wretched abode (in the Hereafter).

(Al Quran, 13:25)

Hadith

Jubair b. Mutlim reported that his father narrated to him that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said: The severer of the tie of kinship would not get into Paradise.

Breaking the kinship ties is major sin in Islam, Once we understand this, we need to ask: who is the one who upholds the ties of kinship? This was explained by the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when he said: "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 break off the relationship." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 5645).

If the relationship is merely one of returning favours and giving like in return for like, and not taking the initiative, then this is not upholding the ties of kinship, it is only responding in kind. Some people follow the principle of giving a gift in return for a gift, and visiting in return for a visit, so if someone does not give them a gift, they do not give him a gift, and if he does not visit them, they do not visit him. This is not what is meant by upholding the ties of kinship at all, and this is not what is required by Islam. This is merely responding in kind, it is not the higher degree which Islam urges us to reach. A man said to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), "I have relatives with whom I try to keep in touch, but they cut me off. I treat them well, but they abuse me. I am patient and kind towards them, but they insult me." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "If you are as you say, then it is as if you are putting hot dust in their mouths. Allah will continue to support you as long as you continue to do that." (Reported by Muslim with commentary by al-Nawawi, 16/115). Who could bear to put up with hot dust? We seek refuge with Allah from cutting off the ties of kinship.

Allah also says in Holy Quran

The believers are but one brotherhood, so make peace between your brothers. And be mindful of Allah so you may be shown mercy. (Al Quran 49:10)

In another Hadith

"Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: A person's du`as will continue to be answered so long as he does not pray for something sinful or for the breaking of family ties. (Narrated by Muslim).

Sayyiduna Abud Darda (radiyallahu ‘anhu) reports that Nabi (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said:
“Should I not tell you something that is better than [voluntary/optional] fasting, Salah and charity?’ They [The Sahabah] said: ‘Yes.’ He said: ‘Reconciling and making peace between people, for spoiling relations is the shaver [destroys Din and good].

Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should not hurt his neighbor and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should serve his guest generously and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should speak what is good or keep silent." (**Al Bukhari**)

All the above verses and hadiths shows the importance of Family and social ethics , May Allah give us strength to keep good relations with our family and friends ! Aameen

Chapter 2

Women's Rights and Equality

Spiritual Aspect

But those who do good—whether male or female—and have faith will enter Paradise and will never be wronged 'even as much as' the speck on a date stone.(Al Quran: 4:124)

In Quran 2:228 Allah says

Women have rights similar to those of men equitably, although men have a degree 'of responsibility' above them. And Allah is Almighty, All-Wise.

In Another Surah 3:195 Allah said

And their Lord responded to them, "Never will I allow to be lost the work of [any] worker among you, whether male or female; you are of one another. So those who emigrated or were evicted from their homes or were harmed in My cause or fought or were killed - I will surely remove from them their misdeeds, and I will surely admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow as reward from Allāh, and Allāh has with Him the best reward."

In another place Quran states

Surely 'for' Muslim men and women, believing men and women,¹ devout men and women, truthful men and women, patient men and women, humble men and women, charitable men and women, fasting men and women, men and women who guard their chastity, and men and women who remember Allah often—for 'all of' them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward. (Al Quran 33:35)

And same topic is discuss in Surah Ghafir verse 40 .

In the West, "equality" of men and women means similar rights for both the genders. Women should have exactly the same rights as men for them to be equal. A large number of Islamic scholars disagree with this definition of equality. For them, the idea that men and women should compete with each other to have the same rights does not make any sense. "In Islam equality does not mean identity." Muslims believe that men and women do not have to have the same rights to enjoy a status of equality. This concept is explained in the context of the intrinsic and natural differences in the biological, emotional, psychological and physiological differences that exist in a man and a woman. These natural differences make one gender more suitable for some functions and the other more suitable for different functions. So in Islam, gender defines the role of a man and woman. Gender roles are considered to be complimentary and not conflicting with each other. A role of a man and a woman is that of a partnership and not a contradictory struggle for supremacy over each other. Western women, in trying to achieve the same rights as men, lose the uniqueness which is inherent in their own gender and only end up degrading themselves. Quran says that both genders have superiority over the other in different areas and one should not try to mimic the other. According to the Quran, men and women have the same spirit; there is no superiority in the spiritual sense between men and women.

Women Rights

In Quran 4:19 Allah S.W.T said to believers men.

"Treat them fairly. If you happen to dislike them, you may hate something which Allah turns into a great blessing".

In Another place Quran 2:232 Allah says

"When you divorce women and they have 'almost' reached the end of their waiting period, either retain them honourably or let them go honourably. But do not retain them 'only' to harm them 'or' to take advantage 'of them'. Whoever does that surely wrongs his own soul. Do not take Allah's revelations lightly. Remember Allah's favours upon you as well as the Book and wisdom He has sent down for your guidance. Be mindful of Allah, and know that Allah has 'perfect' knowledge of all things."

Our Beloved Prophet (P.B.U.H) said in one of his last commands in his farewell pilgrimage before his death, "I Command You to be kind and considerate to women".

In Another Narrations Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) said

"It is only the generous in character who is good to women, and only the evil one who Insults them".

The Economic Aspect.

The Islamic Shariiah recognizes the full property rights of women before and after marriage. A married woman may keep her maiden name.

Greater financial security is assured for women. They are entitled to receive marital gifts, to keep present and future properties and income for their own security. No married woman is required to spend a penny from her property and income on the household. She is entitled to full financial support during marriage and during the waiting period ('iddah) in case of divorce. She is also entitled to child support. Generally, a Muslim woman is guaranteed support in all stages of her life, as a daughter, wife, mother, or sister. These additional advantages of women over men are somewhat balanced by the provisions of the inheritance which allow the male, in most cases, to inherit twice as much as the female. This means that the male inherits more but is responsible financially for other females: daughters, wives, mother, and sister, while the female (i.e., a wife) inherits less but can keep it all for investment and financial security without any legal obligation so spend any part of it even for her own sustenance (food, clothing, housing, medication, etc.).

The Social Aspect

First: As a Daughter

The Qur'an effectively ended the cruel pre-Islamic practice of female infanticide (wa'd):

When the female (infant) buried alive is questioned for what crime she was killed. (Qur'an 81-8-9)

The Qur'an went further to rebuke the unwelcoming attitudes among some parents upon hearing the news of the birth of a baby girl, instead of a baby boy: When news is brought to one of them of (the birth of) a female (child) his face darkens and he is filled with inward grief! With shame does he hide himself from his people because of the bad news he has had! Shall he retain her on (sufferance and) contempt or bury her in the dust? Ah! what an evil (choice) they decide on! (Qur'an 16:58-59)

Parents are duty bound to support and show kindness and justice to their daughters. Prophet Muhammad said: "Whosoever has a daughter and he does not bury her alive, does not insult her, and does not favor his son over her, Allah will enter him into Paradise." [Ahmad] "Whosoever supports two daughters til they mature, he and I will come in the day of judgment as this (and he pointed with his two fingers held together)." [Ahmad]

Education is not only a right but also a responsibility of all males and females. Prophet Muhammad said: "Seeking knowledge is mandatory for every Muslim ("Muslim" is used here in the generic meaning which includes both males and females).

As a Wife

Marriage in Islam is based on mutual peace, love, and compassion, not just the satisfaction of man's needs:

And among His Signs is that He created for you mates from among yourselves that you may well in tranquillity with them and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts); verily in that are signs for those who reflect. (Qur'an 30:21) (He is) the Creator of the heavens and the earth: He has made for you pairs from among yourselves and pairs among cattle: by this means does He multiply you: there is nothing whatever like unto Him and He is the One that hears and sees (all things). (Qur'an 42:11)

The female has the right to accept or reject marriage proposals. Her consent is prerequisite to the validity of the marital contract according to the Prophet's teaching. It follows that if by "arranged marriage" is meant marrying the girl without her consent, then such a marriage is nullifiable if she so wished. "Ibn Abbas reported that a girl came to the Messenger of God, Muhammad, and she reported that her father had forced her to marry without her consent. The Messenger of God gave her the choice ... (between accepting the marriage or invalidating it)." (Ahmad, Hadeeth no. 2469). In another version, the girl said: "Actually I accept this marriage but I wanted to let women know that parents have no right to force a husband on them." [Ibn Majah]

The husband is responsible for the maintenance, protection, and overall headship of the family (qiwamah) within the framework of consultation and kindness. The mutual dependency and complementary of the roles of males and females does not mean "subservience" by either party to the other. Prophet Muhammad helped in household chores in spite of his busy schedule. The mothers shall give suck to their offspring for two whole years if the father desires to complete the term. But he shall bear the cost of their food and clothing on equitable terms. No soul shall have a burden laid on it greater than it can bear. No mother shall be treated unfairly on account of her child nor father on account of his child. An heir shall be chargeable in the same way if they both decide on weaning by mutual consent and after due consultation there is no blame on them. If you decide on a foster-mother for your offspring there is no blame on you provided you pay (the mother) what you offered on equitable terms. But fear Allah and know that Allah sees well what you do. (Qur'an 2:233) The Qur'an urges husbands to be kind and considerate to their wives even if they do

not like them. O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should you treat them with harshness that you may take away part of the marital gift you have given them except where they have been guilty of open lewdness; on the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If you take a dislike to them it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings about though it a great deal of good. (Qur'an 4:19) Prophet Muhammad taught: " I command you to be kind to women ..." "The best of you is the best to his family (wife) ..." Marital disputes are to be handled privately between the parties whenever possible, in steps (without excesses or cruelty). If disputes are not resolved then family mediation can be resorted to. Divorce is seen as the last resort, which is permissible but not encouraged. Under no circumstances does the Qur'an encourage, allow or condone family violence or physical abuse and cruelty. The maximum allowed in extreme cases is a gentle tap that does not even leave a mark on the body while saving the marriage from collapsing.

Forms of marriage dissolution include mutual agreement, the husband's initiative, the wife's initiative (if part of her marital contract, court decision on the wife's initiative (for a cause), and the wife's initiative without a "cause" provided that she returns the marital gift to her husband (khul' [divestiture]).

Priority for custody of young children (up to the age of about seven) is given to the mother. A child later chooses between his mother and father (for custody purposes). Custody questions are to be settled in a manner that balances the interests of both parents and well-being of the child

Question of Polygyny (Polygamy)

One of the common myths is to associate polygyny with Islam as if it were introduced by Islam or is the norm according to its teachings. While no text in the Qur'an or Sunnah states that either monogamy or polygyny is the norm, demographic data indicates that monogamy is the norm and polygyny is the exception. In almost all countries and on the global level the numbers of men and women are almost even, with women's numbers slightly more than men. As such, it is a practical impossibility to regard polygyny as the norm since it assumes a demographic structure of at least two thirds females, and one third males (or 80 percent females and 20 percent males if four wives per male is the norm!). No Islamic "norm" is based on an impossible assumption.

Like many peoples and religions, however, Islam did not out-law polygyny but regulated it and restricted it. It is neither required nor encouraged, but simply permitted and not outlawed. Edward Westermarck gives numerous examples of the sanctioning of polygyny among Jews, Christians, and others.

The only passage in the Qur'an (4:3) which explicitly mentioned polygyny and restricted its practice in terms of the number of wives permitted and the requirement of justice between them was revealed after the Battle of Uhud in which dozens of Muslims were martyred leaving behind widows and orphans. This seems to indicate that the intent of its continued permissibility is to deal with individual and collective contingencies that may arise from time to time (i.e., imbalances between the number of males and females created by wars). This provides a moral, practical, and humane solution to the problems of widows and orphans who are likely to be more vulnerable in the absence of a husband/father figure to look after their needs: financial, companions, proper rearing, and other needs. If you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans marry women of your choice two or three or four; but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them) then only one ... (Qur'an 4:3)

All parties involved have options: to reject marriage proposals as in the case of a proposed second wife or to seek divorce or khul' (divestiture) as in the case of a present wife who cannot accept to live with a polygynous husband. While the Qur'an allowed polygyny, it did not allow polyandry (multiple husbands of the same woman). Anthropologically speaking, polyandry is quite rare. Its practice raises thorny problems related to the lineal identity of children, and incompatibility of polyandry with feminine nature.

As a Mother

Kindness to parents (especially mothers) is next to worship 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 you life say not to them a word of contempt nor repel them but address them in terms of honor. (Qur'an 17:23) And We have enjoined on the human (to be good) to his/her parents: in travail upon travail did his/her mother bear him/her and in years twain was his/her waning: (hear the command) "Show gratitude to Me and to your parents: to Me is (your final) destiny." (Qur'an 31:14)

Mothers are accorded a special place of honor in Hadeeth too: A man came to the Prophet Muhammad asking: O Messenger of Allah, who among the people is the most worthy of my good companionship? The

Prophet said, your mother. The man said then who is next: the Prophet said, Your mother. The man further asked, Then who is next? Only then did the Prophet say, Your father. (al Bukhari)

As a Sister in Faith (Generally)

According to the Prophet Muhammad's saying: "Women are but sisters (or the other half) of men (shaqa'iq).

Prophet Muhammad taught kindness, care, and respect of women in general: "I commend you to be kind to women"

Issue of Modesty and Social Interaction

There exists, among Muslims a big gap between the ideal of the real. Cultural practices on both extremes do exist. Some Muslims emulate non-Islamic cultures and adopt the modes of dress, unrestricted mixing and behavior resulting in corrupting influences of Muslims and endangering the family's integrity and strength. On the other hand, in some Muslim cultural undue and excessive restrictions is not seclusion are believed to be the ideal. Both extremes seem to contradict the normative teachings of Islam and are not consistent with the virtuous yet participative nature of the society at the time of the Prophet Muhammad.

Parameters of proper modesty for males and females (dress and behavior) are based on revelatory sources (the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah) and as such are seen by believing men and women as divinely-based guidelines with legitimate aims, and divine wisdom behind them. They are not male-imposed or socially imposed restrictions.

The notion of near total seclusion of women is alien to the prophetic period. Interpretation problems in justifying seclusion reflect, in part, cultural influences and circumstances in different Muslim countries.

The Legal/Political Aspect

Both genders are entitled to equality before the law and courts of law. Justice is genderless. Most references to testimony (witness) in the Qur'an do not make any reference to gender. Some references fully equate the testimony of males and female. And for those who launch a charge against their spouses and have (in support) no evidence but their own their solitary evidence (can be received) if they bear witness four times (with an oath) by Allah that they are solemnly telling the truth; And the fifth (oath) (should be) that they solemnly invoke the curse of Allah on themselves if they tell a lie. But it would avert the punishment from the wife is she bears witness four times (with an oath) by Allah that (her husband) is telling a lie; And the fifth (oath) should be that she solemnly invokes the wrath of Allah on herself is (her accuser) is telling the truth. (Qur'an 24:6-9) One reference in the Qur'an distinguishes between the witness of a male and a female. It is useful to quote this reference and explain it in its own context and in the context of other references to testimony in the Qur'an. 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 as between the parties: let not the scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him so let him write. Let him who incurs the liability dictate but let him fear his Lord Allah and not diminish aught of what he owes. If the party liable is mentally deficient or weak or unable himself to dictate let his guardian dictate faithfully. And get two witnesses out of 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 witnesses should not refuse when they are called on (for evidence). Disdain not to reduce to writing (your contract) for a future period whether it be small or big: it is just in the sight of Allah more suitable as evidence and more convenient to prevent doubts among yourselves; but if it be a transaction which you carry out on the spot among yourselves there is no blame on you if you reduce it not to writing. But take witnesses whenever you make a commercial contract; and let neither scribe nor witness suffer harm. If you do (such harm) it would be wickedness in you. So fear Allah; for it is Allah that teaches you. And Allah is well acquainted with all things. (Qur'an 2:282) A few comments on this text are essential in order to prevent common misinterpretations: a) It cannot be used as an argument that there is a general rule in the Qur'an that the worth of a female's witness is only half the male's. This presumed "rule" is voided by the earlier reference (24:6-9) which explicitly equates the testimony of both genders in the issue at hand. b) The context of this passage (ayah) relates to the testimony on financial transactions which are often complex and laden with business jargon. The passage does not make a blanket generalization which would otherwise contradict 24:6-9 cited earlier. c) The reason for variations in the number of male and female witnesses required is given in the same passage. No reference was made to the inferiority or superiority of one gender's witness or the other's. The only reason given is to corroborate the female's witness and prevent unintended errors in

the perception of the business deal. The Arabic term used in this passage (tadhilla) means literally "loses the way," "gets confused or errs." But are females the only gender that may err and need corroboration of their testimony. Definitely not, and this is why the general rule of testimony in Islamic law is to have two witnesses even if they are both males. This leaves us with only one reasonable interpretation that in an ideal Islamic society as envisioned by Islamic teachings the female members will give priority to their feminine functions as wives, mothers, and pioneers of charitable works. This emphasis, while making them more experienced in the inner function of the family and social life, may not give them enough exposure and experience to business transactions and terminology, as such a typical Muslim woman in a truly Islamic society will not normally be present when business dealings are negotiated and if may present may not fully understand the dealings. In such a case, corroboration by two women witnesses helps them remind one another and as such give an accurate account of what happened. d) It is useful to remember that it is the duty of a fair judge, in a particular case, to evaluate the credibility, knowledge and experience of any witness and the specific circumstances of the case at hand.

The general rule in social and political life is participation and collaboration of males and female in public affairs: The believers, men and women, are protectors one of another; they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practice regular charity, and obey Allah and His apostle. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is Exalted in power, Wise. (Qur'an 9:71)

Now there is sufficient historical evidence of participation by Muslim women in the choice of rulers, in public issues, in lawmaking, in administrative positions, in scholarship and teaching, and even in the battlefield. Such involvement in social and political affairs was done without losing sight of the complementary priorities of both genders and without violating Islamic guidelines of modesty and virtue.

There is no text in the Qur'an or the Sunnah that precludes women from any position of leadership, except in leading prayer due to the format of prayer as explained earlier and the headship of state (based on the common and reasonable interpretation of Hadeeth). The head of state in Islam is not a ceremonial head. He leads public prayers in some occasions, constantly travels and negotiates with officials of other states (who are mostly males). He may be involved in confidential meetings with them. Such heavy involvement and its necessary format may not be consistent with Islamic guidelines related to the interaction between the genders and the priority of feminine functions and their value to society. Furthermore, the conceptual and philosophical background of the critics of this limited exclusion is that of individualism, ego satisfaction, and the rejection of the validity of divine guidance in favor of other man-made philosophies, values, or "ism." The ultimate objective of a Muslim man or woman is to selflessly serve Allah and the ummah in whatever appropriate capacity.

Inheritance Matter

According to Quran

(4:11)

"Allah thus commands you concerning your children: the share of the male is like that of two females. If (the heirs of the deceased are) more than two daughters, they shall have two-thirds of the inheritance; and if there is only one daughter, then she shall have half the inheritance. If the deceased has any offspring, each of his parents shall have a sixth of the inheritance; and if the deceased has no child and his parents alone inherit him, then one-third shall go to his mother; and if the deceased has brothers and sisters, then one-sixth shall go to his mother. All these shares are to be given after payment of the bequest he might have made or any debts outstanding against him.

You do not know which of them, your parents or your children, are more beneficial to you. But these portions have been determined by Allah, for He indeed knows all, is cognizant of all beneficent considerations.

Example of Islamic inheritance distribution

Here's a simple example of how assets may be divided according to the Shariah between a husband and wife:

Upon the passing of a husband:

Wife 1 12.50% 1/8

Son 1 36.11% 13/36

Daughter 1 18.06% 13/72

Mother 16.67% 1/6

Father 16.67% 1/6

Upon the passing of a wife:

Husband 25.00% 1/4

Son 1 20.83% 5/24

Son 2 20.83% 5/24

Mother 16.67% 1/6

Father 16.67% 1/6

Chapter 3

Ethical Guidelines for Social Interaction in Quran o Hadith

In an emphatic hadith, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stated, "I have been sent only for the purpose of perfecting good morals."

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has clearly stated that one of the important aspects of his being sent as a prophet was to show what the good morals, behavior and manners are. This is a clear sign that behavior and manners clearly fall within the scope of the teachings of Islam. A Muslim cannot escape this fact and he must adjust his behavior accordingly.

There are actually numerous statements of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) related to the importance of having good character. Here, just a few will be presented to simply highlight the importance of this topic.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "I am a guarantor of a house in the highest part of Paradise for the one who makes his behavior good."

This hadith clearly shows the reward for improving and perfecting one's behavior. Some people claim that their character is simply what they are born with and there is nothing they can do to change or adjust it. That is simply not true. As demonstrated earlier, much of the driving force behind one's character has to do with what one believes about God, this life, the Hereafter and so on. Thus, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Piety and righteousness is being of good character."

Piety is achievable but it may take some effort. In fact, when the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) described the hypocrites, those of weak or false faith, he described them by their actions and behavior: lying while speaking, breaking one's trust and so on.

Once again, the example par excellence for the behavior of a Muslim is found in the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). By the grace and mercy of Allah, Allah sent the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), a human being who was a husband, father, member of society, leader of society and so forth, to exemplify for the believers who one should behave in a manner that is pleasing to Allah.

He demonstrated how the Quran is to be applied in practical, daily life. Thus, Aishah, his wife, said about him, "His character was that of the Quran."

Thus, one finds that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sincere, honest, grateful and straightforward. He was humble, patient, calm and forgiving. He would not lie, backbite or slander others. He had a cheerful disposition and would treat all classes of society with proper respect. This is all part and parcel of what it means to behave like a believer.

From an Islamic perspective, character and manners are also comprehensive. In other words, one must have the proper behavior and actions with respect to his Creator, respect to the others he interacts with, with respect to the other beings on earth and with respect to all parts of creation.

The most important category is behavior with respect to the Creator, as that will influence all of the other categories. This embodies having the proper relationship with Allah and submitting to Him in a sincere fashion with a correct attitude. Aspects of this relationship have been touched upon throughout this work.

The last two categories stated above imply good behavior toward all other living creatures on earth as well as all that Allah has placed within this cosmos. A Muslim is not free to behave in any way he wishes with respect to animals or inanimate objects. Indeed, he will be answerable to Allah concerning his behavior towards all things. Everything in this creation that has been put at the disposal of humankind is nothing more than a trust from God. There are, for example, numerous hadith that touch upon how Muslims should treat animals. For example, even with respect to slaughtering an animal for consumption, which Allah has permitted humans, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Verily, Allah has

prescribed excellence in all things. Thus, if you kill, kill in a good manner. If you slaughter, slaughter in a good manner. Each of you should sharpen his blade and spare suffering to the animal he is slaughtering.”

This fact was not lost on the early Muslims as can be seen in the statement of al-Fudail ibn Iyaad, “By Allah, it is not allowed for you to harm a dog or a pig without just cause, how then can you harm a Muslim?”

A Muslim vis-à-vis His Own Self

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explained that a person’s own self has a right over him. Indeed, an individual has very important responsibilities with respect to his own self. Logically speaking, a person’s self has a right and duty to do what is best for it. It is only reasonable that a person should do what he can to keep his soul from being destroyed.

Furthermore, every human must realize that he did not create himself. He is not his own lord. He cannot even claim for himself the right to use his own self or body in any way that he wills, although this is something that one hears often nowadays. Islam teaches that humans have been created by an All-Knowing, All-Merciful God. Thus, even with respect to his own self, the human must obey its Creator and Lord. In turn, the Creator has actually commanded the human only to do what is best for its own self. Actually, the Creator has shown him the way to save himself. This is achieved by exerting oneself to accept wholeheartedly what Allah has revealed and to do what is pleasing to the Lord. In the long-run, in reality, all of the guidance that has come from Allah—the religion of Islam itself—is simply for the benefit of the individual himself. Allah is neither benefited by being worshipped nor harmed by being belied. Thus, in numerous places in the Quran, Allah makes it clear that all of this merciful guidance is simply at the disposal of the humans for their own benefit: “Verily We have revealed the book to you in truth, for (instructing) mankind. He, then, who receives guidance benefits his own soul. But he who strays injures his own soul. Nor are you [O Muhammad] set over them to dispose of their affairs” (39:41; see also, for example, 6:104 and 41:46); “Who receives guidance, receives it for his own benefit. Who goes astray does so to his own loss. No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another nor would We visit with Our wrath until We had sent a messenger (to give warning)” (Al-Isra 17:15); “And whoever purifies himself does so for the benefit of his own soul; and the destination (of all) is to Allah” (35:18).

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stated while speaking to Abdullah ibn Amr, “Your body has a right upon you. Your eye has a right upon you...”

Thus, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has explained many aspects of personal hygiene and practice that are in tune with the true nature of humans. In other words, the soul naturally recognizes that these are good and beautiful practices. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) therefore referred to them as sunan al-fitra or “the acts corresponding to the sound, adulterated nature of humans.” These acts are mentioned by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the following hadith: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “Five are from among the natural practices: circumcision, shaving the pubic hairs, plucking the armpit hairs, clipping the nails and trimming the moustache.”

In another statement, he said, “Ten are from among the natural practices: trimming the moustache, leaving the beard to grow, using the toothstick, [cleaning] by putting water in the nose, clipping the nails, washing the knuckles and finger joints, plucking the underarm hairs, shaving the pubic hairs, using water to clean the private part [after urinating].” Zakariyyaa then said, “Musab said, ‘I have forgotten the tenth, unless it is rinsing one’s mouth.’”

Although scholars differ as to whether these acts are obligatory or highly recommended, there is no question that if an individual truly wants to treat his self properly, with the proper hygiene and outward appearance, he will adhere to all of these practices that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has praised in these hadith.

In addition to such hygienic issues, Islam also guides the individual concerning his eating and drinking. For example, Allah has prohibited the consumption of alcohol: “O you who believe! Alcohol, gambling, idols, and arrows for seeking luck or decisions are an abomination of Satan’s handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful” (5:90). Similarly, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “All intoxicants are forbidden.”

Allah has given instructions as to what types of foods may be eaten as well: “He has forbidden you only the carrion, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah” (2:173); “Forbidden to you (for food) are: carrion, blood, the flesh of swine, and the meat of that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah (or has been slaughtered for idols, or on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering), and that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by the goring of horns - and that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal - unless you are able to slaughter it (before its death) - and that which is sacrificed (slaughtered) on stone altars. (Forbidden) also is to use arrows seeking luck or decision, (all) that is disobedience of Allah and sin” (5:3); “Say (O Muhammad): I find not in that which has been inspired to me anything forbidden to be eaten by one who wishes to eat it, unless it be carrion, or blood poured forth (by slaughtering or the like), or the flesh of swine (pork, etc.) for that surely is impure, or impious (unlawful) meat (of an animal) which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah (or has been slaughtered for idols, or on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering). But whosoever is forced by necessity without willful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits, (for him) certainly, your Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (6:145).

In general, a Muslim can only eat meat slaughtered by a Muslim, Jew or Christian in specified manners. For that reason—without going into the debate that has spread concerning this issue—this author recommends that a Muslim not eat the meat that is sold in the supermarkets of the West. He should restrict himself to what is known as halal or zabihah meat (slaughtered by Muslims) or kosher meat (slaughtered by Jews).

A Muslim vis-à-vis His/Her Parents

Allah has demanded that Muslims treat their parents in the best possible fashion. Muslims must be grateful people. They must be grateful to Allah and to all who do them well. After Allah, there is perhaps no one who deserves a person's gratitude more than his parents. Thus, numerous verses of the Quran touch upon the question of the treatment of parents. Indeed, in more than one place, Allah has closely tied good behavior towards parents with the command to worship Him alone. Note, for example, the following verse of the Quran: “Worship Allah and join none with Him in worship, and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, the poor, the neighbor who is near of kin, the neighbor who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and those (slaves) whom your right hands possess. Verily, Allah does not like such as are proud and boastful” (4:36).

In this verse, Allah has combined His rights over His servants with the servants' rights over each other. Among the servants, a person must treat the following five classes especially well: (1) those that are related to him, especially his parents; (2) those who are weak and in need; (3) those with whom he mixes and sees on a regular basis, such as neighbors; (4) those who come upon a person on a temporary basis, such as a wayfarer; and (5) the slaves that one possesses. In this last category, some of the early scholars also included what one possesses of animals.

Allah also says, “Say (O Muhammad): Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited you from: Join not anything in worship with Him; be good and dutiful to your parents...” (6:151); “And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: ‘My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small.’ Your Lord knows best what is in your inner-selves. If you are righteous, then, verily, He is Ever Most Forgiving to those who turn unto Him again and again in obedience, and in repentance” (17:23-25); “And (remember) when We took a covenant from the Children of Israel, (saying): Worship none but Allah (Alone) and be dutiful and good to parents” (2:83).

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also emphasized good treatment of one's parents, putting it after prayer in its proper time as a deed that is most beloved to Allah:

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was asked, "What deed is the most beloved to Allah?" He replied, "Prayer in its proper time." He was asked, "Then what deed?" He replied, "Being dutiful to one's parents." He was asked again, "Then what deed?" He then replied, "Jihad for the sake of Allah."

Allah reminds the believers that their parents, in particular the mother, went through a great deal of hardship and effort to raise their child and therefore they are deserving of love, respect and gratitude in return. Allah says, "And (remember) when Luqmaan said to his son when he was advising him, 'O my son! Join not in worship others with Allah. Verily! Joining others in worship with Allah is a great wrong indeed.' And We have enjoined on man (to be dutiful and good) to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship, and his weaning is in two years give thanks to Me and to your parents, unto Me is the final destination" (31:13-14); "And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind to his parents. His mother bears him with hardship and she brings him forth with hardship, and the bearing of him, and the weaning of him is thirty months, till when he attains full strength and reaches forty years, he says: 'My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your Favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds, such as please You, and make my off-spring good. Truly, I have turned to You in repentance, and truly, I am one of the Muslims (submitting to Your Will)'" (46:15).

Thus, in particular, the mother is deserving of the greatest friendship and closeness from her children. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was once asked, "Who among the people has the most right for my good companionship?" The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, "Your mother." The man asked, "And then whom?" The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied again, "Your mother." The man again asked, "And then whom?" the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) once again said, "Your mother." The man asked once more, "And then whom?" This time the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Your father."

Converts and Relations with Non-Muslim Relatives

The relationship between a new convert and his non-Muslim family and associates can be a difficult one. Many times there is open opposition from the non-Muslims. This is a great trial for the convert. He will obviously still have love for those people who were so close and good to him for many years. An example for the convert under such circumstances is the early converts to Islam in Makkah. These Muslims faced great opposition and many of them were even tortured due to their new faith. Eventually, the small Muslim community was forced to emigrate to different lands to protect their faith. However, they were patient and persevered, thereby pleasing their Lord. They understood that their new found relationship with God must take precedence over ties with anyone in this world.

When a human meets Allah in the Hereafter, he will meet him as an individual, responsible for his own actions and decisions. The fact that others close to him disliked the truth is obviously not an acceptable excuse to abandon God's religion or even to compromise with respect to God's religion. If such were acceptable to Allah, He certainly would have made that an option for those early Muslims who endured torture and banishment from their lands. However, such an option was not given to them. Actually, such an option implies none other than the destruction of God's religion as there will always be numerous people who oppose the truth and God's way.

For most converts nowadays, by Allah's grace, the situation is not as strenuous as that described above. There is usually a mixed reaction to a person's conversion: The others respect his choice but may not be completely pleased with the choice that he has made. Under these circumstances in particular it is important for the individual to understand the limits of his relationships with those who do not belong to his faith, even though they do not openly oppose his new faith.

Blood relatives, in particular, still have rights over the new Muslim convert.

Al-Bukhari and Muslim record that Asmaa bint Abi Bakr came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, "My mother is coming [from Makkah] and wishes to see me although she is a polytheist. Shall I keep ties with her?" He replied, "Yes, keep ties with your mother." Allah says in the

Quran, "Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and did not drive you out of your homes. Verily, Allah loves those who deal with equity" (60:8).

Allah also says about non-believing parents in particular, "But if they (the parents both) strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others that of which 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 in obedience. Then to Me will be your return, and I shall tell you what you used to do" (31:15). Of course, the individual needs to protect his faith and if the parents are exerting undo pressure on their child, then the son/daughter may have to sever some of his ties with them. However, even then, he should try to do so in the most gracious manner.

A Muslim, by his very nature, is supposed to be grateful. The Prophet said, "The one who does not thank the people does not truly thank Allah."

Thus, a Muslim will always remain grateful and filled with a "natural love" for his non-Muslim parents due to all the kindness and love they showed for him over the years. However, he cannot possess a "religious love" for their actions. That is, from a religious perspective, he can neither condone nor approve of their following a way other than the way of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Thus, he cannot have love for them for the way of life that they have chosen. Whenever there is a conflict between this natural love and religious love, the religious love must take precedence. As Allah has said, "O you who believe! Take not for supporters and helpers your fathers and your brothers if they prefer disbelief to Belief. And whoever of you does so, then he is one of the wrongdoers. 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 striving hard and fighting in His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about His Decision (torment). And Allah guides not the people who are the rebellious, disobedient to Allah" (9:23-24).

Thus, it is not the right of any Muslim to show any approval for their false forms of worship. Allah has guided the convert to the one and only truth and it should be his earnest desire that those close to him would also embrace the truth. While keeping cordial relations with all of those around him, the convert must be clear to himself and to others around him that he can neither approve of nor participate in any form of worship that he must now recognize as being false. A Muslim then is not allowed to celebrate Christmas, for example. Their belief that this is a celebration of the birth of the son of God and the savior strikes at the very root of the Muslim's monotheism. A Muslim could not possibly participate in such a celebration. He also cannot wish that others enjoy such a celebration nor exchange gifts in joy for such an occasion. Instead, he leaves the others to their forms of worship and celebration while making it very clear that participating in such practices would be nothing short of a compromise and contradiction of his new faith. With a calm and clear explanation, it would be hoped that those around him would respect and accept his decision to remain away from such religious practices that are not consistent with his new faith.

Part of keeping ties with one's relatives would include visiting them. Especially if part of the intention behind the visit is to allow one's relatives to see a Muslim and learn true information about Islam, there is no question that such visiting is sanctioned. The Prophet visited his polytheist uncle Abu Taalib while he was ill as well as a young Jewish boy who was on his deathbed. He would accept their invitations for meals. In fact, it is even confirmed that the Prophet visited Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salool on his deathbed, even though the Prophet knew that Abdullah was the leader of the hypocrites and an opponent of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

There are obviously some limits to what types of visits and what activities a Muslim can participate in. Among the common issues that arises for new converts is that of attending the funerals of deceased relatives. Based on reports from early Muslim scholars, the Muslim does pay his condolences to the family and is present during that time but remains distant from the specific acts of the funeral process, especially anything of a religious overtone. The obvious goal is to remain away from any act that may contradict the

Islamic faith in any way. When Ali's father Abu Taalib died as a non-Muslim, the Prophet told him to go and bury his father. Ali then did so.

There is also a report that Ibn Abbaas, the Companion of the Prophet, was asked about a Muslim whose Christian father had died and he replied, "He should attend and bury him."

When offering condolences to non-Muslims, one may wish them well, hoping that nothing but good reaches them and encouraging them to be patient. It is not allowed to seek forgiveness for those who, it is known, died while outside of the fold of Islam. Such has been prohibited in the Quran. Allah says, "It is not (proper) for the Prophet and those who believe to ask Allah's Forgiveness for the polytheists and idolaters, even though they be of kin, after it has become clear to them that they are the dwellers of the Fire (because they died in a state of disbelief)" (9:113)

A Muslim vis-à-vis His/Her Spouse

Marriage is a very important institution in Islam. The family is the nucleus for society as a whole. If the family is on a sound foundation, it is more likely that society as a whole will be in a good state. Thus, in general, the messengers of God, the prime examples for humans, adhered to this institution of marriage. Allah states, "Verily, We have sent messengers before you and appointed for them spouses and children" (13:38). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also established marriage as his way of life, saying, "By Allah, I am the most fearful of Allah of you and I have the most piety; however, I fast and break my fast, pray [at night] and sleep and I marry women. Whoever turns away from my Sunnah is not of me."

The Quran shows that there is a clear bond between men and women. In numerous places in the Quran, Allah reminds humans that they are from the same original human being. It is through this bond that they are interconnected and through these bonds that some of their rights upon one another are established. Allah states at the opening of surah al-Nisaa', "O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person, and from him 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 (kinship)! Surely, Allah is Ever an All-Watcher over you" (4:1).

However, beyond that beginning that the two sexes have in common, Allah points out that the love and affection that He has created in the hearts of the spouses towards another is one of His great signs that act as portents for those people of understanding. In other words, such people can look at this aspect of creation and be reminded of the greatness of Allah's work and power, the perfection of His creation and the magnificent mercy Allah has placed in this world. Allah says, "And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose and comfort in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed Signs for a people who reflect" (30:21). Allah also says, "He it is who created you from a single person (Adam), and then He has created from him his wife, in order that he might enjoy the pleasure of living with her" (7:189).

Thus, according to the Quran, the relationship between a man and his wife should be one of love, mercy and mutual understanding. Allah also commands men to treat their wives kindly in the verse, "And consort with your wives in a goodly manner, for if you dislike them, it may well be that you dislike something which Allah might yet make a source of abundant good" (4:19).

A few words about the purpose of marriage in Islam should be given. This is needed because many times people enter into marriage or desire to get married without realizing the roles and purpose of marriage itself. In turn, they do not realize the kinds of responsibilities that will be on their shoulders when they do get married. However, if the purposes of marriage are known and the responsibilities that marriage will entail are understood at the outset, once again, the probability that the marriage will be a successful marriage will be enhanced. The person will know what is expected of him, both with respect to his responsibilities and duties and his rights.

Obviously, the purpose of marriage is not simply “fun” or the release of “animal urges”. There is much more to marriage than that. Some of the goals behind marriage include: procreating, experiencing permissible physical pleasure, attainment of one’s complete maturity, mutually assisting one another in making one’s life in this world, attaining numerous psychological and physiological benefits, forming the cornerstone of a moral society, bringing up the next generation in a setting that is most conducive for moral and spiritual growth and binding peoples and families together.

Whom One Can Wed

In soorah al-Nisaa’ verses 22-24, Allah has delineated what women a Muslim man may marry. Those categories are straightforward. However, there are a couple of issues that may be of extreme importance for Muslim converts, especially those living in non-Muslim lands. (Note that the question of remaining with non-Muslim spouses was discussed earlier.)

One important issue is that of marrying men or women who are not chaste. There is a difference of opinion among the scholars over whether or not it is allowed to marry a woman whom one knows to be a fornicatress. The majority of the scholars (meaning the Malikis, Shafiis and Hanafis) seem to think it is disapproved but allowable while a group of scholars say that it is forbidden. The difference of opinion revolves around the understanding of the verse, “The fornicator marries none but a fornicatress or a polytheistic woman and the fornicatress marries none but a fornicator or a polytheist. Such a thing is forbidden for the believers” (24:3). The majority of the scholars state that this verse is showing that the act of marriage with such a woman is blameworthy but not prohibited. They also based this on the following hadith: “A man came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and said, ‘I have a wife who is most beloved to me but she does not keep the hand of the toucher from her.’ He said, ‘Divorce her.’ The man replied, ‘But I cannot live without her.’ He said, ‘Then enjoy her with that [deficiency].’”

However, a number of early scholars clearly stated that it is forbidden to marry a fornicatress until she repents from her act of fornication. This was the opinion of Ahmad ibn Hanbal among others. This seems to be the strongest and correct opinion based on the verse above. As for the hadith that is quoted, Imam Ahmad considered it a weak hadith. Assuming it is authentic, as some scholars have stated, it is not explicit that the woman would actually commit illegal sexual intercourse. Instead, one could say that the woman was a little promiscuous or free with other men but not to the extent that she would commit illegal sexual intercourse. If a man has a wife of that nature, he should divorce her as the Prophet (peace be upon him) explicitly told the man in this hadith. This, in fact, is further evidence that one should not marry a fornicatress.

It could be argued that in the case of a Muslim convert, he should be extremely careful about this issue. If the person is new to Islam, he should want to be with a spouse who would improve his faith and strengthen his resolve to worship Allah properly. A spouse of immoral character would obviously not be the right choice for anyone hoping to be a true believer but it may be even more dangerous for someone whose faith is still new and vulnerable.

Another important question is whether it is allowed for a Muslim man to marry a Jewish or Christian woman. This has been a hotly debated question among the scholars, with the majority permitting it (based on Quranic verse 5:5), a minority prohibiting it and another minority applying strict conditions to it. Without getting into the details of that debate, once again, for the convert, he should consider his particular situation carefully. Being new to Islam, he should not open up doors to temptation and reverting from his new faith. It is not expected that non-Muslim women will support him in his faith and aid him to grow in his faith like pious Muslim women would. Hence, there is no question that, in general, converts to Islam should refrain from marrying non-Muslim women.

As for a Muslim woman or a female convert marrying a non-Muslim man, Al-Ghummaari wrote, “The marriage of a Muslim woman to a non-Muslim man is forbidden, as is clearly stated in the Quran, and this

is something that is known by necessity in the religion. If anyone believes that such a marriage is permissible, he is definitively a disbeliever.”

In general, the man is the head of the household. Hence, women marrying non-Muslim men presents a much greater danger for the woman and is thus prohibited.

The Rights of a Husband and a Wife

The first thing that every married person must realize that one’s spouse is first and foremost another Muslim. He/she is one’s brother/sister in Islam. Therefore, all the rights that fall upon a Muslim due to the general brotherhood of Islam are also due to one’s spouse. There are books on the behavior of a Muslim, brotherhood and love and loyalty among Muslims and all of those principles apply to a married person as his spouse is part of that Islamic brotherhood and community. Furthermore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) also stressed this point when he stated, “None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.”

However, one’s spouse has even more rights upon a person due to the great and important contract that has been contracted between them.

Therefore, when discussing the rights of the husbands and wives, this matter should not be looked at in a cold or legal fashion. The relationship between the husband and wife must be much more than a matter of rights stated by the law that each must abide by. Instead, it should be a relationship of love, support and mutual understanding. Each spouse should take into consideration the needs and abilities of the other spouse. They should attempt to make each other happy, even if they have to compromise sometimes, and not simply be out to make sure that they are getting all of their rights in the marriage.

Actually, it is usually the case that neither spouse is completely fulfilling the rights of the other and making the other happy. Hence, they both have to realize and accept their shortcomings.

The Prophet (peace be upon him), in particular, advised the husbands to treat their wives in the best way perhaps due to their greater authority or due to their greater strength, in general. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “The best of you is the one who is best to his family (wife) and I am the best of you to my family.”

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also advised, “I advise you to treat women well for they have certainly been created from the upper part of the rib and the most crooked part of the rib is the upper part. If you then try to make it straight, you will break it off; if you leave it, it will remain crooked. So, I advise you to treat women well.”

Actually, both spouses, in general, fail to some extent in their fulfilling of the other’s obligations. Hence, before criticizing the other or being harsh with the other due to some shortcoming, the person should look to himself and realize what wrong he himself is doing.

At the same time, though, Islamic Law has clearly laid down some rights and responsibilities so that both parties in the marriage know exactly what is expected of them and know what they need to fulfill to be a proper spouse.

Thus, for example, Allah says, “And they [women] have rights [over their husbands] similar to those over them according to what is reasonable” (2:228).

In sum, the rights of the wife or the obligations of the husband include, among others, the following:

(1) Receiving her proper dower: Allah says, “And give the women their dower with a good heart; but if they, of their own good pleasure, remit any part of it to you, take it and enjoy it without fear of any harm” (4:4).

(2) Being fully and completely financially maintained by her husband: Allah says, “Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means” (4:34). Furthermore, in a hadith recorded by al- Bukhari and Muslim, the Prophet (peace be upon him) told Hind bint Utbah, when she complained that her husband (Abu

Sufyan) was very stingy and was not maintaining her and she asked if she could take from his wealth without his knowledge, "Take what is sufficient for you and your child, according to what is customary."

(3) Being treated in a proper and kind manner: Allah states, "And consort with your wives in a goodly manner, for if you dislike them, it may well be that you dislike something which Allah might yet make a source of abundant good" (4:19).

(4) Having the right to sexual intercourse: In the Sahih of Ibn Hibban there is the following narration: The wife of Uthman ibn Madh'oon complained to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) that her husband had no need for women. During the day, he would fast and at night, he would pray. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him, "Am I not the best example for you to follow?" He answered, "Certainly, may my father and mother be sacrificed for you." The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) then told him, "As for you, you pray during the night and you fast during the day. Certainly, your wife has a right upon you. And your body has a right upon you. So pray and sleep and fast and break your fast."

(5) Having the right to "privacy": Note the following hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him): "Is there any man among you who goes to his wife, closes the door behind then, covers themselves and conceal themselves by Allah's concealing." They said, "Yes." He then said, "Then he sits after that [with others] and he says, 'I did this and that.'" They were silent. He then turned to the women and said, "Do you any of you talk about such things?" They were also silent. Then a young girl came walking on her toes so the Prophet (peace be upon him) could see her and hear her and she said, "O Messenger of Allah, they [the men] certainly talk about it and they [the women] also talk about it." He said, "Do you know what they are like? They are like a female devil who met a devil in the street and they satisfied their desires with the people looking on."

(6) The right to being taught or learning her religion.

On the other hand, the rights of the husband or the responsibilities of the women include:

(1) Being the head of the household: Allah has said, "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means" (4:34). Although this is usually stated as a right of the husband, it is actually a heavy responsibility on his shoulders, as it means that he has the responsibility to guide his family and keep them along the straight path.

(2) Having the right to be obeyed: This goes with the first right. A person cannot be the head of something if he has no authority.

(3) Having his wife answer his call to meet his sexual needs: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "If a man calls his wife to his bed and she refuses to come, the angels curse her until the morning."

(4) That the wife will not allow anyone in his house except by his permission: In a hadith recorded in al-Bukhari and Muslim, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Do not allow anyone into his house except by permission."

If the husband and wife enter into the marriage with the right intention of pleasing Allah and pleasing each other, recognizing their roles and responsibilities in the marriage and treating each other with proper Islamic behavior, Allah willing, their union will be a blessed union that will stretch from this life into the Hereafter.

Wedding Night Instructins

Allāh Almighty says:

“They are coverings for you and you are coverings for them; Allah knows that you were deceiving yourselves (in this respect), so He accepted your penance and forgave you; so cohabit with them and seek what Allah has destined for you”

[Surah al-Baqarah verse 187]

The Prophet of Allāh (P.B.U.H) has said:

“Having intercourse (with one’s wife) is a charity.” They (the Companions) asked, “O Messenger of Allāh (P.B.U.H), if one of us fulfills his desire, is there reward in that?” He replied, “Do you not see that if he does it in a Harām way he will have the burden of sin? So if he does it in a Halāl way, he will have a reward for that.”

[Narrated by Muslim, 1674]

Before one intends to have intercourse with his wife, the husband should make sure that she is not in the state of menstruation. Therefore he will have to ask her. It is also the duty of the wife to inform her husband. It is Harām to have intercourse whilst the wife is menstruating. Allāh Almighty says:

“And they ask you the decree concerning menstruation; say, “It is an impurity, so stay away from women at such times, and do not cohabit with them until they have cleansed themselves; so when they have cleansed themselves, cohabit with them the way Allāh has determined for you”; indeed Allah loves those who repent profusely, and loves those who keep clean.”

[Surah al-Baqarah verse 222]

Many women (due to shyness) do not inform their husbands (especially at the first night of marriage) that they are in state of menstruation. And even after informing, the husbands do not respect this. This should not happen at any cost.

If the wife is in menstruation then it is totally forbidden to have intercourse with her. From those sins which Islam has classified as ‘major’, one of them is having sexual relations in the state of menstruation. It is prohibited for the man to touch his wife anywhere between the navel and the knee except through a barrier like a cloth etc.

Husbands should also be aware of the feelings and state of women. Many are only concerned about themselves, and do not see whether the wife is ready to have an intercourse (she might be ill etc).

“When a man holds his wife’s hand (to delight her) then for him are written 10 rewards. If he places his hand on her neck (out of love) for him are written 10 rewards, and when he cohabits with her then it is better than the world and what is in it.” [Ghunya al-Ṭālibīn]

1) Before undressing, the couple should make fresh Wudū (remove any unpleasant smell from the mouth), pray 2 Rak’at of prayer (to thank Allāh Almighty) and then the husband should recite the following:

- Bismillāhil ‘aliyyil Adhīm Allāhu Akbar Allāhu Akbar
- Surah Ikhlās once.
- When they are ready to go to bed, the groom should put his hand on the bride’s forehead and pray:

“Bismillāhi Allāhumma Jannibnash-Shayṭān Wa Jannibish-Shayṭān Mā Razaqtanā”

According to a narration, if a husband was to pray the above prayer before intercourse, and if a child has conceived, Allāh will protect the child from devil. [mentioned in al-Bukhārī]

2) Both should have a good intention (example, fulfilling the rights of the partner, having pious children etc.)

3) Apply perfume/fragrance and be presentable for each other.

4) They should then engage themselves in kind talk and foreplay (cuddling, kissing, undressing each other, caressing the breasts etc) in order to arouse each other.

5) One should be covered (using a cloth/blanket/sheet) and should not be in the open.

Hadīth:

“When one of you goes in unto his wife, let him be covered, for if he is not covered, the angels feel shy and depart, then if they have a child, the Shayṭān will have a share of him.” [al-Tabarānī in al-Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ]

“When one of you goes in unto his wife, let him cover and not be naked like donkeys.” [al-Bayhaqī]

6) There is no time allocated for intercourse. Though the physicists say the latter part of the night (before Fajr) is the best time.

7) One should not have intercourse on a full or on an empty stomach.

8) One should avoid having intercourse on 14th and 15th of each lunar month or during the time of Adhān.

9) You are also allowed to touch each others private parts and if it’s done with a good intention then it will become an act of reward.

10) One should not face the Qiblah during intercourse.

11) When the husband intends to have intercourse, he should take it easy on his wife. Satisfying one’s wife is very important and engaging in sexual intercourse quickly and hastily is not the correct way.

12) It is permissible for the husband to have intercourse with his wife in her vagina in whatever manner he wishes, from behind or from the front, on the condition that it is in her vagina, which is the place from which a child is born. The Prophet of Allāh (P.B.U.H) has said,

“From the front or from the back, so long as it is in the vagina.” [al-Bukhārī]

13) It is not permissible (Harām) for the husband under any circumstances whatsoever to have intercourse with his wife in her back passage (anal). According to the Ahadith, such a person is cursed.

14) One should avoid having intercourse standing up (like animals) or in sitting position (which is not healthy for the body).

15) The wife should be beneath the husband (lying on the bed) and the husband should be on top of the woman. This is more appropriate and befitting.

16) One should not talk during intercourse. It is feared that the child conceived during the act may become dumb or may have speech problems.

- 17) During the intercourse, the husband and wife should not think of someone else except their spouse.
- 18) The spouses are allowed to touch any part of each others body. But one should not look at the privates whilst engaged in intercourse. This is weaken the eyesight, and the eyesight of the child.
- 19) There is no harm is kissing the breasts, again with a good intention, it will become an act of reward. But one should be careful that the milk does not go down his throat. Though drinking wife's milk is Harām, it will not affect the marriage.
- 20) One should take care of one's wife's sexual needs. This is so that she does not get attracted to others and helps protect marriage bond.
- 21) When ejaculation takes place, the husband should seek refuge of Allāh from the devil (in mind; not verbally).
- 22) One should not move away after ejaculation, because it takes time to fulfill the wife's sexual need and desires. Rather the husband should remain engaged in the act.
- 23) After the intercourse, the spouses should clean their private parts using a separate cloth and the husband should urinate so that no semen is left inside his private part.
- 24) One should not immediately use cold water to bathe as the body during intercourse becomes warmer. Rather one should relax or lie down for 10 minutes and thereafter bathe.
- 25) One should not drink water immediately after intercourse.
- 26) If after intercourse (before bathing) one is in need of eating, then he or she should wash the mouth and hands thoroughly and then eat food.
- 27) It is Mustahab that Ghushl al-Janābat should be performed soon after sexual intercourse, and the sooner it is performed the better. Also, if one would like to have sexual intercourse more than once in one night, it is better that after every time, they perform Ghushl. However, if this is not feasible, it is recommended that one should do Wudū before engaging in the act again.
- 28) There is no harm for both spouses to have a shower/bathe themselves together.
- 29) If the wife is in menstruation, it is not permissible to have intercourse with her after her blood flow ceases and before she has made Ghushl (bathing).
- 30) It is Makruh (disliked) to use contraceptives in normal conditions or for simple reasons. If there is danger to the mother with a pregnancy and an expert, religious Muslim doctor gives the opinion that contraceptives be used, then it is not disliked. However, using a permanent method of contraception is not at all allowed for either men or woman like vasectomy, etc. [See Q-ID0177 Having sex whilst pregnant & use of contraception]

What aspects makes it obligatory to bathe

There are five aspects that make it obligatory for a person to have a bath, and they are as follows; -

- The ejaculation of sperm.
- To have a wet dream (nocturnal emission).

- The head of the penis to enter the vagina, whether it be with or without lust, with or without orgasm, the bathing would be obligatory on both.
- To become clean from menstrual pause (period).
- To become clean from blood after child birth.
- Three obligatory aspects of bathing

There are three obligatory aspects in bathing, and are as follows;

1) To perform mouthwash so that every single part of the inside of the mouth from the beginning of the lips up to the throat is cleaned with water. Water must reach the gaps between the teeth, the gums, all the sides of the tongue and the edge of the throat. If you are not fasting then you must gargle so that the water reaches clearly all parts. If there is anything stuck in the teeth then unless it is impossible to release or would cause serious pain it is necessary that they are removed, because without doing this the bath won't count and therefore the Salāh won't count.

2) To clean the nose out with water. Meaning to suck up water into both nostrils until it reaches the bone, so that not even a hair or its equivalent size remains dry, otherwise the Ghusl will not valid. If the nose is pierced then the water must reach the hole as this is also necessary. If mucus has dried in the nose then to release it is necessary and to wash the nostril hair is also necessary.

3) To wash every single part of the body. Meaning to make sure water washes all the body up to and including the soles of the feet, ensuring that every hair and every pimple is washed, because even if only one hair or it's point's equivalent remains dry, the bath will not count. If you are wearing a ring or nail varnish etc it is necessary you remove them so there is no barrier between your skin and the water.

May Allāh Almighty enable us to spend our lives according to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet (P.B.U.H), Āmin.

Dissolution of a Marriage

Having said what was just said about marriage, Islam, though, is also a practical religion. It takes into consideration all possible common scenarios. It is possible for a man and woman to enter into a union with good intentions yet their personalities and likes simply do not coincide with one another. There are times in which a good marriage simply cannot be achieved and the spouses enter into a state of misery. Under such circumstances, Islamic law allows for an end to the marriage and their suffering.

The goal is to either stay together in a friendly manner or to separate in a goodly manner. Thus, for example, Allah says, "And when you have divorced women and they have fulfilled the term of their prescribed period, either take them back on reasonable basis or set them free on reasonable basis" (2:231). Allah also says, "Then when they are about to fulfill their term appointed [bringing an end to the divorce], either take them back in a good manner or part with them in a good manner" (65:2).

There are basically three ways in which a marriage is dissolved in Islamic Law. The first is talaq, commonly translated as "divorce." This is a pronouncement of divorce made by the husband. After this pronouncement, the wife enters into a "waiting period" of approximately three months, during which time they may simply reunite as husband and wife. However, after the third pronouncement of talaq, reunification during the waiting period is no longer permissible and the two must separate completely. A second form is known as khul'. This is where the wife is not satisfied in the marriage and offers something to the husband to release her from the marriage. For example, she may offer to return the dower in exchange to bringing an end to the marriage.

A third form is where the rights of the wife are not being met by the husband and therefore she turns to a judge to bring an end to the marriage.

Obviously, divorce is not a desired goal or a light matter. In a perfect world, all married couples would be in bliss. However, there are times in which this option is the best for all parties concerned.

Unfortunately, in some Muslim cultures today, divorce has become so “shameful” they have neglected this important guidance of Islamic Law, leading to spouses suffering in silence. This is definitively not the goal of Islamic Law concerning such issues.

A Muslim vis-à-vis His/Her Children

Having a child is both a great blessing and a great responsibility. Allah has said, “Your wealth and your children are only a trial, whereas Allah—with Him is a great reward (Paradise)” (64:15). Allah also says, “O you who believe, guard yourselves and your families from the Hell-fire whose fuel is men and stones” (66:6). The meaning of this verse was reiterated by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when he said, “All of you are shepherds and all of you will be asked about your wards... The man is responsible for his household and will be asked about his responsibilities. The wife will be asked about the house of her husband and her responsibilities.”

Muslim scholars consider that the rights of children appear long before they are even conceived via the selection of a pious and righteous spouse. This will be the first step in providing a good household and environment for the child.

Beyond that, the most important rights of the child include:

- (a) being maintained and provided for in a healthy manner;
- (b) being taught the tenets of the religion;
- (d) being treated with compassion and mercy;
- (e) being just among multiple siblings; and
- (f) having a good example set for them by their parents.

A Muslim vis-à-vis His/Her Neighbors

Allah says in the Quran, “Worship Allah and join none with Him in worship, and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, the poor, the neighbor who is near of kin, the neighbor who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and those (slaves) whom your right hands possess. Verily, Allah does not like such as are proud and boastful” (4:36).

Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good things or keep silent. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should be courteous and generous to his neighbor.”

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said, “Gabriel kept advising me concerning the neighbor to the point that I thought he would inherit [from his neighbor].”

In another hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “By Allah, he is not a believer. By Allah, he is not a believer. By Allah, he is not a believer.” It was said to him, “Who is that, O Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him)?” He said, “The one from whose affairs his neighbor is not safe.”

One time the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked about a woman who performed lots of prayers, fasted and gave charity but she used to harm her neighbor by her speech. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that she is in the Hell-fire. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked about a woman who did not fast, pray or give in charity much [more than what was obligatory upon her] but she would not harm her neighbors. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that she is in Paradise.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also demonstrated specific ways by which one is generous or courteous to his neighbor. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) once said to Abu Dharr, “O Abu Dharr, when you prepare stew, increase its water and deliver it to some of your neighbors.”

Being courteous and generous to one's neighbor includes helping him when they need assistance, visiting them when they are ill and general checking on their welfare. Abu Bakr al-Jazairi wrote,

One should demonstrate goodness towards one's neighbor by: helping them when they seek help, assisting them if they seek assistance, visiting them when they fall ill, congratulating them if something pleasing occurs to them, giving them condolences upon afflictions, helping them if they are in need, being the first to greet them, being kind in speech to them, being gentle in one's speech to the neighbor's children, guiding them to what is best for their religion and worldly life, overlooking their mistakes, not attempting to look into their private matters, not constraining them with one's building or renovations or along the walkway, and not harming them by letting one's trash onto their property or in front of their household. All of those actions form part of the goodness that one is ordered to perform in Allah's command [in the verse to be quoted shortly].

Living in non-Muslim environments, it is very important to recognize that the scholars have concluded that there are three types of neighbors:

- (a) a neighbor who is also a relative and a Muslim. This type of neighbor has three types of rights over the person (that of being a neighbor, a relative and a brother Muslim).
- (b) a neighbor who is not a relative but is a Muslim. This neighbor has two types of rights over the person.
- (c) a neighbor who is neither a relative nor a Muslim. This neighbor only has the right of a neighbor.

Thus, even if a neighbor is a non-Muslim, that person has the right to a special relationship by virtue of being a neighbor.

The Permanent Committee for Scientific Research, Saudi Arabia, was asked about dealing with non-Muslim neighbors (accepting gifts from them and so on) and they stated in response:

Response: One should treat well those who treat him well from among them, even if he be a Christian. If they give you a permissible gift, you should respond in kind. The Prophet (peace be upon him) accepted a gift from the leader of the Romans who was a Christian. He also accepted a gift from a Jew. Allah says in the Quran, "Allah forbids you not to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and drove you not from your homes. Verily, Allah loves those who deal with equity. It is only as regards those who fought against you on account of religion, and have driven you out of your homes, and helped to drive you out, Allah forbids you to befriend them. And whoever befriends them are the wrongdoers" (60:8-9).

Ibn Uthaimen also stated, "There is no harm in meeting the needs of a disbeliever if it does not contain any action which is forbidden as the neighbors have rights upon one another and this might even be a reason for him to accept Islam."

Ibn Baaz also said, "[The Muslim] must be neighborly toward his non-Muslim neighbor. If your neighbor is good to you, you do not harm him and you may even give him charity if he is poor or give him a gift if he is rich. You may also advise him concerning what is good for him. All of this may lead him to want to learn about Islam and become a Muslim and because neighbors have very great rights."

The spirit of neighborliness is something that has been lost in many cultures in the hustle and bustle of contemporary civilization. It would be excellent if Muslims, new converts or long-time Muslims, could revive this spirit and revive part of the religion of Islam.

A Muslim vis-à-vis Other Muslims

If one were to ask many today as to what the strongest bond there could possibly be among people, most of them would probably answer something like blood relationship, ethnic origin, nationality and so forth. Actually, the Quran shows that these types of bonds are not that strong if the foundation behind them is

weak. In the Quran, Allah gives the examples of Cain and Abel, who were two brothers yet one killed the other, as well as the example of the brethren of Joseph, who cast Joseph into a well. Those were all blood relatives; however, they put this world above their relationship with others. Such is occurring today throughout the world. The ties between the people are subservient to their desires, goals and wants of this world. Many individuals are quickly and easily willing to sell out their own kith and kin to get ahead in this world or to get something they want in this world.

All of this demonstrates one thing: When the ties between people are based on worldly considerations, even if they are originally blood ties, then those ties are given up when the worldly considerations so demand them to be given up. Hence, those are not the strongest ties that can be built among people. The strongest ties that can be achieved between people are the ties of Islam and true faith. These are the bonds forged between people that are solely the result of their belief in Allah and their love for Allah. This was clearly pointed out by Allah in the Quran when Allah stated, "And He has united their (believers') hearts. If you had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have united their hearts, but Allah has united them. Certainly, He is All-Mighty, All-Wise" (8:63). Allah also says, "And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves, and remember Allah's favor on you, for you were enemies and He joined your hearts together, so that by His grace, you became brethren and you were on a brink of a Pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes clear His signs to you, that you may be guided" (3:103). The Quran and the Sunnah show that the bond of faith is the strongest of all bonds. It represents humans from all over the world coming together for one purpose only: to establish the worship of Allah alone. To achieve that goal, Muslims work together and help one another in compassion, mercy and love.

There are actually numerous texts of the Quran and hadith that demonstrate beyond any doubt that Muslims are to form one universal, international brotherhood and sisterhood. For the sake of brevity, only a few examples of those texts will be presented here:

Allah says, "The believers, men and women, are auliya (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another, they enjoin what is good and eradicate what is evil. They offer the prayers and pay the Zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. Surely, Allah will have His Mercy on them. Surely, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise" (9:71). Another verse reads, "The believers are nothing else but brothers" (49:10). Allah also says, "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are severe against disbelievers and merciful among themselves" (48:29). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "The believer with respect to another believer is like a building, one portion strengthening the other." Another hadith states, "The parable of the believers with respect to their love, mercy and compassion for one another is like that of the body: if one of its limbs is hurting, the remainder of the body is afflicted by sleeplessness and fever."

But this great brotherhood of Islam is not something theoretical. It is, in fact, well defined. It has certain basic components to it and specific rights and obligations that are spelled out in the Quran and Sunnah. These rights and obligations are due to every Muslim, of every time and place.

One of the necessary aspects of this brotherhood is love. That is, it is an obligation upon all Muslims to love their brother Muslims. In fact, they should love them in a manner similar to the way they care for themselves. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."

A second necessary aspect of this brotherhood is mutual support, aid and assistance. When his brother is being oppressed or wronged, he comes to his aid and assistance with his wealth and soul, if possible. This is described, for example, in the following verses: "And what is wrong with you that you fight not in the Cause of Allah, and for those weak, ill-treated and oppressed among men, women and children, whose cry is, 'Our Lord! Rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors, and raise for us from You one who will protect, and raise for us from You one who will help'" (4:75).

A third essential aspect of this Islamic brotherhood is mercy and tenderness between the believers. This goes beyond a simple love for one another but it means that each brother feels in his heart for what his brother is going through. The Prophet (peace be upon him) described the Muslims in the following fashion, “The similitude of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, fellow-feeling is that of a body; when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches due to fever and sleeplessness.”

A final necessary component of our brotherhood is common acts of courtesy. True brotherhood has to be put into practice; it cannot simply be a statement of the tongue. One amazing and beautiful aspect of Islam is that it does not leave matters at a hypothetical level with each individual attempting to figure out how goals can possibly be achieved. Thus, for example, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has detailed specific acts that one has the right to expect from one’s brother and which one should also perform towards one’s brother. Thus, among those common obligatory acts of courtesy are the six mentioned by the Prophet (peace be upon him): “Six are the rights of a Muslim over another Muslim.... When you meet him, offer him greetings; when he invites you to a feast, accept it; when he seeks your sincere counsel, give it to him; when he sneezes and says, ‘al-hamdulillah,’ say, ‘May Allah show mercy to you’; when he falls ill, visit him; and when he dies, follow his funeral bier.”

Beyond these six well-known practices, Islamic Law guides Muslims to many other practices that help gender love and closeness between the believers, which is an obvious goal of the Law itself. Thus, for example, if a Muslim loves another Muslim for the sake of Allah, he should inform the other individual of that feeling. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explained the reason for doing so when he said, “If one of you loves his brother for the sake of Allah, he should inform of that as this will make the bond longer lasting and the love more confirmed.”

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said, “By the One in whose hand is my soul, you will not enter Paradise until you believe. And you do not believe until you love one another. Certainly, let me inform you of that which will establish such for you: spreading peace among yourselves.” This hadith could mean the spreading of the greetings of peace or doing actual deeds that bring about peace and togetherness.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also noted the importance of giving gifts to one another. He said, “Exchange gifts and you will love one another.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also encouraged Muslims to visit one another. He stated, “Visit one another occasionally and love [between you] will increase.”

In addition to all of these positive acts, when one avoids the forbidden acts, the results will also be positive for interpersonal relationships. In other words, when one avoids backbiting, slandering, lying, cheating, spying and so forth, nothing but good will result from the avoidance of these evil practices that Islam has clearly forbidden.

In sum, if Islam is truly applied, a Muslim will be a brother/sister to all the Muslims in the world and would do nothing but good toward them and would expect nothing but good in return from them.

A Muslim vis-à-vis Non-Muslims

Obviously, Muslims and non-Muslims are following very different paths. A Muslim’s life revolves entirely around the proper belief in God. A Muslim’s attitude toward others is likewise determined by the other’s attitude toward God. A Muslim could not possibly feel complete affinity and love toward someone who has turned his back on God, refuses to submit to God or ridicule belief in God. It is simply not natural for there to be complete love between two such people.

However, even given this possible negative feeling in the heart, a Muslim must deal with non-Muslims on the basis of just principles. This applies to all non-Muslims—many non-Muslims are not antagonistic at all toward Muslims while others exhibit clear and unequivocal scorn and hatred toward Muslims.

One of the basic principles of behavior toward non-belligerent, non-Muslims is found in the following verse of the Quran: "Allah forbids you not to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and drove you not out from your homes. Verily, Allah loves those who deal with equity" (60:8)

Additionally, a Muslim has very clear responsibilities towards non-Muslims.

First, he must call them to the way of Allah. It is part of a believer's attempt to bring good to all people and to the world as a whole that he thereby actively calls other people to Islam.

The desire to see others know and worship Allah fills the heart of the true believer. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), of course, set the best example. Allah describes in more than one place in the Quran how the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) grieved over the fact that many refused to become believers. Allah says, for example, "Perhaps, you, would kill yourself (O Muhammad) in grief, over their footsteps (for their turning away from you), because they believe not in this narration (the Quran)" (18:6).

In fact, although the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) suffered so much harm from the disbelievers of Makkah, when the angel came to him to give him the option of bringing the mountains of Makkah down upon those people, the Prophet refused the offer and said, "I hope that from their descendants there will come a people who will worship Allah alone while not ascribe any partners to Him."

Calling to the religion of Allah is truly the path of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the path of the believers. Allah says, "Say (O Muhammad): 'This is my way; I invite unto Allah with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me (also must invite others to Allah) with sure knowledge'" (12:108). This is truly the greatest and best good deed that one could do toward his fellow citizen.

A second obligation toward disbelievers is proper and just treatment.

This is described by Shaikh ibn Baaz who said, "[the Muslim] may not wrong the other person with respect to his life, wealth or honor, if the non-Muslim is a citizen of the Islamic state or has attained other protection. He must fulfill the other's rights. He may not wrong him with respect to his wealth by stealing from him, deceiving him or cheating him. He cannot harm him in his body by beating or killing him. His protection from the state guarantees his safety from such things."

A Muslim can interact with non-Muslims, buying, selling or renting from them, for example.

Even on a social level, there can be interaction, such as coming together for meals and the like. However, such interactions are, by nature, going to be limited. The different views of reality between a Muslim and a non-Muslim easily leads to disagreements. On a religious level, there is definitely going to be a feeling of discontent or disappointment with people of other faiths.

However, in addition, the differences in a Muslim's outlook and actions are going to prevent him from truly participating and being close friends with non-Muslims. A Muslim, for example, does not drink alcohol and does not wish to be around people when they are drinking alcohol, not to speak of drugs and other activities. A Muslim must be very restrictive and cautious in his or her interaction with the opposite sex, which creates barriers for social interaction. Even among members of the same sex, a Muslim does not engage in inappropriate speech about members of the opposite sex, a very common practice in social settings these days. Perhaps one could say that the Muslim's ultimate goal in his relations with non-Muslims is to bring them to Islam, thereby opening the door for there to be a complete relationship of love and brotherhood between them. Even if the non-Muslim is antagonistic and impolite, the Muslim knows that he should repel his evil with goodness. Allah says, "The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel [the evil] with [a deed] that is better. [If you do that] then verily he, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend" (41:34).

In sum, as ibn Baaz wrote,

It is obligatory upon Muslims to deal with disbelievers in an Islamic fashion with proper behavior, as long as they are not fighting the Muslims. One must fulfill one's trusts to them, must not deceive them, must not betray them or lie to them. If there is a discussion or debate between them, one must argue with them in the best manner and be just with them in the dispute. This is in obedience to Allah's command, "And argue not with the People of the Scriptures (Jews and Christians) unless it be in a way that is better, except with such of them as do wrong" (29:46). It is sanctioned for the Muslim to invite them to the good, to advise them and to be patient with them at the same time being neighborly and polite with them. This is so because Allah has stated, "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom (of the Quran) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better" (16:125). Allah has also said, "Speak good to people" (2:83).

Finally, a Muslim may even give charity to non-Muslims. The Permanent Committee of Islamic Research (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia) has stated,

It is permissible for a Muslim to assist his non-Muslim neighbor by giving him some meat from his sacrificed animal... It is allowed for us to give food to the disbelievers living under the Islamic state and wayfarers from the meat of the sacrificed animal. It is allowed to give to them on the basis of their poverty, blood relation, being a neighbor or to soften their hearts... However, one should not give such meat to a harbi (someone who is fighting against the Muslim state) because in their case, the obligation is to suppress and weaken them and not assist or strengthen them with charity. In fact, that is the ruling with respect to all forms of voluntary charity, based on the generality of the verse in the Quran, "Allah forbids you not to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and drove you not out from your homes. Verily, Allah loves those who deal with equity" (60:8). Furthermore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered Asma bint Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with her) to help her mother out with money although she was a polytheist.

A Muslim vis-à-vis Society as a Whole

When a Muslim accepts to live in a certain society, he is, in essence, making a pact that with that country that he will abide by the laws of that state. He does not have the right to violate the laws of that state simply because he is a Muslim and the state is not an Islamic state. Thus, all of the principles of proper behavior that have been described in this chapter apply to a Muslim living wherever he may be living. In most countries today, many things may be legal that are forbidden to a Muslim. These legal things a Muslim simply avoids. He should also demand his legal rights to ensure that he is not forced to do anything forbidden in Islam. Overall though, he should be from among the law-abiding citizens.

In addition to that, a Muslim should be a plus for any society he is living in. He should be a model citizen in many ways. As described earlier, he should be a good neighbor. He has the obligation to encourage what is good and prevent evil wherever he may be living. In addition, he must avoid and oppose what most societies see as the greatest crimes, such as murder, robbery, extortion and so forth. Furthermore, he must steer clear of alcohol or drug use, thus not burdening society as a whole with his personal weaknesses and addictions. Finally, he must be just and fair in all of his dealings with the other members of society.

Even though Muslims should play a positive role in any society, in many countries of the West today, a Muslim's loyalty and patriotism is being questioned. Obviously, a Muslim is not going to have the same feelings towards a secular government as he would toward a Muslim government. That, however, does not mean that he is going to work against his government or seek to harm the country he is living in. Undoubtedly, many a Jew will feel more loyalty to Israel than to their own home country. In fact, the recent debates in the United States demonstrate that many Christian groups are displeased with their government (and with the Supreme Court in particular). Many a Democrat in the United States, for example, does not feel complete loyalty for Republican administrations and vice-versa. However, no one seems to be questioning their loyalty and patriotism.

If patriotism means to simply follow and support what one's government is saying and be gung-ho in such blind allegiance, no intelligent person would be patriotic as all governments are known to lie and deceive at one time or another. On the other hand, if patriotism means to wish what is best for one's country, then the problem is that everyone differs as to what they see is best for their country. Some feel that they have the right to speak on behalf of all, but their "right" to do so may be questioned.

Islam recognizes the fact that it is natural for an individual to love his country and to have an affinity for that land in which he grew up. When the Muslims were forced to migrate from Makkah, which was under the control of the polytheists, many of them expressed their love for Makkah. Hence, it is natural for Muslims to develop a love for whatever land they happen to be in, even if the country is not an Islamic state. It is also natural for Muslims to desire what is best for their homeland.

But, again, unfortunately, their idea as to what is best may not be shared or appreciated by others. For example, the Muslims may wish to see an end to gambling, prostitution and pornography. The Muslims believe that this is what is best for all the people concerned, Muslims as well as non-Muslims. However, many non-Muslims will not share this feeling. Therein lies the crux of the problem. Theoretically speaking, though, in contemporary "free" societies, this should not be a problem. Muslims should be able to hold on to their values and customs—without bringing harm to others—while the others follow the dominant culture in non-Muslim lands. If the "free" countries are not willing to give the Muslims that much, it means that they are not willing to live up to their own ideals. It is not that Muslims are trying to cause them harm, they are simply trying to be good citizens while living a different lifestyle than the dominant culture.

Orphans Rights in Islam

Orphans are those members of the community who lost their father or both the parents before reaching the age of maturity and become alone in the world or society. In Islam, there is a great emphasis on the rights of Orphans. From the very beginning, Islam always enforced people to provide protection, care, love and respect to Orphans. In Qur'an, many verses are emphasizing methods that how to treat Orphans. Allah says:

“Concerning the world and the Hereafter. They ask you about the orphans. Say, “Setting right (their affairs) for them (is) best. And if you associate with them then they (are) your brothers. And Allah knows the corrupter from the amender. And if (had) willed Allah surely He (could have) put you Indeed, Allah (is) All-Mighty, All-Wise.” (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:220)

The pure and true religion of Allah ordered its member to have mercy and to be merciful towards all creatures. An orphan is a person who has lost his father or both his parents before the age of maturity. The Prophet (PBUH) was an orphan too and as such, orphans hold a special place in Islam. Anyone, whom Allah (s.w.t) has chosen to be the guardian of an orphan must be steadfast and must give these rights to the child. The orphans are among those who need mercy and they ask us to deal with them in a good way. Allah says:

“And (do) not come near (the) wealth (of) the orphan, except with what [it] is best until he reaches his maturity. And fulfil the covenant. Indeed, the covenant will be questioned.” (Surah Al-Isra 17:34)

Parents are one of the greatest blessings of Allah (SWT). Losing anyone or both of them is such a loss that it's beyond count. When parents, leave, all the love and kindness in the world leaves. Or at least the orphans think so. It is because parents are shade in the hardships, in difficulties and in hard times. When this kind of shade is gone, only the scorching heat of reality remains. And the orphans have to live in it.

Here are some rights of orphans in Islam:

- Be merciful to orphans Allah will make good your affairs
- Spend your wealth on charity and give the orphans
- Harshness to orphans is a sign of a non-believer
- Take care of the orphans and be good to them

- Fearing Allah in the orphan's money
- To stand for justice for them
- Give children an education
- Organise proper shelter and accommodation
- Feeding, dressing and providing for his necessary need
- True believers are devotees to Allah in everything they do
- Provide proper health care and immunisations to children
- Provide support who have been victims of conflict or disaster
- The believers are protectors of one other. So when we find those in need, such as the orphans and the widows, we should strive to help them.

Below are some reminders of the rewards for doing so. Allah says:

“Whatever ye spend that is good, is for parents and kindred and orphans and those in want and wayfarers. And whatever ye do that is good, -(Allah) knoweth it well.” (Surah Al-Baqara, 215)

A parent can never be replaced, but as Muslims, we can still give these children the best we can. Allah knows why he chose to make someone an orphan, and why he chooses you to be the guardian of that child. Have faith and remember that Allah is ever seeing, all hearing of what we do. Indeed, there is a great reward for taking care of an orphan.

Some may think that it is common sense that we should treat orphans with mercy:

The right to being raised: Every child holds the right to being raised by either a mother (if alive) or by any responsible person who will serve as a guide. It entails caring for the child both emotionally and physically. Children must be nurtured, loved, care for.

The right to inheritance: If the parents of the orphan left behind the property, the guardian of that child must keep it until the child is of age, and give it to him. Consuming the property of orphans incurs the wrath of Allah.

The right to child support: This includes the right to education, clothing, feeding, shelter, and healthcare.

Cared for and maintained: Concerning the world and the Hereafter.

Not spending the wealth that the orphan has outside the purpose of life: The wealth that the orphan has must be used only for the life of the orphan. We must not use it for ourselves because it breaks Allah's rules.

Honoured and not humiliated: Islam forbids to be bad to the orphans. Whether it is degrading, humiliating, abusing, rebuking, punching, being arbitrary or other bad behaviours to them. It is because we are the same as a human and have the same degree in the eyes of Allah. He alone never humiliates His people and it is recommended for us to do so. Moreover, the orphans have already lost too much of their life.

Here are some examples of the teachings of the Holy Quran regarding orphans:

“...Come not near to the orphan's property, except to improve...” (Quran, 6:152)

“And they feed for the love of ALLAH, the poor, the orphans, and the captive” (Quran, Al-Nisa. 8)

“Indeed, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly are only consuming into their bellies fire and they will be burned in ablaze.” (Qur'an. Al-Nisa. 10)

“Those who unjustly eat up the property of orphans, eat up a Fire into their bodies: They will soon be enduring a Blazing Fire.” (Quran, 4:10)

“But when He tries him and restricts his provision, he says, “My Lord has humiliated me.” No! But you do not honour the orphan.” (Al-Fajr 89:16-17)

“Have you considered him who calls the judgment a lie? That is the one who treats the orphan with harshness.” (Quran, 107:1-2)

In case there are some orphans who happen to inherit wealth, as in the case of the death of wealthy parents. Islam as a universal way of living that covered all aspects of life, did not leave it up to the caretaker to abuse the wealth of the young orphan -or orphans. The caretaker is warned to be careful, honest and just about the orphan's wealth and how to spend it to the orphan's benefit.

More Rights of Orphans in Islam

Here is presented more rights of orphans in Islam.

- Protect themselves and self-defence
- Play and do activities that they want
- Freedom of religion and perform it
- Has their privacy
- Gain health access
- Get a living and don't work
- Same in the eyes of Islamic and national law
- Has a role in Islam and the country's development

Keep a close check on orphans until they reach a marriageable age, then if you perceive that they have sound judgement hand over their property to them. Do not consume it extravagantly and precipitately before they come of age. Those who are wealthy should abstain from it altogether. Those who are poor should use it sensibly and correctly. They must be taught good Islamic morals, disciplined and taught to differentiate right from wrong. This is to ensure that the child grows up to become a good member of society who will benefit the people around him positively. Allah says:

“Nay, Him Alone you call and He would remove what you call upon Him if He wills, and you will forget what you associate (with Him).” (Surah Al-An'am 6:41)

In Islam, the re-marriage of widows has been greatly emphasized. At the same time, it has also been often stated that people, who bring up orphans, are very dear to Allah (SWT). This should give a very good idea, as to what is the reward for someone who gets married to a widow and supports her children from her deceased husband. That's all the rights of orphans in Islam. Hope we will appreciate their rights more and become better Muslims. Finally, it is a part of righteousness to spend your wealth on them: Allah says:

“And give (to) the orphans their wealth, and (do) not exchange the bad with the good, and (do) not consume their wealth with your wealth. Indeed, it is a sin great.” (Surah An-Nisa 4:2)

We should love everyone for the sake of Allah (SWT). A penny we spend for the sake of Allah (SWT), He promises to return us 10 times more of it in this world and seventy times in the hereafter. The same measure, or probably more, go for love and care. If you want to gain the mercy of ALLAH, want to soften your heart, want forgiveness, want that ALLAH listen to your prayers, and for all these things you just have to show love, care and mercy towards orphans.

A Muslim vis-à-vis Wealth and Property

In Islam, wealth is not considered an evil. Wealth is a bounty that Allah bestows upon individuals. It is definitely not evil nor even a necessary evil, as some other religions teach. In fact, protecting and safeguarding wealth is one of the goals of the Sharee'ah. Hence, people are encouraged to engage in earning a livelihood and accumulating wealth.

However, like many good things, there has to be limits with respect to wealth. In the hands of a righteous person, wealth becomes a tool that can be used to please Allah. On the other hand, it can also be something that may lead to a person's own destruction. Hence, it is truly a kind of trial from God. Allah describes it in this manner, “Your wealth and your children are only a trial” (64:15). The Prophet said, “The two feet of the human will not move on the Day of Resurrection until he is asked about his life and how he used it, about his knowledge and what he did with it, about his wealth and how he acquired it and how he spent it...” For example, one cannot give wealth priority over the teachings of the faith. Wealth or money cannot, thus, become one's ultimate goal in life. Additionally, wealth must be acquired by permissible means and spent on permissible matters. The ethical standards of Islam must be adhered to and, as a result, the wealth may be blessed by Allah, benefiting the individual in both this life and the Hereafter.

The righteous person understands that the wealth under his control actually belongs to Allah and the human's ownership of wealth is more akin to that of a caretaker. In other words, the human must use wealth only in the manner approved of by the true owner of that wealth, Allah. The Muslim understands that he is not free, therefore, to use his money in any fashion that he wishes. There are some things that are clearly and obviously forbidden for him. For example, he cannot use his money to bribe others or wrong others, thus going against justice. Allah says, "And eat up not one another's property unjustly, nor give bribery to the rulers (judges before presenting your cases) that you may knowingly eat up a part of the property of others sinfully" (2:188).

Ethics and Business Dealings in Islam

Business dealings in Islam are not simply a matter of getting ahead in this world. They are not cutthroat competition or taking advantage of others. Instead, they are based on a very strong ethical basis. A Muslim realizes that every business transaction is a question of morals and ethics.

Business transactions are an essential aspect of any developed society. The Prophet (peace be upon him) gave a great deal of guidance concerning business transactions. Muslims must heed this guidance. This guidance will, Allah willing, go a great way in removing many problems and feelings of hatred that are the result of unjust or improper business practices. Furthermore, the feeling of brotherhood loving for one's brother what one loves for oneself should permeate all business transactions. How can brothers be considered true brothers to one another when they are willing to cheat each other or lie to each other simply for the sake of the dollar?

Thus, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stated in a hadith that stresses both brotherhood and fair business practices: "Do not be envious of one another; do not artificially raise prices against one another; do not hate one another; do not turn one's back on each other; and do not undercut one another in business transactions. And be, [O] servants of Allah, brethren. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He does not wrong him. He does not fail him [when he needs him]. He does not lie to him. And he does not show contempt for him. Piety is here" and he pointed to his chest three times. "It is enough of evil for a person to hold his brother Muslim in contempt. All of a Muslim is inviolable to another Muslim: his blood, his wealth and his honor."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said, "May Allah have mercy on the one who is easy-going and generous while buying, while selling and when demanding his rights."

In fact, the key to blessed business transactions, in which both parties please Allah and receive blessings, is honesty and straightforwardness. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "The buyer and seller have the right of option as long as they do not part from one another. If they were honest and clear, they would be blessed in their transaction. If they concealed facts and lied, the blessings of their transaction would be destroyed."

If a person is ethical and morally conscious in his business dealings, this is a good sign that he is preferring the Hereafter to this world. He is not willing to risk Allah's punishment and anger for a measly gain. He is also strengthening the trust among the Muslim brethren. Allah willing, his reward with Allah will be great.

A general principle with respect to business transactions is that they must be the result of the mutual consent or approval of the contracting parties: Allah says, "O you who believe! Eat not up your property among yourselves unjustly except it be a trade amongst you, by mutual consent" (4:29). During the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also announced, "The wealth of a person is not permissible except through willing consent."

In other words, no one can be coerced into giving up part of his wealth or entering into a business dealing. Such coercion is illegal and would void the contract. At the same time, the Muslim is free to enter into any business transaction that does not violate Islamic law. In general, he is a "free actor," neither compelled by the state nor any other force. In this sense, the Islamic economic system has some characteristics in common with free market capitalism.

Another general principle with respect to business transactions is that they are permissible unless there is evidence to demonstrate that they are forbidden; only if it is found that it contains some forbidden aspect will it be deemed forbidden. Thus, Islamic Law has laid down some principle guidelines while delineating particular forbidden aspects that must be avoided. The matters that should be avoided include unstated or undetermined terms, speculative or overly risky conditions, interest, gambling and fraud or deception. If any one of these factors is found in a contract, the contract, depending on the extent to which they are present, may be rendered null, void and impermissible. It is essential that Muslims be aware of these forbidden characteristics so that they may live off of pure and permissible sources.

Chapter 4

West Womens Problems Solution is Quran

In the Western world, women continue to face various challenges and issues, despite significant progress in gender equality. Some trending issues that women are facing in the West include:

1. **Gender Pay Gap:** Women still earn less than men on average, and this pay gap persists in various industries and at all levels of employment.
2. **Gender Discrimination:** Discrimination based on gender, including in the workplace, is an ongoing issue. Women may face biases, stereotypes, and unequal opportunities.
3. **Lack of Representation:** Women are often underrepresented in leadership positions, politics, and on corporate boards, which hinders their ability to influence important decisions.
4. **Sexual Harassment and Assault:** The #MeToo movement highlighted the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault, leading to discussions about consent and workplace safety.
5. **Work-Life Balance:** Many women struggle to balance work and family responsibilities, which can limit their career opportunities and lead to burnout.
6. **Reproductive Rights:** Access to reproductive healthcare, including contraception and abortion, remains a contentious issue, with ongoing debates about women's autonomy over their bodies.
7. **Maternal Health Disparities:** Disparities in maternal health outcomes persist, with higher mortality rates among Black and Indigenous women, highlighting racial inequalities in healthcare.
8. **Online Harassment:** Women are often targets of online harassment and abuse, affecting their safety and participation in online spaces.
9. **Body Image and Beauty Standards:** Unrealistic beauty standards perpetuated by media and advertising can contribute to body image issues and low self-esteem.
10. **Domestic Violence:** Domestic violence and intimate partner abuse continue to affect many women, necessitating support services and legal protections.
11. **Unequal Household Chores:** Women still tend to shoulder a disproportionate share of household and caregiving responsibilities, which can limit their career opportunities and well-being.
12. **Intersectionality:** The intersection of gender with other factors like race, class, and sexual orientation can compound challenges and create unique issues for marginalized women.
13. **Access to Education:** While women have made great strides in education, disparities may still exist, particularly in STEM fields and higher education leadership positions.
14. **Healthcare Disparities:** Gender-based healthcare disparities can affect women's access to quality medical services, including reproductive and mental health care.
15. **Ageism:** Older women may experience ageism in the workplace, limiting their job opportunities and income potential.
16. **Legal Rights and Abortion:** Ongoing debates about reproductive rights and the availability of safe and legal abortion services continue to impact women's choices and autonomy.

17. Parental Leave: Inadequate parental leave policies and the lack of affordable childcare options can create challenges for working mothers.

18. Human Trafficking: Human trafficking, including sex trafficking and labor exploitation, remains a significant concern affecting women in many Western countries.

19. Sexism in Media: Gender stereotypes and sexism in media can perpetuate harmful ideas about women's roles and identities.

20. Cybersecurity and Privacy: Women may face unique cybersecurity challenges, including online harassment and threats to privacy.

21. Mental Health: Women can experience higher rates of mental health issues, and access to mental health services is sometimes limited or stigmatized.

22. Environmental and Climate Issues: Women can be disproportionately affected by climate change and environmental degradation, particularly in vulnerable communities.

23. LGBTQ+ Rights: Challenges related to LGBTQ+ rights, including those faced by transgender and non-binary women, continue to be important issues.

24. Tech and Gaming Industry: Gender disparities in the technology and gaming industries persist, affecting career opportunities and representation.

25. Safety and Public Spaces: Women often face safety concerns in public spaces due to harassment, assault, and violence.

Islam Provides The Best solution to all these current problems and the upcoming Problems till the last hour.

How we can apply the teachings of Surah An-Nisa in Modern World

Surah An-Nisa from the Quran addresses various aspects of family, marriage, inheritance, and social justice.

1. Gender Equality: The surah emphasizes the equality of men and women in terms of their rights and responsibilities. In the modern world, this principle can guide efforts to promote gender equality, women's rights, and the elimination of discrimination.

2. Social Justice: Surah An-Nisa contains guidance on inheritance laws aimed at ensuring the fair distribution of wealth among family members. Modern societies can use these principles as a basis for fair inheritance laws.

3. Family Values: The surah encourages strong family bonds and care for orphans. In the modern world, these teachings can inspire the promotion of family values, child welfare, and support for vulnerable individuals.

4. Ethical Conduct: Surah An-Nisa provides guidance on moral conduct, which remains relevant in contemporary society. It encourages honesty, justice, and kindness, which are essential values in the modern world.

5. Interfaith and Intercommunity Relations: The surah also addresses interactions between different communities. In today's globalized world, it can serve as a guide for promoting tolerance and understanding between various religious and cultural groups.

6. Personal Development: The surah emphasizes self-improvement and spiritual growth. Modern individuals can apply this by focusing on personal development, self-reflection, and leading a virtuous life.

It's important to approach these teachings with a contemporary perspective, taking into account the evolving nature of society and the need to adapt them to the current context while upholding their core principles of justice, equality, and ethical behavior.