

Family – The Center Of Stability

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Sub Title:

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Publisher(s):

[Foundation Of Islamic Thought](#) [3]

This text compares Islamic family values with Western family values, making it clear that Islamic laws and regulations for relationships are not only fundamentals for Islam, but also for every human being in every aspect and thus is the only way to lead a successful and fruitful life.

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Topic Tags:

[Family](#) [8]

Miscellaneous information:

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Publisher's Note

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Foundation of Islamic Thought Tehran,

Islamic Republic of Iran

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Introduction

This book takes a look at the values and status of the family and its effect on societies; eastern, western and Islamic.

The family unit is composed of several different individual relationships, husband and wife, father, mother, son and daughter; these form the nucleus of society. After all, society is a body of people the sum total of its members. The welfare of any society depends on the moral well-being of its individual relationships.

When the growth and prosperity of the family is given importance and is highly regarded, the welfare of society in turn is safeguarded. No society can be considered healthy if the families which comprise it are suffering from difficulties and instability.

In this book, we would like to reflect on this most important human sanctity; the family, and what form it has taken in the west, the east and what Islam advises, with emphasis on the centre of development of women, wives, and mothers. They are the nucleus of the family unit. Their loving presence in the family unites its members and transforms any dwelling into a 'home'.

So major is their role as mother that Islam the upholder of human nobility, places heaven at their feet. Women in an Islamic society are encouraged to seek education and social and political awareness in order to be active members of their society. As human beings, they were created equally and will be judged equally by God.

In the West, under the pretext of equality, women have been exploited and oppressed to the detriment of the family and the downfall of society. Materially the west may be advanced, but spiritually it is backward. Islamic laws, social and otherwise, are far superior to any in the world, and when they are applied by society, family and individual) stability is achieved.

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Family Instability In The West

The main indication of family instability in the West is the rise in the divorce rate. This is not to say that other families are blissfully happy or without problems, but they too, because of their social and ethical relationships within society, suffer from some form of instability. Researchers are trying to discover a solution to this shortcoming which would lead to strengthened family ties.

To reach this goal, they suggest that their youth, upon reaching puberty, should leave their families and with this separation from their parents, take steps in choosing a spouse and forming a family of their own. This period which accompanies the storm of youthful tendencies and feelings, causes the undirected young people to become bewildered and lost.

Today, the West, with its present cultural and social structure, is going through one of the most corrupt periods in its history. In terms of unorthodox sexual relations, it is unequalled. In regards to family stability and morality, which is essential for every shared life, young and old families alike suffer. This is the kind of morality the West exports. In this war against virtues, the West is not alone but the East as well plays an effective role.

We refer to some statistics to illustrate these claims. In 1890, 6% of marriages in America ended in divorce. By 1910 the figure increased to 10%. Between 1920 and 1930 the divorce rate was at 14%. At the end of 1939, 20% of marriages in America failed. In 1945, after World War II, the rate had increased to 30%' and by 1947, the 'Baby Boomer' years, four out of ten marriages in America ended up in divorce court. Current rates have reached as high as 60%!

It can be seen that due to the increasing figures of divorce, the family has faced increasingly difficult times. In Sweden, over a matter of just 50 years, divorce statistics have risen to ten times that of America.

Every year 27,000 illegitimate babies are added to the Swedish population of 7 million. In Germany, 3 million women who, because of separation and divorce, have been abandoned, take refuge in women's organisations which have taken on the job of supporting them.

On the whole, it could be stated that the most unstable families in the world today live in Europe and America.

Religion's Role In Family Stability

Whenever effective factors for strengthening and stabilising the family are discussed, religion's role is usually overlooked. This is due to the fact that few have witnessed the effects of religion on the family.

The majority do not consider the religious factor a scientific one, but the truth is that any human being who relies on materialistic values will always be disappointed. The fundamentals of atheism refuse to accept metaphysical factors and effects. In regard to family social problems, they have no answer but that which is obvious and natural, the result of man's imperfect mind and thoughts.

Just as every physical matter is subject to change and destruction, so are man's futile attempts of little lasting value. Presently those who deny religion, including the capitalist and socialist societies with their common belief in refusing to worship one God and refusing to believe in the spiritual world, have come out in full force to tackle the problem of "family instability".

Centres and communal services have been established in order to educate the public in this area. No solution has been discovered; in fact, according to published figures, their efforts have resulted in a decrease in family stability.

The general assumption is that the only effective factor for the health and growth of the family is by providing for their general needs, such as food, clothing, health, education and recreation.

Without understanding man's inherent needs, they claim to have designed the correct and essential programs for him. In regards to the importance of faith (religion) and its role in rebuilding morality and sensuality of individuals and improving their social relations and also strengthening family ties, it would be essential to point out that religion, in dealing with problems and giving advice to man, has not been satisfied with the mere material and physical side of man.

Taking a look beyond the material factors with awareness of the mysteries and intricacies of human needs, man gains insight and effective ideological weapons with which to defend himself successfully against the enemy of various social corruptions.

Religion is the factor that frees his belief and the fundamentals of thinking from the limited boundaries of this confined world and lays a strong ideological and cultural ground to aid him in gaining the disciplinary powers of thinking and purification of his internal desires and motives.

When man has faith in a religion whose main fundamentals are Tawhid (Oneness of God) and Ma'ad (belief in Resurrection), his life and movements will enjoy a particular kind of holiness. His life has a purpose. His actions are accompanied with good morals, and his cause and conduct are harmonious to religious teachings and his wishes are the commands of his religion, guaranteeing prosperity and well-being of the mind and body.

When the man of a family comes into contact with an error by his wife and as a result becomes angry and acts unsuitably towards her, the results of his actions are a loss to him. These are the signs of disbelief in the benefit of a generous disposition which is one of the effects of believing in God and His mercy and forgiveness. Once religion penetrates his behaviour, mercy and forgiveness will overcome revenge, and optimism will replace suspicion.

His affection and sympathy would be directed towards his spouse and he could better control his anger. The acceptance of advice and counselling with one another is recommended by all religions to all couples. Respecting the rights of a wife, mercy and forgiveness, expression of love, respecting the family, relatives and friends are considered to be the most important of religious teachings.

Why is it that the futility of unorthodoxy which nests in the minds of the materialists and atheists propounds to ensure prosperity among families but the element of religion, which can take root and promote the body and soul, providing man with rightful needs and guiding him to elevated and healthy aims, is considered ineffective?

One pitfall of the West in the making of laws concerning women and families has been their ignorance of the true qualities and characteristics of women. Through this ignorance and lack of understanding they institute laws which do not coincide with man's inborn needs and tendencies.

One of the most important problems amongst the Godless, capitalist governments in the West is their ignorance or ignoring of the many dimensions of man's existence and his real needs.

In the West man has been called an "economic animal". With a fair judgement of their laws, we shall discover the aims and means behind them to turn man into a tool to fulfil the desires of a greedy bunch of rulers.

Today in the West the motive for marriage has lost its purity. People marry or commit adultery merely to satisfy their animalistic desires. Thus rebellion and extremism replace modesty.

Most degrading of all is the consequences of these false trends which will trap future generations within epidemic diseases of corruption and misguided morality. Abuse of women and children, corrupt establishments and places of debauchery, parental carelessness in cultivating moral principles within the family, disintegration of the family and separation of children from their parents, adopting corrupt lifestyles, addiction, crime, etc are all signs of western societies ruled by corrupt governments.

Morality And The Wheels Of Industry

Since the West prospered from its industrial and economic growth, it has invested all its power to reach higher industrial and economic aims economic growth focussed on individual planning. Individuals are used as tools of this economic system. A certain reluctance towards religion and teachings for the growth and guidance of the society has already taken root in most Western rulers' rubbed salt in the

wound causing society to regress into the ghettos of immorality.

The make-up of Western families during the first stages of its expansion was such that the most important daily needs and responsibilities were carried out by family members. The family provided food, clothing and all necessities and with strengthening ties among its members it provided protection against enemies.

The family was also responsible for child training and teaching religious and other matters. Sincerity and faith were felt amongst families. With the beginning of the era of industrialization, the family lost its warm and sentimental existence. It took on an aggressive and harsh tone. Changes in industry, church, schooling, and national life did not leave the family status unaffected.

Family ties disintegrated or were weakened in the eyes of its members. Industrialization persuaded the young, who were loved by their families, to leave the warm atmosphere of their homes in search of better jobs, comfort, luxury and money. The young and lonely did not hesitate to join any form of corruption in an effort to rid their tired and restless minds from the burden of industrial and economic wheels.

Affection, sympathy, love for their fellow man, good intention towards one another all disappeared, destroyed by the beatings of the hammers in the factories. Mothers, women, girls and children also followed suit. They too became prey to the great moral and social disease called 'alienation'.

Activities and movements influenced by industrialism have increased over the past century. Social organisations have been established to induce people to work in the factories and leave their former quiet and healthy family life.

This was particularly obvious in the U. S. at the turn of the century. Millions of people travelled back and forth between industrial centres and their rural homes. This new way of life eroded family stability. People started taking tranquillisers to relieve the pressure of this lifestyle, crime and corruption was on the upswing.

With the invention of numerous electrical appliances like washing machines, vacuum cleaners, etc. life was transformed from its traditional state, extra free time became available, especially for women at home.

Instead of using this extra time to teach and train their children or to organise the family by creating useful and constructive hobbies, etc., they were drawn into economic and industrialised centres. They, unknowingly, became pieces of the great Western economic puzzle. With industrial progress, rural areas were deserted and people migrated to the cities.

This in itself had a tremendous effect on agricultural production. They poured into small cramped and frustrating apartments. Economic independence and pride among men and women made both of them

negligent of home, family and the children. As a result the new foundation of the family became shaky and often relied on government offices and organisations for help.

American families, even more than others, were affected by these communal changes and with the loss of traditional family structure, its stability was endangered. Lost family unity, people's reluctance to educate children and the carelessness in their training caused the breakup of many families. The spread of careless behaviour among young and old are the results of this industrial revolution.

The rising figures of teenage criminal acts are another clear evidence of this instability. Community help organisations whose job it is to give support and security to women and children have done nothing to improve this situation.

The reality is that the positive and healthy growth of families is considered to be an obstacle to the progress of the capitalist systems. The structure of the society in the West is constantly threatening the family. Organisations in America, who have undertaken the responsibility of caring for the families and children, have practically replaced the traditional family unit, but have failed to bring stability to the society.

Inequality

Demands for equal rights of men and women accompanied the boom of industrialization and economic progress. Western capitalists, who had now built large factories, needed not only a huge labour force to run them, but a cheap one as well.

A section of society who slaved her days through without being allowed to own anything or have a say in matters, would now more than welcome the passing of a law which would enable her to own what she earned.

Women rushed in where mothers feared to tread. They walked into the factories, stepping over their families to get there. These were the women who raised a generation of keyhole children.

Children who came home from school letting themselves in with their own keys. Children who came home to an empty and cold house to eat a cold lunch, children who had to keep all the exciting stories of their day for later when their mother would be at home, usually she was too tired from work to listen! This equality of rights between men and women left children motherless.

This child, upon knowing the reasons for his loneliness, would probably disagree with such an equality saying, "No, my mother has never been the same as my father. My mother is kind, loving, warm and generous. She is patient with me and overlooks my mistakes because of her compassion. But my father is not the same. He hardly listens to me when I talk and I dare not do anything wrong when he's around."

Having this innocent argument in mind, one wonders about this law and its execution. What have been the motives behind it? Factors of economy, morality, advertising, and politics could be mentioned as the main reasons behind the issue of equality of women and men's rights. On the economic side, lack of manpower to run the huge industrial machinery at the factories and workshops caused the capitalist to submit the said law to the government.

In Britain, before 1882, women did not own what they earned according to the civil law. The passing of a law guaranteeing this encouraged women to go out to work. Women became good workers, cheap labour and hardworking. In some cases they took the jobs from men, leaving them unemployed. The demand was high for women workers.

This type of active participation of women in society was detrimental to her natural morality and nature. Her home performance as a mother and a wife were also affected, her children were left in nurseries and day-care centres. Separation of children from their mothers was a great side effect of the equality law.

With her love and affection, a mother can inject lessons of life into her child that no other teacher or nurse can. When a child is away from this source of love and sympathy for ten hours or more each day, both mother and child forget how to communicate and understand each other. They stop learning from and loving each other. Long days in nurseries result in passive learning habits, alienation and estrangement of the child.

A child that is not attracted to his home by a warm family environment will look elsewhere in order to satisfy his natural desire to be loved and wanted. This child will choose to leave such a cold and empty house and enter a corrupt and aggressive society. He is one of the many millions of sacrifices that Western families have had to make in order to keep the wheels of their economy turning.

On the issue of morality, the law of equality of the sexes opened the way to corruption and the spread of immorality in society. It provided the right environment for the fulfilment of sexual desires and made fulfilment easy and available.

Before industrialization small families formed small units who stayed together until death parted them. But after industrialization the young were encouraged to be happy and enjoy life as much as they could because this was to the benefit of the factory owners.

A person who has no ties to wife and children has fewer problems, works better and has a better output. This has reached a point that Westerners do not see it necessary to marry and form a family until quite old. At this later age, both men and women have lost the enthusiasm and ability to have and raise the next generation.

This trend does not mean that these men and women are childless. Even though today many men and women marry in their mid-thirties, they have already either had an unwanted pregnancy or an

illegitimate child. According to statistics in Britain out of 650,000 babies born in 1984, 20% were fatherless. These illegitimate children are also a category of people that the West will have to deal with.

In the U. S., 90 million youth under the age of 20 are driven out of home and live alone in towns and cities; children and youth who have no identity, who become corrupted and adopt unorthodox lifestyles.

They become the transmitters of such deadly diseases as AIDS. This disease, which has spread its killing claws into every section of Western society, is the 20th Century plague which is the consequence of a Western revolt against civilization. Even the respectable members of the United Nations have not been spared.

The fear of this disease has forced authorities to take serious health measures such as increasing public awareness about AIDS through the mass media; using plastic cups and plates and special drinking straws in restaurants; wearing rubber gloves in medical facilities to protect workers from patients, etc.

These are all the results of undermining the family and more importantly, the role of women in this small unit of society. The Western world, which calls itself civilised, is the symbol of uncivilization, one obvious reason being the degradation and attack on the woman and her dignity.

They took away her identity and offered her doom. They enticed her out of the warm family environment and after dispersing her husband and children, used her as a propaganda tool to sell their commercial products. This they call civilization.

The equality of women and men's rights encouraged the consumerization of women. With the expansion of industry all the warehouses were stocked full of luxury goods. Commercial advertising trapped women into spending lavishly on clothes, cosmetics and unnecessary goods dictated by what fashion designers claimed was necessary in clothing, furnishings, etc. Women made good consumers. Having earned the money themselves, they did not hesitate to spend it in any way they wished.

This trend of consumerism gradually found its way to all Western countries and even some of their colonies and it will be an arduous task to stop it. Another reason behind the law of equality of men and women was a political one.

With the establishment of this law, these plunderers managed to gain popularity among women, who make up half of the population of each country. So, these corrupt people through their support for this law managed to reach key positions in the office and spread their corrupt ideas of immorality. These ideas proved to be destructive to the talents and abilities of the young minds in the society.

It pre-occupied them with unlimited and unlawful pleasures and wasted their time, effort and energy thus leaving them indifferent and ignorant about the governing of the country. In this way, the politicians backed by the capitalists are left free to exploit the country. Unfortunately, this calamity has spread to other countries.

Small countries, who should be able to employ their religion against this imported Western culture and promote themselves to higher goals, have unfortunately succumbed to it. Doing away with corruption is not an easy task. Only firm cultural and ideological moves based on genuine and pure aims can hope to save a society from this difficulty.

Report And Analysis On The Moral Demise Of America

Today the West is the most corrupt region of the world in regards to sexual and moral degradation. It is also going through its worst and weakest period in relation to family fortification and stability.

Children in the West today lack a healthy moral atmosphere for growth. An overwhelming majority sustains severe damages during their pre-marital life, such that when, in later years they become married, their body and mind is too tired to face even the smallest of problems and difficulties that any shared life might have.

Today in Western and also Eastern societies the young do not tie themselves down with a family and even if they do, it is because of the financial benefits that they are able to receive from the woman.

Because their aim in forming a family is a financial one, it is not difficult to guess that when they arrive at economical fulfilment, this social unit, because it has reached its goal, would end in separation.

America, the 'Mother of Corruption' of this century, while claiming advanced civilization and rulership of the world, is being drawn into the swirl of corruption to the extent that their newspapers and magazines are now voicing their premonitions concerning the demise and doom of the younger generation. They occasionally write a few lines warning the authorities about the young falling into the wells of destruction which surrounds them in that country.

Time magazine in its December 9, 1985 issue, speaks about the moral deviation of the younger generation. In this critical article, the magazine has proven that America's mass media, deliberately or otherwise, contributes a good share to the spread of corruption and social unrest there.

This report is important due to the fact that inside it, America's society has been referred to as a "corrupt society". To prove its point time prints documented statistics of illegitimate sexual relations among the young.

Sadly, the Third World countries have been affected by the Western world¹. In many African, Asian and Latin American countries, social structure is adopted from the West. It is clear to the researchers today that the "Western philosophy" has failed in the field of interrelationships between men and women, and is facing a grave problem. It is foreseeable that the Western societies will eventually be destroyed by this weak point.

Some statisticians believe that, in the near future, Western and Eastern generations will be comprised of

a majority of illegitimate children during whose childhood and adolescence have suffered from spiritual and mental problems which will affect the future management of their societies.

Time reports; "*They are from various generations and places but their fates are all similar.*"

"Just barely 15, a white girl from middle-class Louisville, Kentucky, cares for her six-week-old son black 14-year-old in San Francisco, California awaits the arrival of her baby. In Minneapolis, Minnesota a native American Indian of 17 struggles to care for her two illegitimate children"

"If present trends continue, American researchers predict that 40% of today's 14-year-old girls will be pregnant at least once before the age of 20."

The statistics surrounding teenage pregnancies are appalling. "With disadvantage creating disadvantage, it is no wonder that teen pregnancy is widely viewed as the very hub of the U.S. poverty cycle.

"The shocking prevalence of teenage pregnancy among white as well as black Americans was brought to light when a nonprofit research centre in New York City released the results of a 37-country study. Its findings: the U. S. leads nearly all other developed nations in its incidence of pregnancy among girls aged 15 through 19."

Some may justify this by saying it is the Western moral way of life but Time refers to this as a serious problem needing further investigation. Today, wherever we look in the West, we are faced with unwanted pregnancies, young girls who are desperate. This problem demands urgent attention in order to solve it. Statistics substantiate this.

According to figures, 84% of Americans consider unwanted pregnancies of women under 20 to be a problem causing negative influences on the family. Time writes, "Half of the girls who become pregnant are not able to complete their high school education and the other half raise their fatherless children in poverty and misery."

The strange and frightening thing is that the authorities in these countries and cities do not consider these disgraceful statistics to be detrimental but progressive. They themselves drive the young towards this sea of corruption.

Using the ignorance of the young they conspire against them in order to reach their dominating aims. They lift all restrictions and allow society to burn in the fire of ignorance and immorality. As an example, a governor general gave permission for the publication of a book that contained guidelines on how to prevent unwanted pregnancies for school girls.

As he put it, "this action proved effective in reducing the anxiety of thousands of concerned people in America who were facing this problem." According to this book, the publication of which was approved by a majority vote of the county committee, the teaching of sexual matters will become obligatory in all

schools. In fact, in some Western countries like England, sex education is a required course in most schools.

The ban on selling contraceptives without a licence has been lifted and a \$1 million budget was allocated to advise the young about pregnancy. This law also obliges the families of single mothers to support their children financially and states that they are legally responsible for taking care of the newborns. Time continued by stating, "All the youth and their parents bear a responsibility toward their own actions."

Even when the imperialist governments decide to help the poor, they only make matters worse and further spread corruption. For example, a law was introduced to help the destitute parents providing financial help only to those parents who have three or more children.

Thus, young parents and immature mothers, the majority of whose children have not even seen their fathers and other deprived and poverty stricken in society in order to get past this legal obstacle and obtain their daily bread, are motivated to increase the number of their illegitimate children!

Upon closer examination of these matters and the plight of these people, one cannot help but shed tears and feel sorry about their oppression. Why? Why should healthy individuals in a society, blindly or otherwise, be cheated by the great Satan of their own souls and as a result fall prey to the hands of these oppressive governments?

Why must these innocent young girls be sacrificed for the satisfaction of the animal instincts of a bunch of unleashed dogs? Why should they spend their sweetest years of life amidst depression? How could one ignore the role that this propaganda of the imperialist governments plays in this evident crime?

When the government encourages such acts and passes such laws, it should be held responsible for the grave consequences.

We would not be too wrong in saying that the period of Jahiliyyah (ignorance) has been revived. The days when ignorant fathers buried their daughters alive! When those innocent tiny bodies cried from beneath the sands, "Father please! Please father, take pity upon me!" No affection ever blossomed in those sealed hearts.

That was the era of ignorance, the era of corruption and ignorant acts by ignorant people. Is the state of these defenceless girls and their fatherless children in America or other parts of the Western world any better than being buried alive? It was in the midst of all this pedantry that the 'Sun of Truth' shined from the East and God's Messenger, Muhammad (S), called upon them,

"Fathers! O men, for what crime are you killing your dear daughters? Daughters are your dear ones; they are the source of your growth and prosperity."

From that day on the despicable habit of killing daughters gradually disappeared and daughters were

treated better, becoming dear and precious to their family, giving new life to it.

Yes, we thought the era of ignorance had ended forever, but alas, we are destined to witness such ignorance in our own times! The 'dragon of ignorance' this time has raised its head in the West but the flames of its breath have spread around the world.

If the girls in Jahiliyyah were buried alive by their fathers, the girls in the West are being tortured to death. They are being driven from home; having to take refuge with strangers; becoming pregnant; having to raise unwanted children while still a very young age themselves; and live on their own with no support.

Once again, Islam, with a divine and liberating call from a horizon not too far and through the words of another revolution, announces: "O you oppressed people of the world! Come to your senses; do not walk over your dignity and pride and do not throw your life under the wheels of industry. Search for your true self and regain your lost honour.

Do not let the warmth of your family circle and the innocence of your children becomes the target of the attacks of the culture of sexual anarchy. Liberate yourselves and break this yoke of ignominy. Do not allow the false propaganda of the mother of corruption, America to intrude on the pure land of your souls.

Refuse to allow the blossoming talents of your youth to be severed by this brutal industrialised world. Let it flower and gain power to achieve what you desire. O, you who govern the West, take pity on your people, do not sacrifice them for the sake of your prosperity and profiteering."

The spread of corruption in American schools under the given plan increased to an extent that the director of a high school in Chicago decided to open a health clinic inside the school compound. This clinic passes out contraceptives to those girls who bring written permission from their parents.

Every year over three hundred teenage school girls in this city become pregnant. The parents of some students, particularly the religious-oriented, protested against the presence of the clinic at school. The problem became so grave that the Americans themselves openly criticised it. The school refused to close the clinic.

The principal, Judith Stenbergen, replied rather vehemently, "The only thing I can say is that we are trying to keep some of the young ladies at school and offer them some welfare services." The committee of the trustees of Los Angeles school is also planning to open health centres in order to prevent early pregnancies of young girls in any way possible.

According to time, until now, only nine schools throughout America have opened such health and educational clinics. Other clinics are awaiting public readiness to be opened. The result of so many young women giving birth has increased the number of infant deaths and defects.

This is a true story of the West and America. The young people in smaller countries look upon the West as a land of skyscrapers, modern factories, shiny cars and fashionable clothes, but the dazzling lights are deceiving and reveal only the surface of this society.

What they see from the distance and through the pictures and movies is only a mirage because as one gets close the mirage disappears and what is seen is the dirty ghettos of deprivation and misery. Yes, only a small minority, i.e., the capitalists who are rich and can spend lavish amounts of money, get the most from this type of society. The rest are unwitting slaves. Alas, the disease of corruption is contagious and does not differentiate rich from poor, young from old.

Even the rich capitalists have sunk under the influence of their own destructive plots for the entire society has become bogged down by this quagmire or immorality, leaving broken homes or in their case, broken mansions and villas! These are all due to the wrong interpretation in the West of the equality of rights of men and women.

Of course, the main reason for this discussion and analysis is not to merely report on it, but, as mentioned earlier, it is to emphasise the importance of marriage and the formation of a family. The consequences of not believing in the importance of the family is what the West is suffering from today.

The only way for the prosperity of a society is to respect the natural rights of men and women within its logical limits and forming the family as one of the most basic social, moral, and mental units of society. We observed that the societies that refuse to walk in this path are subject to disruption and doom.

1. It must be borne in mind that wherever the West is mentioned, it also refers to socialist countries, because socialist countries have imitated the West in regards to women. Of course, at first they followed the ideas of Marx and Engles in this regard and continued to do so until the period of Lenin. Because the opinions of the Marxists concerning family and the relationships between men and women were faced with failure, they gradually abandoned those ideas.

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Socialist Families

Having discussed the family status in the capitalist societies, we now continue our discussion about the family structure in socialist societies. The socialist system is primarily affected by the West; and most major problems are common to both East and West. Here we deal mainly with points in which they differ.

According to statistics Eastern socialist countries also possess a similar figure, in regards to the degree of corruption, the main reason being that the basis of their thinking is the denial of a divine ideology and the rejection of any metaphysical existence. It is natural that mere reliance on knowledge and experience limits man to certain tangible discoveries. Through religion and the oneness of God, man can gain a much wider understanding.

Historical View Of The Socialist School Of Thought

The Views of the Forerunners—Before the appearance of family sociology and until the time of Pruden and August Kent, the philosophical views and thoughts of Plato, who considered the family to be the symbol of love and fairness, were held. In the second half of the 19th century the subject of the family was studied by people such as Morgan, Engels and Backofen.

They considered the family to be a socio-historical institution with responsibilities and makeup determined by the rate of growth of the whole society. Research plans concerning the family and marriage is a serious problem which is under investigation by both eastern and western sociologists.

One of those sociologists, Anatol Kharkov, introduces a particular method in studying the family structure. He states:

1. “Society is a logical structure of social classes, groups and individuals inside which exists differences related to the classes of people, their interaction and influence on each other.”
2. “The family is a part of the said discipline. It is a social unit while at the same time it possesses the particularities of an institution or a group. Also, through it other phenomena within the society and internal phenomena are curbed and complemented.”
3. “The appearance and development of the family that at the same time depends on the growth and expansion of the individual and the growth of mankind have a twofold effect; necessary material factors which affect directly and mental and spiritual factors which affect indirectly.”

Marxists believe that marriage throughout history has gone through three phases. The first phase is complete sexual freedom, when man was freer than animals in his sexual relationships. The second phase is group marriages in which any woman could have sexual relations with any man. Gradually, as private ownership was strengthened, the family was imposed on man as a symbol of exploitation and

growth bringing about the third phase.

They foresaw that in the period of returning to socialism, public ownership that rule' over all private ownership will yet again collapse the families returning them to the first period or complete sexual freedom during which marriage would be a kind of sexual anarchy and the babies born out of this relationship would belong to everyone in society.

The management and custody of these children become the responsibility of the government, which is obliged to establish public centres and nurseries to look after these children. In this way, contact between child and parent is severed each continuing his life separately. Family relations are limited to the relationship of the couple. They also suffer from infidelity on both sides. No firm basis or foundation is left for a shared family life between father, of her and child.

This cycle continues and children, upon reaching puberty, become involved in sexual relationships free of any moral or legal obligations and follow in their parents' footsteps. When communism took over Russia, one of its first steps was to disperse the family and utilize its entire means in doing so.

Its logic was the “family” as a structured discipline, has been an ancient base for exploitation and breeds exploiters. Even in the second congress of Russia in the year 1919 in the confirmation and legalisation of this act, they included a chapter in their resolution encouraging people to break their family relations and support the establishment or public organisations to look after their lonely children.

Of course, after a while they realised what a disgraceful act this was and that the family deserves more than this. On the other hand, the separation of the youth from their collapsed families drove them into creating a kind of corruption in moral complexities. This resolution has since been cancelled.

But even today when they have given up the Marxist theory concerning the family, unfortunately, they are struck by another disease which is imported from the West. Western style corruption has spread to the Eastern Bloc countries and is haunting family stability. In this way, the East also suffers from a type of westernisation and will have to face the grave consequences.

Discussion

Of course, what could be said about Kharkov's viewpoints is that it is all very well that the family is a unit such as other units of society, but the effect it has on that society is never similar nor comparable to the effects of other institutions like schools. The positive values that are accepted by the members of a family will directly or indirectly affect the whole network of society.

If value and importance is given to the growth and well-being of the family and the quality of its spiritual health, the wellbeing of society in turn is preserved, as the family creates the first and lasting impression in the innocent mind of a child engraving the first images on the clean page of a young mind. No society can be considered healthy if the families which makeup that society are suffering from difficulties and

instability.

The Family Defined

The family is the basic unit and fundamental element of the society by means of which disciplined forces of the socialist community are planned within the society. (Fredrick Luple)

The contract of marriage is the indication of the first stage of legal jurisdiction in society. The mental and spiritual union of man and woman form an organism whose parts complete one another, the aim of this organism is to bring about justice, and to create civilization. (Pruden)

The fact that the family has been accepted as a basic unit of society is a correct and logical matter and that both men and women after marriage complement each other is also undoubtedly true. As to what results can be deduced from the above facts, there is room for debate.

Pruden considers the growth and completion of the couple is fulfilled by reaching civilization, material progress and comfort. The argument is illogical that after every completion and end i.e upon reaching comfort, doom and destruction should follow. If the growth and completion of a couple inside a family after having reached comfort and civilization should end in death and doom, it is not very valuable.

Religion, on the other hand, argues that the completion and progress of the couple is true and correct only when the result of their union is the appearance of and growth of children and younger families whose thoughts and moralities are superior to their parents" is only then that the couple will reach spiritual comfort and peace of mind through which they are able to travel the road of true prosperity and reach ultimate satisfaction and comfort.

Another of this school of thought, pointing out the influence of society on the family says, "The family has always been in the process of development from an inferior to a more superior form. This change has been in accordance with the growth and progress of society, technology and economy."

Of course, Engels has also approved this historical trend that: In the beginning there were no obstacles in the way of free sexual relationships and any woman could belong to any man and vice versa. Strangely enough he adds: "This kind of marriage did not essentially lead to anarchy because individual marriages had not been rejected then." Engels considers this to be the starting point of the appearance of different forms of the family.

Another opinion states, "In the Stone Age economy was based on hunting, gathering nuts and fruit and catching fish. Man learned to live within a community so certainly in addition to a family consisting of a husband and wife a kind of social organisations in the shape of a tribe or clan existed." (Gordon Child)

Therefore, the formation of a family, in particular the role of men and women in the Stone Age, depended merely on the level of technology.

The factor behind the reformation of social units and their trend towards perfection is man. The fact that after many years this trend of communal living is concentrated within a unit called 'family' raises the question. If no factor other than man plays a part in the completion and quality of history, how is it that all men have arrived at the same conclusion, i. e the family and the act of marriage?

If we agree with the idea or the rejection of any kind of effectiveness by un-material factors in the activities and qualitative growth of man proposed by the socialist ideology, yet again the same question lingers. It is here that we conclude another fact, i.e., the innate nature of marriage and the satisfaction of internal desires in a correct and secure manner. This argument is tantamount to the acceptance of man that he is affected by one who is unaffected, that is, God.

One God no other creator and deity exists other than Him. He is free of all imperfections. What could be said about the generality of marriage and family is that marriage is an act which originates from man's innate feelings and is not limited to one particular class of humans. The relative equality of the number of men and women all over the world is the relative equality of the number of men and women and is indicative of how sexual relations should be.

Truly this is one of the miracles of creation and a strong reason in proving the government of the Creator and the mindful disciplines of the whole being. The relative equality of the number of the two sexes reveals a plan and not a haphazard accident. All of the Islamic teachings in regards to the family and the rights of married couples are based on the equality of their relationship.

Engels' Theory Of How The Family Began

In this matter, Engels is influenced by Morgan. He sets a seal of approval on Morgan's theory and while condemning one partner families expresses his opinions on the history and the stages of family development. Here is a brief outline of his writings in order to become familiar with his ideas.

Up around 1860 a theory of family structure did not exist. In this field the historical sciences were influenced by the five books of Moses (a.s.), the most widely accepted theory being that there existed a period of mixed sexual relations. He adds that the first recorded facts pertaining to the subject of family was in 1861 in a book called *The Rights of Motherhood* by Backhofen.

In his book the author expressed his views about the stages of family development. He first viewed mediaeval man as having a mixed sexual relationship and believed that such mixing caused the separation of father and child.

Therefore, only the relationship between mother and child were known and the paternal parent remained unknown. In this way the family structure and its security demanded that the family circle have more background of the mother's family, which led to a matriarchal family.

Referring to the period of ignorance (or as he calls it the period of savagery), women and young girls

were often killed, which caused an imbalance between men and women causing marriage between one woman and several men. Thus, matriarchy has its most in the period of ignorance and savagery.

Of course, it should be pointed out that Engels has obtained all of his ideas from Backofen and Morgan and plays a major role in the spread of such thinking. Such opinions, despite their rejection by facts in history, unfortunately have followers in countries like England. Dividing history into three stages of savagery, barbarism and civilization, he explains them as such:

Man put behind him three periods:

- a. The Era of Savagery whose primary phase lasted one thousand years during which man lived with animals used the wild crops to prepare food and drink and ate the roots of the trees. The intermediate stage of this era was from the time man started catching fish and migrating to different parts of the earth and discovering hunting and its methods and the last stage of this era led to the discovery of the bow and arrow and other handmade instruments, hunting tools and also knitting.
- b. The Era of Barbarism whose primary stage began with the making of pottery, domestication of animals, farming and cultivating. Its intermediate phase consisted of the training of animals for domestic use, construction and the eating of meat became popular and the last stage began with the melting and purification of iron and the inception of the alphabet.
- c. The Era of Civilization begins with an industrial revolution and the development of industrialization, production and consumption. According to this book man is still in this stage.

The method of marriage in these three periods was: group, polygamy and monogamy respectively.

With the increase in man's awareness, he discovered the corruption of group marriages and so one partner marriages became common everywhere. As the relationships in these kinds of families were limited to a couple and their lawful children, peace and quiet followed and gradually became a social custom among all tribes and nations.

Of course, the one partner marriage is not something made by one particular group, but a method which embodies coherence and morality of humankind and is recommended by religion, especially Islam. In

such families, one man and one woman, after completing the stages of introduction and legalisation, start their common life and they share the responsibility of their children.

These children have no such relationship with any other family or individual. In this kind of family discipline where legal relations, sharing of interests and mutual respect are seen amongst its individuals, women are no longer a play thing in the hands of men and are no longer an inactive and ineffective element of the society. Each is endowed with respect and love. Through marriage this love and respect is further increased.

Engels considered the beginning of the period of one-partnership equal to the downfall or women's value, and the collapse of the rights of motherhood and matriarchy and a global defeat to the female sex.

With the emergence of one-partner families, the governing of the family was placed on the man's shoulders and the woman was dropped from her position, becoming a slave in the hands of her husband, a mere device for the production of children.

It was his desire to destroy the one-partnership marriage and change private ownership to public. In conclusion he said: "If the family is the product of a social structure and the progress and expansion of society is reflected by it, then family is a social and changing phenomenon. Until now it has changed four times, and it is now presently changing.

As a result of the way society is moving, the family will also continue its development and it could be accepted that the family deserves to reach a state of perfection, meaning that it should bear the equality of men and women." On how this equity among sexes could be reached he suggests, "The formation of special places to look after children so that children are given general public training and women are given the opportunity to take part in society. Through this act the proposed equity could be reached."

With these words, we again return to the Western discipline which, in the name of equality between men and women, evacuated the homes, dispersing the women and children and disrupting the structure and network of the family. Under the pretext of letting women take part in the turning of the wheels of society and economy they reached their aims, which is nothing but the spread of anarchy.

The world of socialism also mentions this hypothesis and throughout its historical discussion and division of history, puts men into three stages of savagery and barbarism and has managed to eventually inject their poisonous ideas into the minds of men and women and spread the disease of corruption.

A system that claims to support women and give them a position of respect, in real life by condemning one partnership marriages and dispersing them from their homes, has severely insulted women. Today the East is also suffering from the same problem. Economist magazine, printed in London, quoting from a Russian magazine called Semna states the following statistics:

"In one of Russia's towns called Perm, an European city whose population is barely one million, 70% of the young girls who become pregnant for the first time are not married. Nearly 27% of them choose abortion as a legal way to rid themselves of this undesirable pregnancy. Another 27.5%, after marriage, deliver the babies who belong to their previous boyfriends.

These women, in order to keep their dignity after they are forced into marriage, or in order to cover up their corrupt actions, give in to marriage. It is very obvious that such marriages never become very stable. It is similar to building a large fortress on top of a damp and old foundation. It may protect one for a while, but eventually it will collapse.

In any case, the intention of a person in doing something is important too. If a person undertakes a marriage contract because of a short-lived fantasy or for advantageous purposes, his or her marriage will not last very long.

The foundations of marriage have become so shaky in the West that according to statistics 40% of the children do not meet their fathers within their family environment and are denied a father for their entire lives. In other cases, they are separated from both parents and never see either one.

East Accompanies West

This is the state of the Russians and that of the Westerners and Europeans who constantly compete with each other in this race towards corruption. Man is to choose his way from either the East or West which ultimately ends up the same.

One can choose Islam's way, which respects the woman's personality and the family rights. Islam makes its utmost effort to protect the well-being and stability of the family and raise pious children. This is achieved through the contract or marriages, 95% of which are monogamous and the rest polygamous.

Now that the subject or family and the rights of men and women has been discussed within Eastern and Western disciplines, we shall investigate the matter through the eyes of Islam.

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Marriage And Family From A Religious Viewpoint

One of the most important moral principles, from the Islamic viewpoint, is marriage and the formation of

the family. The Prophet of Islam, (peace be with him and his progeny), considers the family as an unsurpassed structure in the community.

He himself sets a superb example in this regard, encouraging his followers to marry and abide with this golden tradition. Many words have been said in regards to the importance of marriage. Here we state a few. The role of marriage prepares a couple to move towards moral and mental perfection, the well-being of mind and body. This in turn results in the well-being of society.

As mentioned earlier, man by himself is incomplete; it is only through marriage (legally) that he is able to reach completion. An investigation of human instincts and the quality and conditions of man's capabilities shows us that every quality blossoms under certain specific conditions. For the speedy and healthy growth of a capability, certain conditions must exist.

For example, man's love of his fellow man, generosity and self-sacrifice are among these qualities whose potentials are given to everyone at birth. If a man lives apart from others in such a way that he has no contact with them from birth, we cannot expect these qualities to develop. But as soon as he is given a chance to grow within a community, through daily contact with his fellow man, these qualities will develop naturally.

If the conditions for achieving knowledge and education are provided for a child, we might expect him to become a scientist or philosopher. In the absence of such conditions, the possibility of achieving such aims is non-existent. The institution of the family and the act of marriage are of those conditions and provisions that prepare the means for growth and birth of a great many human capabilities.

For example, in Islam when a man and woman become acquainted through marriage and form a small and pure segment of the community called the family, they undergo some new developments and are faced with some religious duties that are new to them.

The improving of relations, strengthening the sense of affection, increasing the sense of responsibility and management, patience, placidity, spiritual health, reproduction, sacrifice, etc. are all among the characteristics of a successful marriage.

Of course, these qualities take shape only upon reaching ultimate spiritual growth which will have an effective role in its stability and strength. These qualities come to light only if marriage is done in compliance with religious law and abides by God's commandments.

On this basis, the impeccable Imams, peace be with them, the religious leaders and most important, the Holy Qur'an, recommends marriage. The Holy Qur'an's invitation in this regard includes:

"Marry those among you who are single, or the virtuous ones among your slaves, male or female: If they are in poverty, God will give them means out of His grace; for God encompasseth all, and He knoweth all things." (24:32).

In this verse, in addition to a direct emphasis on marriage as essential for individuals, society and religion, the abandonment of marriage due to poverty and inability is refuted. It promises goodness and blessings in life. In another verse, marriage and partners are known to be the cause for ease and tranquillity. Naturally not abiding with this Qur'anic recommendation will lead to discomfort and disturbance of the body and spirit.

“And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): Verily in that are signs for those who reflect” (30:21).

In regards to its importance, the Holy Prophet of Islam, peace be with him and his progeny, has said,

“Whoever is acting on the tradition of Muhammad and is the lover of his path, must act in accordance with his traditions, one of which is marriage.”

It is certain that the prophets' fitra (nature) is the same divine nature on which all men have been created, so when marriage is a genuine need felt by the prophets, definitely, it is an essential for others.

In another sermon by the Holy Messenger peace be with him and his progeny, in regards to the effects of marriage and family on the quality of men's worship, he has stated,

“Whoever acts on a correct marriage has achieved half of his religion and the other half should be gained through divine piety.”

Thus, marriage is an effective factor in the quantitative and qualitative degree of worship and the well-being of morality and belief.

Why Marriage? Why Form A Family?

Until now it has been proven that marriage is one of the basic needs of man. What need looking into now, is the quality of marriage and the makeup of the couple's relations and their social life after marriage. We have reviewed some of the tension that exists in families in Western and Eastern societies.

Islam places great importance on the formation of this small unit. It insists that the well-being of the family unit assures the welfare of the society. This is the reason for its repeated encouragement for the formation of the family and the continuation of a lasting and happy life shared by the couple and their children.

The couple, after marriage, lay the foundations for a new structure, an institution superior to other institutions and structures. A holy community that is the place for the correct training of today's children, who become the great men of the future, certainly the healthier this system, which is influenced by the

culture of the parents and somewhat from the society, the higher the quality the children's growth shall be.

One of the so-called important gifts of the West to its people and colonies was the injection of the idea of the equality of men and women's rights and the participation of women in factories and industrial centres. In fact, as mentioned, they consider this to be of benefit to them and something to be proud of.

Apparently, the image that Europe has of Islam and its treatment of women is an ignorant one. The West constantly criticises Islam under the pretext that it prevents women's participation in socio-economic activities. Secondly, the result of the Western way of thinking about women has offered them nothing other than a false personality to women and the deception of men.

The West has been successful in using women to promote commercial products, increasing the income of the comfort-loving capitalists. How could they dare to introduce themselves as supporters of women's rights? Is the employment of women to pose behind shop displays and for advertising commercial goods like clothes, cars and candies helping the cause of women or harming it?

Does the employment of women in industrialised centres and full-time jobs, which weakens the nerves, saps the physical strength and exhausts morality, help women's personal status or lower it to a mere industrial tool? Does the separation of women from their families, engaging them in workshops and harmful hobbies and distractions lead to the health of the family or its destruction?

Is the increase and development of boarding schools, nurseries, etc., which indicate children's separation from the warm and loving environment of home, helping or improving family morality or disintegrating the basic potential elements of the society and driving them to the valley of death and moral demise?

Islamic Views Concerning Women's Work

Islam, with its fair and thorough ideology, paints a constructive picture of women. It refers to them as the builders and trainers of man and humanity. Islam values women greatly, but the basis of its value system is a far cry from that of the West or the East.

If women of the West today, due to cultural alienation, are suffering from moral and intellectual disturbances and are grieving for their dispersed families, Islam, with emphasis on the formation of the family and establishing healthy relations among people and the family in a higher level in society, will guide the caravan of humanity towards peace of mind.

The most important occupation of women is to train healthy children in compliance with scientific and religious teachings. This does not prevent her from undertaking social occupations outside the home.

Those who believe that religion is against women working should be informed that Islam does not set

any limits on the type of occupation chosen by a woman. In Islam, women are not responsible for the family income; they even may request payment for work done in the home or refuse to work if not paid.

Investigating the Holy Qur'anic verses reveals that women and men are both spoken to simultaneously by God and women are held as much responsible as men for abiding with religious laws.

Of course, there are a few commandments specifically for men and some specifically for women. This is due to the nature and inner characteristics of women and men. In the majority of verses where fear and hope, punishment and reward is promised, both sexes are spoken to equally.

This is one of the reasons for the evaluation of the religion of women, making her responsible too. It is not only men that God has sent His commandments for, but also women should feel obliged to act according to these commandments and should be able to answer for all their actions and shortcomings.

If Islam inter-relates the qualitative growth of the children with the qualitative growth and moral status of the family and the parents, and if it warns parents first and foremost, it is because children are trained by their parents and therefore are influenced by them. Having clarified and emphasised the important role that a woman should play in child training, it must also be clearly stated that Islam does not exclude women from communal work.

While leaving her free in the social scene, it reminds her to obey the related laws and regulations in order to prevent her children from any harm. Although Islam has determined the family breadwinner to be the man, it still looks upon the working of women positively.

There are no doubts or questions about women working but what religion involves itself with is the type and method of work she becomes involved in. Some occupations are strictly for women.

Women and men each, because of their physical strength and mental qualities, are qualified to do a particular work, and each desires an occupation suitable to their own conditions. A woman who has a pure and affectionate heart does not deserve to wear out these feelings by the drudgery of factory workshops.

These pure feelings should be spent in the way of warming up the family atmosphere and reassuring the whole family that although they face difficulties and hardships in their outside life, they will always have a shoulder to cry on. There is nothing more enjoyable and refreshing for a man and his children than to spend their time together within the family environment.

The existence of factors such as trust, assurance, affection, kindness and faithfulness between the couple and the family are among the factors which increase the rate of comfort in individuals and prepare the background for a healthy life. If families enjoy a healthy relationship; the society which is made up of these families will naturally be healthy.

"And in no wise covet those things in which God hath bestowed His gifts more freely on some of

you than on others; to men is allotted what they earn, and to women what they earn; but ask God of His bounty. For God hath full knowledge of all things.” (4:32).

With the analysis of Qur'anic verses and narrations it could be concluded that women have the right to ownership and work as men do. This right is among the privileges that women have achieved through religion.

According to religion, everyone has the right to work and earn profits. Basically, Islam advises against the wastage of time and advises to divide our time into hours of work, worship and rest.

If a woman's job does not conflict with the well-being of her children and the family and does not drive them to corruption nor damage their health, they are allowed to work outside in accordance with their physical strength and available time.

Of course, there are three occupations which Islam has forbidden for women:

- 1) judge;
- 2) frontline combatant of Jihad (Holy War);
- 3) jurisprudence.

Why?

Before anything else it must be said that judgement is a religious duty, not a job as it is known. Whoever is duty bound to judge has the right to do so. Women have been prevented from this. Maybe the reason for this could be found in the tender-heartedness, sympathy and affection of women. Sometimes her emotional internal feelings may interfere and prevent her from doing what is religiously right.

Of course, women can be witnesses to a judgement and their testimony will be accepted, and two women as witnesses are equal to the witnessing of one man. All in all, a woman's nature itself prevents her from this role.

Frontline Jihad is a jihad that Muslims do according to the order of the Imams ('a), and the just leaders of the time, its aim being to defend, guard and protect the fundamentals of the religion. This is a struggle against the infidels and idol-worshippers who seek to confine, distort and oppress the religion of Islam.

In the minor jihad, only men are allowed to participate in the battlefields. In defensive wars, known as defensive or major jihad, i.e., the active participation of Muslims against the attacks of the infidels, polytheists and atheists upon Islamic governments, both men and women have the right to participate in the defence.

Any time an enemy invades their country, women too are needed to defend by all means in their power and in this Jihad, there is no need for the permission of the leader of the society as it is only common

sense to defend one's honour, dignity and religion and prevent the enemy from ruling. Even for the salvation of one's religion and own belief, one should fight until the last drop of blood is shed.

Among other matters that women are not responsible for is religious jurisprudence. On this basis the responsibility to be a religious leader or jurisprudent or central leadership is lifted from her shoulders.

Therefore, according to Islam, women can have a healthy participation in all occupations other than the ones discussed which is in fact a removal of some very heavy responsibilities and not merely the forbiddance of this type of work.

Islam, having upheld human nobility, offers a kind of work to women that suit them both mentally and physically; a work that does not harm her due to its severity or other conditions. Therefore, work is provided for all, but keeping within Islamic principles.

Europe, as we have seen, acts contrary to this. The working of women in factories and offices as secretaries, operators, cleaners, in advertising and labouring in restaurants, etc., not only has not motivated the Western world towards working harder, but it has merely increased the rate of corruption there.

Islamic Working Conditions For Women

As mentioned, women have as much right as men to play an active role in the economic activities of their society. Here are some main factors concerning jobs for women:

- 1) **Society's Welfare.** Precautions should be taken by women as to what consequences a particular job would have for the society. Would it have negative or positive effects? Would it be a healthy improvement to society or will it bring about its moral demise?
- 2) **Family Welfare.** As the family is considered to be the foundation of social life, it must always remain healthy and prosperous. If the work of a woman or a mother damages the health and stability of the family and weakens the loving relations among its members, then the woman should not pre-occupy herself with that work.
- 3) **Individual Welfare.** The amount of work should be considered according to how much is advisable for her. Does it promote her status and lead to her mental growth? Would her working relations create a gap in her relations with other family members? Does the work suit her circumstances or not?
- 4) **Possibilities and Power.** In offering jobs to others, care must be taken as to who is more suitable for a particular job. Who will provide a higher output and who has a higher possibility? Who will have the ability to do this work?

Generally, if the above points are kept in mind, almost any job could be given to a woman. These points

are not an obstacle for her work but an aid and a benefit to society. If the meaning of equality is the division of responsibilities and women are expected to do heavy jobs like men that is not equality. A woman's position is much higher, undertaking unrealistic jobs results in the destruction of the innate delicate nature of women.

It is essential to remember that the participation of women in political activities is very important. After all, women constitute nearly half of every country's population and can change the destiny of a society for the better or worse depending on the extent of their political awareness and participation.

An example of this is seen in the heat of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. With their babies in their arms, and young children by their sides, women protested against the tyrannical regime and were shot by the Shah's police. Several mothers and their children were martyred during these incidents. Today, women are considered to be the cornerstone of this revolution, helping its growth in every way possible.

The bravery of Muslim women is not limited to our time. The pages of history contain scenes of heroic Muslim women who possessed exalted personalities. Their active participation in the religious-political movements of their time is a lesson to women all over the world urging them to regain their lost identity. One example from the early history of Islam is Nusaibah (Nasibah) who lived in the city of Medina.

She was an Ansar, and was known as Nusaibah (Nasibah) Jarahe. She was married and had two sons named Amareh and Abdollah. Her name first appears in the history of Aghabeh Bei'at. Here new converts to Islam shook the Messenger's, peace be with him and his progeny, hand in an oath of allegiance. During this ceremony sixty men and two women from Ansar converted to Islam.

The Prophet of Islam, peace be with him and his progeny, who highly respected women, placed his hand in a dish of water and passed it to the women who in turn did the same. The government of the Prophet (S) was aided by these people.

Nusaibah (Nasibah)'s husband was martyred in the Battle of Badr. One of her sons was also martyred at this time. This family, from the beginning of Islam in Medina, fought alongside the Prophet (S) against the infidels.

History tells us that Nusaibah (Nasibah) took part in battles alongside Prophet Muhammad, (S), as a surgeon. She participated in many battles, carrying a waterskin upon her shoulders, treating the sick and injured in the burning deserts of Arabia.

Nusaibah (Nasibah), accompanied by her son, Amareh, participated in the Battle of Uhud. When the Muslims suffered a setback, she carried her waterskin and gave water to the thirsty and aided the injured using her primitive surgical supplies.

It is narrated from this great lady that, "Amidst the fight I saw my son running away. Stopping him I said, 'My child why are you running away? Who are you escaping from? From God or His Messenger?' "

She then sent her son back, while she herself watched from a distance. It was then that she suddenly noticed the Prophet being surrounded by the enemy. In a quick witted move, she and her son rushed to the Messenger and joined in the fight with the enemy. At this time one of the infidels martyred her son. It was here that Nusaibah (Nasibah); the mother grabbed her son's sword and with the help of Divine Power, killed his assailant. The dear Messenger, (S), said to her, "*Well done. May God's blessings be upon you Nusaibah (Nasibah).*"

This heroic woman received thirteen wounds during this battle, one of which was a sword wound on her neck. She lost a hand during the Yamamah War. It has been narrated that this dear self-sacrificing lady of Islam will return with the last Imam, God speed his appearance, as a surgeon.

By the story of Nusaibah (Nasibah) we can have no doubt that women, although they cannot take part in the Lesser Jihad, can play a major role behind the frontlines. Nusaibah (Nasibah) and her family set a great example for the women and families of our era.

A woman who gave service to her religion and remained faithful to the Prophet peace be with him and his progeny, until her death. Those women who actively participate in all religious-political factions take their lessons from this great lady and from the many other sacrificing ladies of Islam like Hadrats Fatimah and Zainab, peace be with them.

The Islamic country of Iran today is full of such heroic women who, wearing hijab and carrying their children, raise their clenched fists and shout, "Death to Imperialism and Oppression!"

How great is the number of those mothers who, by raising pious children and sending them to the battlefields of truth against falsehood, prove their generosity. May the greetings of God and his angels be upon these mothers and their martyred sons. May they enjoy the reward of heaven.

Choosing A Marriage Partner

After emphasising marriage and the formation of the family, Islam places great emphasis on the choosing of the correct partner. The choosing of a husband or wife is itself more important than accepting marriage. Among the prosperities of a couple is their moral and mental agreement.

It is under the shadow of such an agreement that continued understanding and unified thinking throughout life is observed. Shared religious viewpoints and compatibility in the degree of self-purification and knowledge is also important.

As the family is the first discipline within the framework of which the foundations for training children is laid, a great many commandments have been mentioned in regard to the quality of the couple's personalities. Thus, both men and women should take utmost care in choosing the right partner, a partner qualified with the conditions that Islam requires of him or her.

A man must be sure that the woman he chooses to marry has attained sufficient Islamic morals, for she will bear the responsibility of rearing his children. He should be aware that his wife's morality will affect the quality and growth of these children.

In choosing the right partner, one should first question each other pertaining to beliefs and determine the degree of self-purification and personal characteristics as well as physical characteristics, for all of these have a direct effect on their offspring.

The majority of parents who have a quiet moral countenance transmit this characteristic to their children. Bad and undisciplined mannerisms, along with slothfulness in parents, also directly affect their children.

It should be mentioned here that the effect and transmission of morals from parents to child is not only for the period after birth but begins in the prenatal stage when the child is still in its mother's womb. The quality of obedience and compassion in a woman towards a man is among the factors that help men in the management of the family.

Monogamy – It rarely happens that those who have a polygamous relationship are able to act fairly to more than one family. Therefore, Islam recommends monogamy. This has an evident effect on the well-being of the family structure and society in turn. Stating the words that people cannot divide their love equally among their wives, Islam refutes polygamy saying:

“And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you may wish (it), he not disinclined (from one) altogether so that you leave her as it were in suspense; and if you effect a reconciliation and guard (against evil), then surely Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”
(4: 129).

This verse explains the command of fairness between wives that God has mentioned in the Qur'an. ***“If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly ...*** 'Equity and justice are somewhere between excess and emptiness.

The distinction of this point is very difficult particularly in regards to love and emotional feelings towards women. As emotions cannot always be controlled, God states in this verse that fairness among wives, in the true meaning of the word, is something that however much one strives to achieve total fairness it is forever out of reach.

The only solution available to man is a complete balance of love so that all involved will feel the warmth of being loved and if a decree of "...say not to them a word of contempt..." refers particularly to old age it is because

Thus, it is essential for men who attempt polygamous relationships, to act with practical fairness and equity amongst their wives. The easiest way to be fair in marriage is to practise monogamy. The majority of Islamic marriages are based on this fact. Polygamy is Islam's way of fighting corruption in society.

On the contrary, the West outwardly opposes all polygamy but has undermined monogamy and has subjected women to unfair treatment by men who leave their wives and seek the temporary pleasures of short-lived relationships. This type of interrelationship has no restriction and has gotten completely out of hand in most Western countries.

The Rights Of Family Members

With the formation of a family, new rights are placed upon the couple. The more loving the relations between husband and wife who lay the foundation of the family, the more stable their family structure.

All parental behaviour is conveyed to the children. Therefore, Islam has placed great importance on the well-being of the couple's relationship and manner towards each other and with their children and also the children's interrelationship with their parents.

The Relation Between Husband And Wife

The most important mutual effect of any couple is giving comfort to each other. The wife is a comfort to her husband and the husband a comfort to his wife. The Holy Qur'an says in this regard:

"And one of His Signs is that He created for you mates from among yourselves that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He put between you love and compassion; most surely there are signs for those who reflect." (30:21).

So, every couple in their shared life must be kind and loving towards each other and fulfil each other's needs with compassion and kindness.

Consideration and loving guidance in the relationship of the couple, according to Islamic teachings, are two main elements of a happy family. In other words, every couple should wish the best for each other and live compatible with each other for the rest of their lives in order to overcome problems and difficulties and learn from each other.

It is essential for both parties to have respect for the other's wishes. A firm and stable relationship flourishes when couples encourage one another to do good deeds and tactfully counsel one another against that which is forbidden.

Sharing life's goodness is one of God's blessings bestowed on man; a husband and wife must treat each other with respect at all times and protect that trust and respect when one of them is absent.

"...therefore, the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what God would have them guard." (4:34).

Mercy And Forgiveness

Overlooking each other's errors and remission of the opposite party's mistakes are amongst Islamic teachings to families.

It seems very natural for two human individuals to disagree with each other on some matters. When one party acts without consulting the other conflict may arise. It is advisable for both husband and wife to overlook the other's errors and be congenial, avoiding conflict and argument.

Usually after some time passes, the worries resulting from this conflict either pass or the guilty one becomes ashamed. The well-being of the family atmosphere which is a useful and essential element for the qualitative growth of the children in the family should be carefully controlled.

A couple which acts on the belief that whoever ignores and forgives the other's errors will increase his or her heavenly reward and position can play an effective role in creating a healthy family discipline and strengthen the relations between its members. The Holy Qur'an, on this matter, says

“...and if you pardon and forgive, verily God is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful. (64: 14).”

Whenever a spouse, particularly the husband, is quick to forgive, generous and merciful and compromising, God would also be merciful and generous towards him and would overlook his past errors.

Another verse insists upon improving the relations with each other and making efforts for the betterment of the couple's actions saying,

“...And practise self-restraint, God is well acquainted with all that you do.” (4: 128).”

Peace and piety in daily life is a factor in strengthening the family and marriage ties. The greater the presence of these factors the more successful and happier the family will be.

“...If ye come to a friendly understanding and practice self-restraint, God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (4: 129).”

If the couple, at the break out of a conflict, be it ideological or a family dispute, whoever forgives first will be blessed by Him and will enjoy a bright future with God's forgiveness.

Fairness In Life

One of the fundamental and basic Islamic teachings is that all matters are based upon justice and fairness. On this basis, man, who has a pure Fitra also loves justice.

If in speaking, eating, drinking, walking, buying or selling, family matters and even matters concerning

worship and knowledge, a balanced foundation exists such that everything one does is done in proportion, neither excessively nor too little, one's life will be a well-balanced and healthy one under this condition.

“God commands justice, the doing of good and liberality to kith and kin..” (16:90).

In the above verse the Holy Qur'an commands married couples to be just, benevolent and good to each other and also to their relatives, and encourages them to be generous and giving. Among the important responsibilities of a man towards his wife is providing for her daily needs. This is a religious duty which a man cannot deny.

Woman, because of her important responsibilities in the family such as giving birth, training and caring for her children and other work that she does due to her kindness and generosity such as cooking, cleaning etc, deserves extra honour and glorification. Women have no responsibility to earn the family's living. She is not even asked to provide for her own personal needs.

Her value and status are higher than being required to earn money in addition to what she contributes to the family circle out of love. It is the husband's duty to provide for the whole family to the best of his means. Because of accepting the sole responsibility of earning a livelihood and the difficulties that accompany such work man naturally has a greater responsibility in the family.

As he is the head of the family, so the right of guardianship is with him and because of his depth and practical insight in matters and endurance and patience in tolerating life's difficulties, he has the responsibility of running the family. As the Holy Qur'an says:

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because God has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore, the righteous women and devoutly obedient guard in (their husbands') absence what God would have them guard.” (4:34).

Deceased Spouse

The benevolence of a husband towards his wife and vice versa does not end with their death. Even after death, goodness will flourish in his or her family and the living party, by praying for his or her deceased partner and doing good deeds, which can make their spirit rest in peace. In the case of both of them dying, their children are able to increase the reward of their parents by doing good deeds in their names or for their sake.

The Holy Qur'an speaks of the necessity of determining a will for the wife and children after the husband's death. This is partly due to the fact that the wife is forbidden to remarry until the iddah (waiting period) of four months and ten days is finished. Even during this period a wife must be provided for by her deceased husband from the remainder of his wealth.

Iddah is a divine law, a period of time in which the wife after separation from her husband may not remarry. Depending on the kind of separation, the length of this period varies; each period has specific commandments concerning it.

Generally, after a separation, every woman must keep an iddah during which she may not marry anyone. One reason for keeping this period is in case of a pregnancy, the father would be distinguished, thus clarifying inheritance and legal responsibilities.

For example, after a divorce, the woman should keep a 90-day Iddah. If a pregnancy is recognised during this period, it belongs to the ex-husband. In such circumstances, if the woman had ignored this religious law and married someone else immediately after her separation, the baby might mistakenly be recognised as being related to her present husband. This act is totally forbidden.

This matter reveals the intricacies of Islamic law which distinguishes the true relations and belongings of every individual. This matter has been totally ignored by both Western and Eastern schools of thought. This itself is one main reason for the spread of anarchism in those countries.

I. Iddah for Divorce. If, after the contract of marriage and before intercourse, divorce occurs, a woman is not obliged to keep iddah and naturally this law does not apply.

In the case of a divorce occurs after intercourse, the woman must observe Iddah and act according to the rules and regulations of this period. The duration of Iddah for divorce is three months.

During this period of Iddah, the couple, upon reconciliation, may reunite, in which case the divorce is considered to be cancelled. On the other hand, the divorce is irrevocable if the period of iddah is completed and no reconciliation occurs.

II. Iddah of Death. If a husband dies, his wife should hold an Iddah of four months and 10 days which is required of her according to the laws of religion. After the end of his period, she may remarry.¹

The Relations Between Children And Their Parents

Among the other important responsibilities to be shouldered by the members of a family is the good relation of children with their parents, i. e., the rights of the parents in regards to their children. The father, from an Islamic viewpoint, has a great number of duties towards his children and the society.

In the words of His messengers, particularly Prophet Mohammad, peace be with him and his progeny,

God has repeatedly stressed the importance and the high value of respecting parents. In fact, children are commanded to respect their parents at all times.

In many places in the Holy Qur'an, after inviting Muslims to worship God, they are recommended to do good deeds towards their parents. Where Islam rejects polytheism and recommends worshipping the One and Only God, it immediately insists on respect towards parents.

"And serve Allah and do not associate anything with Him, and be good to the parents and to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the neighbour of (your) kin and the neighbours who are strangers and the companion in a journey and the wayfarer and those whom your right hands possess. Surely Allah does not love him who is proud, boastful." (4:36).

He who wishes to enter Paradise must please his father and mother. The teachings of Islam specify its enthusiasm to strengthen family ties and increase the warmth of its atmosphere. In this regard, it has been said:

"And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) 'Ugh', nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word" (17:23).

"And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion and say: 'O my Lord! Have compassion on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little.' (17:24).

The problem of recommending sincerity in worship is the greatest of religious decrees and the most obligatory: just as attributing a partner to Allah is the greatest of sins. All sins originate from Shirk (polytheism). If man did not worship any other than God, he would not place himself in the claws of Satan and would not devote himself to desires of the self.

He would never commit sin and would not violate God's orders in doing what is recommended and abstaining from what is prohibited. The commitment of every sin, stems from obedience to other than God and obedience to others is a kind of worship. As He has said:

"Did I not enjoin on you, O ye children of Adam, that ye should not worship Satan; for that he was to you an enemy avowed?" (36:60).

Even an infidel who denies the Creator and Maker of this world is also a polytheist because, despite the intuition of the favourable side of his soul which acknowledges a Creator, he believes that the management of nature is run by nature itself.

Next to Tawheed, belief in the oneness and worship of Him, respect to one's parents is of utmost importance. Affection between a father and mother towards their children is of great social value, and the continuity and richness of human societies depends on it.

Therefore, according to the traditions and the ruling of human nature, man must respect his parents. If this decree is not practised by the society and children treat their parents as strangers, then surely love and affection will disappear and the basis of social life will be shaken and fall apart.

The word Kibre used in Chapter 17, Verse 23 of the Holy Qur'an, "*...if either or both of them reach old age..*" (17:23), refers to the aged, the word Ugh implies reluctance and hatred and the word 'nahara', chide means to reproach, repulse or break the heart of someone by shouting or swearing at them.

If the decree of '...say not to them a word of contempt...' refers particularly to old age it is because during that period, parents undergo the most difficult stage of their lives and feel a greater need for the help of their children as they are unable to take care of themselves.

Once it was the other way around, parents took care and nursed their helpless children with love and compassion when they were unable to provide for themselves. It therefore only stands to reason that in turn when their parents grow old and feeble, the children should care for them lovingly.

Lowering The Wings Of Humility

"...lower to them the wings of humility and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy mercy even as they cherished me in childhood" (17:24).

The expression 'lowering the wings' refers to an exaggerated case of verbal and practical humility. The child is obliged to be humble towards his parents in talking and acting.

This verse implies that in association and speaking to one's father and mother, one should speak without insolence so that the parents would feel the humility, modesty and love of their children towards them. The prayer of a child for his parents consoles the spirit of the parents after death and is affected by the prayers during their lifetime. This is representative of the high values Islam offers to each and every family.

Honour Thy Mother

Islam's recommendations regarding respecting parents has a special reference to mothers. This stems from the fact that in addition to verses stressing respect for parents, there are others specifically mentioning mothers and their high status. This is evidence of Islam's opinion that the highest role for a woman is to be a good mother.

A mother, because of the pain and hardships she bears during delivery, and the care she gives during infancy and childhood, deserves to be respected and thanked by the children she bears. Although they may not remember what she has done for them, they are duty bound to be grateful to her throughout their lives.

When a child, as a result of the specialised care which parents provide, particularly the mother, grows up leaving his or her childhood behind and steps into adolescence, it is right for him to thank the Almighty God for being blessed with living parents and ask remission from God and a bright future for them.

"We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents: In pain did his mother bear him and in pain did she give him birth. The carrying of the (child) to his weaning is (a period of) thirty months. At length, when he reaches the age of full strength and attains forty years, he says. 'O my Lord! Grant me that I may be grateful for Thy favour which Thou hast bestowed upon me and on my parents, and that I may do good which pleases Thee and do good to me in respect of my offspring; and be gracious to me. Surely, I turn to Thee, and surely I am of those who submit. "
(46: 15).

"And We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning: (hear the command), 'Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is the eventual coming." (31: 14).

According to the Qu'ān, dutiful children are loved and granted, by Allah, a high position because they act according to these laws. God will look upon them with kindness and mercy, overlooking their mistakes. It is now clear that one of the ways to attain God's satisfaction is to do good deeds for our parents. Truly competent children have elevated positions; to them has the promise of heaven been given.

"Such are they from whom We shall accept the best of their deeds and pass by their ill deeds: (they shall be) among the Companions of the Garden: a promise of truth, which was made to them (in this life). "
(46: 16).

Parents' Relationship With Their Children

Parental affection and empathy towards their children is special. Even when a child turns his back on his parents or insults them, they patiently pray for his remission and guidance from God and hope he realises his mistakes. Parents teach their children right from wrong. This is a remarkable relationship that can be found between no other living thing, only within the family circle.

In our daily lives many times we are met with confrontations that may lead to aggressive behaviour. Within a family, particularly one with a religious background, even if the parents become subject to some ignorant or angry remarks or actions from their children, they do not relinquish their affectionate attitude towards them and gently try to guide them and pray for their success in life.

"But (there is one) who says to his parents, 'Fie on you! Do ye hold out the promise to me that I shall be raised up, even though generations have passed before me (without raising again)?' and they two seek God's aid, (and rebuke the son): 'Woe to thee! Have Faith! For the promise of God

'is true.' But he says, 'This is nothing but tales of the ancients'." (46: 17).

Vasia, to enjoin, command, in these verses, is a recommendation accompanied by admonition and charity. Thus, God's recommendation to parents is to teach their children to be respectful and charitable towards them. This is a general religious teaching ordered by God to the followers of all religions. It is for this reason that God has said,

"And We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents ... " (46: 15).

Not only Muslims, but all individuals in society are duty bound to be good to their parents. Of course, respect for the elderly, be they strangers or relatives, is of the teachings of religion. This is rarely given any value in other schools of thought.

Following this recommendation, the verse points to the hardships of a mother during pregnancy, delivery and care for the growing infant in order to arouse feelings of affection and mercy from the child.

This in itself is the best criterion in the creation and continuation of benevolence and charity among them. In fact, children, after the death of their parents, carry on the memories of them and through prayers and worship not only asks forgiveness and remission for themselves, but also for their parents.

Just as children are obliged to fulfil some duties in relation to their parents, parents are compelled to perform some duties towards their children. Of course, moderation in all things is recommended in Islam, and in this respect, there are limits to every law.[2](#)

Children, no matter what age, should always be subject to affection and attention from their parents. Providing health care, food and clothing for their children until they reach an independent age is one of the essential responsibilities of every parent. Ever after independence, these responsibilities are not terminated, but take a different form.

Providing for their satisfaction and the training of children under any circumstances until the ages of 7 and 14 is recommended by Islam. On this basis, parents are not allowed to abandon their children. This is a religious duty that they are compelled to perform.

If parents and children determine to abide by religious laws and regulations, certainly the health and welfare of the family is guaranteed. As other schools of thought are man-made, their ideas about family lack consistency and therefore are less likely to be successful in real life.

Choosing a desirable name for the child, care in his training and providing the means for his growth and protection can never be underestimated. In addition to practising religious laws and in performing family matters, the factor of affection and kindness that exists among parents and children is a great help in strengthening their relationship.

If Islam orders a couple to forget and forgive and be charitable towards one another, if it forbids children

to be disrespectful towards their parents, it also orders the parents in turn to take responsibility in regards to their children's needs.

Attention to every detail in child training is considered very important. Parents are committed to some duties even before the birth of the child and during pregnancy which is evident by the importance and value that religion places on children.

Family Interrelations

Within the family circle, freedom in behaviour should clearly be felt. As soon as we come out of the family environment some other duties are expected. These duties become more intricate when it comes to women.

Hijab (modest dress) is one of the limits that, in its general form, is particular to both men and women and in its particular form is special for women who are compelled to keep within these limitations.

We know very well that the majority of social corruption that has spread to the family environment has originated from immodest dress. The problems in the West and Europe with corruption in the society have their origins in immodesty.

So, Islam, before contamination of the family and society, particularly the young, through setting moral laws regarding hijab, is out to prevent the formation and growth of such corruption. The basic meaning of hijab is the covering of the body to prevent the spread of negative and forbidden relationships.

Its true meaning and limitations can be investigated by studying the verses of the Holy Qur'an on this subject. Hijab is not only limited to covering the parts of the body which attracts, but all parts of the body are affected by hijab. The eyes, lips, hands, body, voice, all should have a particular form of hijab which is utilised outside of the family environment.

"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them. And God is well acquainted with all that they do." (24:30).

It is made absolutely clear here that men should not look upon women who are forbidden to them and women should not look upon men.

"And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw the veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, the husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden

ornaments. And O ye Believers! Turn ye all together towards God, that ye may attain bliss.” (24:31).

Controlling one's gaze to keep from looking at that which is forbidden has been commanded to both men and women. In this verse, the limits of hijab are extended and include the covering of the head and neck and natural or artificial ornaments. On this basis, women must not expose themselves to the view of others.

Of course, this restriction is lifted in the presence of the relatives mentioned in the above verse. Therefore, hijab is particular to the environment outside the family. Wearing an ornament itself, like earrings, bracelets, etc., is not forbidden, therefore what is forbidden is the display of these ornaments.

Of course, even those parts of the body which do not need to be covered must not display ornaments such as attractive cosmetics, earrings, bracelets, etc. When attention is attracted by the use of such ornaments it is a violation of modest dress (hijab).

Therefore, as long as the face, hands and feet of a woman do not provoke the spread of corruption and lust, they need not be covered. The other conditions of hijab consist of wearing a maqne', a type of hair covering which extends down to the shoulders and over the breasts. This style is derived from the verse

“They should draw their veils over their bosoms” (24:31).

On this basis, women are not allowed to expose their ornaments to unbelieving women (infidels, polytheists, etc.). Islam, with a benevolent view towards women, encourages them to keep hijab and says:

“O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad); that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (33:59).

The meaning of covering in this verse refers to wearing a cloth which covers the body or a maqne' that is long and covers the breasts and neck.

We know well that the starting point of sexual corruption is visual stimulation which, in Europe, is the main reason for the carelessness of individuals in the type of clothing they wear. Islam, with the insistence on covering the body from the view of unlawful gaze, proves that hijab is a means for protecting the personality and value of women such that they are protected from being hurt by pleasure-seeking men.

During the pre-Islamic era, women without hijab were subject to the unlawful gazes of strangers. Islam rescued women from this impudence and paved the way for the growth of her personality and independence, such that no one dares to insult women in an Islamic society. Today the women's carelessness in dressing and rejection of hijab originates mainly from the spread of corruption.

Those who consider hijab an obstacle in the way of the growth and independence of women and refer to it as a sign of stagnation and underdevelopment must consider their beliefs and determine right from wrong by investigating more deeply into this subject. They should distinguish progress from stagnation and ultimate knowledge from ignorance.

The active participation of the Iranian Muslim women who wear hijab in the days of the formation and victory and continuation of the Islamic Revolution and their martyrdom in the way of defending this revolution is evidence to the greatness of their personalities.

In the days of braving the bullets of the enemies of Islam, these Muslim women painted the streets of Tehran red with their pure blood, and with the motto, "Freedom, Independence, Islamic Republic", faced their martyrdom. The Westernised women, who did not wear hijab, escaped to the darkness of their houses and preoccupied themselves with life's pleasures, while criticising those heroic women.

Today these same women play into the hands of Western culture. Every hour and every day they are painted into a different colour dictated by the fashion makers, like senseless dolls. These are the very people that, due to extreme carelessness, have unstable families and have distanced themselves from any positive movement.

Therefore Islam, from its early days, has paid particular attention to family welfare and its active role in constructive training in moral, social and cultural movements. With the introduction of hijab, particularly for women and generally for men, Islam has protected their dignity from being endangered by satanic insinuations.

Equal Rights Within The Family Circle

What has been achieved by investigation concerning family discipline and the rights of women and men in the capitalist systems is the equality of women and men in participation in economic affairs, motivated by the expansion of economic profits and products, indirect satisfaction of individuals, the underdevelopment of women from their genuine growth, the un-awakened talents of women, consumerization of women and most importantly, deviating the young and distancing them from the political scene, resulting in their oppression.

The trick the West has played upon the uninformed is to show them the outer dimension of equality, an irrelevant equality. They are perhaps unaware that the equality of men and women cannot be mentioned only in economic terms, equality has other dimensions as well.

The way the West has dealt with this subject has been shortsighted and weak. They still do not know the true nature of men and women, yet they claim to possess the key to their prosperity.

Husbands And Wives Complement Each Other

The highest status that a woman can achieve is her role in complementing and relieving man's moral and mental stress and satisfying his sexual desires. In return man plays the same role and this is an act relating to their creation, planned and managed by God.

A woman without a man and a man without a woman is an incomplete entity. Each is in need of the other. This void in both sexes is removed by the legal marriage and religious union of the two. The fact that the existence of a woman brings comfort and tranquillity to a man and that a man does the same for a woman is the basis of Islamic thinking about marriage and the formation of a family.

Islam does not look upon a woman as a useless creature. It does not consider her as a means to satisfy public sexual tendencies, but it values her personality and considers her as the source of the appearance and blossoming of talents in her spouse and half of the strength of man's personality depends on her and as stated before, the Holy Qur'an says,

“And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colour: Verily in that are Signs for those who know.” (30:22).

Equality Of The Couple In Their Mutual Rights

Just as men have religious rights in regards to women, so do women have legal and religious rights in regards to men. If the management and finance of the family is one of the man's duties, providing for the peace and tranquillity of the family is the responsibility of the woman. If Islam orders man to be merciful and forgiving towards his wife, it also encourages women to do the same. A verse from the Qur'an reveals that:

“...And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable; but men have a degree (of advantage) over them. And God is Exalted in Power, Wise.” (2:228).

In this verse, after mentioning the problem of divorce and the rights of the couple in this regard it says that as men have the right to divorce, women, too, have this right, but they must act in an acceptable manner.

In view of the fact that Islamic law is based on human instinct, inevitably, if people act according to their innate demands, they will reach ma'ruf, an act acceptable in the eyes of society. This is the realisation of Islamic law and one of the accepted principles of the society that individuals should enjoy equal rights in compliance with the law. Each should have authority according to his responsibilities.

This equality would not materialise unless the people's dignity was protected by law. In Islam, laws concerning women are based on this principle. They possess rights in relation to their position and responsibility. These rights are protected within the family and the society.

It is only right that a woman should furnish herself with the good qualities of piousness and dignity and well mannered behaviour toward her husband. This piousness should affect her behaviour when her husband is present and would help to protect his rights when he is absent.

If men are expected to perform jihad and be killed in the battlefields, this momentous task is lifted from women's shoulders. Women, too, with planning family matters and efforts in child training, can gain such values and positions that are equal to mujahids (fighters in the way of Allah).

Islam considers a well-mannered woman, who acts on her religious responsibilities, equal to a mujahid and her act is considered equal to jihad. This means that martyrdom in the battlefields, with all of its worth, has no superiority over housekeeping, child training and the act of marriage. A judge who issues a verdict or a governor who governs people has no superiority over a pious housewife.

Islam says that women are human creatures just like men. The nature and makeup of every human being, be it male or female, plays a part in society and none has superiority over the other, unless it is by the degree of piousness which is the extent of one's fear of God's punishment, and worship and submission before Him. Also, it is the care with which major and minor religious matters are acted upon. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an says:

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (He who is) the most righteous. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).” (49:13).

Equality Of Women And Men In Divine Rewards And Punishments

As mentioned earlier, men and women each possess a value and a responsibility. Neither has any superiority over the other, except for the degree of righteousness.

Now here, by way of some verses from the Holy Qur'an, we shall prove another important fact. The real dimensions of equality between men and women are in direct relation to the meting out of reward and punishment.

“...never will I suffer to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female: ye are members, one of another...” (3: 195).

In this verse it has been made clear that no act will be forgotten by God and the value of every person is based on his own actions. The act of every person is his own; no one else will be accountable in his stead.

On this basis a woman who possesses a high degree of faith and knowledge and high moral values is

superior to men who have not reached such stages of development. Greatness and superiority are not relevant to sex, race, position, wealth or power, but only to piousness, virtue and knowledge.

Women and men both according to their actions deserve praise or reprimand and what is important before the Creator is good deeds and sincerity of intention in acting on matters. Now whether the action was done by a man or a woman makes no difference. God observes even the smallest good and evil deeds and rewards or punishes accordingly.

“Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has faith, verily to him will We Give a new life, a life that is good and pure and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions.” (16:97).

We see that a pure and enriched life is offered as reward to the pious. Of course, the condition for a competent action to be accepted is faith in the fact that it complies with the principles of religion and abides with religious law. Another verse emphasising this is,

“He that works evil will not be requited but by the like thereof: and he that works a righteous deed whether man or woman, and is a believer—such will enter the Garden (of Bliss): therein will they have abundance without measure.” (40:40).

Another verse tells us,

“If any do deeds of righteousness, be they male or female, and have faith, they will enter Heaven, and not the least injustice will be done to them.” (4: 124).

The point is that in investigating the actions of men and women, not even a minute matter will be missed. No one will be oppressed and the rights of everyone will be given in accordance with their acts and intentions.

Both men and women have independence concerning ownership. Therefore, women and men are equal in financial matters, but women have been given priority in achieving their rights and doing social activities because of their delicate feelings. Although the consequences of bad deeds for both men and women are the same, their way of punishment in each case may be different.

Equality Of Rights Between Men And Women In Training And Cultivating Children's Talents

Certainly, the first and last teacher and coach for every child is their parents. The child is born in the comfort of their security. Every stage of his life is affected by them. Of course, other factors, such as religion' the environment and the government are not without effect. Before the birth of the child, the parents' particularly' the mother, will lay the first pillars of his or her moral foundation.

A great amount of his mentality, both external and internal qualities are particularly similar to that of his parents. After birth and throughout childhood, parents are his nearest, dearest and most sympathetic coach. Good and evil is taught to the child by his parents. If the family circle is full of love, sincerity, faith, purity and righteousness, a child will follow in that direction automatically when they are conditioned into the child's actions and constantly observed by the parents.

The affection and kindness ruling a family between parents and children can be a good means for guiding them" Advice that is given kindly can have immensely more effect on a child and who is better to advise them than their parents.

Examples of Child's Training – Luqman and His Advice to His Son

Hazrat Luqman, a dignified prophet and father, began his teachings to his son first by teaching him Tawhid (Oneness of God), which is an example to all fathers that the foundation of training and the teaching of one's children must begin with a lesson on Tawhid. He continued his lessons by instilling respect for parents and keeping the daily prayers. Allah says:

"Behold Luqman said to his son by way of instructions: 'O my son! Ioin not in worship (of others) with God: for false worship is indeed the highest wrongdoing. '" (31: 13).

And he read God's words to him:

"And We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning: (hear the command), 'Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thy final) goal! '" (31: 14).

He then said to him:

"O my son! surely if it is the very weight of the grain of a mustard-seed and it were (hidden) under a rock, or (anywhere) in the heavens or on the earth, God will bring it forth: for God understands the finest mysteries, (and) is well acquainted (with them)" (31: 16).

Luqman taught his son the lessons of Tawhid, sincerity and daily salutations to the Almighty God, and also that one must act on what is recommended by God, distancing himself from that which is forbidden and patience in life. Truly these few points could be considered the most concise and complete teachings for all.

A model father, who teaches patience and prayer, which are acts of piety, to his child, is himself a fine example to all fathers who should know that the only preventative factor from life's discrepancies is guidance towards truth and perfection. Prayer and patience are like strong roots which protect the tree of life from being uprooted and blown away.

“O my son! Establish regular prayer, enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil: and bear with patient constancy whatever betide thee; for this is firmness (of purpose) in (the conduct of) affairs.” (31: 17).

Truly how nice it would be if all fathers taught the lessons of patience and endurance in matters to their children and who would be the entrusted gardeners which fill the land of children's beings with scented flowers protected from physical and mental calamity.

The great Luqman then strengthened the belief of his child and taught him good mannerisms, telling him:

“And swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men, nor walk in insolence through the earth; for God loveth not any arrogant boaster.” (31: 18).

Luqman's son was advised on distancing himself from pride and self-centeredness. Also, humility and sincerity in behaviour was taught to him. The child now knew how to live well, for he was given a good example:

“And be moderate in the pace, and lower their voice, for the harshest of sounds without doubt is the braying of the asses.” (31: 19).

In this way Luqman set a good guideline for the teaching and training of children for parents to follow. He also made parents realise their own elevated position and their important role in raising their children.

1. There are several types of iddah not covered here. The reader is encouraged to look into the matter further in Imam Khomeini's *Tahrir al-Wasilah*.

2. Modesty in behaviour is an Islamic recommendation. On this basis all customs and moralities must not be excessive. In the obedience to parents, a limit has been set, meaning that, as long as one's parents do not go out of the boundaries set by Islam, the children are compelled to obey and respect them. But as soon as they convert or give up the religion or take religious matters lightly, or invite their children to polytheism, this recommendation no longer applies and children are not obliged to obey them; for obedience to God is first and foremost.

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Conclusion

A mother's intimate contact with her child will transmit her morality to him. Children at a very young age consider their mother to be the best refuge and turn to her open arms in happiness and in sadness. They consider her to be their best friend and mediator. Over this period, a mother who gives more

attention and care to her child can have a positive effect on the quality of the child's moral growth.

Studying the biography of great men in religion and observing their religious moral characteristics clarifies the point that mothers play a determining role in the behavioural habits and moral makeup of the child when he grows up. A dutiful mother feeds her child according to religious law and cares for his health and well-being, putting her entire Self into this huge responsibility.

Parents, who refrain from bad manners such as telling untruths, using foul language, gossiping, eating unlawful food, etc., will be able to raise pious and healthy children. We should bear in mind that pious children of today are the competent adults of tomorrow's society, and competent children are raised by believing and healthy parents.

The reason for the expansion of anarchy and the spread of corruption in place of piousness in the West is clearly the evidence of the transmission of morality from the old to the young. When drinking alcohol, immorality, incessant use of foul language forms the basis of a child's moral upbringing, obviously this child will grow up doing the same.

Unless the training environment is revised or replaced by new, pious and benevolent teachers, there is no hope for the well-being of the family structure in the future. Most of the corruption that was discussed concerning Western, capitalist and socialist societies is obviously going to be transmitted to future generations.

There should remain little doubt that the equity between women and men in child training should be a real and essential act and other kinds of equalities mentioned concerning capitalistic values should be considered harmful to mankind.

The joining of the spirits of man and wife in a family circle and the sincere devotion between them which lasts until death gives a particular aura of holiness and immense value to family life. Marriage and the formation of a family circle, in fact creates a warm and sincere atmosphere for bringing up the generations to come. The prosperity of the future generations depends solely on family discipline.

The All-Powerful Creator, the Wise and Benevolent God, for the establishment and continuation of the human race, has created strong bonds of love between husband and wife, and between parents and children, and a strong and special bond between mother and child. The social, cultural, emotional and physical tendencies of man stem from the family environment.

The spirit of the child is nurtured in the warmth of the family. It gains flexibility and firmness. A human society which consists of such families will grow a strong relation among its individuals and will become like a big family. It is at this stage that individuals feel like brothers and put into practice the verse:

"Truly the believers are brothers." (49: 10).

In that kind of family atmosphere everyone wishes well for one another and as they share a common

belief and morality, the collective aim is moral and mental health for everyone. Thus, fathers and mothers, who are at the pivot of the family, lay the foundation for the health and prosperity of the present and future generations.

Lack of justice and affection in Europe and weak relations between fathers, mothers and their children result in cold family relations. Sincerity and love have left these families and the unity and generosity that is found in Eastern families, particularly with Muslims, can rarely be witnessed there, the main reason being the immoral sexual trends.

These societies, if their authorities are well-intentioned, have no other choice than to improve the state of sexual behaviour which rules over their societies by encouraging women and men to form independent families which limit sexual affections to one couple who then become fathers and mothers. This is their only alternative to save their societies from complete chaos.

What the West has presented to women under the pretext of equality does not lead anywhere but to exploitation and oppression. It is necessary that all thinkers and writers take steps to uncover this West-East conspiracy and introduce the true character of women to themselves, as the welfare of every society depends on the moral well-being of its people, and their healthy interrelationships.

It is hoped that we have managed to take a step, however small, towards enlightening thoughts and minds concerning this subject. We pray to God for His guidance and salvation from any deviations from the Straight Path.

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