

Woman's Value and Role

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Produced and Published by: Al-Maaref Islamic Cultural Association

Al-Islam.org

Publisher(s):

[Al-Ma'arif Books](#) [1]

This text discusses the status of women in Islam and sheds some light on a lot of important issues which the woman is exposed to in her daily life, such as her value and role, her rights, her learning, the veil, marriage, divorce, chastity, woman's work and so on.

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Introduction

In the Name of God, The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful

Praise be to God, The lord of all the worlds. And God's prayers and peace be bestowed upon the messenger of mercy Muhammad ibn Abdullah and his household.

It is doubtless that great Islam has within its concepts and rules the path of the guidance for all the people in order to get them out of darkness into light. These rules are decreed, so that they will be adequate to the human being with all his/her characteristics, inclinations, and peculiarities and so that they will grant each person the guidance path which suits him/her.

From here, there are a lot of issues and rules and concepts which are related to the woman and which she cannot do without knowing them and abiding to them, so that they will be a light which assists her to guarantee a respectable life and a happy hereafter near the prophets and the righteous ones.

This book sheds light on a lot of important issues which the woman is exposed to in her daily life: We ask The Most High God that the believing women benefit of it.

At the beginning and at the end,

Praise be to God, the lord of all the worlds.

Al-Maaref Islamic Cultural Association

Lesson 1: Woman's Value

The Woman in the Eyes of the Societies

There are a lot of ideas and theories which are wide spread among the people and which rank the woman in a level less than that of the man. Also, the people incline to believe that such ideas are demonstrated by the divine doctrine; as a result, the Muslim person does not dare to face them, thus conceiving that to do so is an opposition to the doctrine. Yet, the truth is absolutely not so. Among these theories are the following.

1- Is the Woman a Secondary Creature?

It is widespread among some Muslims that Hawwaa [Eve] (God's peace bestowed upon her) was created from one of Adam's (God's peace bestowed upon him) ribs, and it is referred to some narratives to serve as testimonies for this theory. Such theory as regards the creation of Hawwaa may lead the human being to think that Hawwaa– and consequently all the women– is a secondary creature which was created from the rib of the man; moreover, some people relate that it is the short and left rib. This is absolutely an incorrect idea.

We do not need to discuss the signification of Hawwaa's being created from Adam's (God's peace bestowed upon him) rib. It is related to us that she was created from the same clay from which Adam (God's peace bestowed upon him) was created and definitely not from his rib.

It is related by Ibn Abi Al-Miqdad that his father related, "I asked Abu Ja'far [Imam Al-Baqir] (God's peace bestowed upon him), 'From what did God create Hawwaa?' He (God's peace bestowed upon him) in turn asked me, 'What do the people say?' I answered, 'They say that God created her from one of Adam's ribs.' He (God's peace bestowed upon him) said, "They are untrue. Could not He create her from anything else rather than his rib?' I asked him, 'O Son of God's prophet, I sacrifice my soul for your sake! From what did God create her?' He (God's peace bestowed upon him) answered, "My father told me in ascription to his fathers (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon them), 'God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) said, 'The Most High and Blessed God took a grip of clay, mixed it by His Right – and both His Hands are Right, and created Adam from it. And from the leftover of the clay, The Most High God created Hawwaa. [1](#)

The term "leftover of clay" is not meant to make little of this clay, for God is All Wise which means that His Work is not resulted in leftovers. This term indicates two points.

First, it refers to the chronological order i.e. God created Adam (God's peace bestowed upon him) at first from a part of the clay and then created Hawwaa (God's peace bestowed upon her) from what remained

from that clay after He had created Adam.

Second, it shows that she was created from the same clay which Adam was created from i.e. it deletes the idea which states that there is another clay for women different from that of men. In consistent with this is the saying of The Most High God in The Noble Qur'an:

“And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect.” (The Qur'an, Ar-Rum, 30:21)

2- The First Fault and Sin

The adopters of other religions rather than Islam, and some Muslims as well, believe that the woman is responsible for the first fault which was done by the human being and that she was the reason of Adam's (God's peace bestowed upon him) committing of the fault too because she persuaded him of eating from the tree which The Most High God forbade them to eat from.

It is ascribed to Ibn Abbas that he said, “When Adam ate from the tree which he was forbidden to eat from, The Most Glorious and Reverent God asked him, ‘What made you disobey me?’ Adam answered The Most High God, ‘O God, Hawwaa persuaded me to.’ Then, God said, ‘I will punish her by that she does not conceive but painfully and does not labor but painfully and by that she bleeds twice a month.’ When Hawwaa heard that, she cried loudly. At that, God said to her, ‘The cry is destined on you and on your daughters’”.[2](#)

We consider such narratives as incorrect, for they contradict the literal meaning of The Noble Qur'an. The Most High God says,

“And O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in Paradise, and eat thereof as you both wish, but approach not this tree otherwise you both will be of the unjust. Then Satan whispered suggestions to them both in order to uncover that which was hidden from them of their private parts; he said, “Your Lord did not forbid you from this tree save you should become angels or become of the immortals. And he [Satan] swore by Allah for them both, “Verily, I am one of the sincere well-wishers for you both.” (The Qur'an, Al-Aa'raf, 7: 19–23)

The Woman in the Eye of Islam

The woman is one of the two types of the human being species. Therefore, in order to get acquainted with Islam's view of the woman, we must examine her with respect to the kind which she belongs to i.e. the human being, and then we move to examine her with respect to her peculiarity as a woman.

The Woman's Honor as a Human Being

The Most High God says,

“And indeed We have honored the Children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with the lawful good things, and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preference.” (The Qur’an, Al-Israa’ 17:70)

This honor is true for the woman as it is true for the man, and it is so equally true for both. The woman is not a creature that has the form of the human beings: She is a human being for true, and she is equal to the man concerning this point.

The Most High God says in His Noble Book,

“O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another.” (The Qur’an, Al-Hujurat, 49:13)

As the nations and the tribes are equal to each other because all of them are human beings, the male and the female are so.

Common Points of Weakness

This honor which is indicated in the noble verses does not mean that there are no points of weakness in the character of the human being with its both types. There are many points of weakness which the Qur’anic verses refer to not in order to dispraise and underestimate the human being but in order to draw his/her attention to the gaps which he/she must be aware of in order to fill them in and in order not to be an easy prey. The aim of The Noble Qur’an is the guidance:

“This is the Book, whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are the pious ones.” (The Noble Qur’an, Al-Baqarah, 2:2)

Therefore, every verse which reflects upon a certain point of weakness is in fact a kind of guidance towards perfection and not a sword held, we seek refuge by God, in order to weaken the human being, the man or the woman. The human being is weak; The Most High God says,

“...and man was created weak.” (The Qur’an, An-Nisa’, 4:28)

Also, the human being is hasty; The Most High God says,

“and man is ever hasty.” (The Qur’an, Al-Isra’, 17:11)

Moreover, the human being gets irritable at the evil and niggard at the good; The Most High God says,

“Verily, man was created very impatient, irritable when evil touches him, and niggardly when

good touches him.” (The Qur’an, Al-Ma’arij, 70: 19–21)

All these verses do not aim at underestimating the human being but at holding his/her hand and preserving him/her from falling in such things. This applies to the woman and to any verse talking about her or referring to some traps in which the human being often falls.

No Difference within the Human Species

The woman’s being a human being makes her of the greater honor with respect to the other creatures, as is stated in The Noble Qur’an. But the still raised question is related to within the human species itself: Is the woman of a lower level of the human being species while the man is of the highest level?

The Noble Qur’an answers this in saying:

“O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is that who is the most pious. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.” (The Qur’an, Al-Hujurat, 49: 13)

The Most High God did not determine the standard of honor in that the human being be a man or a woman. The only standard is that of piety in which there is no difference between the man and the woman. The most pious person, whether a man or a woman, is the most honorable with The Most High God.

It is related in the narrative ascribed to Imam Abu Abdullah Ja’far As-Sadiq (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “The righteous woman is better than a thousand unrighteous men”³.

The question still raised is about the saying of The Most High God:

“... but men have a degree over them.” (The Qur’an, Al-Baqarah, 2:228)

What is the connotation of this noble verse? And what is meant by the degree which men have over women?

This Qur’anic verse is involved among the following verses:

“And if they decide upon divorce, then Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower. And divorced women shall wait [as regards their marriage] for three menstrual periods, and it is not lawful for them to conceal what Allah has created in their wombs, if they believe in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands have the better right to take them back in that period, if they wish for reconciliation. And they have rights similar over them to what is reasonable, but men have a degree over them. And Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.” (The Qur’an, Al-Baqarah, 2:227–228)

This noble verse talks about the marital relationship and about the duties and rights of both the man and

the woman in this relationship. It does not refer to the spiritual status or to a difference between the woman type and the man type. On the contrary, it indicates a practical issue which is related to the rights and duties of the husband and the wife; and it is doubtless that there are differences from the religious aspect in a lot of the practical details between the man and the woman. One of these details is the divorce to which this noble verse points out.

In later on lessons, we are going, by the will and help of The Most High God, to talk about the difference which is related to the practical aspect and about the background of these differences.

Women in the Noble Qur'an (A Balanced Look)

The Noble Qur'an is distinguished by its balanced look towards the woman. It neither, as some societies did, present her as a goddess and nor, as other societies did, disparage her to the extent of burying her alive. On the contrary, it presents her, as it presents the man, as a human being who passes in this life through tests and afflictions during which this human being may be guided to the correct path or may be misled.

The Noble Qur'an, therefore, refers to some women who failed the test of this world. The Most High God sets forth a parable about atheist women; The Most High God says,

“Allah sets forth an example for those who disbelieve, the wife of Nûh [Noah] and the wife of Lout [Lot]. They were under two of our righteous slaves, but they both betrayed them so they benefited them not, against Allah, and it was said: ‘Enter the Fire along with those who enter!’”

(The Qur'an, At-Tahrim, 66:10)

On the other hand, The Noble Qur'an sets forth another example which is related to a woman who had money and power; yet when she got acquainted with The Truth, she believed in The Most High God and gave up to His Will. The Most High God says in Al-Naml [The Ants] Chapter,

“She said: ‘O chiefs! Advise me in this case of mine. I decide no case till you are present with me.’ They said: ‘We have great strength and great ability for war, but it is for you to command; so think over what you will command.’ She said: ‘Verily! Kings, when they enter a town, despoil it and make the most honorable amongst its people low. And thus they do. But verily! I am going to send him a present, and see with what the messengers return.’ So when they came to Soulayman [Solomon], he said: ‘Will you help me in wealth? What Allah has given me is better than that which He has given you!

Nay, you rejoice in your gift!’ Go back to them. We verily shall come to them with hosts that they cannot resist, and we shall drive them out from there in disgrace, and they will be abased.’ He said: ‘O chiefs! Which of you can bring me her throne before they come to me surrendering themselves in obedience?’ An afreet from the jinns said: ‘I will bring it to you before you rise from

your place. And verily, I am indeed strong and trustworthy for such work.’ One with whom was knowledge of the Scripture said: ‘I will bring it to you within the twinkling of an eye!’ then when he Soulayman saw it placed before him, he said: ‘This is by the Grace of my Lord to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful! And whoever is grateful, truly, his gratitude is for his own self; and whoever is ungrateful, certainly! My Lord is The Most Rich, The Most Bountiful.’

He said: ‘Disguise her throne for her that we may see whether she will be guided, or she will be one of those not guided.’ So when she came, it was said (to her): ‘Is your throne like this?’ She said: ‘It is as though it were the very same.’ And [Soulayman said]: ‘Knowledge was bestowed on us before her, and we were submitted to Allah.’ And that which she used to worship besides Allah has prevented her, for she was of a disbelieving people.’ It was said to her: ‘Enter the edifice’ [(a glass surface with water underneath it) or a palace]. But when she saw it, she thought it was a pool, and she uncovered her legs. He said: ‘Verily, it is an edifice paved smooth with slab of glass.’ She said: ‘My Lord! Verily, I have wronged myself, and I submit in Islam, together with Soulayman, to Allah, The Lord Of All The Worlds’” (The Qur’an, An-Naml, 27:32–44)

Focus on the Shining Model

It is noticed that The Noble Qur’an often refers to the shining model of the woman. It also highly sheds light on the righteous woman in a lot of its noble verses and focuses on a lot of shining points from her history throughout the human process. In addition, it presents many women as models not only for the women but also for all the humanity, thus including both men and women.

Among these Qur’anic models are the following.

1-The Wife of the Pharaoh

The Most High God says in His Noble Book,

“And Allah has set forth an example for those who believe, the wife of Fir’aun [Pharaoh], when she said: ‘My Lord! Build for me a home with You in Paradise, and save me from Fir’aun and his work, and save me from the wrong doing people.’” (The Qur’an, At-Tahrim, 66: 11)

To be noticed, the wife of the Pharaoh was not presented by The Noble Qur’an as a model for the women only but for all those who believe. The world with all its luxuries was available for this shining model; however, she turned away from it towards The Most High God:

“My Lord! Build for me a home with You in Paradise...” (The Qur’an, Al-Tahrim, 66: 11)

2- Maryam Bint Omran

2- Maryam Bint⁴ Omran

This great woman is referred to in many Qur'anic verses. Her story recurs in more than one chapter in The Noble Qur'an, thus accompanying her in several stages of her noble and blessed life. Among these verses are:

“So her Lord accepted her with goodly acceptance. He made her grow in a good manner and put her under the care of Zachariah [Zachary]. Every time he entered the sanctuary to visit her, he found her supplied with sustenance. He said: ‘O Maryam (Mary)! From where have you got this?’ She said, ‘This is from Allah.’ Verily, Allah provides sustenance to whom He wills, without limit.”
(The Qur'an, Aali-Imran, 3:37)

“And when the angels said: ‘O Maryam (Mary)! Verily, Allah has chosen you, purified you, and chosen you above the women of the mankind and the jinns. O Maryam! Submit yourself with obedience to your Lord, prostrate, and bow down along with those who bow down etc.” (The Qur'an, Aali-Imran, 3:42-43)

There are a lot of ideas and theories which represent the woman as being of a level lower than that of man.

The theory about Eve's (God's peace bestowed upon her) creation from Adam's (God's peace bestowed upon him) rib is not consistent with the narratives which relate that she was created from the same clay which Adam was created from.

The Most High God made the woman equal to the man in humanity and imposed on each one of them special duties which are adequate to him/her.

The Most High God does not, in the Qur'anic address, distinguish between the woman and the man; He made them of the same level of honor.

The Noble Qur'an often refers to the shining models of the women. It also highly sheds light on the righteous woman in a lot of its noble verses and focuses on a lot of shining points from her history throughout the human process. In addition, it presents many women as models not only for the women but also for all the humanity, thus including both men and women.

Comprehension Questions

1- Is the woman a secondary creature?

2- What is the Qur'anic look towards the woman?

3- How would you answer the one who demonstrates that the woman i.e. Hawwaa is the one who committed the first sin?

4-Who are the women whom The Most High God set forth a parable about them in The Noble Qur'an?

5- Does the Saying of The Most High God: "but men have a degree over them" mean that the man is preferred to the woman?

For Reading: Fatima Bint Asad

Fatima Bint Asad is the wife of the Sheikh of Al-Bat'hah [the level land], Abu Taleb. She is the mother of The Prince of the Believers Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (God's peace bestowed upon him) and Taleb and Aqeel and Ja'far. And she is the one who brought up God's prophet Muhammad ibn Abdullah (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) after his grandfather Abdul Moutaleb had died, putting him ahead of her four children in her tenderness, motherhood, and noble sympathetic affection.

How graceful the talk of The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) is when he describes her in his saying, "She was, among all God's creatures, the kindest one to me. She was my mother next to my mother who gave birth to me. Abu Taleb used to do his work, and the table used to be prepared for him, and he used to gather us to his food. This woman used to keep a part of the food, so that I would eat from it."

What also indicates this is what the historiographers and the biographers related as regards what he (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) did when she died. The chronicles relate that he (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) "shrouded her with his noble shirt. He lay in her tomb. And then he exclaimed seventy times, 'God is Great' when he prayed on her: an act he did with none but with her." After that, God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) said, "The angels filled the horizon. A door of Heaven was opened for her. The beds of Heaven were prepared for her. And an aroma from Heaven was sent to her: She is in an ease and spirituality and a Heaven of blessing; and her tomb is a yard from Heaven."

One of the companions of the concluding Prophet was astonished of that, so he asked him about the reason. God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) answered, "Nobody, after Abi Taleb, was kinder to me than she was."

The history recorded several points for this model woman, among which are the following:

- She was the first woman next to Khadija (May God be pleased with her) who adopted Islam.
- She was the first woman to immigrate to Al-Madina on foot and bare footed.
- She was the first woman to pledge allegiance to God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) in the day of Allegiance Pledge.

Ibn Abbas related that the following noble verse descended in reference to her:

“O Prophet! When believing women come to you to give you the pledge, that they will not associate anything in worship with Allah, that they will not steal, that they will not commit illegal sexual intercourse, that they will not kill their children, that they will not utter slander, intentionally forging falsehood [i.e. by making illegal children belonging to their husbands], and that they will not disobey you in any good deed, then accept their pledge, and ask Allah to forgive them, Verily, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (The Qur’an, Al-Mumtahanah, 60: 12)

She is the mother of The Prince of the Believers Imam Ali Al-Murtadha (God’s peace bestowed upon him). She gave birth to him inside Noble Kaaba, which is an excellence God granted to nobody but her: God, in an act of honoring her, split for her the wall of Al-Kaaba, thus giving her the permission to give birth to her blessed baby there.

- [1.](#) Bihar Al-Anwar [The Seas of Lights], Part Twenty Two, p.116
- [2.](#) Al-Moustadrak [Making Up For the Means], Al-Hakim Al-Nisabori, Part Two, p.381
- [3.](#) Wasa’il Al-Shi’a [The Means of the Shiite], Part Fourteen, p. 123
- [4.](#) Bint: the daughter of

Lesson 2: Woman’s Rights

The Difference between the Man and the Woman

When we talked about the woman’s value in Islam, we mentioned that the human type is the one which is designed to carry the divine authority and the one who can cover the levels of perfection. This applies to both the man and the woman.

This does not mean that there is no difference between the man and the woman; they, however, differ in the physiological and psychological capabilities. Yet, this difference is not linked to the aspect of deficiency or perfection; it is, however, a matter of equivalence and adequateness. The law of creation aims from this difference at the establishment of a higher adequateness between the man and the woman who are meant for a common life. The bachelorhood life is but a deviation from the law of creation. This concept will be more clarified later on when the forms of difference are going to be analyzed.

The Forms of Difference

Looking for the difference between the man and the woman is not a recent issue. In fact, it goes back in history to more than 2400 years. Plato insisted on the presence of a qualitative difference between the man and the woman. Also, his student Aristotle assured the presence of difference in his saying, “The

quality of the woman's capabilities differs from that of the man. Moreover, the duties and responsibilities which are imposed by the law of creation on each of them differ. And the various rights which the law of creation demands for each one of them differ." The scholars and the philosophers who succeeded Aristotle gave his theories preference to those of Plato. [1](#)

As regards our present age with its scientific progress, the difference between the man and the woman has turned to be specific and clear as a result of the reliance on observation, experience, statistics, and field study.

Here we mention the differences which we have collected from what the researchers have said.

From the Physiological Aspect

- 1- The man in general is characterized by a huge body whereas the woman is not so.
- 2- The man is coarser while the woman is softer. The man's voice is huger and coarser while that of the woman is kinder and softer.
- 3- The woman grows up faster than the man does, but the muscular growth of the man is more than that of the growth of the woman's muscles and body.
- 4- The woman reaches the sexual maturity faster than the man does. In addition, the woman turns to be unable to bring children i.e. barren) faster than the man does.)
- 5- The child girl starts to talk faster than the child boy starts to.
- 6- The size of the man's brain is bigger than the size of the woman's brain, taking in consideration the brain's proportion to the whole body.
- 7- The man's lung has a greater capacity for air than the woman's lung has.
- 8- The beats of the woman's heart are faster than those of the man's heart.

From the Psychological Aspect

- 1- The man inclines to the sports and hunting and motive actions than the woman does.
- 2- The man's feelings are opposing and military whereas the woman's feelings are peaceful. The woman keeps from using violence towards the others and towards her own self; as a result, the percentage of the women's suicide declines. Men's suicide is much uglier since they commit suicide by means of shooting themselves or jumping from a very high place. On the other hand, the women commit suicide by means of taking in sleeping pills or narcotic materials.
- 3- The woman is more passive than the man is i.e. she gets under the influence of her feelings more

than the man does.

4- The woman, on the contrary of the man, is greatly interested in beauty, adornment, and the different fashion styles.

5-The woman is more cautious, fearful, and eloquent than the man is.

6- The woman's emotions are motherly, and this appears since childhood. Moreover, the woman is more related to the family, and she unconsciously notices the importance of the milieu of the family before the man does.

7- In general, the woman does not reach the level which the man reaches with respect to the evidential sciences and the dry mental issues. Yet, she is equal to him with respect to the fields of literature, art, and all the issues which are related to taste and affection.

8- The man is more capable of keeping a secret and of keeping the disturbing news for himself. As a result, he is more fast afflicted with the illness resulted from keeping the secrets.

From the Aspect of the Exchanged Emotions

The man aims at accompanying the woman and at putting her at his command whereas the woman aims at winning the man's heart and at dominating him through his heart. He, therefore, wants to control her from above while she wants to penetrate into his heart. The woman looks for courage and manliness in the man; on the other hand, the man looks for beauty and affection in the woman.

How to Examine the Rights?

There are two points that must be taken in consideration when we examine the woman's rights. They are:

1-Adequateness Not Equality

On the basis of the already mentioned differences between the man and the woman, it is noticed that what adequates to the woman may not adequate to the man, and vice versa. From here, it is not required that we apply the situation of the woman on that of the man or the situation of the man on that of the woman. What is required is to specify each one of them with what adequates to his/her physiological and psychological characteristics. Adequateness, therefore, and not equality between the man and the woman is what is required.

2-The Comprehensive View of the Rules

The fragmental view may be a major cause for not comprehending the Islamic legislation, for Islam is characterized by the comprehensive legislation. If we want to consider a certain issue, we must consider

it within the frame of the whole system of the doctrine and not alone regardless of everything else related to it. Therefore, when we examine these rights about which the questions are raised, we must consider them with respect to the issues related to them.

On the basis of these two points, we move to shed light on some terms that are brought up concerning the woman's rights.

Polygamy

It is doubtless that polygamy is permitted in Islam. The Most High God says,

“And if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry women of your choice, two or three, or four, but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly [with them], then only one or [the captives and the slaves] that your right hands possess. That is nearer to prevent you from doing injustice.” (The Qur'an, An-Nisa' 4:3)

In addition to this, there is a long chronicle about the Muslims who performed polygamy without The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) or the Imams (God's peace bestowed upon them) objecting to that. Even more, The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) and the Imams (God's peace bestowed upon them) used, in certain conditions, to suffice with one wife but used, in other conditions, to get married to more than one woman. Therefore, doubting Islam's opinion about polygamy is just an unreasonable contention that has no evidence to support it.

The question set forth in this issue is not related to Islam's opinion as we have just mentioned; it is related to the wisdom of the permissibility of polygamy. Why did Islam enact such an issue?

It is necessary that polygamy remain permissible in order to effectuate justice among the women on one hand and in order to solve the social problems that may become serious on another hand. This is so because there is a problem that has two faces:

1- The percentage of women is more than that of men. This is so because death attacks men much more than it attacks women, especially in youth as a result of wars which men usually confront and as a result of going out for work, in addition to the other risks to which the man is exposed more than the woman is.

2- Every woman has the right to establish a family on a religious and legal basis. The woman has the right to build her own family. Had the men's number been equal to the women's number, we would have been able to say that this right of the woman is reserved even without polygamy. Yet we know, by means of the scientific statistics, that the just opposite is true. The number of the women is much more than that of men, so preventing polygamy will necessarily mean closing the door before many women and depriving them of their right to establish their families. Therefore, calling for the prevention of

polygamy is a sort of individual selfishness that the married woman falls in on the account of the other women who will not be able to get married.

The doctrine, on the basis of its balanced look that aims at achieving justice at least on the level of providing all the women with the opportunity to get married, leaves this door open.

The Man's Superintendence over the Woman

The Most High God says in His Glorious Book,

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend from their means...” (The Qur'an, An-Nisa', 4:34)

In order to illustrate this term, we must take into consideration that the family is a small social unit which, as is the case with the large society, needs a leader and a person who is in charge of its affairs.

The man's superintendence over the woman is based on two supports:

1-“because Allah has made one of them to excel the other...” This preference is not one of spiritual value but one of practical merit by which the man is distinguished and which makes him eligible for superintendence. This is related to the traits by which the man is characterized and those by which the woman is characterized. The woman, on the contrary of the man, is usually passive due to the agitated affection she has.

2-“and because they spend from their means...” The expense on the house is the duty of the man and not that of the woman. It is natural that the one who carries the responsibility of expense on any enterprise is more entitled to superintend it.

Inheritance

The Most High God says in His Noble Book,

“There is a share for men and a share for women from what is left by parents and those nearest related, whether, the property be small or large - a legal share). (The Qur'an, An-Nisa', 4:7)

Islam legislated the inheritance for the woman as it did for the man and determined a portion for each one of them. But there is a distinguishing feature concerning the inheritance of the children i.e. they do not inherit equal portions, for the male receives double what the female receives. The Most High God says,

“Allah commands you as regards your children's [inheritance]; to the male, a portion equal to that of two females...” (The Qur'an, An-Nisa', 4:11)

Why is there such a difference between them as regards the inheritance?

The cause of this difference is manifested through the consideration of two points:

1- The man is responsible for spending on the family and providing for its materialistic needs; on the other hand, the woman is not responsible for that. Even more, it is the responsibility of the man, whether being a father or a husband, to provide for the woman's personal needs. Moreover, The Most High God says,

“Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope.” (The Qur'an, Al-Baqarah, 2:286)

As long as the man is responsible for spending on the family, it is natural that this be recognized in the distribution of the finances, so that the distribution will be consistent with the responsibilities which are assigned to each one of them. From here, it is not weird that the man inherits double what the woman inherits.

2- The man is the one who pays the dowry to the woman in the marriage contract. This, in turn, supports the presence of privileges in the distribution of finances, so that there will be harmony between the incomes and the expenses.

A great percentage of what the man inherits will go back to the woman as a daughter or a wife whom he has to spend on. On the other hand, the money which the woman inherits remains completely for her with nobody having the right to share it with her.

Therefore, when we consider the inheritance as one of the financial incomes, we must consider it with respect to the system of incomes and expenses in the Islamic law, so that a kind of equivalence between them will be procured.

Summary

There are differences between the man and the woman with respect to the physiological and psychological capabilities. Yet this difference is not linked to the aspect of deficiency or perfection; it is, however, a matter of equivalence and adequateness. The law of creation aims from this difference at the establishment of a higher adequateness between the man and the woman who are meant for a common life.

Looking for the difference between the man and the woman is not a recent issue; in fact, it goes back in history to more than 2400 years.

The fragmental view may be a major cause for not comprehending the Islamic legislation, for Islam is characterized by the comprehensive legislation. We must consider the issue of the man and the woman within the frame of the whole doctrine and not alone regardless of everything else related to it.

Preferring the man to the woman in the Saying of The Most High God,

“... because Allah has made one of them to excel the other...” (The Qur’an, An-Nisa’, 4:34)

is not one of spiritual value but of practical merit by which the man is distinguished and which makes him eligible for superintendence. This is related to the traits by which the man is characterized and to those by which the woman is characterized.

There is a distinguishing feature concerning the inheritance of the children i.e. they do not inherit equal portions, for the male receives double what the female receives. This difference has many causes, among which is the following: the man is responsible for spending on the family and for providing for its materialistic needs whereas the woman is not responsible for this. A great percentage of what the man inherits will go back to the woman as a daughter or a wife whom he has to spend on. On the other hand, the money which the woman inherits remains completely for her with nobody having the right to share it with her.

Comprehension Questions

- 1- Mention some physiological differences between the man and the woman.
- 2- Mention some psychological differences between the man and the woman.
- 3- What is the wisdom implied in the permissibility of polygamy?
- 4- Why does the male inherit double what the female inherits?
- 5- What is meant by the following noble verse: “... because Allah has made one of them to excel the other...?”

For Reading: Umm Kulthum

Sayyida Umm Kulthum is the daughter of Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (God’s peace bestowed upon him) and Sayyida Fatima Al-Zahraa (God’s peace bestowed upon her). She is a woman who struggled for God’s sake by means of words and deeds. She is next to Sayyida Zeinab (God’s peace bestowed upon her) in age and honor, and she is her partner in carrying the burden which Sayyida Zeinab (God’s peace bestowed upon her) carried after the martyrdom of Imam Al-Husayn (God’s peace bestowed upon him) in Karbalaa.

Sayyida Umm Kulthum entered Al-Kufa during the regime of her father The Prince of the Believers (God’s peace bestowed upon him) after he had declared it as a capital for his state. She lived in his modest house and learnt from him the loftiest morals.

Yet when she entered Al-Kufa for the second time, she entered it as a captive with the captives of

Karbalaa. She entered it with the heads of her brother Imam Al-Husayn (God's peace bestowed upon him) and the martyrs raised over the spears and with the people watching them. She was greatly affected with what she saw, with the people's pity on them, and with the people's offering of bread and dates for the children. She used to take away the alms from the children's mouths and hands while saying, "O People of Al-Kufa, giving alms to us is [religiously] forbidden."

Then, she addressed them with a speech from which we mention the following: "O People of Al-Kufa! Shame on you. What is the matter with you? You disappointed Al-Husayn and killed him. You robbed his money and inherited him. And you took his women as captives and distressed him. Woe to you and away with you! Do you know what an evil you did?"

Her speeches, along the path of captivity, uncovered the evil policies which were conspiring against Islam and its prominent characters. Moreover, she spread among the people a poetry in which she aroused the emotions, so that the nation would wake up from its slumber to face the oppression of the Omawweet. From that poetry is the following:

We are the lost with no guardian
And we are lamenting on our brother
We are riding on mounts
Carried on the camels of the detesters
We are the daughters of Ya'seen and Ta'ha²
And we are weeping on our father
Oh our grandfather! They killed Husayn
And did not consider God in us
Oh our grandfather! Our enemies attained
Their wishes and avenged themselves from us.

This is Umm Kulthum, the woman who teaches the women how to struggle for God's sake by means of the word and the attitude.

¹. Refer to Nezam Houkouk Al-Mar'aa Fi Al-Islam [The System of Woman's Rights in Islam], The Martyr Murtadha Al-Moutahhari, p. 159 and the following pages.

². Other names for God's prophet Muhammad ibn Abdullah (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household)

Lesson 3: Woman's Learning

Importance of Learning

We might not come across such a consecration of learning and such a call for it among all the religions and sects and creeds as they are spot in Islam. Even more, the first verse addressed to The Greatest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) when the revelation came down on him was:

“Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created. Has created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught by the pen. Has taught man that which he knew not.”

(The Qur'an, Al-'Alaq, 96: 1-5)

The Most High God joined the reading with the mentioning of Him in order to indicate the relationship between learning and the belief in The Most Glorious and Reverent God.

Then, He made learning one of the standards of preference among the people; The Most High God says,

“...Say: ‘Are those who know equal to those who know not?’” (The Qur'an, Az-Zumar, 39:9)

Then, He praised the learners and raised them to special ranks:

“Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe, and those who have been granted knowledge” (The Qur'an, Al-Mujadilah, 58: 11)

to the extent that losing them turned to be a gap which can be closed by nothing.

It is ascribed to The Prince of the Believers Imam Ali Al-Murtadha (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “The learning believer is more rewarded than the one fasting and praying and fighting for God's sake is. When he [the learning believer] dies, a gap opens in Islam which is to be closed by nothing till the Day of Resurrection.”^{[1](#)}

Why did The Most High God attach such an importance to learning? And why did He endow the learner with all this spiritual essence, ranks, and honor?

Its Necessity for the Human Being

This interest in learning did not originate from nothing. This interest has specific significations to which the narratives referred. Learning is intricately associated to the true divine religion that came down from The Most High God. The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) referred to this association in his saying, “Learning is the life of Islam and the prop of religion”^{[2](#)}.

The Most High God is The Truth. As the human being acquires more knowledge and insight, he/she

draws nearer to The Truth. The Most High God says,

“And those who have been given knowledge see that what is revealed to you from your Lord is the truth, and guides to the Path of the Exalted in Might, Owner of all praise.” (The Qur’an, Saba, 34:6)

Also, The Most High God says,

“And that those who have been given knowledge may know that it is the truth from your Lord, and that they may believe therein, and their hearts may submit to it with humility. And verily, Allah is the Guide of those who believe, to the Straight Path.” (The Qur’an, Al-Hajj, 22:54)

Learning is not restricted to a certain topic rather than another topic or to a certain level of knowledge rather than another level; it is, therefore, good wherever it takes place. It is related in the narrative ascribed to The Prince of the Believers (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “Learning is the source of every good; on the other hand, ignorance is the source of every evil.”³

Here, we are going to reflect upon some roles of learning.

1 – Acquisition of Knowledge

Knowledge is demanded for itself; thus it needs nothing else to justify it, especially as regards the basic lores which are related to the creation and the hereafter. Henceforth, The Noble Qur’an teaches us never to get quenched from knowledge but to ask always for more. The Most High God says,

“And say: ‘My Lord! Increase me in knowledge.’” (The Qur’an, Taha, 20: 114)

2- Prerequisite for the Work

Any deed, whether insignificant or great, needs scientific premises which as the human being gets more acquainted with them and works being guided by them, his/her work becomes more masterfully and subtle. It is related in the narrative ascribed to The Noblest Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “...God likes that when a human being performs a work to master it.”⁴

3- Rationality for the Society

If ignorance were the characteristic of the societies, it is doubtless that the rule would be for none but for the law of the jungle. The ignorant person, in his nature, is not deterred by reason but is deterred when he senses a power greater than his.

We refer here to the narrative ascribed to The Prince of the Believers (God’s peace bestowed upon him) in which he said, “The ignorant is not deterred even by the sharpness of the swords.”⁵

4- A Solution for All the Problems

Wherever ignorance penetrates, corruption accompanies it. As a result, we may find out a lot of the social problems originating from ignorance and lack of learning. It is ascribed to The Prince of the Believers (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "Ignorance is the corruption of every matter."⁶

Learning Is Not Exclusive to the Man

Is it possible, after having realized the association of learning to religion and knowing The Most High God and to the masterfulness of deeds and the guidance of the society and after having realized that ignorance is the origin of corruption, to make learning exclusive to the man and to deprive the woman of it?

If learning were exclusive to the man, this would mean that religion, knowing God, masterfulness of deeds, and guidance would be exclusive to the man, which is an idea stated by no one. In this course, we refer to the narrative ascribed to The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) in which he said, "Asking for learning is a duty imposed on every male and female Muslim. God likes them who ask for learning."⁷

Learning, therefore, is not exclusive to the man because its excuses are not exclusive to him. Woman's learning is not only not prevented, but also it is required and preferable.

It is ascribed to The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "He who has a daughter whom he educates and masters her education, teaches and masters her teaching, and gives generously from the bounties God bestowed upon him will have her as a protection from fire."⁸

The Circumstances of Learning

The circumstances of the schools, institutes, universities, and all the areas of learning must be healthy and helpful in accomplishing the aims of learning. Learning must continue in elevating the human being and in emphasizing the human values. In other words, it must be the prop of religion and must call [the human being] to know The Creator and to be committed to the lofty human morals. This can be accomplished by means of two issues:

1- The woman must not be inattentive to the aim of learning which is the complementarity of the human being as an individual and as a society, for inattention is the cause of forfeiture.

2- The woman must stick to chastity, abide to the religious rules, and follow after the path which noble Islam delineated for us in the character of Sayyida Fatima Al-Zahraa (God's peace bestowed upon her) who is the model of the learned women and who "The Scholar" was one of her titles. Every scholar or

learning woman, therefore, should have Sayyida Fatima Al-Zahraa (God's peace bestowed upon her) always before her eyes, in order that she will follow after her in any movement she performs or any stillness she is in.

Priorities of Learning

What are the priorities of learning with respect to the woman? There are a lot of basic and indispensable issues, among which we are going to reflect upon the following:

1- The Basic Lores, such as: the Creeds, Jurisprudence, and Morals

It is related in a narrative ascribed to The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "Learning is of three types: a fixed verse, a just duty, or a followed convention. Anything else is considered to be an excess."⁹

These lores are highly indispensable for each woman whatever position she is in because she is ordered to, before anything else, reform herself on the learning, religious, heart, moral, conduct, and jurisprudential levels which the woman cannot do without whatever position she is in.

2- Methods of the Family Behavior

The first role which the woman faces is her role inside her family as a daughter, sister, wife, or mother. All of these roles are of a special importance and a crucial influence on the family, especially the role of the mother who sends out to the society righteous sons: scholars, fighters for God's sake, martyrs, and pious sons.

From here, the woman must learn the means of education and must get acquainted with the characteristics and variables of the children with respect to their age and nature. This will help her a lot in her mission as a mother, and so is the case with the wife in her life with her husband.

A lot of problems and gaps result from ignorance, so it is natural that getting acquainted with these roles and their means and their methods improves the woman's performance and activates her role.

3- The Services which Help in establishing the True Islamic Environments

Since the woman represents half the society, at the least evaluation, she needs social and psychological and medical service. If the society does not have women specialized in this field and thus able to satisfy the woman's needs, the women would be obliged to consult the men, which is an improper issue if it is not necessary. As a result, the women should specialize in the fields which the women are in need of.

4- The Needs of the Society

The society, in general, has special needs which differ from one place to another with respect to the conditions and the requirements. It is required and preferable to consider these needs seriously and to turn towards specialization in order to satisfy them.

We might not come across such a consecration of learning and such a call for it among the religions and sects and creeds as they are spot in Islam. Learning is intricately associated to the true divine religion that came down from The Most High God.

From the roles of learning are:

- 1- Acquisition of knowledge
- 2- Premise for the work
- 3- Rationality of the society
- 4- A solution for all the problems

If the duty of learning were exclusive to the man, this would mean that religion, knowing God, masterfulness of deeds, and guidance would be exclusive to the man, which is a matter that no one says!!

The circumstances of the schools, institutes, universities, and all the areas of learning must be healthy and helpful in accomplishing the aims of learning. Learning must continue in elevating the human being and in emphasizing the human values. This can be accomplished by means of two issues:

- 1- The woman must not be inattentive to the aim of learning
- 2- The woman must stick to chastity, abide to the religious rules, and follow after the path which Islam delineated

There are several basic issues which the woman should know:

- 1-The basic lores, such as: the creeds, jurisprudence, and morals
- 2- The methods of the family behavior
- 3- The services which help in establishing the true Islamic environments
- 4- The needs of the society

Comprehension Questions

- 1- What is the influential role which Islam aims at accomplishing by means of learning?
- 2- What is the attitude of Islam as regards the woman's learning?
- 3- What are the issues which help in the accomplishment of the aims of learning?
- 4- What are the most important issues which the woman must learn?
- 5- What is meant by that the woman must learn the special needs of the society?

For Reading: The Martyr Amina As-Sadr (Bint Al-Huda)

Amina As-Sadr was born in Al-Ka'themiyya in 1927 A. D./1357 of immigration. She is the daughter of Sayyid Haydar As-Sadr, one of the prominent scholars and researchers; and she is the sister of the Martyr Muhammad Baker As-Sadr (May The Most High God be pleased with him).

In her house, the house of learning, the Martyr Bint Al-Huda learnt, in addition to the traditional lores which were taught in the governmental schools, linguistics, logic, jurisprudence, and Al-Osoul [a book titled 'The Rules of Deduction' by The Sign of God Al-Burojardi] to the extent that many scholars testified her genius.

In 1967, she turned towards teaching and became responsible for Al-Zahraa Schools. She was characterized by her magnificent presence in the public womanish court and in the literary court. Her writings were distinguished by a special glamour. In spite of the fact that most of her writings are narrative, she carried within her writings a message addressed to the youth.

From the poems in which she addressed the Muslim woman is:

If it is said old fashioned you are
Care not and steadfast continue to be
Say, I am the daughter of the message
From its light I get guidance
My shyness has not prevented me from the highs
It has not shackled my hands, No!!
And this veil hinders me not from my aim!
O sister, the morrow is ours!
Go on your path and upwards
O sister, the truth rises above
The cunning of the aggressor!

From her writings are: Al-Fadeela Tan'taser [The Virtue Triumphs], Kaleema wa Daa'wa [A Word and An Invitation], Al-Mar'aa Maa Al-Nabee [The Woman with The Prophet], Imraatan wa Rajol [Two Women and a Man], Zikrayat ala Tilal Makka [Memories over the Hills of Makka], Al-Ba'hitha aan Al-Hakika [The Woman Searching for the Truth], Siraa [A Struggle], Al-Khala Al-Da'ee'aa [The Lost Aunt], Boutoulat Al-Mar'aa Al-Muslima [The Heroisms of the Muslim Woman], etc.

The Martyr Bint Al-Huda exceeded the educational and social work to reach the political struggle. She played an effective and strong role in transmitting the ideas of the Martyr Sayyid As-Sadr to the women and in illustrating for everybody working with her the requisite political attitude at that time. In addition, she worked towards mobilizing the women in order to resist the ideas and plans of the tyrant regime, and she participated in establishing the striving spirit against the enemies of Islam.

In 1977 A.D, The Sayyid, The Martyr, was arrested. As a result, The Martyr Bint Al-Huda, her steps being inspired by the steps of Sayyida Zeinab Al-Hawraa (God's peace bestowed upon her) with no fear and with a Zeinabian courage, got out to the sanctuary of her grandfather The Prince of the Believers (God's peace bestowed upon him), thus appealing the people for help and motivating them to rebel. She called most loudly, "O my grandfather, O The prince of the Believers! I complain to God and to you about the oppression and persecution we are exposed to." And then, she addressed the people saying, "O noble ones! Are you going to remain silent even though your reference is arrested? Are you going to remain silent while your reference is being jailed and tortured? Then, what would you say to my grandfather The Prince of the Believers if he asked you about your betrayal? Get out! Demonstrate! Protest!"

The tyrant Saddam noticed that The Martyr Bint Al-Huda and her father were exposing his tyrant regime to danger; so he ordered to arrest them and he exposed them to a severe torture which ended in the martyrdom of Sayyid As-Sadr and his pure sister Bint Al-Huda (May God be pleased with them both).

From her poems are the following:

Even if the road is filled
With what prevents to move on
Even if life strives
to despoil me
Even if the tyrant time tries
To shoot spears at me
Even if circumstances interplay
To cause me pains and distress
And the clouds of worries heap
To gloom the horizon of my thought
Even if my feet bleed
I swear not to give up my aim

Not to stop striving, No!
For my aim is higher and loftier!
I already know that
The path of truth is throne filled
The resistant has always been
Alone among the legions
And God has always helped
His soldiers even being the few
The truth is immortalized in existence
With everything else evanescent
I will continue to chant my Islam
And to disclaim every falsehood

- [1.](#) Bihar Al-Anwar [The Seas of Lights], Part Two, p. 17
- [2.](#) Mizan Al-Hikmah [The Standard of Sagacity], Part One, p.463
- [3.](#) Mizan Al-Hikmah, Part Three, p.2064
- [4.](#) Amali, Sheikh Al-Tusi, p.428
- [5.](#) Mizan Al-Hikmah [The Standard of Sagacity], Part One. p.462
- [6.](#) Mizan Al-Hikmah, Part One, p.462
- [7.](#) Al-Kafi [The Sufficient], Part One, p.30
- [8.](#) Mizan Al-Hikmah, Part One, p.65
- [9.](#) Al-Kafi [The Sufficient], Part One, p.32

Lesson 4: The Veil

Introduction

The veil is one of the most important controversial issues in the societies on the general social level because of its great influence on the determination of the identity of the society and because of its basic and crucial role as regards the approach and the behavior of the society with both its men and women.

As a result, the veil is always exposed to campaigns of distortion and weakening by means of controversy and suspicion at one time; by means of the practical confrontation through the laws of restriction and forbiddance at another time; and by means of attempting, through issuing the accusations of underdevelopment and narrow mindedness and fanaticism, at isolating the veiled women from having any influence on the society at a third time.

This manifests the importance of the veil and its fateful and crucial role in the struggle between the truth and the falsehood. It is the towering fortress which protects the camp of the truth. Therefore, its

extinction, God forbids, results in the collapse of a lot of concepts and behaviors all at once. Abandoning the veil is not equivalent to taking away one of Islam's fruits only; it is, in fact, equivalent to shaking the table of the truth from the behavioral aspect, so that all the fruits on it will fall down and will be replaced by zachum [an infernal tree with bitter fruits], dareeaa, and the tables of falsehood.

The Veil throughout the Human History

The veiling, as is the case with the unveiling, was not restricted to one period of the human history. When we examine the history, we find out that veiling and unveiling are as ancient in the human history as the truth and the falsehood are. When Islam came and The Noble Qur'an descended, they assisted the humanity – and this is acknowledged by the enemy before it is acknowledged by the friend – to move forward on the civilizational level. Islam asked the woman to put on the veil in a society where some people used to nakedly circumambulate around the honorable Kaaba and where there were houses of the raised red flags in the Jahiliyyah [the period before Islam]. When we read the prophets' (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon them) biography, we always find these two lines. Yet upon reflecting upon the future and upon the point at which the humanity will anchor at the end of its history in this life, we find out that the veil represents the future which the humanity will adopt.

The human experience has proved that unveiling is the cause of the underdevelopment of the societies from the social aspect and the cause of the dangerous problems which the western world is suffering from nowadays. Here it is enough to compare between the security of the woman in the western societies which turn away from the veil and the security of the woman in the Islamic societies which abide to the veil – in spite of the default as regards the actual abiding to this duty.

The veil embodies the perfection, development, and assurance which the truth represents. On the other hand, unveiling embodies the deficiency, underdevelopment, confusion, and lack of security which the falsehood represents.

To add, the veil is a duty imposed by The Most Glorified and High God; so it is for sure a perfection and development – and not a deficiency or underdevelopment – with respect to those who believe in God and His perfect characteristics. The promised day is going to come when no flag but that of the truth is going to rise, when Al-Hujja Al-Mahdi (May God hasten his honorable revelation) is going to appear:

“And indeed We have written in Al-Zabur [the Psalms] after We have written it in the Book that My righteous slaves shall inherit the land.” (The Qur'an, Al-Anbiya, 21:105)

What Is the Meaning of Veiling?

In the linguistic books, it is mentioned in illustration of veiling: “Everything that prevents something from another thing, then it veils it. The veil is with which you hold back something from another thing”¹.

When we talk about the woman's veil, we mean preventing the marriageable men from looking at the woman's body. The veil, then, is what serves as a block, barrier, and a screen from looking, regardless of the nature of the barrier.

What Must Be Veiled?

There are two issues related to the outer part of the body. They are: the skin with its color and its shadow, and the size with its three aspects i.e. the form. Must only one of them be veiled? Or must both be veiled?

As regards the skin, it must doubtlessly be veiled, whether its color or its shadow. As regards the size, it must not be veiled completely; only the parts that cause seduction must be veiled.

The Evidences on the Necessity of Veiling

Concerning the veil, there are three issues with which we must be acquainted:

1-In front of Whom Must the Woman Wear the Veil?

The woman must wear the veil in front of the marriageable men i.e. any man except those whom The Most High God excludes in His Book. The Most High God says,

“...and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husband's sons, their brothers or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons, or their women, or the [female] slaves whom their right hands possess, or old male servants who lack vigor, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And all of you beg Allah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful.” (The Qur'an, An-Nur, 24:31)

2-How Much Is the Woman Ordered to Veil?

The woman must obstruct the marriageable man's looking to any part of her body rather than the face and the palms. There are evidences from the noble verses and the discourses of the Infallibles (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon them) which indicate this.

A-The Saying of The Most High God:

“Tell the believing men to lower their gaze, and protect their private parts. That is purer for them. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze, and protect their private parts and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent and to draw their yashmaks all over Juyubihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms, etc.” (The Qur'an, Al-Nur, 24:30-31)

This noble verse reflects upon several points:

1- The marriageable believing men and women must lower their gaze i.e. not to look fixedly and excessively at each other.

2- The believing men and women must keep up their sexual parts. Therefore, it is required to work hard in order to maintain chastity and purity.

3- The adornment must be covered. There are two kinds of adornment: hidden and apparent. The hidden adornment is the one which is hidden under the clothes, thus being covered from the gazes of the lookers, such as: the necklace, earring, the hair color, the adorned clothes, etc. On the other hand, the apparent adornment is the one which usually appears from the woman as a necessity for her to accomplish her needs i.e. the face and the palms.

It is related in a narrative ascribed to Mas'ada ibn Ziad that he said, "I heard Ja'far (God's peace bestowed upon him) being asked about what adornment the woman may show. He (God's peace bestowed upon him) answered, '[The parts which the woman is permitted to show are] the face and the palms.'"² This means that she must cover all her body except the face and the palms.

The Most High God goes on saying, "...and to draw their yashmaks all over Juyubihinna [i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms, etc.]"

The yashmak is a cloth with which the woman covers her head and neck. The jaib is the split in the shirt which opens at the neck and the breast. It is related that the women, during the era of The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household), used to wear clothes opened at the neck and the breast, and that they used to drop their yashmaks behind their heads. This manner of dropping the yashmaks caused their ears and earrings and part of their chests to be apparent to the lookers. As a result, the above mentioned Qur'anic verse came down to order them to drop their yashmaks over their jaibs i.e. drop the remaining part from the head cover over their breasts, so that they would cover their ears and earrings and breasts.

B- The Saying of The Most High God:

"O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks all over their bodies. That will be better, that they should be known so as not to be annoyed. And Allah is Ever Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful." (The Qur'an, Al-Ahzab, 33:59)

This verse involves a clear order by the necessity of letting down the cloaks. What is meant by cloaks? And how to let them down?

The cloak is a cloth which the woman wears and which covers all her body. The yashmak is also known as a cloak. It seems that the cloak is used here with the meaning of the yashmak; and to let it down means to cover the jaib with it. This verse manifests what is mentioned in the previous one, but here it is

added, "...That will be better, that they should be known so as not to be annoyed." This implies that such is better for them, so that they will be known of the chaste and righteous ones; then, none of the people of dissipation will try to harm them³.

Two Concepts for the Women's Veil

There are two concepts for the veil which greatly affect the woman's role, activity, and presence in the society.

The First Concept: It is to negatively regard the veil and to apply it in a manner which isolates the woman completely from the society, so that she, with this veil, will no more have a probable affectivity and so that her entire life will be restricted to her house without any association to the society.

This way of veiling is not in consistency with a lot of Qur'anic verses, like the Saying of The Most High God,

"The believers, men and women, are supporters of each other; they enjoin Al-Maarouf [i.e. monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do] and Al-Munkar [i.e. polytheism and disbelief of all kinds and all that Islam forbids]." (The Qur'an, Al-Tawba, 9:71)

Moreover, it is a contradiction to the Islamic career and history. Sayyida Fatima Al-Zahraa (God's peace bestowed upon her) was a basic prop from the props of the Islamic society. Likewise was Sayyida Zeinab (God's peace bestowed upon her) with her well known role especially after Karbalaa when she carried its everlasting message; before Karbalaa even, she had her major role especially in the womanish society.

The Second Concept: It is the positive veil that preserves the woman in the society and that supplies her with the proper atmosphere which assists her in work and efficiency. It is, in fact, a push towards work and efficiency and influence, as were The Mistress of the Women Sayyida Fatima Al-Zahraa (God's peace bestowed upon her), her mother Khadija Bint Khouwayled (God's peace bestowed upon her) before her, Sayyida Zeinab Al-Hawraa (God's peace bestowed upon her) after her, and the women of the message in general. His Eminence Imam Al-Khomeini (May his secret be sacred) said, "Islam qualifies the woman to have, as the man has, a role in all the issues. As the man plays a role in all the issues, the woman has also such a role.

Summary

Veiling, as well as unveiling, was not restricted to one period of the human history. When we examine history, we find that the veiling and the unveiling are as old in the human history as the truth and the falsehood are.

The human experience has proved that unveiling is the cause of the underdevelopment of the societies

from the social aspect and the cause of the dangerous problems which the western world is suffering from nowadays.

The veil embodies the perfection, development, and assurance which the truth represents. On the other hand, unveiling embodies the deficiency, underdevelopment, confusion, and lack of security which the falsehood represents.

Veiling is the prevention of the marriageable men from looking at the woman's body. There are two issues which are related to the outer part of the body; they are: the skin with its color and its shadow, and the size with its three aspects (form). As regards the skin, it must doubtlessly be veiled, whether its color or its shadow. As regards the size, it must not be veiled completely; only the details that lead to seduction must be veiled.

The woman must cover herself in front of the marriageable man except the face and the palms i.e. except what The Most High God excludes in His Book.

There are two concepts for the veil:

The First Concept: It is to negatively regard the veil and to apply it in a manner which isolates the woman completely from the society, so that she will no more have a probable affectivity. This way is not in consistency with a lot of the Qur'anic verses, like the Saying of The Most High God, "The believers, men and women, are supporters of each other; they enjoy Al-Maarouf [i.e. monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do] and Al-Munkar [i.e. polytheism and disbelief of all kinds and all that Islam forbids]."

The Second Concept: It is the positive veil that preserves the woman in the society and that supplies her with the proper atmosphere which assists her in work and affectivity.

Comprehension Questions

- 1- Is Islam the only one which emphasizes the importance of the veil?
- 2- Does the veil have any influence on the members of the society? What is this influence?
- 3- What are the two looks and concepts for the veil?
- 4- What is meant by the negative veil?
- 5- What is meant by the positive veil?

For Reading: Imam Al-Khomeini and the Veil

The family of His Eminence Imam Al-Khomeini (May his secret be sacred) relate many stories about the veil and men's and women's being at the same place in the Imam's daily life, so that they will be a lesson for us. Here we mention some of these stories and words.

1- Sayyida Fatima Tabataba'i said, "The Imam used to be hurt so much when he realized that someone was disobeying the doctrine, and his composure used to change clearly. He, for example, used to caution us as regards the complete abidance to the veil if a part of the hand of one of us was apparent, more than the permitted religious extent, while we were sitting to the table of food."⁴

2- Sayyida Ateefa Al-Ishraki said, "From the issues which The Imam used to be so concerned in is the marriageable person being at the same place. I remember that he called me once when I was not more than ten years old. I was playing hide and seek with my brothers and my cousin. Even though I was putting on the veil, he said to me, 'There is no difference between you and your elder sister. So, how is that you are playing with the boys while she is not doing so?'"⁵

3- Sayyida Fatima Tabataba'i said, "The Imam used to find no necessity in the talk to the marriageable men, so we used not to sit in The Imam's house in one room with any of his grandsons if he had reached the age of religious responsibility. The rare point while we used to be sitting with The Imam is that if one of his grandsons entered his room, he used to ask his grandson, and not us, to get out. Also, when I used to be sitting with The Imam and one of his grandsons who had reached the age of religious responsibility wanted to enter, The Imam used to prevent him to enter because of my being there, in spite of the fact the this grandson was of my son's age."⁶

4- Sayyida Zahraa Al-Moustafawi said, "The Imam is strict concerning the marriageable persons being at the same place. For instance, my children and my brother Sayyid Ahmad's children are of close ages i.e. between fifteen and sixteen years old. If one day we were invited to lunch at The Imam's house, we used not to take our children with us. And if we took them with us, the boys would go to Sayyid Ahmad's house where the men would have lunch. As regards the girls, they would eat with us in our mother's room in The Imam's house, in order that the marriageable persons, even if being kins, would not sit to the same table. Even more, he used to assure that there was no need for them to salute each other because saluting is not a duty."⁷

5- Sayyida Zahraa Al-Moustafawi said, "I was fifteen years old when the deceased Sheikh Al-Ishraki and my sister got married. One day, he invited us to a banquet at his house. Sheikh Al-Ishraki got out to the garden of his house in order to welcome us. I asked my father, 'Shall I salute him?' He answered, 'Saluting is not a duty.' So, I had to pass through the garden in order to avoid saluting him."

¹. Kitab Al-Ein [The Book of the Arabic Letter "Ein"], Part Three, p.86

². Wasa'il Al-Shi'a [The Means of The Shiite], Part Fourteen, p.146

³. Refer to Al-Mizan Fi Tafseer Al-Qur'an [The Standard in the Illustration of The Qur'an]

4. The appendix of Ittila'at Newspaper, March 14th, 1369 of Immigration
5. "Zen Rose" Magazine, Edition 1267
6. The appendix of Ittila'at Newspaper, March 14th, 1369 of Immigration
7. "Sha'hed Banawan" Magazine, Edition 149

Lesson 5: Men's and Women's Being at the Same Place

Introduction

Men's and women's being at the same place, represents, in general, a fertile land for falling in a lot of behavioral and psychological deviations, a land which may tempt the human being to find him/herself, from these two aspects, at a point at which he/she has lost all the psychological defenses against the insinuations of the devils and the calling for evil soul, at which he/she has turned to be a victim under the control of cursed Satan and away from the divine mercy.

Such areas where both men and women are present are, in fact, from the easy targets towards which Satan and his soldiers direct all their weapons and seductions and embellishments and illusions, so that they will defeat the human being and so that the aim of cursed Satan will be accomplished:

"[Satan] said, 'O my Lord! Because You misled me, I shall indeed adorn the path of error for them on the earth, and I shall mislead them all. Except Your chosen slaves among them.'" (The Qur'an, Al-Hijr, 15:39-40)

From here, men's and women's being at the same place implies a special danger which makes it necessary to get acquainted with the religious limits which prevent the human being from falling into the trap of Satan and his soldiers and which supply the human being with the requisite protection and invulnerability in order to remain honorable in this life and in order to gain salvation in the hereafter.

What Is the Meaning of Men's and Women's Being at the Same Place?

Men's and women's being at the same place means the meeting of the men and the women at one place, whether a house, a market, a road, etc. Then, any meeting for one of the sexes with the other sex is considered to be involved in this definition.

Being illustrated with this general meaning, men's and women's being at the same place can be avoided

with respect to one person or two persons. But it is absolutely difficult to avoid it with respect to the society in general because the human being usually lives in a society where both men and women are present.

Also, the members of the society have exchanged needs, which makes it difficult to impose the complete isolation between the men and the women. Even more, we notice that men and women are present at the same place even in some major religious issues, such as: the pilgrimage and the fight for God's sake.

It is related in the biography of The Greatest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that the women used to get out with him for war in order to cure the wounded, to supply the fighters with water, etc.

Reduction of Men's and Women's Being at the Same Place

The fact that the men's and women's being at the same place is necessary in some issues does not present a sufficient excuse to give up to it and to agree on it whatever. This is so because necessities are limited to their requisite rate. Therefore, men's and women's being at the same place must be reduced to the most possible extent as The Noble Qur'an guides us to in the stories of the Talker with God, Prophet Musa (God's peace bestowed upon him and upon our Prophet and his Household) and the two daughters of His prophet Shou'aib (God's peace bestowed upon him and upon our Prophet and his Household). The Most High God says,

“And we he arrived at the water of Madyan [Midian], he found there a group of men watering [their flocks], and beside them he found two women who were keeping back [their flocks]. He said, “What is the matter with you?” They said, “We cannot water [our flocks] until the shepherds take [their flocks]. And our father is a very old man.” (The Qur'an, Al-Qasas, 28:23)

The Forbidden Privacy

The sacred doctrine forbids that sort of men's and women's being at the same place which reaches the extent of the privacy between the marriageable man and woman under certain conditions which Imam Al-Khomeini (May his secret be sacred) referred to in saying, “If the man and the woman meet in a place of privacy where nobody is present and where nobody else is able to enter and if they fear to commit something forbidden, they must get out of the place.”¹

It is enough even if the forbidden part in the privacy place is restricted to the forbidden look only. Such privacy is forbidden in itself. It is related in the narrative ascribed to The Prince of the Believers Imam Ali (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “Let no man be in privacy with a woman because whenever a man is in privacy with a woman, the devil is the third one there.”²

It is related to Imam As-Sadiq (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) imposed on women a commitment not to wail, scratch themselves, and sit with men alone."

The Standards of the Permissible Men's and Women's Being at the Same Place

If no privacy takes place, men's and women's being at the same place is not forbidden in itself. But this does not mean that there are no religious limits. When the man and the woman are present at the same place with each other, there are several limits which must be taken in consideration and which must be avoided. Here we mention some of these limits.

1- Grooming and Adorning: Grooming and adornment are from the things which the woman is forbidden to show to the marriageable men. It is related in the forbiddances discourse ascribed to The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "He [wanting God] [forbade that she adorns for anybody rather than her husband. If she does, God will burn her in fire."

2- Fragrance and Perfume: The fragrance and the perfume are also judged as grooming is; but the difference lies in that the grooming is sensed by the sight whereas the perfume is sensed by the smell. If the evil is probable, she is forbidden to get out of her house and to be with the marriageable men at the same place while she is being perfumed. It is ascribed to Jaber ibn Yazeed that he said, "I heard Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali Al-Baqir (God's peace bestowed upon him) saying, 'She is not permitted to perfume when she gets out of her house.'"

Getting out is just an example for what gives chance for men's and women's being at the same place. Forbiddance is not exclusive to getting out; it is applicable to men's and women's being at the same place in general even if it takes place inside the house.

3- Touching the Marriageable Person and Shaking Hands: Touching and shaking hands are from the evils related to the sense of touch, so it is forbidden to touch the skin of the marriageable person. It is ascribed to God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "He who shakes hands with a woman while it is forbidden to do so is going to come on the Day of Judgment shackled and then is going to be ordered to the Fire."

It is ascribed to Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "The woman is not permitted to shake hands with a marriageable man but when the hand is covered with a veil."

Forbiddance, therefore, applies to both men and women: The man is forbidden to shake hands with the marriageable woman, and the woman is forbidden to shake hands with the marriageable man.

4- Speaking in a Seductive Way: It is to speak in a coquettish way, and The Most High God forbids this

in His saying,

“O wives of The Prophet! You are not like any other women. If you keep your duty [to Allah], then be not soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease [of hypocrisy or evil desire to adultery, etc] should be moved with desire, but speak in an honorable manner.” (The Qur’an, Al-Ahzab, 33:32)

This noble verse indicates the seriousness of the role of The Prophet’s (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) wives and indicates that they are asked, before the other women are asked, to abide to these Islamic duties which are general for all the Muslims. From these duties is not to speak in a soft i.e. coquettish way. The Muslim woman, therefore, must speak in an honorable way and must turn away from the ways which seduce the listening men, especially those in whose hearts are diseases.

5- Going Too Far in Looking: The Most High God says,

“Tell the believing men to lower their gaze [from looking at forbidden things] and protect their private parts [from illegal sexual acts, etc]. That is purer for them. Verily, Allah is All Aware of what they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze [from looking at forbidden things] and protect their private parts [from illegal sexual acts, etc] and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent [like palms of the hands or one eye or both eyes for necessity to see the way, or outer dress like veil, gloves, head cover, etc] and to draw their veils all over their Juyub [i.e. their bodies, faces, necks, bosoms, etc].” (The Qur’an, An-Nur, 24:30–31)

The believing men and women must lower their gazes and not fix their looks at each other. It is ascribed to The Noblest Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “God’s wrath increases on a married woman who quenches her sight by looking at somebody rather than her husband or at a marriageable man. Once she does so, The Most Glorified and Reverent God aborts everything she does.”³

It is ascribed to Imam Abu Abdullah As-Sadiq (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “Looking is one of Satan’s poisoned arrows. How many a times has a look resulted in a long sorrow!”⁴ It is also ascribed to him (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “A look after a look plants the desire in the heart, and it is sufficient to seduce the looker.”⁵ If it is a look with a desire, then even the first look is forbidden.

6- Joking and Much Laughing: The woman must preserve her honorability when she is present at the same place with marriageable men, and she must not give herself vent to look as if she has a frivolous character which is easily turned with the fancies. Much joking and laughing are from the issues which show the woman as being frivolous and non-grave in this society where both men and women are present. Because of this, it is related in the narrative ascribed to God’s prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “He who jokes with a woman who is not his own

wife will have God imprisoning him in this life a thousand years for every word.”⁶

Joking deletes the psychological limits and paves the way in front of any probable slipping.

Abu Baseer said, “I was teaching Qur’an to one woman, and I joked with her about something. When I went to Abu Ja’far [Imam Al-Baqir] (God’s peace bestowed upon him), he asked me, ‘What did you say to the woman?’ So, I covered my face. He (God’s peace bestowed upon him) said to me, ‘Do not do that again.’”

These are the major standards which must be taken into consideration when men and women are present at the same place.

Summary

Men’s and women’s being at the same place represents, in general, a fertile land for falling in a lot of behavioral and psychological deviations.

Since men’s and women’s being at the same place is dangerous, it is necessary to get acquainted with the religious limits which prevent the human being from falling into the trap of Satan and which supply the human being with the requisite protection and invulnerability.

Men’s and women’s being at the same place means the meeting of the marriageable men and the women at the same place, whether a house, a market, a road, etc. Then, any meeting for one of the sexes with the other sex is considered to be involved in this definition.

The sacred doctrine forbids that sort of men’s and women’s being at the same place which reaches the extent of the privacy between the marriageable man and woman. There are two basic points which result in the forbiddance of the privacy:

- 1- To be alone in a place where nobody else can enter
- 2- Not to be safe from evil, even if the evil is restricted to the limit of the forbidden look

When men and women are present at the same place, there are several limits which must be taken into consideration and which must be avoided. Here we mention some of these limits:

- 1- Grooming and adorning
- 2- Fragrance and perfume
- 3- Touching the marriageable person and shaking hands
- 4- Speaking in a seductive way i.e. coquettishly

5- Going too far in looking

6- Joking and much laughing

Comprehension Questions

1- What are the social consequences of men's and women's being at the same place?

2- What is meant by men's and women's being at the same place?

3- What is the difference between men's and women's being at the same place and the forbidden privacy?

4- What are the two conditions which fulfill the forbidden privacy?

5- What must the woman take into consideration and avoid in the councils where both men and women are present?

For Reading: Khadija bint Khouwayled

For Reading: Khadija bint Khouwayled (God's peace bestowed upon her): The Sacrifice to Preserve the Message

When The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) was being hurt and was facing the difficulties, there was at the same time someone who was appeasing him, easing his pains, and driving away his worries and sorrows. That person is the great woman: Khadija bint Khouwayled (God's peace bestowed upon her).

The presence of Khadija (God's peace bestowed upon her) was an important factor in the life of The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) and in the life of Islam at its very beginning. Had not her presence been of this great importance, it would not have been so hard for The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) to lose her and her death would not have been so painful for him: He (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) called the year in which she passed away "The Year of Sorrows", and he continued to remember her and her grace the whole of his lifetime.

When Sayyida Khadija (God's peace bestowed upon her) got married to God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household), she did not spare any effort to dedicate all her financial and spiritual capabilities for the sake of helping him.

She is the one who said to her cousin Waraka ibn Nawfal, "I declare that I have offered all my money and servants to Muhammad, so that he will dispose of them however he wishes." So, her cousin Waraka ibn Nawal stood between Zamzam [well of blessed water in Makka] and Makam [the Sanctuary] and

called most loudly, “O Arabs, Khadija call you to be her witnesses on that she offered herself, her money, her servants, and whatever she owns to Muhammad as a sign of reverence of him and glorification of his status...”

After that, the greatest peril on the message which The Noblest Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) faced was the siege Quraish dropped around him, his family, relatives, and Sons of Hashem in general. At that point, Khadija’s (God’s peace bestowed upon her) money was the key for enduring the siege and was the outlet for the ones sieged: She used to buy the food for double its price, so that the sieged people would eat. The three years of siege passed, thus ending with the safety of the people and the frustration of what Quraish plotted against them.

The narratives relate that what Sayyida Khadija (God’s peace bestowed upon her) spent summed up to forty thousand and forty thousand dinars.

- [1.](#) Tawdeeh Al-Masael [The Illustration of the Questions], Imam Al-Khomeini (May his secret be sacred), Question 2445
- [2.](#) Moustadrak Al-Wasa’il [Making Up for the Means], Part Fourteen, p.265
- [3.](#) Mizan Al-Hikmah [The Standard of Sagacity], Part Two, p. 116
- [4.](#) Al-Kafi [The Sufficient], Part Five, p.559
- [5.](#) Wasa’il Al-Shi’a [The Means of the Shiite], Part Twenty, p. 192
- [6.](#) Wasa’il Al-Shi’a, Part Twenty, p. 198

Lesson 6: Ashamedness and Chastity

Ashamedness

The Noble Qur’an set forth several models of the righteous woman and indicated their behavior and characteristics, among which is ashamedness. The Most High God says,

“And when he arrived at the water of Madyan [Midian], he found there a group of men watering [their flocks], and beside them he found two women who were keeping back [their flocks]. He said, “What is the matter with you?” They said, “We cannot water [our flocks] until the shepherds take [their flocks]. And our father is a very old man.” So he watered [their flocks] for them, then he turned back to shade, and said, “My Lord! Truly, I am in need of whatever good that You bestow on me!” Then there came to him one of the two women, walking shyly. She said, “Verily, my father calls you that he may reward you for having watered [our flocks] for us.” So when he came to him and narrated the story, he said, “Fear you not. You have escaped from the people who are Zalimun [polytheists, disbelievers, and wrong doers].” (The Qur’an, Al-Qasas, 28:23–25)

These verses relate the story of Prophet Musa’s (God’s peace bestowed upon him and upon our

Prophet and his Household) meeting with the two daughters of Prophet Shou'aib (God's peace bestowed upon him and upon our Prophet and his Household). Also, these verses manifest clearly the ashamedness of these two righteous women in two points.

The first point is: "... They said, "We cannot water [our flocks] until the shepherds take [their flocks]..." They refused to get in among the men, thus preferring to wait till the place would be unoccupied. This has a crystal like association to ashamedness and to the refusal of being with marriageable men at the same place.

The second one is: "Then there came to him one of the two women, walking shyly..." Here is a clear statement of the ashamedness by which the daughter of Prophet Shou'aib (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and upon our prophet and his Household) was characterized.

Importance of Ashamedness

It is ascribed to God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "Ashamedness and faith fall in one category; once one of them is lost, the other one follows with it."¹

It is ascribed to Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "He who has no ashamedness has no faith."²

These narratives show the intricate association of faith to ashamedness to the extent that faith cannot be fulfilled without ashamedness! This means that the lack of ashamedness will be reflected on the conduct of the human being in this life, thus leading it far away from the conduct of the religiously committed believer. Also, since the conduct and the deeds of the human being will be reflected on the hereafter, then non ashamedness in this life will be reflected as a clear loss in the hereafter.

It is ascribed to God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "He who has no ashamedness in this life is not going to be admitted to Heaven."³

Ashamedness is demanded from the human being in general, but it is demanded from the woman by all means. It is ascribed to God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "God divided ashamedness into ten parts, thus putting nine parts in the woman and one part in the man."⁴

Being Ashamed of Whom?

1- Ashamed of The Most High God: Someone said to The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) "Give me a recommendation." He (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) said, "Be ashamed of God as you are ashamed of a righteous man in your nation."⁵

2– Ashamed of The Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) and the Imams (God’s peace bestowed upon them): It is ascribed to Imam Muhammad Al–Baqir (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “The deeds of the people are shown before your Prophet every Thursday evening. Let everyone of you be ashamed of showing before his/her Prophet an abominated deed.”⁶ It is related by Ya’coub ibn Sou’aib, “I asked Abu Abdullah (God’s peace bestowed upon him) about the Saying of The Most High God:

“And say [O Muhammad], Do deeds! Allah will see your deeds, and [so will His Messenger and the believers.]” (The Qur’an, At–Tawba, 9: 105)

He (God’s peace bestowed upon him) answered, ‘They [the believers] are the Imams (God’s peace bestowed upon them.)’⁷

3– Ashamed of the Angels: It is ascribed to God’s prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “Let everyone be ashamed of the two angels who are with him as he is ashamed of two righteous men from his neighbors and who are with him day and night.”⁸

4– Ashamed of the People: It is ascribed to Imam Ali (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “He who is not ashamed of the people is not ashamed of The Most Glorified God.”⁹

5– Ashamed of the Self: It is ascribed to Imam Ali (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “The best ashamedness is your ashamedness of yourself.”¹⁰

Being Ashamed of What?

It is ascribed to God’s prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “Ashamedness is all the religion.”¹¹ Moreover, it is ascribed to Imam Ali (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “Ashamedness keeps the human being away from the performance of abominated deeds.”¹² It is also ascribed to him (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “Ashamedness is the key for every good.”¹³

The whole of these narratives indicates that the human being must be ashamed of committing sins; he/she must be ashamed of abandoning the duties and of performing the forbiddances. He/she must be so because he/she who is ashamed of The Most High God cannot, knowing that He is watching him, disobey Him. In addition, he/she who is ashamed of The Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) cannot, knowing that his/her sin is going to be shown before The Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household), commit sins.

Verily! Ashamedness is all the religion! And what is attached to it is the whole of the religion. With the increase of ashamedness, the religiousness increases. It is ascribed to Imam Ali (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “As much as ashamedness is, as much as chastity is.”¹⁴

In addition to all of this, there are certain issues which we are going to refer to as terms related to ashamedness.

1- Ashamedness in Secrecy

It is related that when God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) saw a man washing before the people who were watching him, he (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) said, "O people! God likes from His servants the ashamedness and secrecy. Let whomever washing to hide from the people, for ashamedness is the adornment of Islam." [15](#)

2- Ashamedness in Looking

The Most High God says,

"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze [from looking at forbidden things]." (The Qur'an, An-Nur, 24:31)

3- Ashamedness in the Saying

It is ascribed to God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "God forbade that the Heaven be admitted by every obscene, filthy, and shameless person who cares neither for what he said nor for what it was said about him." [16](#)

Chastity

The Meaning of Chastity

Chastity is a psychological characteristic in the human being.

It can be noticed through its impacts on the human being. Some narratives state that these impacts are:

– Abstinence from the desire: It is ascribed to Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "Abstinence from the desire is chastity." [17](#)

– Asceticism: It is also ascribed to Imam Ali (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "Chastity is asceticism." [18](#)

– Protection of the soul and the abstinence from everything mean: It is also ascribed to Imam Ali (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "Chastity protects the soul and abstains it from the low things." [19](#)

All of these are regarded to be the impacts of the chastity which in turn indicate it.

Chastity from What?

The things which are related to chastity are many. Here we refer to some of them.

1- Abstinence from Disclosing the Financial Need: The Most High God says,

“[Charity is] for the poor who in Allah’s Cause are restricted [from travel] and cannot move about in the land [for trade or work]. The one who knows them not thinks that they are rich because of their modesty.” (The Qur’an, Al-Baqarah, 2:273)

It is ascribed to Imam Ali (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “Chastity is the adornment of poverty.”^{[20](#)}

2- Chastity as Regards Insistence on the Veil: The Most High God says,

“And as for women past child bearing who do not expect wed lock, it is no sin on them if they discard their [outer] clothing in such a way as not to show their adornment. But to refrain [i.e. not to discard their outer clothing] is better for them. And Allah is All Hearer All Knower.” (The Qur’an, An-Nur, 24:60)

3- Abstinence from the Desire: The Most High God says,

“And let those who find not the financial means for marriage keep them chaste, until Allah enriches from His Bounty.” (The Qur’an, An-Nur, 24:33)

Opposites of Ashamedness and Chastity

1- Imitation of the Men: We previously mentioned that there are certain issues which are adequate to the man and other issues which are adequate to the woman. Islam stresses the necessity for each one to abide to what adequates to him her, so that the woman will not perform what is adequate to the man and what opposes the ashamedness and chastity because what reforms one of them may corrupt the other one.

The Noblest Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) highly emphasized this to the extent that he cursed the woman who turns away from what suits her in order to imitate the men. It is ascribed to him (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “God cursed the woman who imitates the man, and God cursed the man who imitates the woman.”^{[21](#)}

It is related in the narrative ascribed to Imam Al-Baqir (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “The woman is not permitted to imitate the men because God’s prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) cursed the men who imitate the women and cursed the women who imitate the men.”^{[22](#)}

Imitation takes many forms, and it includes whatever contradicts the nature of the woman but suits that of the man. The clearest form is that of clothes imitation, such that the woman wears the clothes of the man and the man wears the clothes of the woman.

2- Imitation of the West: Alienation and loss of identity represent the most dangerous disease to which the human being may be exposed. It is so because it is the disease which destroys the entity and the personality and the privacy. It is, in fact, a breakdown for all the values which are prevailing in the society and a loss of the base on which the human being establishes his/her society. Then, a society without fixed standards and clear bases is an underdeveloped one to the utmost extents; in fact, it is a pest which survives on the scrupulous nessof the other societies.

It is originally unnatural that the human being loses his/her identity. What if the identity [that may be lost] is Islam? And what if these values are the divine values and the firm bond after which no guidance can be achieved and rather than which no good can be found? How can the human being, in order to adhere to the traditions and customs which have proved their failure and degradation and which have afflicted the societies with the crises on the level of the security and the moral values, forsake his/her guidance:

“This is the Book [the Qur’an] whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are Al-Mouttaqun [the pious and the righteous persons who fear Allah much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden) and love Allah much (perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained.)]” (The Qur’an, Al-Baqarah, 2:2)

Due to the danger of the loss of the identity, Islam refuses the imitation of the others even in the most trivial things, even on the level of the form only, in addition to the content. It is ascribed to God’s prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “Change the hoariness and imitate not the Jews and the Christians.”²³

It is also ascribed to God’s prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “Trim the fingers, and imitate not the Jews.”²⁴ It is also ascribed to him (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) in a third narrative that he said, “Sweep your yards, and imitate not the Jews.”²⁵

Then consider how much he (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) stresses the necessity of educating the society not to imitate the others. The danger lying in this imitation is the loss of the identity as is realized from the following narrative ascribed to The Prince of the Believers Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (God’s peace bestowed upon him). He (God’s peace bestowed upon him) was asked about the discourse of The Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household): “Change the hoariness, and imitate not the Jews.” He (God’s peace bestowed upon him) answered, “He said that at a time the religion was still narrow-ranged. Now its range being widened, then everybody is given the choice to do what he wants.”²⁶

This signifies that the problem does not lie in the change of the hoariness [i.e. the color of the hair] or

not, but in the imitation of the Jews. Once imitation takes place, turn away from it even if it takes place in things which there is no objection to in themselves.

His Eminence Imam Al-Khamene'i (May God lengthen his presence among us) says, "The greatest cultural attack is that they [the attackers] have, throughout the long years, taught the brain and its creeds that we are incapable [by ourselves] and thus we must follow after the west and Europe. This is the cultural invasion. They do not allow us even to trust our capabilities."

This is with respect to the non-forbidden issues. Then what about the imitation that has to do with the religiously forbidden issues which contradict Islam and its doctrine and which are from the great sins which deprive the human being of his/her religious commitment and make him/her lose the hereafter and thus testify the Saying of The Most High God:

"By Al-Asr [the time]. Verily! Man is in loss. Except those who do righteous good deeds and recommend one another to the truth and recommend one another to patience!" (The Noble Qur'an, Al-Asr, 103: 1-3)

In this frame, we must differentiate between making benefit of the knowledge and imitating. Knowledge is the quarry of the believer wherever it is, and as it is ascribed to Imam Ali (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "Knowledge is the goal of the believer."[27](#)

Yet, acquisition of knowledge does not mean imitation as Imam Ali Al-Khamene'i (May God lengthen his presence among us) testifies in his saying, "The Europeans have uncountable wrong deeds and abominable conduct. Why should we learn these deeds from them? . . . We are Muslims, and we must remain Muslims. They have more knowledge than we have. Well, let us go and learn their knowledge. But why should we learn the customs, culture, conduct, and etiquettes of the social relations from them? What a wrong talk is this! Why should we imitate them in their clothes, conduct, etiquettes of the social relations, talk, and even accent? This is a lack of self-confidence and a feeling with meanness. Why should I feel meanness? I am proud of my language! I am proud of my culture! And I am proud of my home and country and history! Why then should I imitate them?"

Summary

Ashamedness is demanded from the human being in general, but it is demanded from the woman by all means. The religiously committed person must be ashamed of:

1- The Most High God

2- The Prophet) God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household (and The Imams ((God's peace bestowed upon them(

3- The angels i.e. those who record the good and bad deeds performed by the human being

4- The people

5- The self

The narratives indicate that the human being must be ashamed of committing sins. He/she must be so because he/she who is ashamed of The Most High God cannot, knowing that He is looking at him, disobey Him. In addition, he/she who is ashamed of The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) cannot, knowing that his/her deed is going to be shown before The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household), commit sins.

Chastity leads the human being to abandon the sins and to draw close to The Most High God, and it makes the conduct of the human being be dedicated to obey The Most High God.

From the impacts of chastity are:

1- Abstinence from the desire

2- Asceticism in this life and abstinence from its luxuries

The issues which are related to chastity are: abstinence from disclosing the financial need, chastity as regards insistence on the veil, abstinence from the desire, and abstinence from eating what is forbidden.

From the opposites of chastity are the imitation of the men and the imitation of the West.

Comprehension Questions

1-What must the human being be ashamed of?

2- To what extent does ashamedness influence the societies?

3- What is chastity? What are the issues related to it?

4- What are the impacts of chastity?

5- What are the opposites of chastity?

For Reading: From the Attitudes of Sayyida Zeinab

The eloquent inheritance which Sayyida Zeinab (God's peace bestowed upon her) bequeathed to us in addition to her attitudes which the history has immortalized deserve to be engraved in the hearts of all of the people who want to adopt the attitude of the truth and virtuousness.

We are going to mention a part of her speech with which she addressed the people of Al-Kufa and which left a great imprint in their hearts.

Basher ibn Kha'zeem Al-Asadi relates, "On that day, I looked at Zeinab Bint Ali (God's peace bestowed upon her) and saw no fear. And God sent the words from her as if they were branching from the tongue of The Prince of the Believers Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (God's peace bestowed upon him). She made a sign for the people, thus asking them to be silent; so the breaths drew back, and the bells stopped ringing. Then, she (God's peace bestowed upon her) said,

"Praise be to God. And God's prayers be bestowed upon my father Muhammad and upon his virtuous good Household."

"O People of Kufa! O People of deceit and betrayal! Are you crying? May your tears stop not and may your cry ease not! You are like the woman who undoes the thread which she has spun after it has become strong, by taking your oaths a means of deception among yourselves. You are characterized by none but by boastfulness, being stained by evils, detest, adulation, betrayal of the enemies: you are like a dead animal which is laid in a grave."

"Evil is what your souls have offered you: God's wrath fell upon you and you are going to be immortalized in the torture. Are you crying and weeping? By God! Cry a lot, and laugh a little, for you will never be able to wash the shame and disgrace you did. How can you wash your killing of the descendant of The Concluding Prophecy, the spring of the message, the master of the youths of Heaven, the shelter for your confusion, the refuge for your crisis, the light for your aim, and the leading person for your religious norm?"

"Verily! Evil is the burden you are carrying! Away with you! And woe to you! Your attempt was frustrated. Your hands were broken down. The bargain was lost. You were afflicted with a wrath from God. And you were stricken by disgrace and shame!"

"O People of Al-Kufa! Are you aware what a son for God's prophecy you did kill? What a daughter for him you did uncover? What a blood for him you did shed? What a sacredness for him you did violate? Your deed was cunning, ignominious, tremendous, violent, and as much disgraceful as the whole earth and the whole sky are huge!"

"Wonder not if the sky rains blood. And the torture of the hereafter is going to be much more disgraceful, and you are not going to be helped. Be not comfortable because you are granted a delay. Hastiness does not drive Him [The Most High God]. And it is not feared that the revenge be missed. And your God is in wait for you!"

[1.](#) Wasa'il Al-Shi'a [The Means of the Shiite], Part Eight, p.517

[2.](#) Al-Kafi [The Sufficient], Part Two, p.106

[3.](#) Kanz Al-Ommal [The Treasure of the Workers], Part Three, p.125

[4.](#) Kanz Al-Ommal, Part Three, p.27

[5.](#) Bihar Al-Anwar [The Seas of Lights], Part Sixty Eight, p.336

[6.](#) Bihar Al-Anwar, Part Twenty three, p.344

[7.](#) Moustadrak Safeenat Al-Bihar [Making Up for the Ship of the Seas], Part Seven, p.165

8. Kanz Al-Ommal [The Treasure of the Workers], Part Three, p.118
9. Mizan Al-Hikmah [The Standard of Sagacity], Part One, p.718
10. Mizan Al-Hikmah, Part One, p.719
11. Mizan Al-Hikmah, Part One, p.717
12. Oyoun Al-Hekam Wa Al-Mawaez [The Prime Adages and Advices], p.28
13. Oyoun AL-Hekam Wa Al-Mawaez, p.33
14. Oyoun Al-Hekam Wa Al-Mawaez, p.327
15. Moustadrak Al-Wasa'il [Making Up for the Means], Part One, p.488
16. Bihar Al-Anwar [The Seas of Lights], Part Seventy Six, p.112
17. Moustadrak Al-Wasa'il [Making Up for the Means], Part Eleven, p.263
18. Mizan Al-Hikmah [The Standard of Sagacity], Part Three, p.2006
19. Oyoun Al-Hekam Wa Al-Mawaez [The Prime Adages and Advices], p.21
20. Nahj Al-Balaghah [The Path of Eloquence], Part Four, Page 15, Aphorism 68
21. Al-Kafi [The Sufficient], Sheikh Al-Koulayni, Part Five, p.552
22. Bihar Al-Anwar [The Seas of Lights], Part Fourteen, p.163
23. Wasa'il Al-Shi'a Al-Islameeya [The Means of the Islamic Shiite], Al-Hurr Al-Amili, Part One, p.40
24. Moustadrak Al-Wasa'il, Al-Mirza Al-Nouri, Part One, p.414
25. Makarem Al-Akhlaq [The Loftiest Morals], Sheikh Al-Tabarsi, p.127
26. Nahjul Balaghah/ Speeches of Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (God's peace bestowed upon him), Part Four, p.5
27. Bihar Al-Anwar [The Seas of Lights], Part One, p.168

Lesson 7: Marriage – 1

The Importance of the Establishment of the Family

It is ascribed to God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "Nothing established in Islam is more liked by The Most High God than marriage is."¹

There are many narratives which spur on marriage and which refer to that small nest where the family lives within a legal and social frame which guarantees the care, security, and completeness for the family. The family is that small society which Islam stresses its importance, spurs on establishing it, and lies the bases for the relationship among its members on the level of the prevailing environments and the behaviors before the level of the rights and duties.

- What are the aims of this establishment?
- What are the environments which prevail in this establishment?
- What are the rights and the duties?

From the Aims of the Family

There are many doctrinal texts which reflect upon the aims of the family building. Here we mention these aims in the following points.

1- Chastity and Purity

Marriage represents the natural satisfaction for the instinct which The Most High God made in the human being and through which reproduction and preservation of the human species are maintained. By means of marriage, this instinct is satisfied and silenced. In addition, the human being guarantees not to slip after this instinct in a fault way. Marriage, therefore, maintains chastity and purity.

It is ascribed to God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "Let the man who likes to meet God pure and purified to meet Him with a wife."²

The address of this call to the human being starts since the age of youth because the human being may weaken in front of the demand and insistence of the instinct if he/she does not satisfy it correctly, properly, and in a religiously permissible way.

It is ascribed to God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "Whenever a youth man gets married while being in the stage of youthfulness, his devil uproars, 'Alas! Alas! He guarded from me two thirds of his religion.' Then, let the human being be devout as regards the remaining third."³

2- Fortification of the Morals

Turning away from marriage results in a lot of psychological struggles inside the human being which in turn lead to a lot of psychological complexes and problems which come out in the form of ill nature. From here, marriage puts an end to such disturbances and brings about good nature.

It is ascribed to The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "Marry off your male servants, so that God will improve their natures, increase their livings, and add to their vitalities."⁴ In addition, it results in the spiritual repose at which The Noble Qur'an points out. The Most High and Glorified God says,

"And among His signs is this, that He created for you your wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for men of sound knowledge." (The Qur'an, Ar-Rum, 30:21)

3- Complementarity between the Wife and the Husband and Fulfillment of the

Needs of Each One of Them:

Both the man and the woman have gaps in their characters, so each one of them is in need for the other one in order to fill in these gaps. The Noble Qur'an indicates this in the Saying of The Most High God,

"... They are libas [i.e. body cover, or screen, or sakan (i.e. you enjoy living with her)] for you and you are libas for them." (The Qur'an, Al-Baqarah, 2:187)

4- Occupation of Time with Obedience

Marriage involves a direct responsibility as regards the providing for the needs of the family after establishing and maintaining it. Therefore, certain daily duties and deeds become requisite, and this in turn presents for the human being daily aims and programs. As a result, this serves in preventing the occurrence of the social evils which originate from vacancy and from the state of having neither an aim nor a responsibility.

Increasing the Believing Progeny and Maintaining the Continuity of Life

It is ascribed to The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "What prevents the believer from getting married? Perhaps God will grant him a child who will fill the earth with, 'There is no god but God.'"⁵

The religious texts, therefore, direct the wife and the husband on the basis of these aims and cast on the family specific environments which help in a substantial way in the achievement of these aims. What are the environments which must be available in the family and which ensure the achievement of these divine aims?

The Environments Prevailing in the Family Relationship

The woman must bear in mind that her relationship with her husband has a religious priority and that it comes at the head of everything else as long as this relationship is included within the frame of the religious standards. Such an importance is attached to the woman's relationship with her husband to the extent that it is considered to be a basis for the woman's struggle for God's sake.

It is related in the narrative ascribed to The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "Woman's struggle for God's sake is fulfilled by her being a good wife."⁶ i.e. her good relationship with her husband. There are many details concerning this relationship which the doctrine reflects upon.

1- Affection: The Most High God says,

“and He has put between you affection and mercy.” (The Qur’an, Ar-Rum, 30:21)

Affection is the psychological inclination which represents a basic ground for mutual understanding and harmony.

2- Mercy: It is the other point to which the just mentioned verse points out. Next to affection comes mercy which means tenderness and gentleness. The Most High God did not settle it for the affection and love relationship between the wife and the husband but He added to it the gentleness and tenderness which appear through the behaviors which manifest the act of giving that expects nothing in return.

It is related in the discourse, “Offering her husband [even] a gulp of water will be better for every woman than the worship of a whole year during which she fasts all the days and stays up all the nights [i.e. in praying and supplication].”

3- The Honorable Association: Once the affection and the mercy prevail in the hearts of the husband and the wife, then their imprints will appear in the daily life and in the association between them in the form of,

“And live with them honorably.” (The Qur’an, An-Nisa, 4:19)

For harm cannot issue from the one who has affection and mercy towards the other one:

“... and do not treat them in such a harmful way that they be obliged to leave...” (The Qur’an, At-Talaq, 65:6)

This honorable association is manifested in various behaviors which the narratives indicate. It is ascribed to The Noblest Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “...The best woman among you... is the easy coming, the soft, and the obedient. She is the one who does not sleep while her husband is still angry till he is pleased, and the one who preserves her husband while he is away from her. She is one of God’s workers, and God’s worker is not disappointed.”⁷

Moreover, it is ascribed to Imam As-Sadiq (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “One man came to God’s prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) and said to him, ‘I have a wife who welcomes me when I enter the house. She accompanies me to the door when I leave. And she says to me when she notices that I am worried, ‘What worries you? If you are worried about your living, then it is undertaken by somebody [wanting God] rather than you. And if you are worried about your hereafter, then may God increase your worry.’” Then, God’s prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) said to that man, ‘Harbinger her with Heaven, and tell her, ‘You are one of God’s workers, and you are every day granted the reward which seventy martyrs are granted.’”⁸

4- Cooperation and Filling in the Gaps: The Most High God says,

“They are libas for you and you are libas for them...” (The Qur’an, Al-Baqarah, 2:187)

This verse implies the next connotations. Firstly, each one of them is considered to be an adornment for the other one; for the garment is an adornment for the one putting it on. Secondly, both fortify each other; for the garment fortifies the human being from coldness in winter and keeps back the intensity of the heat of the sun in the summer. Thirdly, both enshroud each other; for the garment enshrouds the body and hides its private parts. If the woman regards a shame or a problem in her husband, her responsibility is to enshroud him at first, to help him fill in this gap at second, and to adorn him in front of the eyes of the people at third.

5- Patience and Tolerance: Impatience and bad temper can destroy the building of the family from its very roots because the wife’s and husband’s association is a daily one and the consequences of impatience will accelerate to an extent at which it cannot be controlled and at which it will be hard to be amended. On this basis emerges the recommendation of The Noblest Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household (with patience: “God grants the woman who is patient with the ill temper of her husband the reward of Asya Bint Mouzahem.”⁹

It is also ascribed to Imam Al-Baqir (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “The Most Glorious and Reverent God imposed on the men the struggle for God’s sake and on the women the struggle for God’s sake as well. That of the man is to sacrifice his money and blood until he is killed for God’s sake. On the other hand, that of the woman is to tolerate the hurt and jealousy issuing from her husband.”¹⁰

6- Taking into Consideration the Husband’s Capabilities: Let us learn from Sayyida Fatima Az-Zahra, The Mistress of the Women of All the Worlds (God’s peace bestowed upon her) when she said to her husband The Prince of the Believers Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (God’s peace bestowed upon him), “O Aba Al-Hassan, I am ashamed of my God to ask from you what you are incapable of.”¹¹

Such are the healthy environments to which the sacred doctrine guides us. They are demanded to be a manner and a methodology which govern the behaviors of the wife.

Islam did not put this behavioral methodology only, but also it divided the work of the family, thus assigning for each of the husband and the wife a special role adequate to the nature of each one of them. These assigned roles represent the system which rules the family.

The System of the Family

The Noblest Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) divided the work between Imam Ali and Sayyida Fatima (God’s peace bestowed upon both), thus assigning the work inside the house to Sayyida Fatima (God’s peace bestowed upon her) and that outside the house to Imam Ali (God’s peace bestowed upon him). At that, she (God’s peace bestowed upon her) said, “Only God knows how happy I was when God’s prophet spared me to bear the necks of men.”

The Scholar Al-Majlisi says in illustration of this, “Bearing the necks of the men means bearing the things which the necks of the men carry, such as: the canteens and the wood. It may also mean showing up among the men...”¹²

Anyway, Sayyida Fatima Al-Zahraa (God’s peace bestowed upon her) carried the burdens of the work inside the house to the extent that she (God’s peace bestowed upon her) said, “O God’s prophet! My hands blistered from the hand mill: at one time, I grind; and at another time, I knead.”¹³

The system in the house of Imam Ali and Sayyida Al-Zahraa (God’s peace bestowed upon both) sets forth this house as a model for the believers in general. There are certain narratives which refer to the woman’s work inside her house; it is ascribed to The Noblest Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “God looks at the woman who moves something in her husband’s house from one place to another with the aim of using it in a better way. And God does not torture the one whom He looks at.”¹⁴

As we have mentioned, the family is a small society which is founded on affection and mercy and which is wrapped by the environments of repose and peace. However, this does not delete the necessity of the presence of a guardian who is considered to be the head of this small society. The man, therefore, is the guardian chosen by The Most High God to govern this small society; The Most High God says,

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has made one of them to excel the other...” (The Qur’an, Al-Nisa, 4:34)

This is also assured by the narratives. It is ascribed to The Noblest Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “The man is benefited by nothing next to Islam but by a Muslim wife who pleases him when he looks at her, obeys him when he orders her, and preserves him in herself and in his money when he is far away from her.”¹⁵ In addition, it is ascribed to Imam Al-Baqir (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “The woman has no better intercessor on her behalf to her God than her husband’s pleasure with her is.”¹⁶

Such was the model house which was headed by the two Impeccables: Ali and Al-Zahraa (God’s peace bestowed upon both). From her words, it is related that she said to her husband (God’s peace bestowed upon both), “The house is your house, and the free woman [wanting herself] is your wife. Do whatever you wish.”¹⁷

Summary

The family is that small society which Islam stresses its importance, spurs on establishing it, and lies the bases for the relationship among its members on the level of the prevailing environments and the behaviors before the level of the rights and duties.

From the aims of the building of the family are:

- 1- Chastity and purity
- 2- Fortification of the morals
- 3- Complementarity between the husband and the wife and fulfillment of the needs of each one of them
- 4- Occupation of the time with obedience
- 5- Increasing the believing progeny and maintaining the continuity of life

The woman must bear in mind that her relationship with her husband has a religious priority and that it comes at the head of everything else as long as it is included within the frame of the religious standards. It is ascribed to The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "Woman's struggle for God's sake is fulfilled by her being a good wife."

There are many details concerning this relationship upon which the doctrine reflects:

- 1- Affection
- 2- Mercy
- 3- Honorable association
- 4- Cooperation and filling in gaps
- 5- Patience and tolerance
- 6- Taking into consideration the husband's capabilities

The system in the house of Imam Ali and Sayyida Fatima Az-Zahraa (God's peace bestowed upon both) sets forth this house as a model for the believers in general.

The family is a small society which is founded on affection and mercy. However, this does not delete the necessity of the presence of a guardian who is considered to be the head of this small society.

The man, therefore, is the guardian chosen by The Most High God to govern this small society; The Most High God says,

"Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has made one of them to excel the other..."

Comprehension Questions

- 1- To what extent does Islam attach importance to marriage?

2- What is the aim of marriage and family establishment?

3- Is the fulfillment of the needs of the society prior to the fulfillment of the needs of the husband?

4- Mention some issues which the wife must take into consideration in her husband's house?

5- How did God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) divide the work between Imam Ali and Sayyida Fatima Az-Zahraa (God's peace bestowed upon both)?

For Reading: Sayyida Fatima Az-Zahraa , The Wife

Sayyida Fatima Az-Zahraa's (God's peace bestowed upon her) life in the house of her husband The Prince of the Believers (God's peace bestowed upon him) is of the most wonderful issues which represent a model which every woman can follow after. Many narratives refer to Az-Zahraa's (God's peace bestowed upon her) life in the house of her husband The Prince of the Believers (God's peace bestowed upon him).

Among what the chronicles relate is that one day, God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) entered his daughter's house while she was grinding by the hand mill and putting on a cover from the hair of the camels. So he (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) wept and said, "O Fatima, gulp the bitterness of this life in order to gain the comfort of the hereafter."

Concerning her good morals, The Prince of the Believers (God's peace bestowed upon him) said, "...And she never enraged me nor disobeyed any of my orders. My worries and sorrows used to be driven away when I looked at her."

How content with what God gave her a wife Az-Zahraa (God's peace bestowed upon her) was. She used to demand nothing from The Prince of the Believers (God's peace bestowed upon him). The chronicles relate to us that Imam Ali (God's peace bestowed upon him) woke up one day and asked her, "O Fatima! Do you have anything for me to eat?" She answered, "By Him Who honored my father with prophecy! No, I have nothing to give you to eat. And since two days, I have used to prefer you to my own belly and to my sons as regards any food we have had." At that, he (God's peace bestowed upon him) asked, "O Fatima! Why do not you tell me, so that I will try to bring you something?" She (God's peace bestowed upon her) answered, "I am ashamed of God to ask from you what you are incapable of."

When Foud'da was serving her, Az-Zahraa did not use to relax and give orders to the maid Foud'da. She (God's peace bestowed upon her) used to alternate the service between herself and Foud'da: She used to work one day and Foud'da the next day, and so on.

The narrative relates that Salman Al-Muhammadi saw Fatima (God's peace bestowed upon her) while

she was sitting down and grinding barley. And he noticed that there was blood on the column of the hand mill. Also, Al-Husayn (God's peace bestowed upon him) was in a corner of the house starving. So he said to her, "O Daughter of God's prophet! Your palms have blistered. Here is Foud'da [i.e. let Foud'da do the work]." She (God's peace bestowed upon her) said back to him, "God's prophet recommended me to alternate the service between me and her, and yesterday was her service day."

Such is Sayyida Fatima Az-Zahraa (God's peace bestowed upon her) in the modest house of her husband. She sublimed herself till The Most High God made her a model for the women of all the worlds and their mistress as well!

- [1.](#) Man La Yah'dourohou Al-Fakih [He Who Has No Jurisprudent to Refer to], Part Three, p.383
- [2.](#) Mizan Al-Hikmah [The Standard of Sagacity], Part Two, p. 1178
- [3.](#) Bihar Al-Anwar [The Seas of Lights], Part Hundred, p.221
- [4.](#) Mizan Al-Hikmah [The Standard of Sagacity], Part Two, p. 1179
- [5.](#) Wasa'il Al-Shi'a [The Means of the Shiite], Part Twenty, p. 14
- [6.](#) Bihar Al-Anwar [The Seas of Lights], Part Hundred, Page 245
- [7.](#) Al-Kafi [The Sufficient], Sheikh Al-Koulayni, Part Five, p.325
- [8.](#) Makarem Al-Akhlaq [The Loftiest Morals], Al-Tabarsi, p.200
- [9.](#) Makarem Al-Akhlaq [The Loftiest Morals], p.214
- [10.](#) Al-Kafi [The Sufficient], Part Five, p.9
- [11.](#) Bihar Al-Anwar [The Seas of Lights], Part Thirty Seven, p. 103
- [12.](#) Bihar Al-Anwar, Part Forty Three, p.81
- [13.](#) Za'kha'er Al-Okba [The Provisions of the Hereafter], p.50
- [14.](#) Wasa'il Al-Shi'a [The Means of the Shiite], Part Twenty One, p.451
- [15.](#) Al-Kafi [The Sufficient], Part Five, p.327
- [16.](#) Wasa'il Al-Shi'a, Part Twenty, p.222
- [17.](#) Bihar Al-Anwar [The Seas of Lights], Part Twenty Eight, p.303

Lesson 8: Marriage -2

Continuity of the Family

It is ascribed to Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "The Most Glorious and Reverent God likes the house where there is a wedding but detests the house where there is a divorce. And nothing is more hateful than divorce is."¹

The divorce is a destruction for a building which The Most High God likes and spurs the people on it i.e. marriage. Even though the marriage is liked by The Most High God and even though it is one of the causes of the perfection of religion and a fortress against the sins.

The Most High God did not want to oblige the people to abide to this alternative or to fortify by this fence.

This is so because the obligation may bring about a lot of negative consequences which make the human being hesitate a lot before entering the marriage cage because he will not be able to get out of it. In addition, the obligation contradicts the state of affairs and overlaps the real problems which the wife and the husband may fall in and which they may find no solution for but separation.

Perhaps these points in addition to other points illustrate the divorce's not being religiously forbidden and the reason of keeping the door open before this alternative. But at the one and the same time, The Most High God directs the human being to turn away from the divorce and not to resort to this alternative as much as this is still possible.

It is ascribed to Imam Al-Baqir (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) said, 'Jibrael (God's peace bestowed upon him) recommended me with the woman to the extent that I thought that she should not be divorced but for a demonstrated abomination.'"²

The Most High God stressed the hatefulness of divorce to the extent of regarding it as the most hateful issue as is mentioned in the previous narrative ascribed to Imam As-Sadiq (God's peace bestowed upon him). Even more, there are certain narratives which do not stop at the hatefulness of divorce but exceed this to declare the hatefulness of the one who chooses and performs it.

It is ascribed to Imam As-Sadiq (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "Nothing among the issues which God permitted is more hateful to Him than divorce is. And God hates the moody divorcer."³

Although the alternative of divorce is not religiously forbidden, one must consider it seriously and turn away from it as much as this is still possible. Even more, one must not have it in mind at all, so that it will not turn to be the easiest solution which is resorted to in order to escape from any problem in which the husband and the wife may fall.

From the Causes of the Divorce

1- Not Abiding to the Sacred Doctrine

The Most High God put the laws to organize the marital relationship and made it in the form which best guarantees the happy and successful marital relationship. When the human being turns away from these religious limits and trespasses them, then he/she threatens the whole marital life.

From here, it is necessary for the wife to get acquainted with the marital rights and with the etiquettes of the relationship with her husband so as to effectuate a state of invulnerability which protects the building of the family from cracking. We are going to illustrate this in details under the title of avoiding the causes of divorce.

2- The Faults

The wrong evaluation which results from not knowing the partner, his peculiarities, what he likes, and what he hates or the inability to harmonize with him in spite of knowing his inclinations and his peculiarities may result in tension and doing faults, thus endangering the marital life. Therefore, being well acquainted with the partner may help in understanding the behaviors in a way effectuating harmony.

How to Handle Them?

Taking into Consideration the Rights and the Etiquettes

There are certain rights and etiquettes which must be realized and taken into consideration. Abandoning these rights and not realizing these etiquettes will keep the door widely open in front of misunderstanding and will put the building of the family face to face with danger. Then, what are these rights and etiquettes?

Rights and Etiquettes in the Relationship with the Husband

It is ascribed to The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "The one, among all the people, who has the greatest due on the woman is her husband..."⁴ And it is also ascribed to him in another narrative that he (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) said, "The woman will not be able to pay the due of The Most Glorious and Reverent God until she pays the due of her husband."⁵ Moreover, it is ascribed to him that he (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) said, "The woman's struggle for God's sake is fulfilled by her being a good wife."⁶

First: Fulfillment of Her Husband's Needs

The woman must grant her husband his need i.e. obeying him as regards the issue of the private relationship between them. If she refuses to do so, God becomes displeased with her till she pleases her husband.

It is related that when one woman asked God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) about the husband's due on the woman, he (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) answered her, "It is to grant him his need even if [he asks for it] over a saddle..."⁷

Second: Beautifying Herself and Endearing to Her Husband

By beautifying, it is meant to turn away from what repels the husband and to show him a comely composure. When Imam Al-Khomeini (May his secret be sacred) talked about the recalcitrance of the

woman in his book *Editing the Means*, he mentioned “the non-removal of the repulsions that contradict his enjoyment with her; even more, it is not to clean and adorn herself in spite of the husband’s need for this”⁸ as a part of recalcitrance.

In addition, it is ascribed to Imam As-Sadiq (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “...The wife cannot, as regards the relationship between her and her husband, do without three characteristics. She must up keep herself from every abomination, so that his heart will be at ease with her in weal and in woe. She must also attend to him, so that this will plead for her if she does something wrong. And she must show love to him through being fascinating and comely looking in his eye.”⁹

Third: Preserving Her Husband’s Money

The woman must feel responsibility for her husband’s money i.e. she must not spend it lavishly on one hand and must not dispose of it without his permission on the other hand. There are many narratives which refer to this. It is ascribed to Imam As-Sadiq (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “...and does not give out anything without his permission. If she does so, she is going to bear the sin and he is going to be granted the reward.”¹⁰

Fourth: Not Angering and Hurting Her Husband

It is ascribed to The Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “Woe to the woman who angers her husband. And blessed be the woman whom her husband is pleased with her.”¹¹ It is also ascribed to him (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “He who has a wife who hurts him has God not accepting her prayer and none of her good deeds, even if she fasts all her lifetime, till she pleases him.”¹²

In addition, it is ascribed to God’s prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “The best woman among the women of my nation is the woman who, when she notices that her husband is angry, devotes herself to grant him his demands and says to him, ‘My eye will not sleep till you are pleased with me.’”¹³

Fifth: Not Getting Out of His House without His Permission

It is related to Imam As-Sadiq (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “There is no expense for the woman who gets out of her house without the permission of her husband till she is back at her house.”¹⁴ Imam Al-Khomeini (May his secret be sacred) considers “the wife’s getting out from her husband’s house without his permission” to be from the wife’s recalcitrance.

The Solution after Getting in the Problem

If any problem takes place between the husband and the wife, they have in the beginning to look for the solution inside the house without moving it outside the house in a way which leads to enlarging and

complicating it more and more. The Most High God says,

“And if a woman fears cruelty or desertion on her husband’s part, there is no sin on both them if they make terms of peace between themselves; and making peace is better. And human inner selves are swayed by greed. But if you do good and keep away from evil, verily, Allah is ever All Acquainted with what you do.” (The Qur’an, An–Nisaa, 4:128)

When the husband and the wife are not able to solve the problem to arrive at mutual understanding and continuity of the marital life in a proper manner, here rises the role of the righteous external factors [the arbitrators] to help in solving the unsettled problems.

The Most High God says,

“If you fear a breach between them twain (the man and his wife) appoint two arbitrators, one from his family and the other from hers; if they both wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation. Indeed Allah is Ever All Knower, Well Acquainted with All Things.” (The Qur’an, An–Nisa’, 4:35)

This verse does not state a specific person like the father, the uncle, or anybody else. It is so perhaps in order to keep the door open before choosing the one who is the most wise, the most righteous, and the most capable of recognizing the nature of the problem and presenting a solution for it and influencing the person concerned i.e. the husband if he/she [the arbitrator] is from the husband’s family or the wife if he/she is from the wife’s family.

The Most High God wants the family [that of the husband or the wife] to be a positive factor which helps in reforming the marital life and not a negative factor which adds to the complication of the problem. Imam Al–Khomeini (May his secret be sacred) said in this course,

“When disagreement takes place between the husband and the wife to the extent that it may lead to dissension and separation and to the extent that their problem reaches the governor, he must send after two just arbitrators, one on his behalf and one on her behalf, in order to reconcile them and in order to put an end to the dissension in the way they regard it to be the most proper whether in joining or separation.”

“The two arbitrators must examine the situation and the cause of this dissension between the husband and the wife, and they must try to reconcile them. The judgment the formers arrive at and agree on is applicable on the husband and the wife who must be content with the arrived at judgment in condition it is religiously permissible, such as: if they impose on the husband to accommodate his wife in a specific country or in a private residence or at her parents’; that his mother or sister does not reside with her even in separate resident; that he does not accommodate her fellow wife with her in the same house; that she be patient with him till he is able to offer her the dowry; that she pays back to him the credit he gave to her; and so on.

On the other hand, the arrived at judgment is not accepted if it is not religiously permissible, such as: not giving the fellow wife her dutiful expense or other rights; giving the wife the permission to get out of her husband's house whenever and wherever she wants; and so on.”¹⁵

Divorce: The Authority of the Husband

The divorce's being the authority of the husband does not authorize him to tyrannize over the wife and to misuse it. This right is a trust consigned to the husband about which The Most High God is going to ask him on the Day of Judgment.

It is related in the narrative ascribed to Imam As-Sadiq (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “It was related to The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that Abu Ayyoub wanted to divorce his wife, so God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) said, ‘Divorcing Umm Ayyoub is a sin.’”¹⁶

Retaining Her on Reasonable Terms or Divorcing Her with Kindness

The husband must choose to continue the marital life yet within the frame of correct and healthy environments, thus retaining his wife on reasonable terms and treating her amicably. However, if the problem reaches a blocked way and he decides to divorce her, then he has to divorce her with kindness.

The Most High God says,

“The divorce is twice, after than either you retain her on reasonable terms or release her with kindness. And it is not lawful for you (men) to take back (from your wives) any of your dowry which you have given them, except when both parties fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah. Then if you fear that they would not be able to keep the limits ordained by God, then there is no sin on either of them if she gives back (the dowry or part of it) for her divorce. These are the limits ordained by Allah, so do not transgress them. And whoever transgresses the limits ordained by Allah, then such are the wrong doers.” (The Qur'an, Al-Baqarah, 2:229)

It is not permissible to retain the wife in order to hurt her. Moreover, it is not permissible to deal harshly with her, in order that she will give up her dowry or in order that he will avenge himself from her in one way or another.

The Most High God says,

“And when you have divorced women and they have fulfilled the term of their prescribed period, either take them back on reasonable basis or set the free on reasonable basis. But do not take

them back to hurt them; and whoever does that, then he has wronged himself. And treat not the Verse of Allah as a jest, but remember Allah's Favors on you, and that which He has sent down to you of the Book (i.e. the Qur'an) and Al-Hikmah (The Prophet's Sunnah - legal ways - Islamic jurisprudence, etc) whereby He instructs you. And fear Allah, and know that Allah is All Aware of everything." (The Qur'an, Al-Baqarah, 2:231)

Summary

The divorce is a destruction of a building which The Most High God likes and spurs the people on it i.e. marriage. It is ascribed to Abu Abdullah Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "The Most Glorious and Reverent God likes the house where there is a wedding but detests the house where there is a divorce. And nothing is more hateful than divorce is."

Though the alternative of divorce is not religiously forbidden, one must turn away from it as much as it is possible. Even more, one must not have it in mind at all, so that it will not turn to be the easiest way which it is resorted to in order to escape from any problem which the husband and the wife may face.

From the Causes of Divorce

- 1- Not abiding to the sacred religion
- 2- The faults and the inability to be in harmony with each other

Rights and Etiquettes in the Relationship with the Husband

- 1- The woman must grant her husband his need i.e. obey him as regards the issue of the private relationship between them.
- 2- The woman must beautify herself and endear to her husband. By beautifying, it is meant to turn away from what repels him and to show him a comely composure.
- 3- She must preserve his money i.e. she must have the sense of responsibility for her husband's money.
- 4- She must not anger and hurt him.
- 5- She must not get out of his house without his permission.

How Are the Problems Solved?

If any problem takes place between the husband and the wife, they have in the beginning to look for the solution inside the house without moving it outside the house.

When the husband and the wife are not able to solve the problem inside the house in the proper way, here comes the role of the righteous external factors [i.e. the arbitrators] to help in solving the unsettled problems.

The divorce's being the authority of the husband does not authorize him to tyrannize over the wife and to misuse it. This right is a trust consigned to the husband about which The Most High God will ask him on the Day of Judgment.

The husband must choose to continue the marital life yet within the frame of correct and healthy environments, thus retaining his wife on reasonable terms and treating her amicably. However, if the problem reaches a blocked way and he decides to divorce her, then he has to divorce her amicably as well.

Comprehension Questions

1- How does Islam regard the divorce?

2- What are the causes of divorce?

3- What are the husband's rights on his wife?

4- What are the methods which must be followed in order to reform the marital life?

5- Does the divorce alternative's being the authority of the husband mean that the divorce is a sword held over the neck of the woman?

For Reading: Asya Bint Mouzahem

Sayyida Asya Bint Mouzahem (God's peace bestowed upon her) is the wife of the Pharaoh who lived during the lifetime of Prophet Musa (God's peace bestowed upon him and upon our Prophet and his Household).

Everything was furnished for this woman to have the top materialistic life and to enjoy a luxurious life along with the provided servants, bond maids, jewels, adornments, and best quality clothes just for being the wife of the Pharaoh, Egypt's governor, who was passionately in love with her and who was ready to fulfill any desire she had in order to honor her...

In spite of all of this and amid all these conditions which make it easy for the human being to be misled and corrupted and deviated from the right path, Asya Bint Mouzahem (God's peace bestowed upon her) turned away from everything. She turned away towards The Truth when she heard His call on the tongue of Prophet Musa (God's peace bestowed upon him and upon our Prophet and his Household) who was brought up in her bosom and palace. She believed in him and believed his call, so Sayyida

Asya (God's peace bestowed upon her) was from the first ones who believed in the religion which Prophet Musa (God's peace bestowed upon him and upon our Prophet and his Household) called to.

Sayyida Asya's (God's peace bestowed upon her) belief enraged the Pharaoh who was declaring himself to be God – God forbids! The Pharaoh was so enraged because the one who believed in Musa was not a stranger from him or just an ordinary person; she was his wife who had been living with him in his palace. As a result, he tried by all means to hide her belief from the people, so that his throne would not be shaken.

Yet, all his attempts failed since she cleaved to what she believed in, thus forsaking everything except her creed which was as firm as mountains are. At that, the Pharaoh decided to avenge himself from her and from her religion, so he ordered her to be crucified in order that she would be set forth as a lesson for all the people.

However, she tolerated the crucifixion by means of her strong belief, and she turned to be a martyr, the martyr of the true religion. Because of this, The Most High God praised her in His Noble Book in His Saying,

“And Allah has set forth an example for those who believe, the wife of Fir'aoun [Pharaoh] when she said, “My Lord! Build for me a home with You in Paradise, and save me from Fir'aoun and his work, and save me from the people who are Zalimun [polytheists, wrong doers, and disbelievers in Allah].” (The Qur'an, At-Tahrim, 66: 11)

She was an example for those who believed, men and women who have been learning from her the patience and the steadiness to the true religion till the last breath.

- [1.](#) Al-Kafi [The Sufficient], Sheikh Al-Koulayni, Part Six, p.54
- [2.](#) Man La Yah'dourhou Al-Fakih [He Who Has No Jurisprudent to Refer to], Part Three, p.440
- [3.](#) Al-Kafi, Part Six, p.54
- [4.](#) Mizan Al-Hikmah [The Standard of Sagacity], Part Two, p. 1184
- [5.](#) Moustadrak Al-Wasa'il [Making Up for the Means], Part Fourteen, p.257
- [6.](#) Al-Kafi [The Sufficient, Part Five, p.9
- [7.](#) Al-Kafi, Part Five, p.508
- [8.](#) Tahreer AL-Waseela [Editing the Means], Part Two, p.305
- [9.](#) Bihar Al-Anwar [The Seas of Lights], Part Seventy Five, p.237
- [10.](#) Wasa'il Al-Shi'a [The Means of the Shiite], Part Twenty, p.312
- [11.](#) Bihar Al-Anwar [The Seas of Lights], Part Seventy Three, p.363
- [12.](#) Bihar Al-Anwar, Part Seventy Three, p. 103
- [13.](#) Al-Kafi [The Sufficient], Part Five, p.514
- [14.](#) Tahreer Al-Waseela [Editing the Means], Part Two, p.305
- [15.](#) Tahreer Al-Waseela [Editing the Means], Part Two, p.306
- [16.](#) Al-Kafi [The Sufficient], Part Six, p.55

Lesson 9: Her Role as a Mother

What Is the Mother?

“Mother” is an exceptional word which leaves a deep impact in the soul of the human being, arouses the passions, and evokes softness, warmth, and tenderness. How logical is the deep impact that this word leaves in the soul of the human being?

When we refer to the sacred religion, we find many doctrinal texts which refer to the mothers and thus arouse this deep affection towards the mother and direct the human being towards it. This affection binds the child to his mother in a way which assists her to perform her duties on one hand and which serves as a kind of gratitude towards her on the other hand. From these narratives, we mention the following:

1- The Heaven is under the Feet of the Mothers

It is related that The Noblest Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) said in his well-known discourse, “The heaven is under the feet of the mothers.”¹ The term “under the feet of” indicates service and humbleness i.e. serving the mother and being humble with her opens the door for the child towards the Heaven of Immortality.

2- Recommendation with Filial Dutifulness towards Her

It is related that when The Noblest Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) was asked about the due of the mother, he (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) answered, “Had he [wanting the child] served her as much as the number of the sands of Ajj and the drops of the rain of all the days of this life are, he would not have paid her the due of a day during which she carried him in her womb...”²

This narrative, in addition to the other ones which highly stress the due of the mother, indicates at the same time that serving her is not a favor from the child on her but that this service is her right.

So, why is she granted this prestige? And how is it that the mother deserves all of this?

The Reason of the Mother’s Prestige

The following noble verse reflects upon the prestige which The Most High God granted to the mother and the reason of her deserving of this prestige. The Most High God says,

“And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say, ‘My Lord!

Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small.” (The Qur’an, Al-Isra’, 17:24)

The child is born weak, so he is in need for someone to be kind with him and to give him for free. He needs to eat, to dress, and to be protected from coldness and hotness. He also needs someone to hold his hand and to teach him about his interests and to guide him to the way of achieving them. He needs all of this at the same time he is unable to give anything in return but a little smile which tickles the mother’s heart and a hope which fills her heart about her baby’s flourishing future.

In The Letter of Dues, Imam Ali Zayn Al-Abideen (God’s peace bestowed upon him) explained this in saying, “She carried you where nobody carries anybody. She gave you from the fruit of her heart what nobody gives anybody. She protected you with all her organs. She did not care that she would be hungry in order that you be fed; be thirsty in order that you be quenched; be naked in order that you be dressed; and be under the sun in order that you be shaded. She did not care that she forsook sleep for your sake. And she protected you from the hotness and coldness, so that you would be for her...”

Nobody can offer what the mother offers to her child. His house was in her interior, and his food was from her blood: Nobody else can offer this!! Imam Zayn Al-Abideen (God’s peace bestowed upon him) said, “...You will not be able to show gratitude to her as she deserves unless by God’s Help and Successfulness.”

Whatever the child offers, the mother remains to be the one most offering.

How Does She Carry This Responsibility?

The mother’s carrying of the responsibility passes through several stages, as the just mentioned words of Imam Zayn Al-Abideen (God’s peace bestowed upon him) indicate them one stage after another.

1- Pregnancy

The Most High God says,

“And we have enjoined on man (to be dutiful and good) to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship, and his weaning is in two years; give thanks to Me and to your parents, unto Me is the final destination.” (The Qur’an, Luqman, 31:4)

Happily and welcomingly does the woman carry her baby during the period of pregnancy in spite of all the weakness which befalls her: “...weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship...” It is a kind of struggle for God’s sake: If the mother dies because of pregnancy, she is considered to be a martyr and is going to be resurrected [on the Day of Judgment] in the prestige of the martyrs, as is understood from some narratives.

It is ascribed to Ibn Baseer in turn to Imam As-Sadiq (God's peace bestowed upon him) in turn to The Most High God in a sacred talk in the tale of Adam and Hawwaa that He said, "...O Hawwaa! I will group with the martyrs every woman who dies while she is conceiving. O Hawwaa! I will grant the reward of a martyr for every woman who is in labor: If she is safe and gives birth to her baby, I will forgive her for all her sins even if they are as much as the foam of the sea and the sands of the land and the leaves of the trees are. If she dies, she will become a martyr; and when her soul is taken away, the angels will be present at her and will harbingers her with Heaven..."³

This is, therefore, the first responsibility which the mother tolerates.

2- Breast Feeding

The Most High God says,

"The mothers shall give suck to their children for two whole years, for those (parents) who desire to complete the term of suckling, but the father of the child shall bear the cost the mother's food and clothing on a reasonable basis..." (The Qur'an, Al-Baqarah, 2:233)

Breast feeding is one of the child's rights which must not be neglected since it affects the mental and psychological formation of the human being. The just mentioned noble verse refers to the duration of the breast feeding i.e. two complete years, and the year here is a lunar one.

In a narrative which demonstrates the reward of breast feeding, God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) said, "When the woman is pregnant, she is in the status of the one fasting, staying up nights [in prayer and prostration], and sacrificing himself and his money for God's sake. When she conceives, she has a reward which is so great to the extent that nobody knows it. When she is breast feeding, she, with every single suck, is considered as if she is liberating one of Ismael's progeny. And when she is done with breast feeding, a noble angel says to her, 'Go on what you are doing: you are forgiven.'"⁴

3- Instruction and Guidance

The mother is the closest person to the child and the one who is dedicated to his affairs. She is, therefore, the one who is the most influential and capable of instructing and guiding him.

All these points are reflected upon in the narrative ascribed to God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) when one man complained to him about his mother's ill nature. He (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) said to the man, "She was not ill tempered when she carried you for nine months, breast fed you for two years, and stayed up her night and thirsted her day for your own sake..."

From here, the mother is the real educator and the first school which the child attends. Then, how is

education fulfilled?

Aims of Education

Education aims at widely opening the gates of the future in front of the child. This is fulfilled, at the first rate, through instructing him to redeem his final destiny in the hereafter. The Most High God says,

“O you who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire whose fuel is men and stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who disobey not, (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allah, but do that which they are commanded.” (The Qur’an, Al-Tahrim, 66:6)

First: Learning

It is related in the narrative ascribed to The Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “If the teacher says to the boy, ‘In the Name of God,’ God grants him [the teacher] and the boy and his parents freedom from Fire.”⁵

Second: Piety

Piety is mentioned in The Noble Qur’an as a cause and a justification for worship:

“O mankind! Worship your Lord, Who created you and those before you so that you may become the pious.” (The Qur’an, Al-Baqarah, 2:21)

Islam attaches a special importance to piety because it represents the psychological door which helps the human being to confront the tests and afflictions of this life. It also represents the armor, on the thresholds of which fall all the deceptions of Satan, all the seducements of this life, and all the allurements of the calling for evil soul.

Methods of Education

There are various methods of education which vary with the capacities and the age of the child and which differ with the topic under discussion. Here, we are going to refer to three major methods.

1- The Indirect Instruction Method

Perhaps this method is the very first method followed with the child because he is unable to receive the instruction messages and to abide to them. Therefore, the mother has to direct the child towards righteousness and to keep him away from corruption through presenting proper alternatives which can occupy him, in order that he will not be led on towards what is corrupted, a psychological barrier will be established between him and corruption, and a model will be set forth for him in order to follow after in

this frame.

It is indispensable that the mother be aware that she is her child's first model and that she has to instruct him through her deeds before anything else; and this is the major method which the mother must follow. In spite of its being the only method throughout the years of the childhood of the human being, this method is requisite as well at all the stages and is beneficial with all ages.

It is related in the narrative ascribed to Imam As-Sadiq (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "Let your child play for seven years and be educated for another seven years. And let him accompany you for other seven years."⁶ Leaving him to play for the first seven years does not at all mean neglecting him; this is in fact in consistency with the indirect instruction even through playing.

2- The Direct Instruction Method

In fact, it represents the admittance into the stage of the scholarly recognition where the human being learns, in accordance to his age and capability, to distinguish between the good and the evil, between the righteousness and the corruption. This issue is also, at a specific stage, indispensable, so that the human being will not get accustomed to the method of following the practical instruction only without any scholarly standards because he may, without these standards, fall down before any test or any environments.

3- Instruction of the Causes and the Consequences Method

The child must be acquainted with the consequences of the deeds and the causes of the goodness or badness of these deeds. Moreover, he must be associated as much intricately as possible to the hereafter; and he must be made to consider the consequences and the reflection of his deeds in the hereafter.

The mother must master these methods in order to be able to apply them properly, so that she will produce a good child to the society. She must always turn towards The Most High God:

“ . . . O my Lord! Grant me from you a good offspring. You are indeed The All Hearer Of Invocation.” (The Qur'an, Aali-Imran, 3:38)

Indispensable Characteristics

In order that the mother will succeed in the education message which she wants to deliver, there are certain basic characteristics which it is indispensable for her to be endowed with. They are summarized in the following points:

1- Showing Love and Tenderness

Showing love and tenderness to the child is of the mother's nature and absolutely not something artificial. The mother's attachment to the child is crystal like in the exchanged affection and is thus indisputable. It is clearly manifested in the story of Musa's (God's peace bestowed upon him and upon our Prophet and his Household) mother where The Most High God relates about her,

“And we inspired the mother of Musa (saying): ‘Suckle him, but when you fear for him, then cast him into the river and fear not nor grieve. Verily! We shall bring him back to you and shall make him one of the Messengers.’ And the heart of the mother of Musa became empty (from every thought except the thought of Musa). She was very near to disclose his (case i.e. the child is her son) had We not strengthened her heart (with faith), so that she might remain as one of the believers. So did We restore him to his mother, that she might be delighted, and that she must not grieve, and that she might know that the Promise of Allah is true. But most of them know not.” (The Qur'an, Al-Qasas, 28:10–13)

The mother must show to her child this love which dwells in the heart of each mother. It is ascribed to The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “Kiss your children a lot. For each kiss, you are rewarded with a degree in the Heaven where there are five hundred years between each degree and degree.”⁷

2- Tolerance and Patience

The mother must be characterized by great tolerance and patience, so that she will be able to perform properly her positive role in bringing up the child. Impatience results in a lot of complications on the psychological and educational levels.

The mother must in addition be well aware of the peculiarity of her child and must know that his behaviors, especially which annoy her like the weeping for example, are very natural and are expressive of good health, and perhaps the lack of such behaviors is a sign of illness.

From here, she must get used to take in these issues, so that they will not reflect negatively on her nerves.

It is ascribed to The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “Do not hit your babies because of their weeping. Their weeping during four months is a testimony of ‘There is no god but God,’ during [the next] four months is a bestowal of prayers on The Prophet and his Household, and during [the next] four months is a supplication for their parents.”⁸

3- Equality

The mother must be at one distance from all her children i.e. she must not distinguish among them in a

manner that might negatively reflect on them. It is ascribed to The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "God will admit to Heaven the one who has a daughter yet neither gets rid of her nor dispraises her or prefers his son to her."⁹

It is also related that God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) looked at one man who had two sons yet he kissed one and did not kiss the other one. At that, The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) said to him, "Would you treat them equally?"¹⁰

Summary

When we refer to the sacred religion, we find many doctrinal texts which refer to the mothers and thus arouse the deep affection towards the mother and direct the human being towards it.

Nobody can offer what the mother offers to her child. His house was her interior, and his food was from her blood: Nobody else can offer this. Imam Ali Zayn Al-Abideen (God's peace bestowed upon him) said, "...You will not be able to show to her the gratitude she deserves unless by God's Help and Successfulness."

The mother's carrying of the responsibility passes through several stages:

- 1- Pregnancy
- 2- Breast Feeding
- 3- Instruction and Guidance

Education must be based on two issues. The first one is learning, and the second one is piety.

Methods of Education:

- 1- The Indirect Instruction Method
- 2- The Direct Instruction Method
- 3- Instruction of the Causes and the Consequences Method

From the characteristics which the educating mother must be endowed with are: showing of love and tenderness, tolerance and patience, equally dealing with and showing affection to all her children.

Comprehension Questions

- 1- Talk about Islam's look towards the mother.

- 2- Why does Islam attach such an importance to maternity?
- 3- What are the responsibilities which the woman is charged with?
- 4- What must the educating of the children be based on?
- 5- Mention some correct methods of education.

For Reading: Fatima Bint Al-Naser

She goes back in her blessed lineage to The Prince of the Believers Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (God's peace bestowed upon him). She is the mother of the two reverent Sayyids and the great and noble scholars Muhammad Al-Ra'dee, the collector of The Path of Eloquence, and Ali Al-Murtadha, one of the well-known ancient scholars.

This noble Alaweeyyeet [in reference to Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb] woman had a luxurious life since she was not poor; however, this did not prevent her from being the most pious one among the women of her time. How would not she, being the daughter of Al-Naser who was known as Abdul-Hak [The Servant of The Truth] and who was master of Al-Talebyeet [also in reference to Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb] at his time, be so?

Ibn Abi Al-Hadeed relates an impressive story: "Fakhar ibn Mee'ad Al-Alawi Al-Mousawi (May God's Mercy be bestowed upon him) said, "The jurisprudent Imam Al-Moufeed Abdullah Muhammad ibn Al-Naaman had a dream in which as if Fatima Bint God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) called on him while being in his mosque in Al-Karkh; she was taking along with her little Al-Hassan and Al-Husayn (God's peace bestowed upon both). She handed them to him and said, 'Teach them jurisprudence.' He woke up astonished of the dream he had."

"When the day of that night during which he had the dream broke, Fatima Bint Al-Naser with her attendants and her little sons Muhammad Al-Ra'dee and Ali Al-Murtadha called on him in the mosque. He moved up, went towards them, and saluted them. Then, she said to him, 'O Sheikh, I have brought my two sons, so that you will teach them jurisprudence.' At that, Abu Abdullah wept and narrated for them the dream he had had."

"He taught them jurisprudence, and God bestowed His bounties upon them and opened in front of them the door of knowledge and merits which have been well known about them across the world and which will remain as long as time will."

This tender mother (May God be pleased with her) bid farewell to this evanescent life after she had been assured as regards her sons and after she had been delighted with them. She passed away on Sacred Thou Al-Houjja, 385 of immigration when Al-Shareef Al-Murtadha was 30 years old and his brother Al-Shareef Al-Ra'dee was 26 years old.

Al-Shareef Al-Ra'dee wrote on her an elegy made up of 68 verses and rhymed with the Arabic sound "æ". It starts with:

I am lamenting you with the hope that my grief be quenched
I am talking about you with the hope that my disease be cured
And I seek condolence in the promising patience
With the hope that in the promising patience be my condolence

- [1.](#) Moujam'maa Al-Bayan [The Collection of Eloquence], Part Eight, p. 11
- [2.](#) Moustadrak Al-Wasa'il [Making Up for the Means], Part Fifteen, p. 182
- [3.](#) Moustadrak Al-Wasa'il [Making Up for the Means], Part Fifteen, p.214
- [4.](#) Wasa'il Al-Shi'a [The Means of the Shiite], Part Fifteen, p. 175
- [5.](#) Moustadrak Al-Wasa'il [Making Up for the Means], Part Fifteen, p. 166
- [6.](#) Al-Kafi [the Sufficient], Part Six, p.46
- [7.](#) Bihar Al-Anwar [The Seas of Lights], Part Hundred and One, p.92
- [8.](#) Bihar Al-Anwar [The Seas of Lights], Part Fifty Seven, p.381
- [9.](#) Moustadrak Al-Wasa'il [Making Up for the Means], Part Fifteen, p. 118
- [10.](#) Man La Yah'dourohou Al-Fakih [He Who Has No jurisprudent to Refer to], Part Three, p.483.

Lesson 10: Woman's Work and Struggle for God's Sake

Woman's Work

The works of the human being can in general be classified into three parts. The first one includes the personal works which are related to the peculiarities of the individual human being, such as: the worship which the human being performs for the sake of his/her individual perfection, the care for some materialistic issues which are associated to the appearance and the possessions, etc.

The second one includes the works which have a familial dimension. These works are divided into subparts: Some of them aim at providing for the materialistic needs of the family i.e. the food, the drink, the clothes, etc. And some of them aim at supplying the family with the spiritual needs i.e. education, guidance, etc.

The third part includes the works which have a social dimension and which the human being performs in order to carry out his/her positive role in the reformation of the society, improvement of its conditions, conformation to its circumstances, etc.

As regards the first part which includes the interest in the individual peculiarities, it is doubtless that the

woman has the right to perform these works in general. Even more, this is desirable, for it is demanded that she cares about her appearance and that she adorns and improves it in front of her husband. It is also demanded that she cares about her special possessions without wastefulness, damaging, loss, etc.

To be added is the worship which is regarded to be the aim of the existence of the human being:

“And I created not the jinns and humans except they should worship Me (Alone).” (The Qur’an, Adh-Dhariyat, 51:56)

As regards the third part, it is doubtless that the woman is assigned with a general social role which she must carry out:

“The believers, men and women, are Awliya (supporters, helpers, friends, protectors) of one another, they enjoin Al-Maruf (i.e. Islamic monotheism, and all that Islam orders one to do) and forbid from Al-Munkar (i.e. polytheism and disbelief of all kinds, and all that Islam has forbidden); they perform the prayer and give the alms and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah will have His Mercy on them. Surely, Allah is All Mighty All Wise.” (The Qur’an, At-Tawba, 9:71)

The scope of this role may, in accordance to the woman’s capacities and the priorities governing her life in addition to the conditions of the society, widen to reach the entire nation or narrow to be included just within a specific frame.

Still to be discussed is the second part. It is doubtless that the woman has a major role as regards the supply of her children with the spiritual needs i.e. education, guidance, etc. But when the subject under discussion is the woman’s work, the question raised is related to the providing for the materialistic needs of the family by means of working outside the house in order to procure the livelihood. What is the attitude from this kind of work?

Woman’s Original Work

Islam did not assign to the woman the responsibility of procuring the livelihood for the family; on the other hand, Islam imposed this responsibility on the man. When The Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) divided the work of the family between his daughter Sayyida Fatima (God’s peace bestowed upon her) and his son in law Imam Ali (God’s peace bestowed upon him), he assigned her with the work inside the house and him with the work outside the house.

This manner represents the healthy situation for the happy family where every member carries out his/her special responsibility which adequates to his/her personality and nature, in order that he/she will complement with the other members in filling in the gaps and in procuring the materialistic and spiritual needs inside and outside the house.

In spite of this, Islam did not prohibit the woman’s work outside the house if this is within the correct

religious rules. Even more, this work becomes preferable in some cases, among which we mention the following:

1- In Case of Financial Need

Seeking after the religiously permissible livelihood is regarded to be a worship as is ascribed to The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household), "The worship is made up of seventy parts, the best of which is to seek after what is religiously permissible."¹

If the woman and those whom she provides for, in case there are persons whom she provides for, are in a financial need, it is doubtless that her work becomes preferred and demanded and will be better than that she be afflicted with poverty or be obliged to humiliate herself in order to get the help of the other people.

2- In Case of Free Time

Islam refuses the free time and laziness. It is related in the narrative ascribed to Imam Musa Al-Kathem (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "The Most Glorious and Reverent God detests the servant who sleeps a lot and who has nothing to do."²

In case a woman has a lot of free times to the extent that if she does not occupy them with work, she will be a conformation of the servant who sleeps a lot and who has nothing to do, then it is preferable for her to work.

3- A Special Importance Attached to Work

The work which the woman performs may be very important from the religious aspect, such as: the institutions which spread the religion among the people, which reform the society, and which are interested in the social work; or the specialization in the feminine medicine; etc. The woman may be occupied with these important works in order to serve the religion and the society, and she may receive money i.e. salary in change for the work she performs, so that she will live honorably and nobly.

These works, even though they procure the livelihood, basically aim at the service of the religion and the society; therefore, they remain to be preferred for themselves.

Abidance to the Religious Rules

The woman's work must be within the frame of healthy environments which take into consideration the religious rules, among which two points are prominent:

1- The woman must turn away as much as possible from being with men at the same place. Also, she must abide to the religious veil. And she must consider the religious rules in her behavior.

Imam Al-Khomeini (May his secret be sacred) said in this course, “Let the woman work but while putting on the veil. There is no objection to her work in the governmental bureaus, but she must take into consideration the religious veil and the adherence to the religious rules.”³

2- If the work performed by the woman demands that she gets out of her house, she must get the permission of her husband in case she is married. According to the religious opinion of Imam Al-Khomeini (May his secret be sacred), “Her getting out of the house must be permitted by her husband.”

The Military Struggle for God’s Sake

Woman’s Role in the Struggle for God’s Sake

May the woman participate in the military work? Or is this kind of work exclusive to the man? If she is permitted to, is this permissibility restricted to certain works rather than other works or to certain kinds of struggle for God’s sake rather than other kinds?

We are going to reflect upon these issues each by itself, so that the picture will be clear and exact.

What Is Meant by the Military Work?

The military work demands a huge effort covered by all those working in the field of struggle for God’s sake. It is, therefore, not restricted to the resistant who takes up the rifle and shots the bullets towards the enemy directly, in spite of the fact that it represents the appearance and consequence and critical moment of the struggle for God’s sake.

Thus, the military work includes all the workers who provide the resistants with weapons at one hand; the workers who furnish them with food and clothes at another hand; the ambulance team who treats the wounds of the resistants, so that they will be able to go back to the arenas of confrontation at a third hand; in addition to a lot of missions which build up in order to enable the resistant to carry on by means of the consequence of this effort, to take up his weapon, and to direct the hits towards the enemies; etc.

It is, therefore, doubtless that the woman can participate in a lot of these missions. Even more, it is required from her that she covers such missions which support the front line and which provide for the resistants’ needs. The woman is considered to be a major reason for the continuation of the struggle for God’s sake. She can work in furnishing the resistants with food and clothes. She can be a nurse or a doctor who treats the wounds. She can as well help in all the logistic actions.

Moreover, it is well known in the Prophetic chronicle that the woman played a prominent role in the wars as regards supplying the fighters with food and the treatment of the wounds. Imam Al-Khomeini (May his secret be sacred) said, “In Sadr Al-Islam [The Rise of Islam], the women used to get out for wars, and most of them used to help the casualties and to treat the wounded all the time.”⁴

As regards the mission of taking up the arms and the direct confrontation with the enemies, may the woman carry out this mission exactly as the men do? Is this imposed on her as a duty?

The Launching and the Defensive Struggle for God's Sake

There are two types of struggle for God's sake: launching and defensive. In the launching struggle for God's sake, the battles take place on the lands of the others because of the Muslims' invasion of these lands. In this time, we are not afflicted with this type of struggle for God's sake. In the defensive struggle for God's sake, the battles take place as a result of the enemies' attack and their threatening of the Muslims.

Her Role in the Defense

The Most High God says,

“So their Lord accepted of them (their supplication and answered them), ‘Never will I allow to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female. You are (members) one of another, so those who emigrated and were driven out from their homes, and suffered harm in My Cause, and who fought, and were killed (in My Cause), verily, I will remit from them their evil deeds and admit them into Gardens under which rivers flow (in Paradise); a reward from Allah, and with Allah is the best of rewards.’” (The Qur'an, Aali-Imran, 3:195)

It is the duty of all the responsible Muslims, whether men or women, to defend Islam and the Muslims and their countries. They must also participate in the defense by all the possible means. In case it is a defensive war, as is the case in this time, the woman's role is not restricted to the logistic issues and the like; she has, if it proves to be necessary, to take up the arms and to fight.

Here comes the role of the diagnosis of the leader and his division of the roles in accordance to what the resistant and social interest he perceives. Imam Al-Khomeini (May his secret be sacred) related, “Some women came here and asked me to grant them the permission to go to Kurdistan in order to fight there. But I answered them, “This is not valid. The people and the army are carrying out their role there”. [5](#)

But if the leader perceives that it is necessary that the woman participates in taking up the arms and in fighting, then she has to do so.

The Military Training

The Most High God says,

“And make ready against them all you can of power, including steeds of war (tanks, planes, missiles, artillery, etc) to threaten the enemy of Allah and your enemy...” (The Noble Qur'an, Al-Anfal, 8:60)

When the fight for God's sake becomes a duty imposed even on the woman in order to defend Islam and the Muslim countries, it is requisite that she be ready to carry out this role which is assigned to her. If her religious role is fulfilled by fighting – as is the matter in the case of defense where the fight of the men alone is not enough – then she must get the military training which provides the apparent reasons for victory, as The Most High God orders us to in the just mentioned noble verse.

In this course, Imam Al-Khomeini (May his secret be sacred) said, “When the defense is a duty imposed on everybody, the pre requisites of defense must be prepared too; included are the military training and learning of the fighting arts. The situation must not be that we must defend, but we do not know how to defend. It is obvious that the milieu where you train on the military arts must be a sound milieu, an Islamic milieu where chastity and all the Islamic issues are taken into consideration and maintained.”⁶

Summary

Islam did not assign to the woman the responsibility of procuring the livelihood for the family. In spite of this, Islam did not prohibit the woman's work outside the house if it takes place within the frame of the correct religious rules.

Woman's work outside the house may be preferred in some cases, among which we mention the following:

- 1- In case of financial need
- 2- In case of free time
- 3- A special importance is attached to the work in the institutions which spread the religion and the like

As regards the work which the woman performs, certain religious rules must be taken into consideration, among which two points are prominent:

- 1- The woman must turn away as much as possible from being with men at the same place.
- 2- The woman must get the permission of her husband in case she is married.

The woman can participate in a lot of military missions. She can work in furnishing the resistants with food and clothes. She can be a nurse or a doctor who treats the wounded. She can as well help in all the logistic actions.

It is the duty of all the responsible Muslims, whether men or women, to defend Islam and the Muslims and their countries, and the woman must be ready to carry out her role. Then, she has to get the military training which procures the apparent reasons for victory which The Most High God ordered us to procure.

Comprehension Questions

- 1- When is the woman's work outside the house considered to be acceptable?
- 2- What are the issues which the woman must take into consideration in case she works outside the house?
- 3- Is the woman permitted to participate in the military work?
- 4- When is the fight for God's sake imposed on the woman?
- 5- What are the issues which the woman must take into consideration during the military training sessions?

For Reading: Umm Salama

For Reading: Umm Salama, The Supporting and Fighting for God's Sake Woman

Umm Salama (May God be pleased with her) is the wife of The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household). She represents the true portrayal of the steadfast belief and the fixed creed which was kneaded with the love of The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) and the support of his Household (God's peace bestowed upon them).

God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) preferred Umm Salama to all his other wives, excluding Khadija (God's peace bestowed upon her). She had the first place and the lofty rank, which none of the other wives, except Khadija (God's peace bestowed upon her), had.

The life of this reverent lady was distinguished by her support to The Household (God's peace bestowed upon them) in spite of all the political trends which aggressed against them and drove them away of the position in which The Most High God made them. She was characterized by the steadfastness to their authority and to the calling [of the people] for it.

After The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) had passed away, she spent all the rest of her life in calling the people and in informing them about their [The Household's (God's peace bestowed upon them)] right, thus referring to what she had heard from God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) as regards their right and prestige.

The Household (God's peace bestowed upon them) used to respect her a lot and to esteem her so highly and honorably.

Umm Salama, the woman who was carrying with her an old belief since the beginning of the call for

Islam, was always aspiring towards the Pleasure of The Most High God. One day, she asked The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household), "Why don't we fight for God's sake and attain martyrdom as the men do?" At that, The Most High God sent down the following noble verse:

"And wish not for things in which Allah has made some of you to excel others. For men there is reward for what they have earned, (and likewise) for women there is reward for what they have earned, and ask Allah of His Bounty. Surely, Allah is Ever Knower of Everything." (The Qur'an, Al-Nisa', 4:32)

She (May God pleased be pleased with her) defended Sayyida Fatima Al-Zahraa (God's peace bestowed upon her). And because she did so, she was deprived of her allotted money [from the House of the Muslims' money] in the same year she defended the daughter of God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household).

Moreover, she (May God be pleased with her) defended The Prince of the Believers (God's peace bestowed upon him) and his true attitude in Al-Jamal war. She gathered the women of Al-Mouhajereen [the immigrants] and Al-Ansar [the supporters] and informed them of her wrath from everyone who had got out fighting The Prince of the Believers Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (God's peace bestowed upon him).

In addition to all of this, her history is filled with many attitudes which testify that she was from the women who fought for God's sake and from the women who strove to raise the flag of Islam with all the might she had.

- [1.](#) Wasa'il Al-Shi'a [The Means of the Shiite], Part Twelve, p. 11
- [2.](#) Wasa'il Al-Shi'a [The Means of the Shiite], Part Twelve, p.36
- [3.](#) From a speech delivered before a group of scholars and students of the religious lores in Kom on March 6th, 1979
- [4.](#) From a speech on repentance on November 8th, 1980
- [5.](#) From a speech delivered before the members of the government on October 2nd, 1979
- [6.](#) From a speech delivered before a group of women in the celebration of Woman's Day on February 10th, 1986

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