



*Your Family*

# 10

Islam attaches great importance to the family, encourages its adherents to lay its foundations and protect it against anything that may harm or destroy it, for a good family paves the way for its members to be good and, by extension, society at large.

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## > The Position of the Family in Islam

**Islam's concern about the welfare of the family may be summarised in the following points:**

1

Islam stresses the principle of marriage to form a family and considers it one of the most meritorious acts as well as one of the practices of Allah's prophets and messengers. The Prophet ﷺ said in this regard, "Sometimes I fast and sometimes I don't; I engage in night prayer and I also sleep, and I marry women. Therefore, whoever does not follow my practice is not one of my true followers." (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 4776; *Saheeh Muslim*: 1401)



- Amongst the countless and greatest blessings that Allah ﷻ has bestowed upon us, the Qur'an mentions, are love and tenderness which He has placed between spouses: "Among His signs is that He created spouses for you of your own kind so that you might find tranquillity in them, and He has placed affection and compassion between you." (*Soorat Ar-Room*, 30:21)
- Islam commands its followers to get married and to make marriage easy for those who seek it to guard their chastity, as the Prophet ﷺ said, "There are three people whom Allah will surely help." Amongst these three he mentioned "a person who wants to get married in order to preserve his chastity." (*Sunan At-Tirmidhee*: 1655)
- It also commands young men to get married, for marriage is the right course of action to help them control their intense sexual impulses and to find tranquillity in their spouses.

> The Qur'an considers tranquillity, affection and compassion between spouses amongst the countless and greatest blessings of Allah.

2

It has shown respect to every member of the family, males and females alike.

It has charged the parents with the great responsibility of bringing up their children. 'Abdullaah ibn 'Umar ؓ narrated that he heard Allah's Messenger ﷺ say, "Every one of you is a guardian and is responsible for those in his custody. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects and responsible for them; a husband is a guardian of his family and is responsible for it; a woman is a guardian of her husband's home and is responsible for it, and a servant is a guardian of his master's property and is responsible for it." (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 853; *Saheeh Muslim*: 1829)

3

It encourages children to honour their parents and commands them to express respect and appreciation to them, look after them and show them due obedience until their death.

No matter how old children may be, they are duty-bound to obey their parents and show kindness to them. Indeed, the Qur'an regards obedience to one's parents a meritorious act of worship and warns the believers against being rude to their parents, even by saying a word of disrespect to them: "Your Lord has decreed that you should worship none but Him, and that you should show kindness to your parents. Whether one or both of them reach old age with you, do not say 'Ugh!' to them out of irritation and do not be harsh with them but speak to them with gentleness and generosity."

(*Soorat Al-Israa*, 17:23)

4

It commands parents to safeguard their children's rights and urges them to spend on them equally and treat them justly in all apparent matters.

5

It directs its adherents to maintain the ties of kinship by keeping in touch with their relatives from both parents' sides and showing kindness to them.

These relatives include paternal and maternal aunts and uncles and their children. Indeed, Islam regards maintaining the ties of kinship as one of the most commendable acts, warns against severing such ties and considers doing so a major sin. The Prophet ﷺ said, "The person who severs the bonds of kinship will not enter Paradise." (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 5638; *Saheeh Muslim*: 2556)



> Islam inculcates in children the principle of expressing respect and appreciation to the parents.

### >The Position of Women in Islam

Islam has honoured women and freed them from servitude and subordination to men. It has also liberated them from being a cheap commodity with no respect or honour whatsoever. Examples of forms of respect Islam shows to women include the following:

- Islam grants them the right to inheritance, allocating them equitable shares with men, which sometimes differ under certain circumstances depending on their relationship with others and the financial obligations they have to discharge. While men support the family as a matter of religious obligation, women are not obliged to spend a penny.
- It establishes total equity between men and women in numerous matters including financial transactions. As the prophet ﷺ said, "Women are the twin halves of men." (*Sunan Abu Daawood*: 236)



- It grants them the right to choose their husbands and places a large amount of the responsibility of bringing up children upon them, as the Prophet ﷺ said, “A woman is a guardian of her husband’s home and is responsible for it.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 853; *Saheeh Muslim*: 1829)
- It grants them the right to keep their maiden names. In Islam, a woman does not change her surname to that of her husband upon marriage, as is common in many parts of the world; rather, she retains her maiden name, and thus her independent personality.
- It makes it the husband’s duty to spend on those women entitled to his support, such as his wife, mother and daughters, without attempting in the least to remind them of his favours.
- It stresses the importance of helping weak women who are in need of support, even if they are not one’s relatives, and urges its followers to engage in such a noble act, regarding it one of the meritorious deeds in the sight of Allah. The Prophet ﷺ said, “The person who looks after a widow or a poor person is like a warrior who fights for Allah’s cause, or like one who performs prayers all night without slackness and fasts continuously and never breaks his fast.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 5661; *Saheeh Muslim*: 2982).

### Women That Islam Enjoins Muslims to Look after

**The Mother:** Abu Hurayrah ؓ narrated that a man once asked the Prophet ﷺ, “To whom should I show kindness most?” “Your mother,” he replied. The man said, “Then who?” The Prophet [again] said, “Your mother.” The man further asked, “Then who?” The Prophet ﷺ replied, “Your

mother.” The man asked again, “Then who?” The Prophet ﷺ said, “Then your father.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 5626; *Saheeh Muslim*: 2548)

**The Daughter:** ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Aamir ؓ narrated that he heard Allah’s Messenger ﷺ say, “Whoever has three daughters and he remains patient with them, provides for them and clothes them from his money, they will be a shield for him from the Hellfire on the Day of Resurrection.” (*Sunan Ibn Maaajah*: 3669)

**The Wife:** ‘Aa’ishah ؓ narrated that Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said, “The best among you are those who are best to their wives, and I am the best amongst you to my wives.” (*Sunan At-Tirmidhee*: 3895)

Islam considers the relationship between husband and wife to be complimentary, each of which remedies the deficiency of each other in building the Muslim society.

### No Place for a Struggle between the Sexes

**The struggle between men and women** ended with either men gaining power over women, as in some pre-Islamic societies, or with women rebelling against their innate natural predisposition, as in some other non-Muslim societies which have rejected Allah’s laws.

This only happened as a result of rejecting Allah’s guidance. As the Qur’an states, “Do not covet what Allah has given to some of you in preference to others — men have a portion of what they acquire and women have a portion of what they acquire; but ask Allah for His bounty. (*Soorat An-Nisaa*, 4:32) Indeed,



Islam has honoured both men and women, and allocated each of them distinctive characteristics and roles whereby they may strive to gain Allah's rewards and attain His pleasure. It does not give preference to any of the two sexes; rather, it aims to promote the welfare of the individual in general and that of society at large.

**Therefore, there is no such** thing in Islam as truggle between the sexes; there is no need for a fierce rivalry for worldly pursuits between them; nor is there a necessity to launch an attack against either of them in an attempt to disparage, harm, criticise or find fault with any one of them.

All this is vain in Islam and constitutes a misunderstanding of Islam's view of the roles it has assigned to each one of them. In Islam, each one of them has a share according to what they have earned in both material and spiritual terms. Instead of envying each other, they are required to ask Allah to give them more of His bounty through lawful labour and through prayer.

### Categories of Women in Relation to a Man

Women in relation to a man fall into three categories:

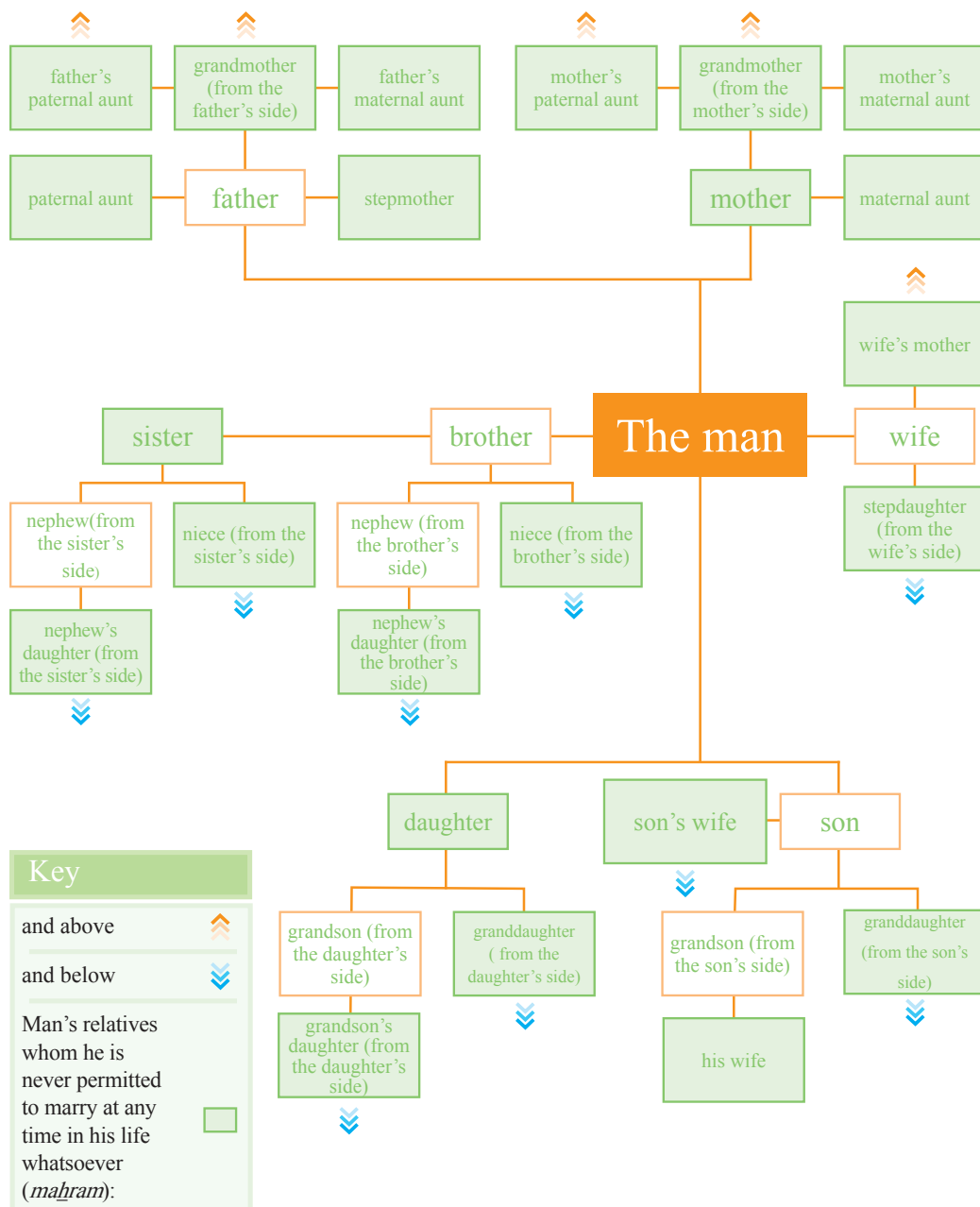
#### 1 She could be his wife:

In this case, he is allowed to enjoy her company in any way he likes, just as she is allowed to enjoy his company. In fact, Allah describes each one of them to be a 'garment' for the other, revealing an excellent image of a perfect physical, emotional and mental union: "They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them." (*Soorat Al-Baqarah*, 2:187) (See page 213)

## 2 She could be a relative whom he is never permitted to marry at any time in his life whatsoever (*mahram*):

This category consists of the following:

1	The mother and above (the maternal grandmother, the paternal grandmother, etc.)
2	The daughter and below (granddaughter, great-granddaughter, etc.)
3	The full sister, consaguine or uterinesister.
4	The paternal aunt, (that is, the father's full sister) or his consaguibe or uterine sister. This includes the paternal aunt of one's father and the paternal aunt of one's mother.
5	The maternal aunt, (that is, the mother's full sister) or her consanguine or uterine sister. This includes the maternal aunt of one's father and the maternal aunt of one's mother.
6	The full brother's daughters or the daughters of the sanguine or uterine brother and below (brother's son's daughters, for instance).
7	The full sister's daughters or the daughters of the consanguine or uterine sister and below (sister's daughter's daughters, for instance).
8	The mother-in-law, whether he is still married to her daughter or has divorced her, and grandmother-in-law
9	The stepdaughter (the daughter one's wife has from an earlier marriage to another man).
10	The son's wife and below (such as the grandson's wife).
11	stepmother and above, e.g. the stepbrother's wife (from the step father's side).
12	The foster mother: A foster mother is a woman who breastfeeds a child during his first two years at least five times to his satisfaction. Islam grants her such a right by reason of such breastfeeding ( <i>radāa'ah</i> ).
13	The foster sister: a foster sister is the daughter of the foster mother. Indeed, a man is not allowed to marry any of the relations through breastfeeding, just as he is not permitted to marry any of the relations through blood relationship. Relations through breastfeeding include foster aunts (foster mother's sisters) and foster nieces (foster sister's daughters).



These female relatives may appear before him without covering the body parts that are not customarily covered, such as the arms, neck and hair, but without going to extremes.



### 3 She could be one he is allowed to marry (*ajnabiyah*, literally, foreigner, not related to him):

Such a woman is one who does not belong to the category of women known as *mahram* stated above, whether she is one of his relatives, such as his maternal or paternal cousin or sister-in-law, or she is not one of his relatives at all.

Regarding this category of women, Islam has laid down a number of rules and criteria which govern a Muslim man's relationship with such women. By doing this, Islam aims to protect people's honour and block all the means that are bound to lead to evil. Allah ﷻ who has created man knows exactly what is best for him, as the Qur'an states, "Does He who created not then know while He is the All-Pervading, the All-Aware?" (*Soorat Al-Mulk*, 67:14)

Every day, we read new reports and statistics of cases of rape and illicit sexual relationships that have ruined countless families and societies that do not implement Allah's laws.



> Islam has laid down rules which govern the relationship between men and women.

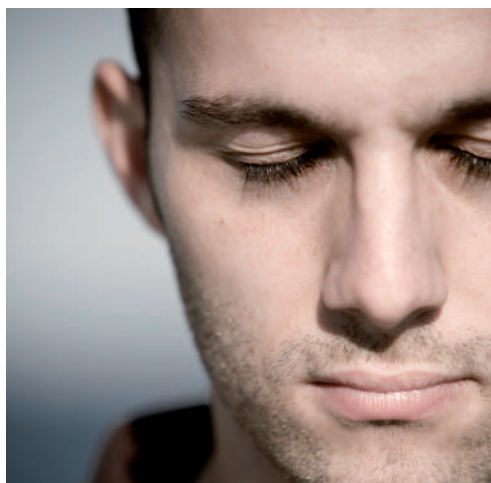
### Rules Governing the Relationship between a Man and Women he Is Allowed to Marry

#### 1 Lowering the Gaze

A Muslim man must not look at other women or at anything for that matter which is bound to sexually arouse him, nor should he unnecessarily look at women.

Allah ﷻ commands both men and women to lower their gaze, for doing so leads to modesty and serves to safeguard one's honour, while lustful looks generally pave the way to sins, as the Qur'an states, "Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty. That will make for greater purity for them. Allah is aware of what they do. Say to believing women that they should lower their gaze and remain chaste." (*Soorat An-Noor*, 24:30-31)

However, if a Muslim accidentally sees a woman, he must divert his eyes from her. In fact, the order to lower the gaze applies to anything that is bound to lead to sexual arousal, including those scenes that are presented in the media and on the Internet.



> Lowering the gaze to avoid looking at things Allah has forbidden leads to modesty and protects one's honour.

## 2 Observing Modesty in Speech

When talking to a woman who is not related to him, he must observe politeness and modesty and avoid any words or gestures which may lead to sexual stimulation. It is for this reason that:

- Allah ﷻ warns women against speaking in a coquettish and too soft a manner when addressing men, as the Qur'an states, "Do not be too soft-spoken in your speech lest someone with sickness in his heart becomes desirous. Speak correct and courteous words." (*Soorat Al-Ahzaab*, 33:32)
- Allah ﷻ warns them against using suggestive gestures and manner of walking or displaying their charms and some of their ornaments: "They should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments." (*Soorat An-Noor*, 24:31)

## 3 Avoiding Private Seclusion with Non-*Mahram* Women Altogether (*Khalwah*)

The Arabic word *khalwah* means the state of being alone with a non-*mahram* woman in a place where no one can see them. Islam strictly prohibits this as it could, through Satan's temptations, lead to illicit sexual relationships. The Prophet ﷺ once said, "Never is a man alone with a woman except that Satan is the third." (*Sunan At-Tirmidhee*: 2165)

## 4 Wearing the *Hijaab* (the Modest Muslim Style of Dress)

Allah ﷻ commands women, but not men, to wear the *hijaab* because women in particular enjoy a natural beauty and attraction that could easily tempt men into sinful acts.

Islam commands women to wear the *hijaab* for a number of reasons, including the following:



- So that they could carry out their mission in life and society in scientific and academic fields in the best possible manner while at the same time guarding their modesty.
- So that they would reduce chances of temptation in order to purify society, on the one hand, and safeguard women's honour, on the other.
- So that they would help male onlookers control themselves even more and thus treat them as civilised and educated human beings and not as sex objects that only serve to tempt men and stimulate them.

### What Must the Hijaab Cover?

Allah ﷻ commands women to cover all their bodies except the face and the hands, as the Qur'an states, "They should not display their beauty and ornaments except

what must ordinarily appear thereof." (*Soorat An-Noor*, 24:31) However, in cases of likely temptation due to their striking beauty, they may have to cover their faces and hands as well.

### Criteria of Proper Hijaab

A woman may choose any design or colour she likes for her hijaab as long as the following conditions are met:

- 1 It must appropriately cover the parts of the body which must be covered in public.
- 2 It must hang loose and must not fit very closely to the body, so that the shape of the body is not revealed.
- 3 It must not allow the wearer's body to be seen through its fabric.



> The hijaab safeguards women's honour and affords them the chance to carry out their mission in society in the most modest manner mankind has ever witnessed.

## > *Marriage in Islam*



> Marriage is one of the strongest relationships Islam has stressed.

Marriage is one of the strongest relationships which Islam stresses, encourages and considers as one of the prophets' practices. (See page 202)

Indeed, Islam attaches much importance to marriage rulings, etiquette and the spouses' rights in such a way as to guarantee marital stability and permanence and create a successful family in which children are brought up enjoying psychological stability, observing devoutness and moral integrity, and displaying excellence in various aspects of life.

### **These rulings include the following:**

Islam has laid down several conditions for the validity of the marriage contract. They are as follows:

### **The Conditions Islam Stipulates Regarding the Wife**

- 1 The wife must be Muslim, Jewish or Christian, believing in her religion. However, Islam encourages Muslim men to choose devout Muslim women for this purpose because a practising Muslim will be a good mother who will give her children the best possible upbringing and help her husband adhere to the teachings of Islam. As the Prophet ﷺ said, "Marry a devout Muslim woman and you will prosper." (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 4802; *Saheeh Muslim*: 1466)



2 She must be a chaste woman, as it is forbidden to marry a woman known for her lewdness and immorality. As the Qur'an states, "It is lawful for you to marry the chaste believing women and the chaste women of the people who were given the Book before you." (*Soorat Al-Maa'idah, 5:5*)

3 She must not be one of those women whom he is never permitted to marry at any time in his life whatsoever (*mahram*) (See page 206), nor must he marry two sisters at the same time or a woman and her aunt at the same time.



### The Conditions Islam Stipulates Regarding the Husband

The husband must be Muslim, and a Muslim woman is forbidden from marrying a non-Muslim man, no matter what his religion may be and whether he is a member of the People of the Book (i.e. Jewish or Christian) or not. Islam stresses that a man must be accepted as a husband as long as he meets the following two conditions:

- Adherence to religion
- Good character

The Prophet ﷺ said, "If a man with whose religion and character you are satisfied asks your daughter's hand in marriage, comply with his request." (*Sunan At-Tirmidhee: 1084; Sunan Ibn Maajah: 1967*)



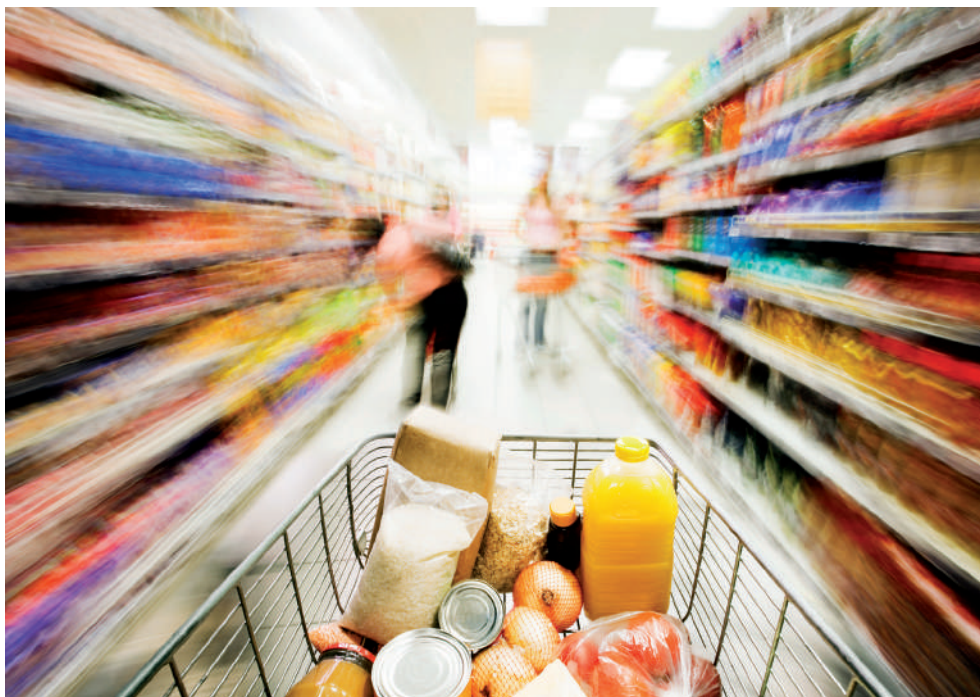
## > The Spouses' Rights and Obligations

Allah ﷻ has entitled husband and wife to certain rights, made it incumbent upon both of them to discharge their duties and encourages them to engage in anything that is bound to promote marital life and preserve it. Indeed, they are both responsible for the welfare of the family and neither of them should demand the other to do something beyond their capacity, as the Qur'an states, "And women have rights similar to those of men over them in kindness." (*Soorat Al-Baqarah*, 2:228) Therefore, tolerance and kindness are required to create a prosperous life and help build a strong family.

### The Wife's Rights

#### 1 Maintenance and Residence

- The wife's maintenance entails her incontestable right to food, drink, clothing, general care and a suitable home, even if she is wealthy.
- How is the amount of maintenance calculated? The husband ought to spend on his wife in accordance with his means without extravagance or miserliness, as the Qur'an states, "Let the man of means spend according to his means: and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him." (*Soorat At-Talaq*, 65:7)



> A Muslim man is duty-bound to support his wife and children in kindness.

- He must spend on her in kindness, without ever implying that he is doing her favours or humiliating her in any way whatsoever. Indeed, such maintenance is not a favour but a duty he ought to discharge towards his wife in kindness, as the Qur'an clearly exhorts him.
- When a Muslim man fulfils his duty of supporting his wife and children, he will be rewarded abundantly by Allah, as the Prophet ﷺ said, "When a man spends on his family, anticipating Allah's reward in the hereafter, this act of his will be counted as an act of charity." (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 4776; *Saheeh Muslim*: 1401) He also said, "You will be rewarded for whatever you spend for Allah's sake even if it were a morsel of food which you put in your wife's mouth." (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 56; *Saheeh Muslim*: 1628) Those who refuse or neglect their duty to spend on their families despite their ability to do so are committing a terrible sin for their negligence, as the Prophet ﷺ said, "A man who neglects those who are under his care would surely be committing a sin." (*Sunan Abu Daawood*: 1692)

## 2 Living with Her in Kindness

This means showing good character, kindness, gentleness in word and deed and putting up with the occasional faults and negligence. As the Qur'an states, "Live together with them courteously and in kindness. If you dislike them, it may well be that you dislike something in which Allah has placed a lot of good." (*Soorat An-Nisaa*: 4:19)

The Prophet ﷺ said, "The believers who have perfect faith are those with the best character, and the best of them are those who treat their women the best." (*Sunan At-Tirmidhee*: 1162)

"The believers who have perfect faith are those with the best character, and the best among you are those who treat their wives the best." (*Sunan At-Tirmidhee*: 2612; *Musnad Ahmad*: 24677)

"The best of you are the kindest towards their wives, and I am the kindest amongst you to my wives." (*Sunan At-Tirmidhee*: 3895)

One of the Prophet's companions once asked him, "Messenger of Allah, what is the right the wife of one of us has on him?" he said, "To feed her whenever you feed yourself and to clothe her whenever you clothe yourself; do not slap her across the face, revile her or separate yourself from her except in the house." (*Sunan Abu Daawood*: 2142)

## 3 Patience and Tolerance

A man must make allowances for women's nature, which is obviously different from that of men; he must also try to look at life from all sides, considering the advantages and disadvantages of his wife, for no one is free from faults. Both spouses must exercise



patience and take into account the positive aspects of each other's personality, as the Qur'an states, "Do not forget to show kindness to each other." (*Soorat Al-Baqarah*, 2:237) The Prophet ﷺ also said in this respect, "A believer must not harbour any rancour against a believing woman; if he dislikes one of her characteristics, he will certainly be pleased with another." (*Saheeh Muslim*: 1469)

The Prophet ﷺ urges men to treat women with kindness, pointing their attention to the fact that women's emotional and psychological nature is different from that of men, that such differences between men and women are in actual fact complementary and must in no way give rise to discord and eventual divorce. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Treat women well and with kindness, for a woman was created from the rib and thus she will not be straightened according to your way. If you want to enjoy her, you will have to enjoy her with her twist. If you try to straighten her, you will break her, and breaking her is divorcing her." (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 3153; *Saheeh Muslim*: 1468)

#### 4 Spending the Night with the Wife

The husband is recommended to spend the night with his wife and must do so at least once every four days. He must also observe equal division of nights between co-wives in cases of polygamy.

#### 5 Defending Her, Representing His Honour

When a man marries a woman, she becomes his 'honour' which he must stubbornly defend even if he gets killed in the process, as the Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever is killed defending his wife is a martyr." (*Sunan At-Tirmidhee*: 1421; *Sunan Abu Daawood*: 4772)

#### 6 Not Revealing Bedroom Secrets

The husband must not talk to others about his wife's particularities and bedroom secrets to other people. The Prophet ﷺ said, "The worst person in the eyes of Allah on the Day of Judgement is that one who has an intimate relationship with his wife and the man then he reveals their bedroom secrets to others." (*Saheeh Muslim*: 1437)

#### 7 Not Engaging in Aggressive or Hostile Actions against her

To solve marital problems, Islam has laid down a number of rules, including the following:

- Problems may be solved through constructive dialogue and wisdom in order to correct mistakes.
- In cases of rebellion, disloyalty and ill-conduct, the husband may stop talking to her, but without exceeding three days; if this course of action does not seem to work, then he may temporarily abandon her in bed or abstain from the usual sexual intimacy, but without leaving the house.
- 'Aa'ishah ؓ narrated, "Allah's Messenger ﷺ never hit anything with his hand ever, except when fighting in the path of Allah. Nor did he ever hit a servant or a woman." (*Saheeh Muslim*: 2328)

#### 8 Teaching and Advising Her

The husband must enjoin his family members to act rightly and forbid them to act inappropriately. He ought to strive hard to help them follow the path that leads to Paradise and avoid those paths that lead to Hellfire. Teaching them by precept and example, he can

do so by acting on obeying Allah's commands and avoiding things He has prohibited. The wife must also advise her husband, guide him to the right path and discuss with him ways of giving the best possible upbringing to their children. As the Qur'an states, "O you who believe, safeguard yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones." (*Soorat At-Tahreem*, 66:6) The Prophet ﷺ also said in this regard, "Every one of you is a guardian and is responsible for those in his custody." (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 2416; *Saheeh Muslim*: 1829)

### 9 Honouring the Conditions Stipulated by the Wife

If the wife makes a stipulation at the time of concluding the marriage contract, such as having a particular kind of accommodation or expenses and the husband agrees to such a condition, he must fulfil such an obligation, for a marriage contract is one of the most solemn agreements and obligations. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Of all the conditions which you have to fulfil, the conditions which make it legal for you to have sexual relations (i.e. the marriage contract) have the greatest right to be fulfilled." (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 4856; *Saheeh Muslim*: 1418)



> The husband must honour the marriage contract and fulfil the conditions stipulated in it.

## The Husband's Rights

### 1 Obedience in Kindness

Allah ﷻ has placed men in charge of women, being responsible for their maintenance, guidance and general care, due to the characteristics with which He has endowed them, in addition to the money they spend to support them. As the Qur'an states, "Men have charge of women because Allah has given the one more [ strength ] than the other and because they spend their wealth on them." (*Soorat An-Nisaa*, 4:34)

### 2 Attentiveness to His Sexual Needs

A Muslim woman must be attentive to her husband's sexual needs and is recommended to beautify herself for him. If she refuses to respond to his legitimate sexual advances, she would be committing a monstrous sin, unless there is a legitimate excuse, such as being on her menses, making up an obligatory fast she has previously missed or being sick.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "If a man calls his wife to bed and she refuses, and then he spends the night angry with her, the angels will continue to curse her until the morning." (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 3065; *Saheeh Muslim*: 1436)

### 3 Not Allowing Anyone He Does not Like in His House

This is his right which she must respect. The Prophet ﷺ said, "It is not lawful for a woman to observe a voluntary fast without the permission of her husband, nor is it lawful for her to allow anyone to enter his house without his permission." (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 4899)

### 4 Not Leaving the House without His Permission

One of the husband's rights is that she is not allowed to leave the house without his permission, whether she wants to go out for a personal or general need.

### 5 Service

A woman is recommended to serve her husband in kindness by preparing meals for him and undertaking other household chores.



## > Divorce

> Islam requires spouses to preserve their marital relationship and urges them to do their utmost to keep it going. However, should there be a genuine need for divorce, Islam requires them to follow certain rules it has laid down in this respect.



**Islam urges** that the marriage contract be permanent and that the marriage relationship be characterised by continuity so much so that husband and wife remain together until death separates them. Islam goes as far as to call marriage a “solemn pledge”. Specifying a date for terminating the marriage contract is strictly prohibited.

**While Islam** stresses all this, it does, however, take into account the fact that it lays down rules and regulations for human beings with frailties that characterise human nature, and so it lays down rules and regulations as to how a divorce may be negotiated after all efforts of reconciliation have been exhausted and there is no other recourse. In this way, it deals fairly and in a practical manner with both spouses. When aversion and conflicts between spouses persistently become intolerable, divorce becomes a necessity for the prosperity and familial and social stability for each one of them. The reason for such an inevitable course of action explains the failure of marriage to realize its purpose, hence dissolution of marriage becomes the lesser of two evils.

It is for this reason that Islam allows marriage dissolution through divorce as a means to end an unsuccessful marriage and to give each spouse the chance to find another

spouse for a better relationship. As the Qur'an states, “If a couple do separate, Allah will enrich each of them from His boundless wealth. Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Wise.” (*Soorat An-Nisaa*; 4:130)

**However, it has laid down a number of rules and criteria concerning divorce, including the following:**

- As a general rule, divorce rests with the husband except under certain circumstances.
- The wife may request a divorce from the judge if she cannot bear to live with her husband any longer for legitimate reasons and the latter refuses to divorce her. The judge then undertakes to dissolve the marriage contract if the reason for requesting a divorce is acceptable.
- A husband can remarry his wife after a second divorce; however, if he divorces her a third time, he cannot possibly remarry her unless she marries another man who has genuinely divorced her.

## > *Parents' Rights*



Showing kindness to parents is one of the most meritorious acts and the best of rewarded in the sight of Allah. In fact, Allah ﷻ mentions it alongside the act of worshipping Him in many places in the Qur'an.

Islam considers dutifulness to parents one of the deeds that lead to Paradise. The Prophet ﷺ said, "A parent is the middle gate of all the gates of Paradise. (That is, obeying parents leads to entering Paradise from its middle gate, which is the best of them all) Now, if you like, you may lose it or keep it." (*Sunan At-Tirmidhee*: 1900)

- **Seriousness of disobedience to parents**

All revealed religions consider disobedience to parents one of the greatest of all major sins and warned against such a monstrous act. The Prophet ﷺ once asked his companions, “Shall I not inform you of the greatest of the major sins?” “Yes, please do, Messenger of Allah,” they replied. He said, “Associating partners with Allah in worship and being disobedient to parents.” (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 5918)

- **Dutifulness to parents but without disobeying Allah**

A Muslim must obey his parents in everything unless they ask him to do something which Allah has forbidden. In this case, he must not obey them but must still be kind to them, as the Qur’an states, “We have instructed man to honour his parents, but if they endeavour to make you associate with Me something about which you have no knowledge, do not obey them.” (*Soorat Al-‘Ankaboot*, 29:8)

- **Showing kindness to them in their old age**

Allah ﷻ says, “Your Lord has decreed that you should worship none but Him, and that you should show kindness to your parents. Whether one or both of them reach old age with you, do not utter the slightest harsh word to them out of irritation and do not be harsh with them but speak to them with gentleness and generosity.” (*Soorat Al-Israa’*, 17:23)

This verse informs us that a Muslim must honour his parents and obey them and that he must not repel them especially if they have attained old age, even by muttering sounds to express annoyance, let alone saying a word of contempt.

- **Non-Muslim parents**

A Muslim is required to obey his parents and show kindness to them even if they are not Muslim, as the Qur’an states, “But if they strive with you to make you associate with Me something of which you certainly have no knowledge do not obey them. Even then, treat them with kindness and due consideration in respect of [the life of] this world.” (*Soorat Luqmaan*, 31:15)



## > Children's Rights



- **Marrying a good devout woman to provide** the best possible upbringing to her children. Indeed. This is the best gift a man can give his children.
- **Giving them good names**, as a person's name conveys meaning and becomes a symbol of that person.
- **Teaching them the principles of Islam:** "Every one of you is a guardian and is responsible for those is in his custody. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects and responsible for them; a man is a guardian of his family and is responsible for it; a woman is a guardian of her husband's home and children and is responsible for them, and a servant is a guardian of his master's property and is responsible for it. Therefore, all of you are guardians and all of you are responsible for those under your care." (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 2416; *Saheeh Muslim*: 1829)

### • Maintenance

The father must support all his children without exception and must not neglect this duty. Rather, he must carry it out to the best of his ability and according to his means, as the Prophet ﷺ said, "A man who neglects those who are under his care would surely be committing a sin" (*Sunan Abu Daawood*: 1692)

Regarding spending and caring for girls in particular, he also said, "Whoever is in charge of any of these girls and treats them well, they will be a shield for him against the Fire." (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 5649; *Saheeh Muslim*: 2629)

### • Justice

All children must be treated equally, as the Prophet ﷺ said, "Fear Allah and treat your children justly." (*Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*: 2447; *Saheeh Muslim*: 1623)