

## Muslim Women, Best Women on the Face of the Earth

The Messenger of Allah said:

«خَيْرُ نِسَائِهَا مَرْيَمُ بِنْتُ عِمْرَانَ، وَخَيْرُ نِسَائِهَا خَدِيجَةُ بِنْتُ خُوَيْلِدٍ»

“The best woman (in her time) was Maryam, daughter of `Imran, and the best woman (of the Prophet's time) is Khadijah daughter of Khuwaylid.” (Tirmidhi)

The Messenger of Allah said,

«كَمُلَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ كَثِيرٌ، وَلَمْ يَكْمُلْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَرْيَمُ بِنْتُ عِمْرَانَ وَآسِيَةُ امْرَأَةِ فِرْعَوْنَ»

“Many men achieved perfection, but among women, only Maryam the daughter of `Imran and Asiah, the wife of Fir`oun, achieved perfection.”

The Six -- with the exception of Abu Dawud - recorded it. Al-Bukhari's wording for it reads,

«كَمُلَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ كَثِيرٌ، وَلَمْ يَكْمُلْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا آسِيَةُ امْرَأَةِ فِرْعَوْنَ، وَمَرْيَمُ بِنْتُ عِمْرَانَ، وَإِنَّ فَضْلَ عَائِشَةَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ كَفَضْلِ الثَّرِيدِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الطَّعَامِ»

“Many men reached the level of perfection, but no woman reached such a level except Asiah, the wife of Fir`awn, and Maryam, the daughter of `Imran. The superiority of `A'ishah (his wife) to other women, is like the superiority of Tharid (meat and bread dish) to other meals.”

These women and their followers are the best women who ever set foot on the face of this Earth.

# Best Women on the Face of the Earth



*Clarification of How the True Believing Muslim Women are the Best of Women*

*Compiled by: Abu Abdur Rahman Faruq Post*

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This is an important subject about which many people lack correct knowledge and understanding of. One of the most beneficial ways to learn the truth about a subject or particular topic is by comparing between different views and beliefs. As such, before we begin to cover our topic, we want to briefly shed some light on the status of non-Muslim women before Islam - and even after Islam, within the other world religions - regarding their treatment, rights and what respect is afforded to them. After observing the status of non-Muslim women, how they are treated by their societies, and whether or not their rights are upheld, we should be able to better realize the blessing and virtue of being Muslim and especially being a Muslim woman. Hopefully this will lead us to better understand Islam, clear up any misconceptions one may have and enable us to understand that the rules and regulations in Islam have been put into place to promote that which is beneficial for humankind and to prohibit and protect humankind from that which is harmful to them.

And with Allah is all success.

**In the Name of Allah the Most Merciful the Bestower of Mercy**

All praises are due to Allah (God) the Creator of all things, the One who proportioned and fashioned everything in the most perfect form and shape; the One who created everything in pairs and created for each and every thing its mate. Allah, from His supreme knowledge and wisdom, created a being in whom man finds his rest, relaxation and pleasure; a being that raises nations of men; a being that should be preserved and protected like a precious jewel. This most precious being is the woman.

Unfortunately, the enemies of civilization and those who have a sickness within their hearts wish to transform the woman into a cheap commodity in the marketplace of desirous and satanic temptations. They wish to display her in front of their eyes so that they can enjoy her beauty and exact from her what is far worse. For this reason, we see licentious magazines and television advertisements that use pictures of scantily clad underdressed young women as a means to spread and sell their publications or goods. Furthermore, because of these dangerous developments, the woman has been removed from her original role in the home, and she is seen as a commodity or marketing tool used to sell cars, beer, cigarettes- anything and everything imaginable. Islam, however, elevates the woman's status to protect her from the damage that this situation can cause. For this reason and many others, we saw it fit to discuss the status of women in Islam.

have inherited from their mother, the Biblical Eve, both her guilt and her guile. Consequently, they were all untrustworthy, morally inferior, and wicked. Menstruation, pregnancy, and childbearing were considered the just punishment for the eternal guilt of the cursed female sex. In order to appreciate how negative the impact of the Biblical Eve was on all her female descendants we have to look at the writings of some of the most important Jews and Christians of all time. Let us start with the Old Testament and look at excerpts from what is called the *Wisdom Literature* in which we find:

*"I find more bitter than death the woman who is a snare, whose heart is a trap and whose hands are chains. The man who pleases God will escape her, but the sinner she will ensnare....while I was still searching but not finding, I found one upright man among a thousand but not one upright woman among them all";*( New International Version, Ecclesiastes 7:26-28).

*"But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword."* (NIV, Proverbs 5:4)

*"To keep you from the evil woman, From the smooth tongue of the adulteress"* (NIV, Proverbs 6:24)

Again and again all women are denigrated because of the image of Eve the temptress, thanks to the altered Genesis account. To sum up, the Judaeo-Christian conception of women has been poisoned by the belief in the sinful nature of Eve and her female offspring, which is completely false.

## Part 1

### The status of non-Muslim women

**We begin our discussion with something that all of us should be somewhat familiar with, the story of Adam and Eve. The misunderstanding of what really happened has led many people astray.**

The Judaea-Christian conception of the creation of Adam and Eve is narrated in detail in **Genesis 2:4-3:24**. God prohibited both of them from eating the fruits of the forbidden tree. The serpent seduced Eve to eat from it and Eve, in turn, seduced Adam to eat with her. [According to these texts in their current form-bearing in mind that they have been altered from their originals] When God rebuked Adam for what he did, he put all the blame on Eve –*"The woman you put here with me --she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it."* Consequently, God said to Eve: *"I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you."* To Adam He said: *"Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree .... Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life..."* [Genesis 2:4-3:24]

The image of Eve as temptress in the Bible has resulted in an extremely negative impact on women throughout the Judaeo-Christian tradition. All women were believed to

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*learn in quietness and full submission. I don't permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner"* (NIV, I Timothy 2:11-14). St. Augustine was faithful to the legacy of his predecessors; he wrote to a friend Laetus: *"What is the difference whether it is in a wife or a mother, it is still Eve the temptress that we must beware of in any woman.....I fail to see what use woman can be to man, if one excludes the function of bearing children."*(*Preaching The Women of The Bible*, p.122)

Centuries later, St. Thomas Aquinas still considered women as defective: *"As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten, for the active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex; while the production of woman comes from a defect in the active force or from some material indisposition, or even from some external influence."*(*Summa Theologica*, Q.92)

Finally, the renowned reformer Martin Luther could not see any benefit from a woman other than bringing into the world as many children as possible regardless of any side effects: *"If they become tired or even die, that does not matter. Let them die in childbirth, that's why they are there"*(*Death and Dying*)

The following question was posed to Rabbi Epstein: "Why are the female members of the family considered part of the family estate?", he answered: "they are owned before

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In another part of the Hebrew literature which is found in the Catholic Bible (Douay-Rheims Bible) we read:

*"And any wickedness, but the wickedness of a woman: And any affliction, but the affliction from them that hate him: And any revenge, but the revenge of enemies. There is no head worse than the head of a serpent: And there is no anger above the anger of a woman. It will be more agreeable to abide with a lion and a dragon, than to dwell with a wicked woman. The wickedness of a woman changeth her face: and she darkeneth her countenance as a bear: and sheweth it like sackcloth. In the midst of her neighbours, Her husband groaned, and hearing he sighed a little.*

*All malice is shore to the malice of a woman, let the lot of sinners fall upon her. As the climbing of a sandy way is to the feet of the aged, so is a wife full of tongue to a quiet man. Look not upon a woman's beauty, and desire not a woman for beauty. A woman's anger, and impudence, and confusion is great. A woman, if she have superiority, is contrary to her husband. A wicked woman abateth the courage, and maketh a heavy countenance, and a wounded heart. Feeble hands, and disjointed knees, a woman that doth not make her husband happy. From the woman came the beginning of sin, and by her we all die." "No wickedness comes anywhere near the wickedness of a woman.....Sin began with a woman and thanks to her we all must die".(Ecclesiasticus 25:19-33).*

Observe the severe tone of St. Paul in the New Testament (which was written by Paul himself): *"A woman should*

*your enemies, and the Lord your God has delivered them into your hands, and you have taken them captive, And you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and desire her, and take her for a wife -Then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and do her nails, And she shall remove the garment of her captivity from her, and remain in your house and weep for her father and mother for a month, and after that you may approach her and have intercourse with her, and she shall be your wife. And if you do not want her, you shall send her out on her own; you shall not sell her at all for money, you shall not treat her as a slave, because you "violated" her."(New International Version, Deuteronomy 21:10-14)*

It is also well known from Aristotle's work that he defined woman as a defective man, and Ian Maclean disputed whether women even possessed souls. This debate reached a peak in 1595 with the publication of Alcidius' book, which argued that women were not even human. Not surprisingly, the same work also links women to demons and dogs.

In fact, the difference between the Biblical and the Quranic attitude towards the female sex starts as soon as a female is born. For example, the Bible states that the period of the mother's ritual impurity is twice as long if a girl is born than if a boy is (New International Version, Lev. 12:1-5): *"The LORD said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites: 'A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be ceremonially unclean for seven days, just as she is*

marriage, by the father; after marriage by the husband." (Epstein, op.cit. p.121)

Jewish Rabbis listed nine curses inflicted on women as a result of the Fall: *"To the woman He gave nine curses and death: the burden of the blood of menstruation and the blood of virginity; the burden of pregnancy; the burden of childbirth; the burden of bringing up the children; her head is covered as one in mourning; she pierces her ear like a permanent slave or slave girl who serves her master; she is not to be believed as a witness; and after everything-death."* (Leonard J. Swidler, Women in Judaism: the Status of Women in Formative Judaism (Metuchen, N.J: Scarecrow Press, 1976) p. 115.)

Even until the present day, orthodox Jewish men in their daily morning prayer recite *"Blessed be God King of the universe that Thou has not made me a woman."*; The women, on the other hand, thank God every morning for *"making me according to Thy will."* Another prayer found in many Jewish prayer books [is as follows]: *"Praised be God that he has not created me a gentile. Praised be God that he has not created me a woman. Praised be God that he has not created me an ignoramus."* (Thena Kendath, "Memories of an Orthodox youth" in Susannah Heschel, ed. On being a Jewish Feminist (New York: Schocken Books, 1983), pp. 96-97. and Swidler, op. cit., pp. 80-81.)

Some of the Jewish sects act upon a verse in the Torah (which has been altered from its original form) to take women (war prisoners) into their houses, then shave their heads, then have intercourse with her, in Deut. 21:10-14 it says what follows: *"When you go forth to war against*

A daughter is considered a painful burden, a potential source of shame to her father:

*"Your daughter is headstrong? Keep a sharp look-out that she does not make you the laughing stock of your enemies, the talk of the town, the object of common gossip, and put you to public shame" (Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible, Ecclesiasticus 42:11).*

*"Keep a headstrong daughter under firm control, or she will abuse any indulgence she receives. Keep a strict watch on her shameless eye, do not be surprised if she disgraces you" (Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible, Ecclesiasticus 26:10-11).*

The position of the Christian Church (as quoted in the "Marriage East and West" pgs. 80-81) : "It would be hard to find anywhere a collection of more degrading references to the female sex than the early Church Fathers provide. Lecky, the famous historian, speaks of these fierce incentives which form so conspicuous and so grotesque a portion of the writing of the Fathers.....woman was represented as the door of hell, as the mother of all human ills. She should be ashamed at the very thought that she is a woman. She should live in continual penance on account of the curses she has brought upon the world. She should be ashamed of her dress, for it is the memorial of her fall. She should be especially ashamed of her beauty, for it is the most potent instrument of the devil." One of the most scathing of these attacks on women is that of Tertullian: *"Do you know that you are each an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age; the guilt must of necessity live too. You*

*unclean during her monthly period. On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised. Then the woman must wait thirty-three days to be purified from her bleeding. She must not touch anything sacred or go to the sanctuary until the days of her purification are over. If she gives birth to a daughter, for two weeks the woman will be unclean, as during her period. Then she must wait sixty-six days to be purified from her bleeding."*

The Catholic Bible states explicitly that:

*"The birth of a daughter is a loss" (Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible, Ecclesiasticus 22:3).*

In contrast to this shocking statement, boys receive special praise:

*"A man who educates his son will be the envy of his enemy."( Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible, Ecclesiasticus 30:3)*

Jewish Rabbis made it an obligation on Jewish men to produce offspring in order to propagate the race. At the same time, they did not hide their clear preference for male children: "It is well for those whose children are male but ill for those whose are female", "At the birth of a boy, all are joyful...at the birth of a girl all are sorrowful", and "When a boy comes into the world, peace comes into the world... When a girl comes, nothing comes."( Swidler, op. cit., p. 140.)

In Encyclopedia Britannica, we find a summary of the legal status of women in the Roman civilization:

"In Roman Law a woman was even in historic times completely dependant. If married, she and her property passed into the power of her husband.....the wife was the purchased property of her husband, and like a slave acquired only for his benefit. A woman could not exercise any civil or public office, could not be a witness, surety, tutor, or curator; she could not adopt or be adopted, or make will or contract." (Encyclopedia Britannica 11<sup>th</sup> ed., 1911, op.cit, Vol. 28, p.782)

According to the English Common Law: "all real property which a wife held at the time of marriage became a possession of her husband" (Encyclopedia American International, Vol. 29, p.108) This may be why the woman takes the husband's last name after marriage.

It was only by the 19<sup>th</sup> century did the situation start to improve. "By a series of acts starting with the Married women's Property Act in 1870, amended in 1882 and 1887, married women achieved the right to own property and to enter contracts on a par with spinsters, widows, and divorcees." (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1968, Vol.23, p 624)

Even in Arab societies before Islam the woman also lived under dire conditions. The Arabs used to hate it when a girl was born. Allah (God) the Most High says this in the Quran:

**"And when the news of (the birth of) a female (child) is brought to any of them, his face becomes dark, and he**

*are the devil's gateway; you are the unsealer of that forbidden tree; you are the first deserters of the divine law; you are she who persuades him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack.*" (On the Apparel of Women, Book 1, Ch.1) Not only did the church affirm the inferior status of woman, it deprived her of legal rights she had previously enjoyed."

In Hindu scriptures, the description of a good wife is as follows: "a woman whose, mind, speech and body are kept in subjection, acquires high renown in this world, and, in the next, the same abode with her husband." (Mace, David and Vera, Marriage East and West. Dolphin Books, Doubleday and Co., Inc. N.Y. 1960)

In Athens, women were not better off than either the Indian or the Roman women.

"Athenian women were always minors, subject to some male to their father, to their brother, or to some of their male kin." (Allen, E.A. History of Civilization, Vol. 3, p.444)

A Roman wife was described by an historian as: "a babe, a minor, a ward, a person incapable of doing or acting anything according to her own individual taste, a person continually under the tutelage and guardianship of her husband." (Allen, E.A. History of Civilization, Vol. 3, p.443)



**"And they (Arab pagans) say: What is in the bellies of such and such cattle (milk or fetus) is for our males alone, and forbidden to our females (girls and women), but if it is born dead, they all have shares therein....." (6:139)**

Also from these customs was that there would be many women living under one man, since there were no limits to the number of wives a man could marry. They wouldn't show any concern for what occurred to the women as a result of this practice, such as living under cramped conditions, inconveniences and injustice.

As you can see, women were treated like animals. They were bought and sold. They had no choice in the matter of marriage; they had to silently accept the highest bidder. They never inherited, even from their close relatives. In fact, the woman herself would become an item to be distributed just like any other commodity of inheritance in a person's estate. Women were regarded merely as properties and possessions of men. Even in the so-called modern European countries they were not even regarded as human. Even in religious matters women were given no status by men, for they were not considered to be worthy of prayer or fit to be counted as human.

It was generally accepted as permissible for men to bury their daughters alive, and this heartless act of inhumanity was regarded as an act of humanity and respect. Furthermore, it was generally accepted that if a woman was murdered, her murderer could not be punished in any

**is filled with inward grief! He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that whereof he has been informed. Shall he keep her with dishonor or bury her in the earth? Certainly, evil is their decision." (Quran 16: 58-59)**

Amongst the Arabs were those who would bury their daughter while she was still alive until she died below the earth. Also amongst them were those who let them live only to face a life of humiliation and degradation.

And Allah, the Most Wise, strongly disapproved of this as He says in the Quran:

**"And when the female (infant) buried alive (as the pagan Arabs used to do) is questioned. For what sin, was she killed?" (81: 8-9)**

This refers to the baby girl that was buried alive and left to die beneath the earth. If she was spared from being buried alive and allowed to live, then indeed she found herself living a life of degradation. This is because she was not allowed to inherit any portion of her relatives' estate no matter how much money he had and regardless of whether she was suffering from poverty and in dire need. The reason for this is because inheritance was specific for men to the exclusion of women. In fact, the woman would be distributed as part of her deceased husband's estate, just as his money would be distributed in inheritance! Also, amongst the Arab customs, was that certain foods were only to be eaten by men and it was not allowed for women to eat them, as Allah told us in the Quran:

The attitude of St. Paul in the New Testament is not brighter:

*"As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church." (New International Version, I Corinthians 14:34-35)*

How can a woman learn if she is not allowed to speak? How can a woman grow intellectually if she is obliged to be in a state of full submission?

### **What is the status of the mother in the Judeo-Christian perspective?**

What do we find in New Testament? Does it call for the honoring of the mother? On the contrary, one gets the impression that the New Testament considers kind treatment of mothers as an impediment on the path to God. According to the New Testament, one cannot become a good Christian worthy of becoming a disciple of Christ unless he hates his mother. It is attributed to Jesus that he said:

*"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters--yes, even his own life--he cannot be my disciple" (New International Version, Luke 14:26).*

way. He could neither be killed in retaliation nor be forced to pay blood money.

In fact, it wasn't until as late as 586 AC that some concession was given to women and, after much arguing, debates and disputes, a resolution was passed stating that a woman was a human. However, this resolution stipulated that she was created and born only to serve man. As late as 1856 women in Britain were not allowed their earnings and had no right to inheritance. In 1857 divorcee women were given the same rights as single woman but married women had to wait until 1893 to receive the same rights. Furthermore, in the English Law, until the year 1805, it was permissible for men to sell their wives, and they even specified her price a half shilling!!!

### **What is the Judeo-Christian attitude towards a female trying to learn her religion?**

The heart of Judaism is the Torah. However, according to the Talmud (which is considered an explanation of Torah), "women are exempt from the study of the Torah."(Talmud Torah 1:01)

Some Jewish Rabbis firmly declared: "Let the words of Torah rather be destroyed by fire than imparted to women", and "Whoever teaches his daughter Torah is as though he taught her obscenity"( Denise L. Carmody, "Judaism", in Arvind Sharma, ed., op. cit., p. 197.)

The Talmud considers a menstruating woman "fatal" even without any physical contact:

*"Our Rabbis taught:....if a menstruant woman passes between two (men), if it is at the beginning of her menses she will slay one of them, and if it is at the end of her menses she will cause strife between them" (bPes. 111a.)*

Furthermore, the husband of a menstruating woman was forbidden to enter the synagogue if he had been made unclean by her, even by the dust under her feet. A wife, daughter, or mother who was menstruating could not recite priestly blessing in the synagogue. No wonder many Jewish women still refer to menstruation as "the curse"! (Ibid., p. 138. and- Sally Pries and, Judaism and the New Woman (New York: Behrman House, Inc., 1975) p. 24. )

## What about adultery and fornication?

Adultery is considered a sin in all religions. The Bible decrees the death sentence for both the adulterer and the adulteress (Lev. 20:10). Islam equally punishes both the adulterer/fornicator and the adulteress/fornicatress (Quran, 24:2). The Bible however, only considers the extramarital affair of a married woman as adultery (New International Version, Leviticus 20:10, Deuteronomy 22:22, Proverbs 6:20-7:27).

*"If a man is found sleeping with another man's wife, both the man who slept with her and the woman must die. You must purge the evil from Israel" (NIV,Deut. 22:22).*

\*There is no possible way Jesus said this, this was the workings of the church fathers and those who took part in altering and authoring the New Testament

## What is said about the menstruating woman?

Jewish laws and regulations concerning menstruating women are extremely restrictive. The Old Testament considers any menstruating woman as unclean and impure. Moreover, her impurity "infects" others as well. Anyone or anything she touches becomes unclean for a day:

*"When a woman has her regular flow of blood, the impurity of her monthly period will last seven days, and anyone who touches her will be unclean till evening. Anything she lies on during her period will be unclean, and anything she sits on will be unclean. Whoever touches her bed must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening. Whoever touches anything she \*sits on must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening. Whether it is the bed or anything she was sitting on, when anyone touches it, he will be unclean till evening" ( New International Version, (look all of ch. 15)Lev. 15:19-23).*

Due to her "contaminating" nature, a menstruating woman was sometimes "banished" in order to avoid any possibility of any contact with her. She was sent to a special house called "the house of uncleanness" for the whole period of her impurity.(Swidler, op. cit., p. 137.)

man are not only illegitimate but they are considered bastards and are forbidden to marry any other Jews except converts and other bastards. This ban is handed down to the children's descendants for 10 generations until the taint of adultery is presumably weakened. (Hazleton, op. cit., pp. 41-42)

## What if a woman is a widow?

Because of the fact that the Old Testament recognized no inheritance rights to them, widows were among the most vulnerable of the Jewish population. The male relatives who inherited all of the deceased husband's estate were to provide for his widow from that estate. However, widows had no way to ensure this provision was carried out and lived on the mercy of others. Therefore, widows were among the lowest classes in ancient Israel and widowhood was considered a symbol of great degradation.

However the plight of a widow in the Biblical tradition extended even beyond her exclusion from her husband's property. According to Genesis 38, a childless widow must marry her husband's brother, even if he is already married, so that he can produce offspring for his dead brother, thus ensuring his brother's name will not die out.

*"Then Judah said to Onan, 'Lie with your brother's wife and fulfill your duty to her as a brother-in-law to produce offspring for your brother' "* (New International Version, Genesis 38:8).

*"If a man commits adultery with another man's wife both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death"* (NIV, Lev. 20:10).

According to the altered Biblical definition, if a married man sleeps with an unmarried woman, it is not considered a crime at all. The married man who has extramarital affairs with unmarried women is not an adulterer and the unmarried women involved with him are not adulteresses. The crime of adultery is committed only when a man, whether married or single, sleeps with a married woman. In this case the man is considered adulterer, even if he is not married, and the woman is considered adulteress. In short, adultery is any illicit sexual intercourse involving a married woman. The extramarital affair of a married man is not per se a crime in the Bible. Why the dual moral standard? According to Encyclopedia Judaica, the wife was considered to be the husband's possession and adultery constituted a violation of the husband's exclusive right to her; the wife, as the husband's possession, had no such right to him. That is, if a man had sexual intercourse with a married woman, he would be violating the property of another man, and thus, he should be punished. (Jeffrey H. Togay, "Adultery," Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol. II, col. 313. Also, see Judith Plaskow, Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1990) pp. 170-177.)

To the present day in Israel, if a married man indulges in an extramarital affair with an unmarried woman, his children by that woman are considered legitimate. However, if a married woman has an affair with another man, whether married or unmarried, her children by that

son of her husband as soon as the marriage contract is conducted. During the times of ignorance (before Islam) the people used to prohibit what Allah prohibits (concerning marriage) except marrying the stepmother and taking two sisters as rival wives. Then Allah revealed this verse.

Widows and divorced women were so looked down upon in the Biblical tradition that the high priest could not marry a widow, a divorced woman, or a prostitute:

*"The woman he (the high priest) marries must be a virgin. He must not marry a widow, a divorced woman, or a woman defiled by prostitution, but only a virgin from his own people, so he will not defile his offspring among his people" (NIV, Lev. 21:13-15)*

## What about woman owning property?

The Talmud describes the financial situation of a wife as follows:

*"How can a woman have anything; whatever is hers belongs to her husband? What is his is his and what is hers is also his..... Her earnings and what she may find in the streets are also his. The household articles, even the crumbs of bread on the table, are his. Should she invite a guest to her house and feed him, she would be stealing from her husband..." (San. 71a, Git. 62a)*

The widow's consent to this marriage is not required. The widow is treated as part of her deceased husband's property, her main function being to ensure her husband's posterity. This biblical law is still practiced in today's Israel .A childless widow in Israel is bequeathed to her husband's brother.( Swidler, op. cit., p. 137)

If the brother is too young to marry, the widow must wait until he comes of age. Should the deceased husband's brother refuse to marry her, she is set free and can then marry any man of her choice. It is not an uncommon phenomenon in Israel that widows are subjected to blackmail by their brothers-in-law in order to gain their freedom.

The pagan Arabs before Islam had similar practices. The widow was considered a part of her husband's property to be inherited by his male heirs and she was usually given in marriage to the deceased man's eldest son from another wife.

**The Quran scathingly attacked and abolished this degrading custom as God/Allah says:**

**"And marry not women whom your fathers married, except what has already passed; indeed it was shameful and most hateful, and an evil way. (4:22)**

In this verse Allah prohibits marrying the women whom the father married in honor and respect to the fathers, not allowing their children to have sexual relations with their wives after they die. A woman becomes ineligible for the

families postponed their daughters' marriages until later than had been customary. Under Canon law, a wife was entitled to restitution of her dowry if the marriage was annulled unless she was guilty of adultery. In this case, she forfeited her right to the dowry which remained in her husband's hands. Under Canon and civil law a married woman in Christian Europe and America had lost her property rights until late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, women's rights under English law were compiled and published in 1632. These 'rights' included: "That which the husband hath is his own. That which the wife hath is the husband's." The wife not only lost her property upon marriage, she lost her personality as well. No act of her was of legal value. Her husband could repudiate any sale or gift made by her as being of no binding legal value. The person with whom she had any contract was held as a criminal for participating in a fraud. Moreover, she could not sue or be sued in her own name, nor could she sue her own husband. A married woman was treated as an infant in the eyes of the law. The wife simply belonged to her husband and therefore she lost her property, her legal personality, and her family name.

### **What is said about polygyny?**

Let us now tackle the important question of polygyny. Polygyny is a very ancient practice found in many human societies. Even the Bible didn't condemn polygyny. To the contrary, the Old Testament and Rabbinic writings frequently attest to the legality of polygyny.

The fact of the matter is that the property of a Jewish female was meant to attract suitors. A Jewish family would assign their daughter a share of her father's estate to be used as a dowry in case of marriage. It was this dowry that made Jewish daughters an unwelcome burden to their fathers. The father had to raise his daughter for years and then prepare for her marriage by providing a large dowry. Thus, a girl in a Jewish family was a liability and not an asset. This liability explains why the birth of a daughter was not celebrated with joy in old Jewish society. The dowry was the wedding gift presented to the groom under terms of tenancy. The husband would act as the practical owner of the dowry but he could not sell it. The bride would lose any control over the dowry at the moment of marriage. Moreover, she was expected to work after marriage and all her earnings had to go to her husband in return for her maintenance, which was his obligation. She could regain her property only in two cases: divorce, or her husband's death. Should she die first, he would inherit her property. In the case of the husband's death, the wife could regain her pre-marital property but she was not entitled to inherit any share in her deceased husband's own property. It has to be added that the groom also had to present a marriage gift to his bride, yet again he was the practical owner of this gift as long as they were married.

Christianity, until recently, has followed the same Jewish tradition. Both religious and civil authorities in the Christian Roman Empire (after Constantine) required a property agreement as a condition for recognizing the marriage. Families offered their daughters increasing dowries and, as a result, men tended to marry earlier while

stressed the fact that the church in Rome banned polygyny in order to conform to the Greco-Roman culture which prescribed only one legal wife while tolerating concubinage and prostitution. He cited St. Augustine, "Now indeed in our time, and in keeping with Roman custom, it is no longer allowed to take another wife" (Jeffrey H. Togay, "Adultery," Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol. II, col. 313. Also, see Judith Plaskow, Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1990) pp. 170-177.)

The Quran, contrary to the Bible, limited the maximum number of wives to four under the condition of treating the wives equally and justly, as God/Allah says:

**"If you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with them, then only one or that your right hands possess. That is nearer to prevent you from doing injustice." (Quran 4 :3).**

This clearly demonstrates the divine origin of the Qur'an and the truthfulness of the message of Islam, which, unlike human philosophies and ideologies, did not arise from its human environment. It is a message which established such humane principles that they neither grew obsolete over the course of time, nor will they become obsolete in the future. After all, this is the message of the All-Wise and All-Knowing-God/Allah- whose wisdom and knowledge are far beyond the ultimate in human thought and progress.

It is said about Prophet/King Soloman:

*"He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines"* (NIV, 1 Kings 11:3)

Also, the noble Prophet/King David is said to have had many wives and concubines (NIV, 2 Samuel 5:13):

*"After he left Hebron, David took more concubines and wives in Jerusalem, and more sons and daughters were born to him."*

The Talmud advises a maximum of four wives [Swidler, op. cit., p. 115].

European Jews continued to practice polygyny until the sixteenth century. Oriental Jews regularly practiced polygyny until they arrived in Israel where it is forbidden under civil law. However, under religious law which overrides civil law in such cases, it is permissible. (Lesley Hazleton, Israeli Women The Reality Behind the Myths (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977) p. 41.

What about the New Testament? According to Father Eugene Hillman in his insightful book 'Polygyny Reconsidered', "Nowhere in the New Testament is there any explicit commandment that marriage should be monogamous or any explicit commandment forbidding polygyny" (Gage, op. cit. p. 142)

Moreover, Jesus hasn't spoken against polygyny though it was practiced by the Jews of his society. Father Hillman

Nigeria, showed that 60 percent of these women would be pleased if their husbands took another wife. Seventy-six percent of the women in a [similar] survey conducted in Kenya viewed polygyny positively. In another survey undertaken in rural Kenya, 25 out of 27 women considered polygyny to be better than monogamy. These women felt polygyny can be a happy and beneficial experience if the co-wives cooperate with each other. (Philip L. Kilbride, *Plural Marriage For Our Times* (Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey, 1994) pp. 108-109.)

Even in the present day, polygyny continues to be a viable solution to some of the social ills of modern societies. The communal obligations that the Quran mentions in association with the permission of polygyny are more visible at present in some Western societies than in Africa. For example, In the United States today, there is a severe gender crisis in the black community, as is outlined by the following facts:

1. One out of every twenty young black males die before reaching the age of 21.
2. For those between 20 and 35 years of age, homicide is the leading cause of death. (Nathan Hare and Julie Hare, ed., *Crisis in Black Sexual Politics* (San Francisco: Black Think Tank, 1989) p. 25.)
3. Many young black males are unemployed, in jail, or on dope. (Ibid, p.26)
4. As a result, one in four black women, at age 40, has never married, as compared with one in ten white women. (Kilbride, op.cit., p.94)

As was mentioned in the beginning of this document, before Islam in the Arab lands, a score of women could be found living under one man, since there were no limits to the number of wives a man could marry. No concern was shown for what occurred to the women as a result of this. This is no different from what we see today: one man with many girlfriends and one woman with many boyfriends.

Let us draw the line here and take a look at some statistics.

**In most human societies, females outnumber males.**

1. In the U.S. there are, at least, eight million more women than men.
2. In a country like Guinea there are 122 females for every 100 males.
3. In Tanzania, there are 95.1 males per 100 females

What should a society do in the case of such unbalanced sex ratios? God/Allah the Most Wise gave us the answer 1400 years ago in the Quran; the only logical answer is polygyny. There is no doubt that what Allah the Most High legislated for us is sufficient for us, but let us just have a look at what some contemporary minds have to say.

A survey of over six thousand women ranging in age from 15 to 59 years, conducted in the second largest city in



polygyny, when ideally practiced, is more Christian than divorce and remarriage as far as the abandoned wives and children are concerned. (Kilbride, op. cit., p. 126.)

The problem of the unbalanced gender ratios becomes truly problematic in times of war. Native American Indian tribes used to suffer highly unbalanced gender ratios after wartime losses. Women in these tribes, who enjoyed a fairly high status, accepted polygyny as the best protection against indulgence in indecent activities. European settlers, without offering any other alternative, condemned this Indian polygyny as 'uncivilized'. (John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988) p. 87.)

We have to ask ourselves at this point: What is more dignifying to a woman: An accepted and respected second wife as in the Native Indians' approach, or a virtual prostitute as in the 'civilized' European settlers' approach?

Isn't it better for the woman to have 1/2, 1/3, or 1/4 of a husband, than not to have a husband at all and live a lonely life? Isn't it better for the woman to have someone who will spend money and time on her, care for her, protect her, and fulfill her needs and desires? Isn't it better for her to know who the father of her children is, instead of choosing between numerous boyfriends, who eventually disappear?

In other words, what is more dignifying to a woman, the Quranic prescription or the theology based on the culture of the Roman Empire?

5. Moreover, many young females become single mothers before the age of 20 and find themselves in need of providers.

The end result of these tragic circumstances is that an increasing number of women are engaged in what is called 'man-sharing'. (Ibid., p. 95) That is, many of these hapless single women are involved in affairs with married men. The men's wives are often unaware of the fact that other women are 'sharing' their husbands with them. Some observers of the crisis of man-sharing in the American community strongly recommend consensual polygyny as a temporary answer to the shortage of males until more comprehensive reforms in the American society at large are undertaken. (Ibid) What is meant by consensual polygyny is a polygyny that is sanctioned by the community and to which all parties involved have agreed, as opposed to the usually secret man-sharing which is detrimental both to the wife and to the community at large. The problem of man-sharing in the African American community was the topic of a panel discussion held at Temple University in Philadelphia on January 27, 1993. (Ibid., pp. 95-99) Some of the speakers recommended polygyny as one potential remedy for the crisis. They also suggested that polygyny should not be banned by law, particularly in a society that tolerates prostitution and mistresses. The comment of one woman from the audience that African Americans needed to learn from Africa where polygyny was responsibly practiced elicited enthusiastic applause.

After a careful study of African polygyny, Reverend David Gitari of the Anglican Church has concluded that

defined framework of the law. Christian countries make a great show of monogamy, but actually they practice polygyny. No one is unaware of the part mistresses play in Western society. In this respect Islam is a fundamentally honest religion, and permits a Muslim to marry a second wife if he must, but strictly forbids all clandestine amatory associations in order to safeguard the moral probity of the community."(Christianstalkingaboutsex.com, Nov. 9, 2007)

Unfortunately, the West, and particularly the Christian church leaders, have used this permission of polygyny for criticizing Islam. Their motive seems just to oppose Islam, hoping thereby to hamper its progress, by degrading it in the eyes of the world.

In their propaganda against this permission, the critics present the following arguments:

1. That marrying more than one wife is against the natural law;
2. That this permission encourages lust and sensuality, which is detrimental to the family well being;
3. That the system of polygyny has social disadvantages, injures the delicate feelings of women; causes deep frustrations and disappointments, giving rise to the feeling of hate and hatred which upsets the proper raising of children;
4. That this law disturbs the family planning, as plurality of wives naturally increases the number of children; this in its turn causes economic problems

It is interesting to note that in an international youth conference held in Munich in 1948 the problem of the highly unbalanced sex ratio in Germany was discussed. Consequently, polygyny was included among the conference[']s final recommendations. (Ute Frevert, Women in German History: from Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation (New York: Berg Publishers, 1988) pp. 263-264.)

It has to be added that in Islam no one can force a woman to marry.

The Bible, on the other hand, sometimes resorts to forcible polygyny. A childless widow must marry her husband's brother, even if he is already married, regardless of her opinion (NIV,Genesis 38:8-10):

*“Then Judah said to Onan, “Lie with your brother’s wife and fulfill your duty to her as a brother-in-law to produce offspring for your brother.” But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so whenever he lay with his brother’s wife, he spilled his semen on the ground to keep from producing offspring for his brother. What he did was wicked in the LORD’s sight; so the Lord put him to death also.”*

Billy Graham, the eminent Christian evangelist has recognized this fact as it has been reported he said the following: "Christianity cannot compromise on the question of polygyny. If present-day Christianity cannot do so, it is to its own detriment. Islam has permitted polygyny as a solution to social ills and has allowed a certain degree of latitude to human nature but only within the strictly

following females, (chosen) according to the (direct) order (of the castes) are most approved." (Manu, iii 12).

"It is now quite settled in the Courts of British India that a Hindu is absolutely without restriction as to the number of his wives, anyone may marry again without his wife's consent, or any justification, except his own wish." (Mayne, On Hindu Law and Usage, p. 113) (Ibid)

Polygyny: According to Jewish Law

In Exodus (NIV, Chapter 21, Verse 10) it is stated:

*"If he takes him 'another wife', her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage shall be not diminish."*

It is evident to even a casual reader of Old Testament that not only is polygyny permitted but also practiced, and that regulations for that have been stipulated in the scriptures.

Polygyny According to Christianity

The Christian writers say that "monogamy (i.e., marrying one wife only) is the divine ideal. The Creator constituted as a union between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:18-24 Matt. 19:5; 1 Cor. 6:16) He preserves the number of males practically equal to the number of females." (The Westminster Dictionary of Bible, 1944 edition)

Before commenting on these objections, let us first examine whether it was Islam, that originally promulgated the system of polygyny, or has it existed since pre-Islamic days. Also let us see whether it is found in other religions. Then we should see on what grounds and with what conditions has Islam allowed a man to marry more than one wife. Does it offer solutions to the social problems facing many countries today?

### **Polygyny: An Ancient Institution**

Polygyny was prevalent among all the nations of antiquity, not excluding the Hindus and Buddhists. The world in general and Arabia in particular before the ministry of the Prophet Muhammad was lying deeply buried under gross licentiousness and depravity. This historic fact no educated one amongst us can ever contradict, particularly about the private life of the rulers of the states. The great king Dasarata, the father of Sri Rama, was polygamous. The Christian monarchs of Europe could not help themselves against having more than one wife. Henry the VIII of England had as many as eight wives.

Polygyny: According to Hindu Law

There is a good deal of controversy as to whether polygyny is sanctioned by Hindu Law. According to Manu the Law on the subject is as follows:

1. "For the first marriage of twice-born men (wives) of equal caste are recommended, but for those who through desire proceed (to marry again) the

## Muslim Women, Best Women on the Face of the Earth

was a Cushite(Ethiopian) woman whom Moses married in the 2nd year of the sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness. (Num. 12:1)

There is no mention anywhere in the scriptures or any other writing that Zipporah was not alive at that time.

Now we come to the prophets who came after this alleged discouraging. We find that polygyny continued to be practiced even after the time of Moses, as by Gideon, Elkanah, Saul, Rehoboam and countless others. For the details, see (Dove of Peace, Catholic Edition, Judges 8:30:

*“Now Gideon had seventy sons of his own, his direct descendants, for he had many wives.”*

And in I Sam. 1:2 :*“There was a certain man from Ramathaim, a Zuphite from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. He had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none”.*

This is also mentioned in II Sam. 12:8: *“I gave you your Lord's house and your Lord's wives for your own.”*

Prophet "David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem." (NIV,11 Sam. 5:13). Prophet Solomon "had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines." (NIV,I Kings 11:3)

## Muslim Women, Best Women on the Face of the Earth

We will talk about the supposed equal numbers of males and females later on. Here I would like to quote from the Bible where God addresses David in following words:

"And I gave thee (David) thy master's house, and thy master's 'wives' into thy bosom, and gave thee the House of Israel and of Juda." (NIV,2 Sam. 12:8)

How is it that God Himself gave him his 'master's wives' if His intention was to keep the 'one man with one woman' rule? Even in the seventh generation after Adam we find that "Lamech took unto him two wives" (Gen. 4:19); Abraham had three wives; Jacob had 2 wives besides concubines; Moses did not forbid it, instead he brought Laws to regulate it, as has been mentioned in the previous heading.

Some Christians try to overcome these difficulties implying that the previous prophets had made a mistake in marrying more than one wife. But the insurmountable difficulty faces them in the case of Moses. They say that Moses had brought a Law from God, and if it was God's intention to make marriage a union between one man and one wife', why did He give Moses regulations about polygyny? The above-mentioned Dictionary Bible tries to gloss over this difficulty by saying, "Moses, who was correcting abuses, not suddenly abolishing them, did not forbid polygyny, but discouraged it."

It is a claim, which cannot be justified, because Moses himself married two wives: one was Zipporah, daughter of Jethro (known in Arabic language as Shuaib), the other

that the Christian Leaders up to at least 16th century did not frown upon polygyny:

"St. Chrysostem, speaking of Abraham and Hagar, says, 'These things were not then forbidden.' So St. Augustine observes that 'there was a blameless custom of one man having many wives, which at that time might be done in a way of duty, which now cannot be done but from licentiousness, because for the sake of multiplying posterity, no law forbade a plurality of wives. (See Grotius, De Jure, vol. i. p. 268 note)

Benefice, Confessor of Lower Germany, having consulted Pope Gregory, in the year 726, in order to know in what cases a husband might be allowed to have two wives, Gregory replied, on November 22nd of the same year, in these words – "If a wife be attacked by a malady which renders her unfit for conjugal intercourse, the husband may marry another, but in that case he must allow his sick wife all necessary support and assistance."

Even writers professing Christianity have published many works in defense of polygyny. Bernardo Ochinus, General of the Order of Capuchins, published, about the middle of the sixteenth century, dialogues in favor of the practice.

Selden proves, in his 'Uxor Hebraica', that polygyny was allowed not only among the Jews, but also likewise among all other nations.

Now we come to the period after the ministry of Jesus Christ.

One of the greatest fathers of the Christian Church ,St. Augustine has declared that polygyny is not a crime where it is a legal institution of a country, and the German reformers, even as late as the sixteenth century, allowed and declared valid the taking of a second or even a third wife, simultaneously with the first, without certain justification or specific cause.

When Christianity made its appearance in Rome, history shows that polygyny was recognized and the early Christian Emperors seem to have admitted its validity.

The Emperor Valentinian II, by an Edict, allowed all the subjects of the Empire, if they pleased, to marry several wives; nor does it appear from the ecclesiastical history of these times that the Bishops and the heads of the Christians made any objection to this law. Far from it, all the succeeding Emperors practiced polygyny, and the people generally were not far from following their example. Even the clergy often had several wives.

It should be mentioned here that Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian (527-565) was in the 6th century of Christian era; it means that up to 6th century there was no prohibition of polygyny in Christianity, at all.

The following paragraphs from 'An Apology For Mohammad And Koran' (by John Davenport) show clearly

the highest importance that it should be decided." (pp. 231-32)

Now, we should look at the arguments of the Christians against the system of polygyny. Is polygyny really against the natural law?

The facts and findings answer this question in the negative.

"'Man', says G.R. Scott, 'is essentially polygamous and the development of civilization extends this innate polygyny.' "(History of prostitution, p. 21; as quoted in 'Polygyny in Islam' published by Islami Mission, Lahore)

Dr. Mercier says: "Woman is by nature monogamist; man has in him the element of polygamist." (Conduct and its Disorders Biologically Considered, p. 292-3; as quoted in 'Polygyny In Islam')

There are a number of countries, including Tanzania, where the population of women exceeds considerably that of men. According to statistics published some time ago, in Soviet Russia, the population of women is about 21 million more than that of the men.

The girls become capable of re-production, and sexually mature earlier than boys. Islam has established principles to establish whether a person is to be considered an adult. One is considered to be an adult by the appearance of one of the following signs: growth of pubic hair, experiencing a wet dream, reaching 15 years of age, and experiencing menses for the girls. It so happens that in temperate climate

On what grounds, then, can a practice be considered so dishonorable or shameful which has been practiced for centuries?

John Milton has earlier written in the same book (Treatise On Christian Doctrine) as follows:

"In the definition, which I have given (i.e., of marriage) I have not said, in compliance with the common opinion, 'of one man with one woman', lest I should by implication charge the holy patriarchs and pillars of our faith, Abraham, and the others who had more than one wife at the same time, with habitual fornication and adultery, lest I should be forced to exclude from the sanctuary of God as spurious the holy offspring which sprang from them, yea, the whole of the sons of Israel, for whom the sanctuary itself was made. For it is said (Deut. 23:2):

*"A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord, even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord."*

Either, therefore, polygyny is a true marriage or all children born in that state are spurious; which would include the whole race of Jacob, the twelve holy tribes chosen by God. But as such an assertion would be absurd in the extreme, not to say impious, and as it is the height of injustice, as well as an example of most dangerous tendency in religion; 'to account as sin what is not such in reality', it appears true that, so far from the question respecting the lawfulness of polygyny being trivial, it is of

Either polygyny, which has legal status, or going to the prostitutes, which is forbidden in every religion.

Apart from these natural causes, which refute the claim of the Christian priests, there are some situations created by man which give lie to that claim. Take for example war. In Europe, during the Thirty-year war and in the last two World wars, so many men were killed that there were not enough males to marry the young girls and young widows. In West Germany alone, after the 2nd World War, there were six million women who could not find a husband. A group of them appealed to the government to promulgate a law allowing polygyny, so that they may get husbands. They pleaded their case on the grounds that it will provide them, economic and social security and satisfy their natural urge. The Church opposed this move, and the helpless 6 million women were left to fend for themselves by illicit sexual activities.

Bertrand Russell says:

"And in all countries where there is an excess of women, it is an obvious injustice that those women who by arithmetical necessity must remain unmarried should be wholly debarred from sexual experience." (Marriage and Morals, p. 47)

It is of interest to note that many non-Muslim countries in the world today have outlawed polygyny. [In these countries,] Taking a second wife, even with the free consent of the first wife, is a violation of the law. On the other hand, cheating on the wife, without her knowledge or

girls are able to conceive at the age of 9 or 10; while in the same climate an average boy becomes sexually mature at the age of about 14 or 15.

Now, suppose a group of people settle together in a place, and suppose that every year 50 boys and 50 girls are born in that community. Also suppose that none of the children die in infancy. In 20 years, there will be 1,000 boys and 1,000 girls.

Out of these 1,000 girls, 550 girls (who were born from the 1st. to the 11th year) will have reached the age of puberty, i.e., will be from 10 to 20 years old.

And out of the 1,000 boys only 300 will reach the age of puberty. These will be the ones born from 1st year to the 6th year, who will be from 15 to 20 years old.

If that community practices monogamy, the 300 boys can marry 300 girls. What will be the fate of the remaining 250 girls? So, the supposed theory of equality in number of boys and girls is wrong not only according to the statistics, but in theory also.

Also, one more fact has to be borne in mind, before claiming this equality of the numbers. Every month, all healthy women experience menstruation during which sexual intercourse is discouraged. But the man does not lose his sexual urge at any time. What is the remedy if a man is unable to resist his sexual urge at a time when his wife is having her menstruation?

successfully argued that the Bay State Constitution guarantees them the right to marry."

Is this what civilized, intelligent people do? Grant rights and pass legislations for same sex marriages when we know that homosexuality is despised in all of the religions?

It has even reached the extent of people marrying and having sexual relationships with animals as is well known in the west by the pornographic films which are produced , as has been reported by the website (English.pravda.ru).

All of this under the slogan of 'freedom of expression, freedom of religion , human rights, and liberty'

## **What is said about the veil or head covering?**

Women throughout the world spend millions of dollars on facial beauty. Companies manufacturing 'beauty' products make a colossal figure in sales. It would be no exaggeration to say that the products used on the face far exceed other products. This in itself proves that humans are particularly possessive of their looks especially when it comes to their faces. People, especially women, take great pride and time in making up their faces.

Allah has placed the beauty of man and woman in the face. Perhaps the busiest part of the body is the face; used

consent, is perfectly legitimate as far as the law is concerned! What is the legal wisdom behind such a contradiction? Is the law designed to reward deception and punish honesty? It is one of the unfathomable paradoxes of the so called 'civilized' Western World.

Another example of an unfathomable paradox is what has occurred in some so called "civilized" countries. They have shown importance to and even brought up the issue of same-sex marriages. Furthermore, they have been passing laws and legislations permitting these same sex marriages.

Reporter Kavan Patterson reported on Stateline.org on Wednesday, November 3, 2004:

"Six months after gay and lesbian couples began legally marrying in Massachusetts, opponents of same-sex marriage swept Election Day, with voters in 11 states approving constitutional amendments codifying marriage as an exclusively heterosexual institution.

The amendments won in Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Ohio, Utah and even Oregon the one state where gay rights activists had hoped to prevail.

Currently, more than 20 lawsuits seeking same-sex marriage rights are being pursued in 11 states: California, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Oregon and Washington. Most of the suits are modeled after a Massachusetts case filed by seven same-sex couples who



suspected adulteress in her trial by ordeal (NIV, Numbers 5:16-18):

*“The priest shall bring her and have her stand before the LORD. Then he shall take some holy water in a clay jar and put some dust from the tabernacle floor into the water. After the priest has had the woman stand before the LORD, he shall loosen her (shall uncover her head, Catholic version) hair and place in her hands the reminder offering, the grain offering for jealousy, while he himself holds the bitter water that brings a curse.”*

The veil in this view signified a woman's self-respect and social status. Women of lower classes would often wear the veil to give the impression of a higher standing. The fact that the veil was the sign of nobility was the reason why prostitutes were not permitted to cover their hair in the old Jewish society. However, prostitutes often wore a special headscarf in order to look respectable. Jewish women in Europe continued to wear veils until the nineteenth century when their lives became more intermingled with the surrounding secular culture. The external pressures of the European life in the nineteenth century forced many of them to go out bare-headed. Some Jewish women found it more convenient to replace their traditional veil with a wig as another form of hair covering. Today, most pious Jewish women do not cover their hair except in the synagogue. Some of them, such as the Hasidic sects, still use the wig. ( *Menachem M. Brayer, The Jewish Woman in Rabbinic Literature: A Psychosocial Perspective (Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav Publishing House, 1986) p. 239. and Ibid., pp. 316-317. Also see Swidler, op. cit., pp. 121-123., Ibid., p. 139., Susan W. Schneider, Jewish and Female (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984) p. 237.*)

extensively in communication, the face communicates a person's mood and expresses character and mannerisms.

Let us now shed some light on what is considered in the West as the greatest symbol of women's oppression and servitude: the veil or the head cover. Let's listen to what the leaders of different religious denominations have to say regarding the veil.

According to Rabbi Dr. Menachem M. Brayer (Professor of Biblical Literature at Yeshiva University) in his book *'The Jewish woman in Rabbinic literature'*, it was the custom of Jewish women to go out in public with a head covering which, sometimes, even covered the whole face leaving one eye free. He quotes some famous ancient Rabbis saying, "It is not like the daughters of Israel to walk out with heads uncovered" and "Cursed be the man who lets the hair of his wife be seen....a woman who exposes her hair for self-adornment brings poverty."

Rabbinic law forbids the recitation of blessings or prayers in the presence of a bareheaded married woman since uncovering the woman's hair is considered "nudity".

Dr. Brayer also explains that veil of the Jewish woman was not always considered a sign of modesty. Sometimes, the veil symbolized a state of distinction and luxury rather than modesty. The veil personified the dignity and superiority of noble women. It also represented a woman's inaccessibility as a sanctified possession of her husband. It is clear in the Old Testament that uncovering a woman's head was a great disgrace and that's why the priest had to uncover the

logic introduced by St. Paul in the New Testament ( Mary Murray, The Law of the Father (London: Routledge, 1995) p. 67].)

## Summarization:

What the New Testament (New International Version) has to say about women:

1 Timothy 2:11-14 *"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."*

1 Corinthians 14:34 *"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."*

1 Corinthians 11:5-10: *"But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For*

What about the Christian tradition? It is well known that Catholic Nuns have been covering their heads for hundreds of years, but that is not all. St. Paul in the New Testament made some very interesting statements about the veil:

*And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head - it is just as though her head were shaved. If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or shaved off, she should cover her head. ( New International Version, I Corinthians 11:5-10).*

*"Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?" (NIV,I Corinthians 11:13)*

St. Tertullian in his famous treatise 'On the Veiling of Virgins' wrote, "Young women, you wear your veils out on the streets, so you should wear them in the church, you wear them when you are among strangers, then wear them among your brothers..."

Furthermore, among the Canon laws of the Catholic church today, there is a law that require women to cover their heads in church ( R. Thompson, Women in Stuart England and America (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974) p. 162.)

Some Christian denominations, such as the Amish and the Mennonites for example, keep their women veiled to the present day. The reason for the veil, as offered by their Church leaders, is "The head covering is a symbol of woman's subjection to the man and to God" : The same

*the days of her purifying be fulfilled. But if she bear a FEMALE child, then she shall be unclean TWO WEEKS, as in her separation: and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying SIXTY SIX days."*

*Ecclesiastics 7:26-28 "And I find more bitter than death the woman who is a snare, whose heart is a trap and whose hands are chains. The man who pleases God will escape her, but the sinner she will ensnare....while I was still searching but not finding, I found one upright man among a thousand but not one upright woman among them all".*

*Leviticus 15:19-30 "And if a woman have an issue (her period/menses), [and] her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the evening. And everything that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean: everything also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean. And whosoever toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the evening. And whosoever toucheth any thing that she sat upon shall wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the evening And if it [be] on [her] bed, or on anything whereon she sitteth, when he toucheth it, he shall be unclean until the evening. And if any man lie with her at all, and her flowers be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days; and all the bed whereon he lieth shall be unclean. And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation; all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: she [shall be] unclean. Every bed whereon she lieth all the days of her*

*this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels."*

*1 Corinthians 11:13: "Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with he head unveiled?"*

What the Old Testament has to say about women:

*Genesis 3:12-16 "And the man (Adam) said, The woman (Eve) whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."*

*Leviticus 12:2-5 "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a MALE child: then she shall be unclean SEVEN DAYS; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean. And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying THIRTY THREE days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until*

7. Man was created in the image and glory of God, and Woman was created in the glory of Man, thus Man must have power over her.
8. Any woman who delivers a male baby shall be unclean for one week. But any woman who delivers a female baby shall be unclean for TWO weeks. Thus, females make their mothers DOUBLY unclean as compared to males.
9. While it is possible to find one upright man in every thousand, it is impossible to find even one single upright woman in every thousand
10. Woman is a snare, her heart is a trap, and her hands are chains. The man who pleases God will escape her, but she will ensnare the sinner.
11. If a woman had her period and touches a chair or a bed or anything else then that item immediately becomes unclean. Anyone who then touches those things shall also become unclean. They must then bathe themselves and wash their clothes because they have touched an item that a menstruous woman has touched.

What the canonized saints of Christianity said about women:

"Woman is a daughter of falsehood, a sentinel of Hell, the enemy of peace; through her Adam lost paradise" (St. John Demascene)

"Woman is the instrument which the devil uses to gain possession of our souls" (St. Cyprian)

*issue shall be unto her as the bed of her separation: and whatsoever she sitteth upon shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her separation. And whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the evening. But if she be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. And on the eighth day she shall take unto her two turtles, or two young pigeons, and bring them unto the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And the priest shall offer the one [for] a sin offering, and the other [for] a burnt offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for her before the LORD for the issue of her uncleanness."*

In other words, the New Testament and Old Testament teaches us that:

1. Women should learn in silence and subjugation.
2. Women should not teach.
3. Adam and Eve were not equal in sin. Adam was not deceived but Eve was.
4. Women must keep silent in Churches. It is shameful for them to open their mouths therein. If they have a question they should ask their husbands before going to church and then their husbands will ask for them in the church.
5. A woman should neither pray nor profess with her head uncovered.
6. If a woman prays with her head uncovered then she might as well shave her head.

## Muslim Women, Best Women on the Face of the Earth

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husband alone to enjoy? Meanwhile the husband is assured that his wife is sacred and special for him alone. He knows that no man other than him has ever seen his wife's beauty and adornment (besides her close relatives, father, brothers, uncles, etc.....). This is true honor and respect of the woman.

What are some of the ill effects created by women's lack of modesty and removing them from their rightful place under the guardianship and protection of their noble kinsmen?

- a) Loss of respect for women in general
- b) A marked increase in the divorce rate.
- c) Neglect of children.
- d) Children not being educated and trained in an upright way.
- e) Increase in the instances of rape.
- f) The rise in the unemployment amongst males leading to loafing and idleness which encourages alcoholism, drug abuse, rape, murder, robbery and a host of other social evils.

All this in the name of liberation and freedom.

If you really want to be free and liberated then turn the page to know about what can truly liberate and free you.

## Muslim Women, Best Women on the Face of the Earth

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"Woman is the fountain of the arm of the devil, her voice is the hissing of the serpent" (St. Anthony)

"Woman has the poison of an asp, the malice of a dragon" (St. Gregory)

\* (all these quotations can be found in Karen Armstrong's book, *The Gospel According to Woman*, London: Elm Tree Books, 1986, pp. 52-62. See also Nancy van Vuuren, *The Subversion of Women as Practiced by Churches, Witch-Hunters, and Other Sexists* Philadelphia: Westminster Press pp.28-30.)

As we can see, in ancient history, Christianity and even during the pre-Islamic era, women were treated like animals and household goods, with little respect and unfair treatment. Unfortunately, the modern world has ushered in a second period of ignorance in its attempt to rectify the folly of the pre-Islamic times. It's very strange that the woman who is under-dressed and half naked is considered free and liberated, but the woman who covers herself being obedient to God, guarding her modesty, is ridiculed and said to be oppressed by her extremist husband?????

Many people in the West talk about "freedom of speech, freedom of expression, etc....." So if it is acceptable for a woman to wear a bikini or mini-skirt out in public, showing everyone her body, flaunting it around like a piece of merchandise for sale, then shouldn't it be acceptable for a woman to wear an outer garment which conceals her beauty from other men, preserves her honor, respect and loyalty to her husband and conceals her beauty for her

encompassing knowledge and wisdom did not create mankind without a purpose, and God did not leave mankind neglected. Rather God sent messengers to proclaim the message that 'there is no deity worthy of worship except God alone', and when God sent these messengers He sent them with divine revelations and books, as God sent Moses with the Torah, David with the Psalms, Jesus with the Gospels and Muhammadﷺ with the Quran.

What is the Quran?

The Quran is the final revelation from Allah to all of mankind. It was revealed to Allah's last messenger the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The Quran completed and abrogated all of the previous books and revelations which came before it such as the Torah, Psalms, Gospels, etc... The Muslims believe in all of these revelations (in their original form before alteration) and believe in all of the messengers and Prophets which God sent, without the exclusion of any one of them. The Muslims are ordered to refer all matters of their religion back to two main sources:

- 1) The Quran which is the last book and final revelation which was sent to the Prophet Muhammadﷺ over 1400 years ago. It still remains in its original form up until today. There is only one version and it has not been changed and will not be changed until the end of time.
- 2) The authentic traditions and narrations of the last and final messenger to all of mankind, the Prophet Muhammad

It is Islam that truly frees and liberates the people. Islam frees people from worshipping and being enslaved to the creation. Islam encourages people to worship the Creator and not the creation.

Some of you may be asking, what is Islam, who is Allah and what is the Quran?

What is Islam?

Islam is an Arabic word which means submission, and this submission is to the one and only true God who has no partners, no son, no father, no mother. He has always existed and is everlasting and never sleeps, slumbers nor will He die. Islam is a complete way of life. Islam made clear everything anyone wants to know about how to live a righteous, pious life, obeying God's commandments. The Muslim believes that there is no one between him and his lord, no intercessors, so they direct all of their worship to Allah alone. If one commits a sin he repents directly to God.

Who is Allah?

The word Allah is an Arabic word for God, and even to this day Arab Christians and Jews call God "Allah". Muslims are those who submit themselves willingly to the one and only God and direct all of their worship to Him alone. Also the Muslim believes that God with His all-

Satan and live their lives according to Allah's Commandments in order to achieve eternal bliss in Paradise. As Allah says:

**"And I (Allah) created not the jinn and men except they should worship**

**Me (Alone)."** ( 51:56)

Also Allah said:

**"Nay! But worship Allah, and be among the grateful."** ( 39:66)

In another place He says:

**"Say (O Muhammad !): 'Verily, I am commanded to worship Allah by obeying Him and doing religious deeds sincerely for His sake only.'" (39: 11)**

Worship has a comprehensive meaning, which encompasses everything Allah loves and is pleased with, from sayings to actions to beliefs, regardless of whether these acts of worship are apparent or hidden. The most important thing is that the worship be done the way the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ did it. This is because Allah the Most High ordered mankind to follow the example of His final prophet. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was sent to all races and nations not just to the Arabs. So it is incumbent upon all of mankind to follow the final messenger Muhammad ﷺ.

**Does the Muslim worship, pray or fast the way he wants to according to his own whims and desires?**

ﷺ. This last messenger to mankind, made clear to us everything we need to know regarding living our lives: how to eat, how to sleep, how to marry, how to pray, how to do business, how to work, how to take care of our families, how to use the bathroom and even how to cleanse oneself and how to wear one's shoes. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ didn't leave us without instruction. He made everything clear to us because this was revelation and guidance which he received from Allah, the most Magnificent. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was entrusted with a duty to convey a divine message, the same message [that] all the other messengers and Prophets were sent by Allah to bring to their nations. This message was the message of Islam, the complete submission, worship, and obedience to Allah alone. These messengers warned mankind of the dangers of polytheism and associating partners with the One True God. They called the people to everything which was good and beneficial for them and warned them of that which was harmful and bad for them. So the Muslims don't worship Muhammad ﷺ, they don't worship the Ka'ba (black cubic building in Makkah) they worship the Lord of Muhammad ﷺ and the Lord of the Ka'ba, who is Allah the Most High.

What does the Muslim believe about the purpose of creation of men and women?

The Muslim accepts that the main purpose behind the creation of mankind, men and women alike, is that they should worship Allah, struggle against the forces of

## Part 2

### The status of women in Islam

If we turn our attention to what the Quran has to say about women we will soon realize that the Islamic conception of women is radically different from the Judaeo-Christian one. Let the Quran speak for itself:

In the Quran we find an entire chapter named after women, as it is called An-Nisa'a, (Chapter Four) which is Arabic for "The Women". In this chapter you will find many important affairs related to the woman, the family, the community, etc....

### The Islamic conception of the first creation is found in several places in the Quran, one example:

**"O Adam dwell with your wife in the Paradise and eat thereof as you both wish, but do not approach this tree otherwise you both will be of the unjust and wrongdoers. Then Satan whispered suggestions to them both in order to reveal that which was hidden from them from of their private parts (before); he said: "Your Lord did not forbid you this tree save that you should become angels or become of the immortals. And Satan swore by Allah to them both saying "Verily, I am one of the sincere advisors for you both. So Satan misled them with deception. Then when they tasted of**

**No**, he must worship, pray and fast the way the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ did, because he was the best of mankind and best understood the divine revelation from Allah. Furthermore, Allah ordered all of mankind to follow him and learn the true religion from his example. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was as a light guiding to a path, the path which will lead us to our Lord the Most Merciful.

Now that we have an idea about the status of women in the world today, let's look at what Islam says regarding some of the topics previously discussed.



## **How should men treat women? What does the Islam say about the—wife and about the ones who oppress or ill-treat women?**

Allah says in the Quran:

**"O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should you treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the dowry you have given them – unless they commit open illegal sexual intercourse; and live with them honorably. If you take a dislike to them, it may be that you dislike something and Allah will bring about through it a great deal of good." (4:19)**

Considering the fact that before the advent of Islam the pagan Arabs used to bury their female children alive, make women dance naked in the vicinity of the Ka'ba during their annual fairs, and treat women as mere slaves and objects of sexual pleasure possessing no rights or position whatsoever, these teachings of the Noble Qur'an were revolutionary. Unlike other religions, which regarded women possessing inherent sin and wickedness and men possessing inherent virtue and nobility, Islam regards men and women as being of the same essence created from a single soul.

the tree, that which was hidden from them of their private parts became manifest to them and they began to cover themselves with the leaves of the Paradise. And their Lord called out to them saying :**"Did I make forbidden for you that tree and tell you: Verily, Satan is an open enemy to you?"** They said: **"Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us, and bestow Your Mercy upon us, we will certainly be of the losers."** (Quran 7:19-23).

A careful look into the two accounts of the story of the Creation reveals some essential differences. The Quran, contrary to the Bible, holds responsible both Adam and Eve for their mistake. Nowhere in the Quran can one find even the slightest hint that Eve tempted Adam to eat from the tree or even that she had eaten before him. Eve in the Quran is no temptress, no seducer, and no deceiver. Moreover, Eve is not to be blamed for the pains of childbearing. Allah, according to the Quran, punishes no one for another's faults. Both Adam and Eve committed a sin and then asked Allah for forgiveness and He forgave them both.

These are just a few verses which clarify the status of women in Islam. As we can see, here and in other verses of the Quran Allah the Most High addresses the men and women equally.

**"Whoever does an evil deed, will not be requited except the like thereof; and whosoever does a righteous deed, whether male or female and is a true believer in the oneness of Allah, such will enter Paradise, where they will be provided therein with all things in abundance, without limit." (Quran 40:40).**

**"Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has faith, verily to him/her we will give a new life that is good and pure, and we will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions" (Quran 16:97).**

It is clear that the Quranic view of women is no different than its view of men. They are both God's creatures whose ultimate goal on earth is to worship their Lord, do righteous deeds, and avoid evil and both will be assessed accordingly. However, their responsibilities differ according to their nature and physical makeup.

The Quran never mentions that the woman is the devil's gateway or that she is a deceiver by nature, nor does it mention that man was created in God's image. All men and all women are his creatures, that is all. According to the Quran, a woman's role on earth is not limited only to childbirth. She is required to do as many good deeds as any man is required to do. The Quran never says that no upright women have ever existed, as we previously saw mentioned in other texts. On the contrary, the Quran has instructed all the believers, women as well as men, to follow the example of those ideal women such as the Virgin Mary and the Pharaoh's wife:

Allah declares in the Quran:

**"O Mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife (Eve), and from them both He created many men and women; and fear Allah through Whom you demand your mutual rights, and do not cut the relations of kinship. Surely, Allah is Ever an All-Watcher over you." (4:1)**

**"Verily, Muslim men and women, believing men and women, devout/obedient men and women, truthful men and women, men and women who are patient, men and women who humble themselves, men and women who give in charity, men and women who fast, men and women who guard their chastity, and men and women who remember Allah much with their hearts and tongues, Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and great reward (Paradise)" (Quran 33:35).**

**"The believers, men and women, are helper, protectors, supporters one of another: they enjoin all that is good, and forbid all that is evil, they perform the regular prayers, and give the regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah will bestow His Mercy upon them. Surely Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise." (Quran 9:71).**

**"So their Lord accepted their supplication and answered them saying, "Never will I allow the work of any of you to be lost, be he male or female." (Quran 3:195).**

## **What does Islam say about relations between man and woman (i.e. husband and wife)?**

The Quran, unlike the altered Bible and Torah, never considers any woman to be the possession of any man. The Quran eloquently describes the relationship between the spouses by saying:

**" And among His signs is that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them and He has put love and mercy between your hearts: verily in that are signs for those who reflect" (30:21).**

This is the Quranic conception of marriage: love, mercy, and tranquility, not possession and double standards.

The Qur'an emphasizes the essential unity of men and women in a most beautiful simile:

**"They (your wives) are your garment and you are a garment for them." (2:187)**

Just as a garment hides our nakedness, so do husband and wife, by entering into the relationship of marriage, they secure each other's chastity. The garment gives comfort to the body; so does the husband find comfort in his wife's company and she in his. The garment is the grace, the beauty, the embellishment of the body, so too are wives to their husbands as their husbands are to them." Islam does

**"And Allah sets forth, as an example to those who believe, the wife of Pharoah: Behold she said: 'O my Lord build for me, in nearness to you, a mansion in the Paradise, and save me from Pharoah and his doings and save me from those who do wrong.'" (66:11)**

There is also a whole chapter named after Mary, the mother of Jesus. It is the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Quran and it is called 'Maryam', which is Arabic for Mary. Allah the Most High says about her in the Quran:

**"And Maryam (Mary), the daughter of Imran who guarded her chastity. And we breathed into her of Our spirit, and she testified to the truth of the Words of her Lord and (also believed in) His scriptures, and she was of the devout and obedient servants to Allah." (66:12)**

**The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:** "Many amongst men reached the level of perfection but none amongst the women reached this level except Asiyah, Pharaoh's wife, and Maryam (Mary), the daughter of Imram..." (Sahih al Bukhari, Vol. 4 Hadith No. 623)

**The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:** "Mary, the daughter of `Imran, was the best among the women (of the world of her time) and Khadija is the best amongst the women (of this nation)." (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 642, Vol. 4)

And these are just a few examples of the honor and respect given to women in the Quran and Islam in general.

ordered those present, and through them all those Muslims who were to come, to be respectful and kind towards women. He ﷺ said:

"Fear Allah regarding women. Verily you have married them with the trust of Allah, and made their bodies lawful with the word of Allah. You have rights over them, and they have rights over you in respect to their food and clothing according to your means." (you must feed them and clothe them generously) (Sahih Muslim)

The Islamic laws and teachings regard women as the spiritual equals of men. The main distinction made between them is in the physical realm based on the principle of fair division of labor. It allots the more strenuous work to the man and makes him responsible for the maintenance of the family. It allots the work of managing the home and the upbringing and training of children to the woman, work which has the greatest importance in the task of building a healthy and prosperous society.

### What does Islam say about polygyny?

Let us recall what was mentioned in Part One about the Hindus, Babylonians, Persians, Athenians, Jews and pre-Islamic Arabs. These nations recognized no limit to the number of wives a man could marry. However, Islam limited and restricted it in number; and regulated it. The Qur'an ordains:

not consider woman "an instrument of the Devil", but rather the Qur'an calls her 'muhsana' – (a fortress against Satan) because a good woman, by marrying a man, helps him keep to the path of rectitude in his life. It is for this reason that marriage was considered by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as a most virtuous act. He said:

"When a man marries, he has completed one half of his religion." (Tabarani 'al-Awsat, Vol.3, pg. 161)

He ﷺ enjoined matrimony on Muslims by saying:

"Marriage is part of my way and whoever shuns from my way is not from me (i.e. is not my follower) (Sahih al Bukhari and Sahih Muslim)

**The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:** "No believing man should hate a believing woman. If he dislikes one of her characteristics, he may be pleased with another." (Sahih Muslim #61)

**The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also said:** "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or else keep silent. Deal kindly with women, for woman was created from a rib..." (Sahih Muslim)

The Prophet ﷺ was most emphatic in enjoining upon Muslims to be kind to their women when he delivered his famous sermon on the Mount of Mercy at Arafat in the presence of many of his Companions who had gathered there for the Hajj al-Wada (Farewell Pilgrimage). In it he

desires of the human being. The Islamic laws and guidelines are built upon complete justice, granting every party what they deserve and what is best for them, without oppressing anyone. As Allah the most High says in the Quran:

**"Verily, Allah enjoins justice and worshipping not but Allah alone, and being patient in performing your duties to Allah and doing them the way the Prophet prescribed, and giving help to kith and kin, also Allah forbids all evil deeds, illegal sexual acts, disobedience of parents, polytheism, telling lies, give false witness, Allah prohibits the killing of an innocent person and all that is prohibited by Islamic Law, and all kinds of oppression. He (Allah) admonishes you, that you may take heed." (Quran 16 :90)**

This verse clearly states that Islam orders with all that is good and beneficial for the men and the women, and prohibits from all that is harmful for them also. Islam is not an extremist religion, on the contrary it is between the two extremes. As Allah the Most High states:

**"Thus we have made you (true Muslims) a just (and the best) nation, that you will be witnesses over mankind...."(Quran 2 :143)**

Islam is between the two extremes of Judaism and Christianity; let's compare:

Islam has allowed a man to marry up to four wives, with the condition that the husband deals justly with all four of

**"And if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphan-girls then marry other 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 slaves that your right hands possess. That is nearer to prevent you from doing injustice." (Qur'an, 4:3)**

If the husband cannot exercise this equality he should not marry more than one wife.

The attitude of the husband towards all his wives must be such as to give no occasion to heartbreaking, jealousy, dissatisfaction, discontent and frustration to any of them. There should be no cruelty, injustice, bias or partiality on the part of the husband. It is expected that peace, harmony and tranquility prevails in the household where the husband faithfully observes the injunctions of Islam regarding the equal status of all the wives in matters of maintenance, and general treatment.

To ensure fairness and justice, the husband must have sufficient economic means to provide adequate food, clothing and other necessities of life to each of them. The husband must spend equal time in the house of every wife. He must divide his nights among them, and must visit his wives accordingly. This will give him a chance to look after their welfare every day, and will maintain good relationship with all of them.

Islam is unique in many ways. It is unique in regards to its taking into consideration the natural inclinations and

snow, rain, etc.... The engineer knows the situations the car can handle and sustain.

What about Allah, the one who created everything in existence, the One who has no comparison in His supreme essence and sublime characteristics. Allah created man and woman and He knows what their natural inclinations and dispositions are. Allah, the All-Wise knows that peoples drives, inclinations, and abilities differ; some people have a high sex drive, some people have a low one; some people are wealthy and some people are poor; some people can manage their families properly while some people can't even manage themselves.

For example, the man who has the desire and ability financially, physically and mentally- and has no fear about oppressing his wives has the option to marry up to four wives, if he so chooses to do so.

As for the man who doesn't have wealth, or is otherwise unable, and may fear being unjust between his wives. He should marry one wife.

The religion of Islam takes into consideration all situations of all people ,in all places at all times; unlike man made laws, which are restricted to certain situations and certain people.

The benefits of polygyny are many. Some benefit the individual and some benefit the community.

-There might be a woman who is not able to have children, and the husband desires children

his wives. If the husband fears of not dealing justly with them then he should marry only one wife.

The Jews have gone to the extreme by allowing the man to marry as many women as he likes without limit or any restrictions.

On the other side, the Christians (Christian clergy, priests and nuns) are not allowed to marry. They have to live a monastic life and remain chaste and focus on worship and servicing the church.

Allah the Most Wise created everything and for it, created its mate or spouse. So whoever tries to change or suppress a natural inclination or disposition is most likely going to fail. This prohibition of marriage goes against the natural drive, desire and inclination of both men and women. While suppressing and prohibiting themselves from lawful outlets (marriage) for these desires, they are going against their human nature. This may be the reason why we see many of the Christian priest, pastors and clergy have turned to young children to fulfill their natural desires, as we have seen them being continuously accused of child molestation and abuse. We seek refuge in Allah from these evil acts.

Please see the statistics on page 59.

The creator of things knows what is best for his creation. If an engineer created a car, the engineer knows best when the car needs gas, oil, or a tune-up, The engineer knows what conditions the car can handle, hot weather conditions,

c)He is also a legitimate father to their children, providing for their needs

d)Provides the women with a life-long partner intellectually, physically, and financially

e)By providing for his family's expenses, the wife/mother can focus on properly raising and nurturing her children, and doesn't have to worry about working outside the home.

## What does Islam say about the veil or head covering?

From what we read previously in part one, it is obvious that Islam didn't invent the head cover, but Islam endorsed and reinforced it. The Quran urges the believing men and women to lower their gaze and guard their modesty and then urges the believing women to extend their head covers to cover the neck and the bosom as Allah the Most High says:

**"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze from looking at forbidden things, and protect their private parts from illegal sexual acts. 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 and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent, and to draw their veils all over their entire bodies and not to reveal their**

-A woman might be ill or have health disorders which don't allow her to get pregnant or deal with pregnancy

- The man is always prepared physically to pro-create and have children and may want to fulfill his desire with his wife. However during menses and post natal bleeding a man is not allowed to have sexual relations with his wife. By having a second , third or fourth wife, the husband is able to approach his other wives fulfilling his natural inclinations and desires. His wives serve as a natural and permissible outlet for the man. If one wife is not capable of having children, or is ill or tired, the husband can visit one of his other wives.

-Women in general, are always ready to be married, and many men are not prepared financially and are not ready to carry the responsibility of marriage. (In Islam the man is responsible for all of the expenses of the family: the house, rent, wife's and children's needs, etc...The woman is not obliged to contribute to the expenses of living, but she has the option to assist if she chooses.).

-The number of women far outnumber the men, so by marrying two, three, or four wives the husband brings to these women many benefits:

a)Provides for the women financially

b)Provides a legal, permissible outlet for sexual desires

The wives of the Prophet ﷺ were models for all women and were regarded as the Mothers of all believers. If they could only be addressed from behind a curtain in order to avoid any temptation or impropriety, how much more then is such a curtain necessary for ordinary women who can be a much greater source of temptation? It is also clear from the time of the Prophet ﷺ that the Companions did not treat this Verse as referring only to the Prophet's wives but applied it to their women as well, with the complete approval of the Prophet ﷺ. The reason given in the above Verse for such a curtain is **"that is purer for your hearts and for their hearts"** and in another Verse we read:

**"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts). That is purer for them. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what they do." ( 24:30)**

**It was narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:** "O young men, whoever among you can afford it, let him get married, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and guarding one's chastity. And whoever cannot afford it, let him fast, for it will be a shield for him." (Sahih Muslim, Book of Marriage #3)

**The Prophet ﷺ said:** 'If one of you likes a woman and feels attracted to her, let him go to his wife and have intercourse with her, for that will repel what is in his heart.' (Sahih Muslim, Book of Marriage #10)

**adornment except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husband's fathers, or their sons, or their husband's sons, or their brothers or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons..." (24:30,31).**

Women can thus expose their objects of beautification such as make-up and jewelry to other chaste women and to specific men such as their close relatives.

In front of other people, the Prophet's wives and all Muslim women have been ordered to fulfill the requirements of Hijab (head covering) by wearing a Jilbāb, which is a long outer garment that covers the entire body:

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

And The Qur'an tells the believing men in the time of the Prophet ﷺ:

**"And when you ask (his wives) for anything you want, ask them from behind a screen, that is purer for your hearts and for their hearts." (33:53)**



**purpose of protecting women- all women. An important Islamic teaching is that it is always better safe than sorry.**

The veil or head covering preserves the love and affection between husband and wife and allows it to endure. When the man sees a woman more beautiful than his wife, the relationship between him and his wife may deteriorate and eventually lead to separation or divorce. This is something which Islam tries to prevent.

It is very important for us to understand that Allah, the Creator of everything in existence, the Protector of everyone and everything, legislated His divine laws with the benefit of His creation in mind. Allah commanded and recommended us to do everything good and beneficial for ourselves and prohibited us from everything harmful to ourselves, as He the Most High says in the Quran:

**"Verily, Allah enjoins justice and worshipping not but Allah alone, and being patient in performing your duties to Allah and doing them the way the Prophet prescribed, and giving help to kith and kin, also Allah forbids all evil deeds, illegal sexual acts, disobedience of parents, polytheism, telling lies, give false witness, Allah prohibits the killing of an innocent person and all that is prohibited by Islamic Law, and all kinds of oppression. He (Allah) admonishes you, that you may take heed." (Quran 16 :90)**

Allah from His all encompassing knowledge and wisdom, legislated divine laws and sent them down to mankind to

**The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:** 'One of the most evil people before Allah on the Day of Resurrection will be a man who is intimate with his wife and she is intimate with him, then he publicizes her secrets.' (Sahih Muslim, Book of Marriage#123)

Islam wishes to establish a pure society in which there is no room even for adultery of the eye. Free-mixing between the sexes is forbidden, men and women are advised to marry at a young age so that they can fulfill their desires lawfully, and all are told to "lower their gazes" in public so that the eye may not be used as an instrument of Satan. By covering themselves, the woman's dignity and decency is safeguarded. Her attire makes clear that she is not an object for sale, advertising her beauty and availability for men's lustful eyes and whistles. We need little reminder of the immoral society around us today in which the sexes mingle wearing indecent clothes, and adultery is only frowned upon if committed after being married. Before marriage individuals are encouraged to try different partners, and the unfaithfulness, the misery, the jealousy and the insecurities, which then take place are a necessary result of such a life style.

**Thus, Allah the Most High ordered all women to veil themselves. The Islamic veil, unlike the veil of the Christian tradition, is not a sign of man's authority over woman nor is it a sign of woman's subjection to man. The Islamic veil, unlike the veil in the Jewish tradition, is not a sign of luxury and distinction of some noble married women. The Islamic veil is a sign of obedience to Allah's orders and modesty, serving the**

instruction one needs to live a righteous life according to Allah's commandments are all contained in the Quran and the authentic narrations of the Prophet Muhammadﷺ.

Moreover, the Quran is so concerned with protecting women's bodies and women's reputation that a man who dares to falsely accuse a woman of being unchaste will be severely punished, as Allah says in the Quran:

**"And those who launch a charge against chaste women, and produce not four witnesses (to support their allegations)- Flog them with eighty stripes; and reject their testimony forever, for such men are wicked liars and disobedient to Allah."(24:4).**

Compare this Quranic verse with the extremely lax punishment for rape in the Bible:

*"If a man happens to meet a virgin who is not pledged to be married and rapes her and they are discovered, he shall pay the girl's father fifty shekels of silver. He must marry the girl, for he has violated her. He can never divorce her as long as he lives" ( New International Version,Deut. 22:28-30).*

One must ask a simple question here, who is really punished? The man who only paid a fine for rape, or the girl who is forced to marry the man who raped her and live with him until he dies? Another question that also should be asked is this: which is more protective of women, the Quranic attitude or the lax Biblical attitude?

be practiced upon His earth, taking into consideration the needs and desires of His creation, commanding with the good and forbidding from the evil and harmful. These divine laws which were sent down from Allah to the final messenger of mankind, (the Prophet Muhammadﷺ), are applicable at all times and in all places. These divine laws which are free from oppression, deception, loop holes, political agendas and the like are what Allah legislated for His creation. Allah doesn't want any laws to be practiced except the divine laws of Islam, which are contained in the Quran and the authentic narrations of the Prophet Muhammadﷺ. Anyone with a sound intellect and heart should only seek to be governed by these divine laws, the laws of Islam. These divine laws are unlike manmade laws; manmade laws are geared to certain people and they don't take into consideration the needs of the individuals and the society as a whole, and they are subject to change whenever there is a change in authority. The divine laws of Islam, however, have not been changed for over 1400 years and will not be changed until the end of time. These laws were made by the One who made everything in existence, Allah the Most High. Doesn't the creator of all things know what's beneficial and the best for that which he created?

Furthermore, Allah from His mercy and grace upon us didn't leave us neglected in this life, without any guidance or instructions on how to live our lives. Allah the Most Wise and Knowledgeable sent down to His creation an instruction book: the Quran. Allah from His Mercy even sent with the instruction book a teacher to explain it to mankind, the Prophet Muhammadﷺ. All the guidance and

A study found 60% of Canadian university-aged males said they would commit sexual assault if they were certain they wouldn't get caught."

Something is fundamentally wrong with the society we live in. A radical change in the lifestyle and culture is absolutely necessary. A culture of modesty is badly needed; modesty in dress, speech, and manners of both men and women. Otherwise, the grim statistics will grow even worse day after day and, **unfortunately, women alone will be paying the price.**

### **Your Attention Please!!!!**

It is one of the great ironies of our world today that the very same headscarf revered as a sign of 'holiness' and a sign of praise when worn for the purpose of showing the authority of man by Catholic Nuns, is reviled as a sign of 'oppression' when worn for the purpose of being obedient to Allah and following Allah's commandments and observing modesty by Muslim women. Muslim women cover themselves out of sincere obedience to their creator, Allah, and in doing so show the authority of Allah upon His creation. For this, they are criticized and ridiculed. But non Muslim women wear a headscarf for the purpose of showing the authority of man and are praised for doing so. Ironic isn't it?

Some people, especially in the West, would tend to ridicule the whole argument of modesty for protection. Their argument is that the best protection is widespread education, civilized behavior, and self restraint. We would say: Fine, but not enough.

**1. If 'civilization' is enough protection, then why is it that women in North America, dare not walk alone in a dark street - or even across an empty parking lot?**

**2. If self restraint is the answer, then why are cases of sexual harassment in the workplace on the news media every day?** A sample of those accused of sexual harassment, in the last few years, includes: Navy officers, Managers, University professors, Senators, Supreme Court Justices, and the President of the United States!

Look at the following statistics, written in a pamphlet issued by the Dean of Women's office at Queen's University:

" In Canada, a woman is sexually assaulted every 6 minutes",

1 in 3 women in Canada will be sexually assaulted at some time in their lives",

1 in 4 women are at the risk of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime",

1 in 8 women will be sexually assaulted while attending college or university, and

### **Is there a punishment for this in Islam?**

Allah says in the Quran: "The woman and the man guilty of illegal sexual intercourse, flog each of them with a hundred stripes. Let not pity withhold you in their case, in a punishment prescribed by Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a party of the believers witness their punishment. (This punishment is for unmarried persons guilty of the above crime, but if married persons commit it (illegal sex), the punishment is to stone them to death, according to Allah's Law). (24:2)

Allah's Messenger ﷺ judged that the unmarried person who was guilty of illegal sexual intercourse be exiled for one year and receive the legal punishment (i.e. be flogged with one hundred stripes) (Sahih al Bukhari #6833)

A man from Bani Aslam came to Allah's Messenger ﷺ and informed him that he had committed illegal sexual intercourse and he bore witness four times against himself. Allah's Messenger ordered him to be stoned to death as he was a married person. (Sahih al Bukhari #681)

### **Did other religions practice this punishment?**

The book of Deuteronomy 22:20-25 clearly states: "If, however, the charge is true and no proof of the girl's virginity can be found, she shall be brought to the door of her father's house and there the men of her town shall stone her to death. She has done a disgraceful thing in Israel by

### **What does Islam say about 'Zina' fornication and adultery?**

Allah the Most High says in the Quran: "And come not near to unlawful sex, it is a transgression, a great sin, and an evil way." (17:32)

Allah says: "Verily, those who like that (the crime of) illegal sexual intercourse should be propagated among those who believe, they will have a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter. And Allah knows and you know not. (24:19)

One of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ narrated: 'Some pagans who committed murders in great number and committed illegal sexual intercourse excessively, came to Muhammad and said: "O Muhammad! Whatever you say, and invite people to is good, but we wish if you could inform us whether we can make an expiation for our (past evil) deeds." So the Divine Verses were revealed:

**"Those who invoke none along with Allah, nor kill such person as Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause, nor commit illegal sexual intercourse-and whoever does this shall receive the punishment. (25:68)**

In Islam 'Zina' (fornication/adultery) is considered a major crime and great sin.

This practice was even mentioned in the Torah and has been practiced by many Jews throughout history. Therefore, Islam re-enforced this divine commandment and didn't invent this punishment. Once again, Allah from His All-Encompassing Wisdom and Knowledge knows what's best for His creation and only legislates that which protects His creation from harm. Furthermore, when this punishment is carried out upon this person, it serves as an expiation for this great sin. And Allah knows best.

Why should someone be punished like this?

-To obey and abide by Allah's commandments

-To stop the spread of danger and infectious diseases within the community: 'Zina' (Fornication and adultery) is one of the greatest reasons for the spreading of infectious and deadly diseases (AIDS, Herpes, and other STD'S)

-Put a stop to divorce, separation, etc...:'Zina' causes problems and separations amongst families

- Prevent people from lying, stealing, killing, jealousy, dishonesty, etc and to serve as a lesson/example/warning for others

-Prevent people from being born without knowing their real parents, which may lead to psychological and mental problems

being promiscuous while still in her father's house. You must purge the evil from among you. If a man is found sleeping with another man's wife, both the man who slept with her and the woman must die. You must purge the evil from Israel. If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin pledged to be married and he sleeps with her, you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death—the girl because she was in a town and did not scream for help, and the man because he violated another man's wife. You must purge the evil from among you. But if out in the country a man happens to meet a girl pledged to be married and rapes her, only the man who has done this shall die."

One of the companions of the Prophet narrated that a Jewish man and a Jewish woman who had committed Zina (fornication) were brought to the Messenger of Allah. The Messenger of Allah went to the Jews and said: "What do you find in the Torah about the one who commits Zina?" They said: "We make them sit backwards (on mounts) and parade them around." He said: "Bring me the 'Torah' if you are telling the truth." They brought it and read it, and when they reached the Verse of stoning, the person who was reading placed his hand over the Verse of stoning and read that which came before it and that which came after it. One of the companions who was with the Messenger of Allah said to him: "Tell him to lift his hand," so he lifted it, and there beneath it was the Verse of stoning. So the Messenger of Allah ordered that they be stoned."(Sahih Muslim, Book of Oaths Hudud #26)

But experts say the increases in the United States are of greater concern because couples in many other countries tend to be more stable and government support for children is often higher.

Children born out of wedlock in the United States tend to have poorer health and educational outcomes than those born to married women, but that may be because unmarried mothers tend to share those problems.

In an enduring mystery, birthrates for unmarried women in the United States stabilized between 1995 and 2002 and declined among unmarried teenagers and black women. But after 2002, the overall birthrate among unmarried women resumed its steady climb. In 1940, just 3.8 percent of births were from unmarried women.

The District of Columbia and Mississippi had the highest rates of out-of-wedlock births in 2007: 59 percent and 54 percent, respectively. The lowest rate, 20 percent, was in Utah. In New York, the rate was 41 percent; in New Jersey, 34 percent; and in Connecticut, 35 percent. Sarah S. Brown, chief executive of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, a nonprofit advocacy group, said sex and pregnancy were handled far too (cavalierly) leniently in the United States, where rates of unplanned pregnancies, births and abortions are far higher than those of other industrialized nations.

“These trends may meet the needs of young adults,” she said, “but it’s far from clear that it’s helpful for children.”

-Prevent illegitimate childbirth

**Some statistics:**

Published on May 13, 2009 the New York Times (Gardiner Harris) reported that : Unmarried mothers gave birth to 4 out of every 10 babies born in the United States in 2007, a share that is increasing rapidly both here and abroad, according to government figures released Wednesday.

Before 1970, most unmarried mothers were teenagers. But in recent years the birthrate among unmarried women in their 20s and 30s has soared — rising 34 percent since 2002, for example, in women ages 30 to 34. In 2007, women in their 20s had 60 percent of all babies born out of wedlock, teenagers had 23 percent and women 30 and older had 17 percent.

Much of the increase in unmarried births has occurred among parents who are living together but are not married, cohabitation arrangements that tend to be less stable than marriages, studies show.

The pattern has been particularly pronounced among Hispanic women, climbing 20 percent from 2002 to 2006, the most recent year for which racial breakdowns are available. 11 percent of unmarried Hispanic women had a baby in 2006, compared with 7 percent of unmarried black women and 3 percent of unmarried white women, according to government data drawn from birth certificates.

Since the seventh century C.E., Islam has granted married women the independent personality which the Judaea-Christian West had deprived them of until very recently. In Islam, the bride and her family are under no obligation whatsoever to present a gift to the groom. The girl in a Muslim family is not a liability. A woman is so dignified in Islam that she does not need to present gifts in order to attract potential husbands. It is the groom who must present the bride with a marriage gift. This gift is considered her property and neither the groom nor the bride's family have any share in or control over it. In some Muslim societies today, a marriage gift of a hundred thousand dollars in diamonds is not unusual. The bride retains her marriage gifts even if she is later divorced. The husband is not allowed any share in his wife's property except what she offers him with her free consent. The Quran has stated its position on this issue quite clearly:

**"And give to the women whom you marry their dowry with a good heart; but if they, of their own good pleasure, remit any part of it to you, take it, and enjoy it without fear of any harm as Allah has made it lawful." (4:4)**

The wife's property and earnings are under her full control and for her use alone since her, and her children's, maintenance is her husband's responsibility. No matter how rich the wife might be, she is not obliged to act as a co-provider for the family unless she herself voluntarily chooses to do so. Spouses do inherit from one another. Moreover, a married woman in Islam retains her independent legal personality and her family name."

The center for Disease Control and Prevention reported in 2006:

- Number of live births to unmarried women: 1,641,946
- Birth rate for unmarried women: 50.6 births per 1,000 unmarried women aged 15-44 years
- Percent of all births to unmarried women: 38.5%

### **What does Islam say about marital affairs and women owning property?**

In the area of marital affairs, Allah limited a husband to marrying the maximum of four wives, on the condition that he treats all of his wives fairly and equally according to his ability. And He obligated to the husbands to live with them in kindness, as He says in the Quran: **"And live with them honorably."** [4: 19]

Allah made the woman the caretaker, commanding good and forbidding evil in the household of her husband and He made her the guardian of her children in the husband's absence. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"A woman is the guardian of her husband's household and she will be asked (on the Day of Judgement) concerning those under her care." (Sunan Abu Dawud #2928, Bukhari # 7138 others)

**As we can see, Islam has uplifted and given the woman a noble status!**

manners and educates her in the best possible way (the religion) and manumits her and then marries her. (Sahih al Bukhari #97)

**The Messenger of Allah** ﷺ also said: "If the wife of any one of you asks permission (to go to the mosque), do not forbid her." (Sahih al Bukhari #873)

**Islam encourages the woman to learn her religion, as they are responsible for the raising and educating of their children. It is well known that after the death of Allah's Messenger, his companions used to seek religious verdicts and education from Aishah (wife of the Prophet) who was considered to be one of the most knowledgeable people regarding the authentic traditions of Allah's Messenger.**

### **What does Islam say about the killing and burying of baby girls alive?**

**The Quran severely condemned this heinous practice:**

**"And when the news of the birth of a female child is brought to any of them, his face becomes dark, and he is filled with inward grief. He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that whereof he has been informed. Shall he keep her with dishonor or bury her in the earth? Certainly, evil is their decision." (16:59).**

It has to be mentioned that this sinister crime would have never stopped in Arabia were it not for the power of the

Muslim mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters had received inheritance rights thirteen hundred years before Europe recognized that these rights even existed. The division of inheritance is a vast subject covered in great detail in the Quran (see 4:7,11,12,176).

### **What does Islam say about educating women about their religion?**

Allah's Messenger ﷺ himself designated a special day for teaching the women their religion:

**Some women requested the Prophet** ﷺ **to fix a day for them as the men were taking all his time. On that he promised them one day for religious lessons and commandments. Once during such a lesson the Prophet** ﷺ **said, "A woman whose three children die will be shielded by them from the Hell-fire." On that a woman asked, "If only two die?" He replied, "Even two (will shield her from the Hell-fire). (Sahih al Bukhari #103)**

This narration shows the concern and respect that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ showed towards the women. While being the leader of the Muslims, he fixed a certain day in which he, himself would give them religious instructions and guidance. Allah's Messenger ﷺ also said:

"Three persons will have a double reward: (One of them being) A master of a woman-slave who teaches her good



**The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also said:**

"Whoever maintains two girls till they attain maturity, he and I will come on the Resurrection Day like this; and he joined his fingers" (Sahih Muslim).

**What does Islam say about the mother and parents?**

**In Islam, the honor, respect, and esteem attached to motherhood is unparalleled.** The Quran places the importance of kindness to parents as second only to worshipping God Almighty:

**"And your Lord has decreed that you worship not but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: "My Lord! Bestow upon them Your Mercy as they did raised me when I was young." (17:23-24).**

The Quran in several other places puts special emphasis on the mother's great role in birth and nursing:

**"And we have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind to his parents. His mother bears him with hardship. And she brings him forth with hardship, and the bearing of him, and the weaning of him is thirty**

scathing terms the Quran used to condemn this practice (16:59, 43:17, 81:8-9). The Quran, moreover, makes no distinction between boys and girls. In contrast to the Bible, the Quran considers the birth of a female as a gift and a blessing from God, the same as the birth of a male.

**The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:** "Allah has forbidden to you disobedience to mothers, burying daughters alive, and withholding the rights of others and asking of them.(Sahih Muslim, Book of Judicial Decisions #12)

The Quran even mentions the gift of the female birth first:

**" To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills. He bestows female children to whomever He wills and bestows male children to whomever He wills" (42:49).**

In order to wipe out all the traces of female infanticide in the nascent Muslim society, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ promised those who were blessed with daughters of a great reward if they would bring them up kindly:

"He who is involved in bringing up daughters, and accords benevolent treatment towards them, they will be protection for him against Hell-Fire" (Sahih al Bukhari and Sahih Muslim).

kinship will not enter Paradise." (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 13, Vol. 8)

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also said: "Whoever desires an increase in his sustenance and age, should keep good relations with his kith and kin." (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 281, Vol. 3)

The very special place of mothers in Islam has been eloquently described by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ:

"A man asked the Prophet ﷺ: 'Whom should I honor most?' The Prophet ﷺ replied: 'Your mother'. 'And who comes next?' asked the man. The Prophet ﷺ replied: 'Your mother'. 'And who comes next?' asked the man. The Prophet ﷺ replied: 'Your mother!'. 'And who comes next?' asked the man. The Prophet ﷺ replied: 'Your father'" (Bukhari and Muslim).

The mother in Islam is highly respected and treated in the best of manners.

## What does Islam say about menstruation?

Islam does not consider a menstruating woman to possess any kind of "contagious lack of cleanliness". She is neither "untouchable" nor "cursed." She practices her normal life with only a few restrictions: A married couple are not allowed to have sexual intercourse during the period of menstruation. Any other physical contact between them is

months, till he attains full strength and reaches forty years, he says: "My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your favor which you have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds, such as please You, and make my offspring good. Truly I have turned to You in repentance, and truly, I am one of the Muslims (submitting to Your will)" (46:15)

And Allah also 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."** (31:14).

**The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:** "Allah has forbidden to you disobedience to mothers, burying daughters alive, and withholding the rights of others and asking of them..."(Sahih Muslim, Book of Judicial Decisions #12)

A man came to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ asking his permission to take part in Jihad (i.e. fighting for the cause of Allah). The Prophet asked him, "Are your parents alive?" He replied, "Yes". The Prophet said to him "then exert yourself in their service." (Sahih al Bukhari, No. 248, Vol. 4)

The Prophet ﷺ strongly warned against severing the bonds of kinship, as he said: "The person who severs the bond of

Even the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ would lay down with and touch his wives : as Aishah (the Prophet's wife) said: "If one of us was menstruating, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would tell her to put on a waist-wrapper (Izar), then he would touch her (above the Izar)" (Sahih Muslim , in the Chapter of Menstruation)

This is the total opposite of what the people of other faiths would do, as we outlined previously. This is proof that in Islam itself there is no extremism. Islam is the middle path between the two extremes.

## What about divorce?

Islam occupies the middle ground between Christianity and Judaism with respect to divorce as well. Marriage in Islam is a sanctified bond that should not be broken except for compelling reasons. Couples are instructed to pursue all possible remedies whenever their marriages are in danger. Divorce is not to be resorted to except when there is no other way out. In a nutshell, Islam recognizes divorce, yet it strongly discourages it. Let us focus on the recognition side first. Islam does recognize the right of both partners to end their matrimonial relationship. Islam gives the husband the right for Talaq (divorce). Moreover, Islam, unlike Judaism, grants the wife the right to dissolve the marriage through what is known as Khula'. If the husband dissolves the marriage by divorcing his wife, he cannot retrieve any of the marriage gifts he has given her. The Quran explicitly prohibits the divorcing husbands from taking back their

permissible. A menstruating woman is also exempted from some rituals such as daily prayers and fasting during her period.

It was narrated that one of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ mentioned that among the Jews when a woman menstruated, they would not eat with her or stay with her in their houses. The companions of the Prophet ﷺ asked the Prophet ﷺ (about that) and Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, revealed:

**"They ask you concerning menstruation. Say: 'That is a harmful thing therefore, keep away from women during menses....' (2:222)**

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Do everything except intercourse." (Sahih Muslim, Book of Menstruation #16)

It was narrated that Aishah (wife of the Prophet) said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to me: 'Pass me the palm-fibre mat from the masjid.' I said: 'I am menstruating.' He said: 'Your menstruation is not in your hand.'" (Sahih Muslim, Book of Menstruation, #11)

**It was narrated that Aishah said:** "I would drink while I was menstruating, then I would pass it to the Prophet ﷺ and he would put his mouth at the place where my mouth had been and drink. And I would nibble meat from the bone while I was menstruating, then I would pass it to the Prophet ﷺ and he would put his mouth where my mouth had been." (Sahih Muslim, Book of Menstruation, #14)

honestly did not like him to the extent of not being able to live with him any longer. The Prophet ﷺ asked her: "Would you give him his garden (the marriage gift he had given her) back?" she said: "Yes". The Prophet ﷺ then instructed the man to take back his garden and accept the dissolution of the marriage (Sahih al Bukhari).

In some cases, A Muslim wife might be willing to maintain her marriage but find herself obliged to ask for a dissolution because of some compelling reason such as: Cruelty of the husband, desertion without a reason, a husband not fulfilling his conjugal responsibilities, *etc.* In these cases, the Muslim court dissolves the marriage.

A Muslim man should not divorce his wife just because he dislikes her. The Quran instructs Muslim men to be kind to their wives even in cases of lukewarm emotions or feelings of dislike:

**"O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will; and you should not treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the dowry you have give them, unless they commit open illegal sexual intercourse; and live with them honorably. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings through it a great deal of good."** (4:19).

marriage gifts no matter how expensive or valuable these gifts might be:

**"But if you intend to replace a wife by another and you have given one of them a large dowry , do not take anything from it, would you take it wrongfully without right and with a manifest sin?"** (4:20).

In the case of the wife choosing to end the marriage, she may return the marriage gifts to her husband. Returning the marriage gifts in this case is a fair compensation for the husband who is keen to keep his wife while she chooses to leave him. The Quran has instructed Muslim men not to take back any of the gifts they have given to their wives except in the case of the wife choosing to dissolve the marriage:

**"It is not lawful for men to take back from their wives any of dowry which you have given to your wives, 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 Allah, then there is no sin on either of them is she gives back the dowry 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 wrongdoers."** (2:229).

Also, a woman came to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ seeking the dissolution of her marriage. She told the Prophet ﷺ that she did not have any complaints against her husband's character or manners. Her only problem was that she

wife is a temporary measure that is resorted to as third in line in cases of extreme necessity in hopes that it might remedy the wrongdoing of the wife. If it does, the husband is not allowed by any means to continue any annoyance to the wife as explicitly mentioned in the verse. If it does not, the husband is still not allowed to use this measure any longer and the final avenue of the family-assisted reconciliation has to be explored.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has instructed Muslim husbands that they should not resort to these measures except in extreme cases such as open lewdness and disobedience committed by the wife. Even in these cases, the punishment should be lightly as Islam has laid down precepts and principles for the discipline of wives. From these precepts:

- 1-He should spank her lightly as one would spank a child,
- 2 He should not strike her face,
- 3- He should not strike her in a place which may leave a bruise or scar,

Furthermore, the Prophet of Islam ﷺ has condemned any unjustifiable beating. Some Muslim wives complained to him that their husbands had beaten them. Hearing that, the Prophet ﷺ categorically stated that:

"Those who do so (beat their wives) are not the best among you" (Abu Dawood #2146)

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ gave a similar instruction:

**The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:** "No believing man should hate a believing woman. If he dislikes one of her characteristics, he may be pleased with another." (Sahih Muslim, The Book of Breastfeeding #61)

Islam is a practical religion, and recognizes that there are circumstances in which a marriage may come to the point of collapse, circumstances in which kind words and sound advice are not viable solutions. In such cases, the Quran offers some practical advice for the spouse whose partner is the wrong-doer. For the husband whose wife's ill-conduct is threatening the marriage, the Quran gives four alternatives as detailed in the following verses:

**"As to those women on whose part you see ill-conduct, admonish them first, next refuse to share their beds, and if that doesn't work then beat them lightly if it is useful; but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means of annoyance. Surely, Allah is Ever Most High, Most Great. If you fear a breach between the man and his wife, then appoint two arbitrators, one from his family and the other from her family; if they both wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation. Indeed Allah is Ever All-Knower, Well-Acquainted with all things. (4:34-35).**

The first three are to be tried first. If they fail, then the help of the families should be sought. It has to be noted, in the light of the above verses, that disciplining the rebellious

break his wife's stubbornness by the lash or by starving her.

For the wife whose husband's ill-conduct is the cause for marital distress, the Quran offers the following advice:

**"If a woman fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part, there is no sin on them both 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 Well-Acquainted with what you do." (4:128).**

To sum up, Islam offers Muslim married couples much viable advice to save their marriages in cases of trouble and tension. If one of the partners is jeopardizing the matrimonial relationship, the other partner is advised by the Quran to do whatever possible and effective in order to save this sacred bond. If all the measures fail, Islam allows the partners to separate peacefully and amicably.

Unfortunately, many claim that the women in Muslim countries are oppressed, abused raped, beaten and the likes of this. It is said that the western countries liberate and give women their rights and protection. However, after investigating the issue it is clear that the total opposite is what is correct. The violence and oppression of women in the west is something well known to all. It cannot be compared to that of the Muslim Nations. Also, this still exists in Muslim countries because of ignorance of the true teachings of Islam.

It has to be remembered at this point that the Prophet ﷺ has also said:

"The best of you is he who is best to his family, and I am the best among you to my family" (at-Tirmidhi #3895)

The Prophet ﷺ advised one Muslim woman, whose name was Fatimah bint Qais, not to marry a man because the man was known for beating women:

"I went to the Prophet ﷺ and said: Abul Jahm and Mu'awiah have proposed to marry me. The Prophet ﷺ (by way of advice) said: As to Mu'awiah he is very poor and Abul Jahm is accustomed to beating women" (Sahih Muslim).

It must be clarified that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ never spanked, touched, or even spoke to any of his wives in an evil or dishonorable manner. Nor did he touch or shake any woman's hand who wasn't from his relatives. As he ﷺ is the example and model that the Muslims follow in their day to day life and dealings.

It should be noted that the Talmud sanctions wife beating as chastisement for the purpose of discipline. The husband is not restricted to the extreme cases such as those of open lewdness. He is allowed to beat his wife even if she just refuses to do her house work. Moreover, he is not limited only to the use of light punishment. He is permitted to

higher among families below poverty levels, and severe spouse abuse is twice as likely to be committed by unemployed men as by those working full time.

**IMPACT ON CHILDREN** . Violent juvenile offenders are four times more likely to have grown up in homes where they saw violence. Children who have witnessed violence at home are also five times more likely to commit or suffer violence when they become adults.

**IMPACT ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES** . Women who are battered have more than twice the health care needs and costs than those who are never battered. Approximately 17 percent of pregnant women report having been battered, and the results include miscarriages, stillbirths and a two to four times greater likelihood of bearing a low birth weight baby. Abused women are disproportionately represented among the homeless and suicide victims. Victims of domestic violence are being denied insurance in some states because they are considered to have a "pre-existing condition."

Please see Statistics on page 56.

## **What does Islam say about the widow or divorcee?**

The Quran, unlike the other altered books (Torah, Bible, Gospels) clarifies that castes widows and divorcees have the freedom to marry whomever they choose. There is no stigma attached to divorce or widowhood in the Quran:

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES**

**MURDER** . Every day four women die in this country as a result of domestic violence: the victims of murder and assault by their husbands and boyfriends. That's approximately 1,400 women a year, according to the FBI. The number of women who have been murdered by their intimate partners is greater than the number of soldiers killed in the Vietnam War.

**BATTERING** . Although only 572,000 reports of assault by intimates are officially reported to federal officials each year, the most conservative estimates indicate two to four million women of all races and classes are battered each year. At least 170,000 of those violent incidents are serious enough to require hospitalization, emergency room care or a doctor's attention.

**SEXUAL ASSAULT** . Every year approximately 132,000 women report that they have been victims of rape or attempted rape, and more than half of them knew their attackers. It's estimated that two to six times that many women are raped, but do not report it. Every year 1.2 million women are forcibly raped by their current or former male partners, some more than once.

**TARGETS** . Women are 10 times more likely than men to be victimized by an intimate. Young women, women who are separated, divorced or single, low- income women and African-American women are disproportionately victims of assault and rape. Domestic violence rates are five times

all the night and fasts all the day." (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 265, Vol. 7)

As a matter of fact, all of the Prophet's wives had previously been married, except his wife Aishia, may Allah be pleased with them all.

**So what are you thinking now? Hopefully we've cleared up some of the misconceptions and misunderstandings we may have had about Islam. And hopefully we better understand the status of women in Islam.**

So now let's mention just a few things which Islam has done for women and remember that these teachings and laws were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad over 14 centuries ago, and true Muslims are still practicing them today.

Islam declared women and men equal in the sight of Allah

Islam condemned pre-Islamic practices degrading and oppressing women.

Islam gave women the right of inheritance and the right of individual independent ownership unhampered by father, husband, brother, son or anyone else.

Islam gave women the right to accept or reject a marriage proposal free from pressure

Islam does not require women to change her name at marriage.

**"And when you have divorced women and they have fulfilled the term of their prescribed period, either take them back on reasonable basis or set them free on reasonable basis. But do not take them back to hurt them, and whoever does that, then he has wronged himself. And treat not the Verses and Laws of Allah as a jest, but remember Allah's favors on you, and that which He has sent down to you of the Quran and the Prophet's ways whereby He instructs you. And fear Allah, and know that Allah is All-Aware of everything." (2:231).**

**"And those of you who die and leave wives behind them, the wives shall wait to get married for four months and ten days, then when they have fulfilled their term, there is no sin on you if the wives do as they desire (regarding marriage) in a just and honorable manner. And Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do." (2:234).**

**"And those of you who die and leave behind wives should bequeath for their wives a year's maintenance and residence without turning them out, but if the wives leave, there is no sin on you for that which they do of themselves, provided it is honorable lawful marriage. And Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise." (2:240).**

**The Prophet ﷺ said:** said, "The one who looks after a widow or a poor person is like a Mujahid (warrior) who fights for Allâh's Cause, or like him who performs prayers



Ambassador Herman Eilts, in a testimony in front of the committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress on June 24th, 1985, said, "The Muslim community of the globe today is in the neighborhood of one billion. That is an impressive figure. But what to me is equally impressive is that Islam today is the fastest growing monotheistic religion. This is something we have to take into account. Something is right about Islam. It is attracting a good many people."

So don't be deceived and misled by the media in regards to the negative things they say about Islam and the Muslims. Read for yourself. Know that Islam has uplifted the woman and given her the respect and honor which she deserves. Now you know that -Islam is not an extremist religion. So don't look at actions of extremists and ignorant people and say that "Islam taught them this." Every person with a sound intellect will agree that you can't hold a grudge or base a judgement on an entire religion or people based upon the acts of ignorant ones who pretend to be something they're not.

This negative portrayal of Islam in the world media has to end, and people need to get their information from reliable sources. Last but not least, non-Muslims need to realize the simple fact that the ignorant actions of some Muslims (suicide bombings, killing of innocent men, women and children, terrorist acts) do not represent Islam, and Islam and the Muslims are free from these evil acts.

Islam protects the family and condemns the betrayal of marital fidelity. It recognizes only one type of family: husband and wife united by authentic marriage contract.

Honoring, respecting, caring for and obeying the parents is a very important aspect of Islam.

*"The best of you are the kindest to their wives and I am the best of you to my family"*, is a teaching by Prophet Mohammadﷺ.

Islam enjoins sound morality in thinking, behavior and appearance.—Fashion trends and social patterns that reduce women to sex objects and exploit them as such are not acceptable in Islam.

The observance of chastity and moral standards is equally demanded by Islam from both men and women.

The covering or veil is not a tradition or something invented by Islam or its scholars; it is a commandment from Allah, which Islam reinforces. The veil protects the woman and helps her to preserve her dignity and respect, and maintains love and affection between husband and wife.

Islam prohibits the killing of women, children and the elderly even in times of war. It has been said, "History hasn't known any conqueror/victor, or crusade more merciful than the Muslims."

Islam forbids even the false accusations of ill and evil conduct of woman without sound substantial evidence.

Islam has so much to offer our world which is in great need of moral guidance and leadership.

**Attention:** This information is a combination of numerous resources, English as well as translated materials from Arabic texts. Any comments, suggestions or corrections please send to: Email [darulitibaa@hotmail.com](mailto:darulitibaa@hotmail.com)

So if you're interested in knowing and embracing the truth, don't be afraid, ashamed, or embarrassed. Submit to the one who created me, you, and everything in existence, Allah the Most Gracious.

**Maybe you're asking, "What do I have to do, if I want to become Muslim?"**

The first step is believing that Allah is the one and only true God who deserves all worship alone, He doesn't have any partners, nor intercessors, nor sons.

Secondly, believing that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the final messenger of Allah. By sincerely believing this in your heart and saying this statement in Arabic: (Ash-hadu an laa, eelaa-ha, ill-allah wa ash-hadu anna muhammadar rasoolul-allah) you become Muslim.

**Did you know?**

**In the U.S. women converts to Islam outnumber men converts 4 to 1**

It's easy, you can do it.

And we ask Allah the Most Gracious to accept this work from us, and make it sincerely for His pleasure and satisfaction alone. We ask that He make this publication beneficial to all people. Finally, whatever this contains of correctness it is from Allah alone, and whatever is incorrect is from ourselves, Allah, His Messenger Muhammad ﷺ and Islam are free from it and we ask Allah to forgive us.

\*Medical expenses from Domestic Violence total at least \$3 billion annually and businesses lose another \$100 million in sick leave, absenteeism and productivity.

\*One out of 7 girls is abused by her boyfriend, and many will be abused by their husbands.

\*Courtship violence is wide-spread and underreported by both men and women. 30% of High School students have experienced physical or sexual violence in dating relationships. 37% of Men and 35% of Women have inflicted some form of physical aggression on their dating partners.

\*Women sustained more injuries than men, and they were two to three times more likely to experience unwanted sexual intercourse.

\*95% of violent crime on Campus is alcohol or drug related.

\*37% of the assailants and 55% of victims of rape had used alcohol or other drugs.

\*Husbands and boyfriends commit 13,000 acts of violence against women in the workplace every year (United States Department of Justice, 1994).

\*Over 1.7 million women were physically abused in 1995 by their male partners, one every 12 seconds (Federal Bureau of Investigation).

## STATISTICS

\* Domestic Violence accounts for a quarter of all reported violent crime. [Working Party Report, Victim Support, 1992]

\* Each year 100,000 women seek treatment in London for violent injuries caused in their homes. [Punching Judy, BBC TV Documentary, 1989]

\* Domestic Violence is not limited to physical assault. It includes sexual abuse and mental cruelty which undermine a woman's self-esteem. [McGibbon and Kelly, "Abuse of Women in the Home", 1989]

\* Research conducted by Police found that 2/3 of all men believed that they would respond violently to their partners in certain situations. [Islington Council, 1994]

\* Almost half of all murders of women are killings by current or former partners. [National Working Party Report on Domestic Violence, Victim Support, 1992]

\*An estimated 2 to 6 million women are battered annually in the USA.

\*Battering is the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 15-44.

\*One out of four pregnant women are battered. The battering may start or escalate during pregnancy.

## Muslim Women, Best Women on the Face of the Earth

\*Nearly 1 in 3 adult women experience at least one physical assault by a partner during adulthood. (American Psychl. Ass'n. Violence and the Family: Report of the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family (1996), p. 10.)

\*In 1993, approximately 575,000 men were arrested for committing violence against women, approximately 49,000 women were arrested for committing violence against men. (American Psychl. Ass'n. Violence and the Family: Report of the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family (1996), p. 10.)

\*Domestic violence is statistically consistent across racial and ethnic boundaries. (Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report: Violence Against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey (NCJ-154348), August 1995, p. 3.)

\*90-95% of domestic violence victims are women. (Bureau of Justice Statistics Selected Findings: Violence Between Intimates (NCJ-149259), November 1994.)

\*Much of female violence is committed in self-defense, and inflicts less injury than male violence. (Chalk & King, eds., Violence in Families: Assessing Prevention & Treatment Programs, National Resource Council and Institute of Medicine, p. 42 (1996).)

\*47% of men who beat their wives do so at least 3 times per year. (AMA Diagnostic & Treatment Guidelines on Domestic Violence, SEC: 94-677: 3M: 9/94 (1994).)

## Muslim Women, Best Women on the Face of the Earth

\*There were approximately 4.5 million violent crimes against women in 1992 and 1993. (The Justice Department recognizes that this is an under-estimation of domestic violence and violence against women). (Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey).

\*50% of all women will be involved in some type of abusive relationship in their life time. We could be talking about your daughters, your mothers, your wives, your girlfriends.

\*30% of High School students have experienced physical or sexual violence in dating relationships.

\*37% of men and 35% of women have inflicted some form of physical aggression with their dating partners.

\*For every 1 rape that IS reported, 10 are NOT reported.

\*By the most conservative estimate, each year 1 million women suffer nonfatal violence by an intimate. (Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report: Violence Against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey (NCJ-154348), August 1995, p. 3.)

\*Other estimates suggest that 4 million American women experience a serious assault by an intimate partner during an average 12-month period. (American Psychl. Ass'n. Violence and the Family: Report of the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family (1996), p. 10.)

## Muslim Women, Best Women on the Face of the Earth

\*88% of victims domestic violence fatalities had a documented history of physical abuse. (Florida Governor's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence, Florida Morality Review Project, 1997, pp. 46-48, tables 14-21.)

\*44% of victims of intimate homicides had prior threats by the killer to kill victim or self. 30% had prior police calls to the residence. 17% had a protection order. (Florida Governor's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence, Florida Morality Review Project, 1997, pp. 46-48, tables 14-21.)

\*A female is battered every nine seconds. [California Alliance Against Domestic Violence, 1994]

\*It is estimated that one third of all high school and college students will have been in an abusive relationship by the time they graduate. [Levy, 1992]

\*Relationship violence is the number one cause of injury to women ages 15-44: more than rapes, muggings and car accidents combined. [Center For Community Solutions, 1997]

\*There are three times as many animal shelters in the United States as battered women shelters. [Senate Judiciary Committee, 1990]

\*63% of all boys ages 11-20 arrested for murder, murdered the man who was assaulting their mother.[Center For Community Solutions, 1997]

## Muslim Women, Best Women on the Face of the Earth

\*In homes where partner abuse occurs, children are 1,500 times more likely to be abused. (Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Family Violence: Interventions for the Justice System, 1993.)

\*26% of pregnant teens reported being physically abused by their boyfriends, about half of them said the battering began or intensified after he learned of her pregnancy. (Brustin, S., Legal Response to Teen Dating Violence, Family Law Quarterly, vol. 29, no. 2, 333-334 (Summer 1995) (citing Worcester, A More Hidden Crime: Adolescent Battered Women, The Network News, July/Aug., National Women's Health Network 1993).)

\*Female victims of violence are 2.5 times more likely to be injured when the violence is committed by an intimate than when committed by a stranger. (Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report: Violence Against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey (NCJ-154348), August 1995, p. 4.)

\*Domestic violence is an ongoing cycle producing increasingly severe injuries over time, battered women are likely to see physicians frequently. (Children's Safety Network, Domestic Violence: A Directory of Protocols for Health Care Providers (1992) p. (1).)

\*65% of intimate homicide victims had separated from the perpetrator prior to their death. (Florida Governor's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence, Florida Morality Review Project, 1997, p. 47, table 17.)

## Statistics on offenders and victims

(page 35)

### United States

The 2004 John Jay Report commissioned by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) was based on surveys completed by the Roman Catholic dioceses in the United States. The surveys filtered provided information from diocesan files on each priest accused of sexual abuse and on each of the priest's victims to the research team, in a format which did not disclose the names of the accused priests or the dioceses where they worked. The dioceses were encouraged to issue reports of their own based on the surveys that they had completed.

The 2004 John Ray report was based on a study of 10,667 allegations against 4,392 priests accused of engaging in sexual abuse of a minor between 1950 and 2002. The number 4,392 represents four percent of the 109,694 priests in active ministry during that time. (see the following references: ("Draft survey: 4,450 priests accused of sex abuse". *CNN*. February 17, 2004., "Executive Summary of "The Nature and Scope of the Problem of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States"". *John Jay College of Criminal Justice*.)

Approximately 56 percent had one reported allegation against them; 27 percent had two or three allegations against them; nearly 14 percent had four to nine allegations against them; 3 percent (149 priests) had 10 or more allegations against them. These 149 priests were responsible for almost 3,000 victims, or 27 percent of the

\*As many as 15 million women have been abused at some time during their lives. [Former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, 1989]

\*As many as one-quarter to two-thirds of battered women report abuse during pregnancy. ["Battered and Pregnant: A Prevalence Study," *Journal of the American Public Health Association*]

\*In a prospective study of 1,200 white, Hispanic and black pregnant women, one in six reported physical abuse during pregnancy. ["Abuse During Pregnancy: A Cross-Cultural Study of Frequent and Severity of Injuries," *J. McFarlane*, 1991]

\*The average battered woman is attacked three times each year. [*Intimate Violence*, R. Gelles and M. Straus, 1988]

\*22 to 35 percent of women who visit emergency departments in the United States are there for symptoms related to on-going abuse. ["Domestic Violence Intervention Calls for More than Treating Injuries," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1990]

\*Families in which domestic violence occurs use doctors eight times more often, visit the emergency room six times more often and use six times more prescription drugs than the general population. ["Domestic Violence: A Community Crisis Waiting for an Effective Response" *Seattle Domestic Violence Intervention*, 1989]

- Around 81 percent of these victims were male.

22.6% were age 10 or younger, 51% were between the ages of 11 and 14, and 27% were between the ages to 15 to 17 years. (Reese, Thomas J. (2004-03-22). "Facts, Myths and Questions". *America*. Retrieved 2009-07-29, Bono, Agostino. "John Jay Study Reveals Extent of Abuse Problem, John Jay College of Criminal Justice. The Nature and Scope of the Problem of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States: 4.3 Characteristics of children who alleged sexual abuse by Catholic priests. p. 69)

- A substantial number (almost 2000) of very young children were victimized by priests during this time period.
- 9,281 victim surveys had information about an investigation. In 6,696 (72%) cases, an investigation of the allegation was carried out. Of these, 4,570 (80%) were substantiated; 1,028 (18%) were unsubstantiated; 83 (1.5%) were found to be false. In 56 cases, priests were reported to deny the allegations.
- More than 10 percent of these allegations were characterized as not substantiated. (This does not mean that the allegation was false; it means only that the diocese or order could not determine whether the alleged abuse actually took place.)
- For approximately 20 percent of the allegations, the priest was deceased or

allegations. (Reese, Thomas J. (2004-03-22). "Facts, Myths and Questions". *America*. Retrieved 2009-07-29)

- The allegations were substantiated for 1,872 priests and unsubstantiated for 824 priests. They were thought to be credible for 1,671 priests and not credible for 345 priests. 298 priests and deacons who had been completely exonerated are not included in the study.
- 50 percent were 35 years of age or younger at the time of the first instance of alleged abuse. (see previous reference)
- Almost 70 percent were ordained before 1970. (see previous reference)
- Fewer than 7 percent were reported to have themselves been victims of physical, sexual or emotional abuse as children. Although 19 percent had alcohol or substance abuse problems, only 9 percent were reported to have been using drugs or alcohol during the instances of abuse. (see previous reference)

6 percent are pedophiles, 15 percent 11 & 12 year olds only (both male and female), 20 percent indiscriminate, and 27 percent mildly indiscriminate. please see: (Cartor, Cimboic & Tallon (2008). Differentiating Pedophilia from Ephebophilia in Cleric Offenders. *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity*, Volume 15, Issue 4, pages 311 - 319.)

There were approximately 10,667 reported minor victims of clergy sexual abuse during this period:

In the spring of 2002, the Christian Science Monitor reported on the results of national surveys by Christian Ministry Resources and concluded: "Despite headlines focusing on the priest pedophile problem in the Roman Catholic Church, most American churches being hit with child sexual-abuse allegations are Protestant, and most of the alleged abusers are not clergy or staff, but church volunteers."(Clayton, Mark, *Sex Abuse Spans Spectrum of Churches*, Christian Science Monitor, 2002, p. 1)

George Weigel, the Chair of Catholic Studies at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, District of Columbia, noted: "In the United States alone, there are reportedly some 39 million victims of childhood sexual abuse... Hofstra University professor Charol Shakeshaft reports that 6-10 percent of public school students have been molested in recent years—some 290,000 between 1991 and 2000. According to other recent studies, 2 percent of sex abuse offenders were Catholic priests—a phenomenon that spiked between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s but seems to have virtually disappeared (six credible cases of clerical sexual abuse in 2009 were reported in the U.S. bishops' annual audit, in a Church of some 65,000,000 members). [Yet] the sexual abuse story in the global media is almost entirely a Catholic story, in which the Catholic Church is portrayed as the epicenter of the sexual abuse of the young.(<http://www.firstthings.com/onthesquare/2010/03/scoundrel-times>. Retrieved 2010-04-20.)

Tom Hoopes, then National Catholic Register executive editor, observed: "during the first half of 2002, the 61 largest newspapers in California ran nearly 2,000 stories

inactive at the time of the receipt of the allegation and typically no investigation was conducted in these circumstances.

- In 38.4% of allegations, the abuse is alleged to have occurred within a single year, in 21.8% the alleged abuse lasted more than a year but less than 2 years, in 28% between 2 and 4 years, in 10.2% between 5 and 9 years and, in under 1%, 10 or more years.

Many of the reported acts of sexual abuse involved fondling or unspecified abuse. There was also a large number of allegations of more grave abuse, including acts of oral sex and intercourse. Detailed information on the nature of the abuse was not reported for 26.6% of the reported allegations. 27.3% of the allegations involved the cleric performing oral sex on the victim. 25.1% of the allegations involved penile penetration or attempted penetration.

Although there were reported acts of sexual abuse of minors in every year, the incidence of reported abuse increased by several orders of magnitude in the 1960s and 1970s. There was, for example, a more than six-fold increase in the number of reported acts of abuse of males aged 11 to 17 between the 1950s and the 1970s. After peaking in the 1970s, the number of incidents decreased through the 1980s and 1990s even more sharply than the incidence rate had increased in the 1960s and 1970s.



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about sexual abuse in Catholic institutions, mostly concerning past allegations. During the same period, those newspapers ran four stories about the federal government's discovery of the much larger — and ongoing — abuse scandal in public schools."("Has Media Ignored Sex Abuse In School?". 2006-08-24.  
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