

The Choice of Every Woman



As-Sayyid bin Ahmad Abu Saif



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By: As-Sayyid Bin Ahmad Abu Saif

Edited By: Abdul Ahad (Alig.)

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“In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful”

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَتَ نُوحٍ وَامْرَأَتَ لُوطٍ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا صَالِحَيْنِ فَخَانَتَاهُمَا فَلَمْ يُغْنِيا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَقِيلَ ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّٰخِلِينَ ۝ وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا امْرَأَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝ وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتَ فَرجَهَا فَنفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَقَتْ بِكَلِمَتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتِبَ عَلَيْهَا الْقَانِنُ ۝﴾

"Allah sets forth an example for those who disbelieve: the wife of Nuh (Noah) and the wife of Lout (Lot). They were under two of our righteous slaves, but they both betrayed them (their husbands by rejecting their doctrine). So they [Nuh (Noah) and Lout (Lot) A.S] availed them (their respective wives), not, against Allah, and it was said: "Enter the Fire along with those who enter!" And Allah has set forth an example for those who believe, the wife of Fir'aun (Pharaoh), when she said: "My Lord! Build for me a home with You in Paradise, and save me from Fir'aun (Pharaoh) and his work, and save me from the people who are Zalimiln (polytheists, wrong-doers and disbelievers in Allah). And Maryam (Mary), the daughter of 'Imran who guarded her chastity; and we breathed into (the sleeve of her shirt on her garment) through Our Ruh [i.e., Jibrael (Gabriel)], and she testified to the truth of the Words of her Lord [i.e., believed in the Words of Allah: "Be" - and he was; that is 'Isa (Jesus) - son of Maryam (Mary); - as a Messenger of Allah], and (also believed in) His Scriptures, and she was of the Qanitun (i.e., obedient to Allah). "

[Quran 66: 10-12]

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Introduction

All praise is for Allah, Who has created the heavens, raised the believers in rankings, forgiven them their sins, prepared for them gardens in Paradise, and sent down abundant blessings upon His slaves.

Women account for half of society's members, but numbers alone are not enough to account for their important role in society. If one wants to measure the moral rectitude of any given society, one need only look at its women. Society is made up of its sum parts - families and individuals. And if a woman is righteous and good, she will have a profoundly positive effect on her family and children; and in turn, her parents will be known for their goodness as well. Conversely, if a woman is base and corrupt in her manners, her children will likely grow up to be very similar to her in character - so imagine an entire society that consists of such women.

The reality of an Islamic family life is this: a husband goes out to pray in congregation and to toil for long hours in order to bring lawful sustenance back home to his family. Meanwhile, his wife is left behind to play her role as the mother of their children, and as the custodian and manager of their house. She, as the woman of the household, has various duties: she must give comfort to her husband, educate and raise her children, and obey her Lord.

But in fulfilling these duties, any given woman is faced with manifold enemies - both of the external and internal kinds - that she must defeat, and numerous obstacles that she must overcome. In this work, I define and discuss if not all then at least some of her main enemies, or in other words, the main causes of her potential downfall - such as jealousy, the Devil, and the evils of the tongue. I have given special attention to those problems that are prevalent in the era we live in. I ask Allah, the All- Mighty, to make this work beneficial for our mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and all of our sisters in faith - Amin.

Abu 'Abdur-Rahman Al-Misri,
As-Sayyid bin Ahmad Abu Saif

Foreword

Very few people truly appreciate how much Islam champions the rights of women, and how little the West has done to raise the status of women. Most people see Western society as the ideal, as the upholder of woman's rights. But how much have women really advanced in Western societies? Now, more than ever, Western societies are afflicted with high divorce rates, which results in a huge number of single mothers, who are forced to both work and raise their children all by themselves. Women are degraded and often forced, not physically but by monetary demands, to sell their bodies, if not for direct physical pleasure, then at least for the camera. Picture a Muslim woman who wears Hijab and who is walking down the street with her children; next picture an almost naked Western woman walking beside her. Who is really being debased? That Muslim woman is the quintessence of the dignified woman: one looks at her and sees a respectable person who is contributing to society by giving her children a good upbringing. She can be respected for her mind and for the choices she has made in life. Meanwhile - and this is a fact that no one can deny - men see the naked Western woman as a sex object and no more. She has no real dignity. She is not respected for her mind, and her only contribution to society is to corrupt the morals of any man who sees her. Is that freedom?

One might argue, what about Western women who have made significant inroads in the workplace? True, many women are successful in the workplace nowadays, but at what cost? Most professional women have sacrificed their families and their children for their careers. Their children are raised without mothers; they themselves hardly ever see their husbands. Then should it be surprising that some Western countries have about 50% divorce rates. Many women in the corporate world are left with a feeling of emptiness on the inside; true, they have money, but they don't have the family base that every woman longs for. This is not to say that Muslim women shouldn't work or do business; I am simply saying that they shouldn't do these things at the cost of their families.

The true liberation of women took place in the seventh century, with the advent of Islam. Women didn't have to fight for the liberation that took place; it came to them directly from Allah (SWT) through Revelation to the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

Prior to Islam, women all over the world had practically no rights. Centuries before the advent of Islam, women were bought and sold in the much praised civilization of Greece. Women were considered vile objects in India, lower in status than poison, snakes, or even death.

At one point in the history of Europe, a recognized learned council proclaimed that a woman has no soul and will therefore be excluded from the afterlife; that a woman must not laugh or speak; and that a woman must spend all of her time in worship or in serving men.

In the year 586, a council was held in France to decide whether a woman is a human being or not. In the end, it was concluded that a woman is in fact a human being, but that she is created to serve man.

In England, Henry the VIII issued a decree, forbidding women from reading the Bible. Up until the year 1850, women were not even considered as citizens under British Law.

But to truly appreciate how Islam came to free the minds and souls of women, we need to take a look at Arabian society during pre-Islamic times, and then at Arabian society after the advent of Islam. The Arab woman of pre-Islamic times had virtually no rights: her wealth would be wrongfully taken away from her; she had no right to inherit wealth; and after divorce or the death of her husband, she was prevented from marrying a man of her choice. Instead, she was considered to be part of her husband's estate, and would thus be passed on to one of his heirs. Describing this pre-Islamic custom, Ibn 'Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) said, "When a man's father died, he had a right over his wife (of course, not his mother,

but another of his father's wives). He could keep her if he wanted, he could confine her until she bought her freedom by paying back her dowry, or he could wait until she died and then take her wealth."

Women were even forbidden from eating certain kinds of foods - the good kinds, of course, since these were reserved for men. A man was allowed to marry as many women as he wanted. In fact, women were so disparaged and despised in Arabia, that it was not an uncommon practice for a man to bury his daughter alive. All Arab tribes were guilty of this practice, except that they each had their own motives for applying it. Some would kill their daughters, fearing the stigma and shame that came with having a daughter; others would kill their daughters only if they were black, leprous, or crippled; and yet others would kill their daughters from fear of poverty.

Being preoccupied with business and for other reasons, some fathers waited until they had to go on a journey before killing their daughters. Sometimes, the daughter would be old enough to understand, as she watched her father pour dirt over her. And some men would kill their daughters by pushing them over the edge of a precipice.

Then came Islam to free both the minds and souls of women, taking them out of darkness and bringing them into light; but also raising them to a status that they had never previously enjoyed. While the peoples of other lands considered women to be somewhat less than human, Islam celebrated the fact that womankind represent one of the two halves or parts from which mankind has flourished.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً﴾

"O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife [Hawa (Eve)], and from them both He created many men and women" [Quran 4: 1]

And while the adherents of certain religions felt that women weren't worthy of having a religion or of touching their holy books, Islam clearly established that men and women alike are rewarded for their good deeds. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا﴾ (١٢٤)

"And whoever does righteous good deeds, male or female, and is a (true) believer [in the Oneness of Allah (Muslim)], such will enter Paradise and not the least injustice, even to the size of a Naqfrah (speck on the back of a date-stone) will be done to them." [Quran 4: 124]

Islam charges man with the duties of having certain beliefs, of adhering to a high moral code, of striving to obey Allah; women are equally charged with these duties. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ
وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ
وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ
اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۝۳۵﴾

"Verily, the Muslims (those who submit to Allah in Islam) men and women, the believers men and women (who believe in Islamic Monotheism), the men and the women who are obedient (to Allah), the men and the women who are truthful (in their speech and deeds), the men and the women who are patient (in performing all the duties which Allah has ordered and in abstaining from all that Allah has forbidden), the men and the women who are humble (before their Lord - Allah), the men and the women who give Sadaqat (i.e., Zakat, and alms, etc.), the men and the women who observe Saum (fast) (the obligatory fasting during the month of Ramadan, and the optional Nawafil fasting), the men and the women who guard their chastity (from illegal sexual acts) and the men and the women who remember Allah much with their hearts and tongues. Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward (i.e., Paradise)."[Quran 33:35]

When it comes to religious duties, a woman is not considered to be an offshoot of her husband; rather, she is an independent entity, which is to say that if she is pious and he is wicked, she will not be held accountable for his wickedness. Conversely, if he is pious and she is wicked, his piety does not benefit her in the least. Allah said:

﴿ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَتَ نُوحٍ وَامْرَأَتَ لُوطٍ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ
عَبْدَيْنِ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا صَالِحَيْنِ فَخَانَتَاهُمَا فَلَمْ يُغْنِيا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَقِيلَ
ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّاخِلِينَ ۝۱۰ وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَتَ
فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ
وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝۱۱﴾

"Allah sets forth an example for those who disbelieve: the wife of Nuh (Noah) and the wife of Lut (Lot). They were under two of our righteous slaves, but they both betrayed them (their husbands by rejecting their doctrine). So they [Nuh (Noah) and Lut (Lot) A.S] availed them (their respective wives), not, against Allah, and it was said: "Enter the Fire along with those who enter! "And Allah has set forth an example for those who believe: the wife of Fir'aun (Pharaoh), when she said: "My Lord! Build for me a home with You in Paradise, and save me from Fir'aun (Pharaoh) and his work, and save me from the people who are Zalimun (polytheists, wrong-doers and disbelievers in Allah).[Quran 66:10,11]

When it came to the act of pledging allegiance, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) put men and women on an equal footing. The Prophet would have his male Companion pledge to obey Allah and His Messenger and to apply the teachings of the Shariah; and he would have women take the same pledge, just as Allah (SWT) ordered him to do:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِيَنَّكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعُهُنَّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾﴾

"O Prophet! When believing women come to you to give you the Bai'ah (pledge), that they will not associate anything in worship with Allah, that they will not steal, that they will not commit illegal sexual intercourse, that they will not kill their children, that they will not utter slander, intentionally forging falsehood (i.e., by making illegal children belonging to their husbands), and that they will not disobey you in any Ma'ruf (Islamic Monotheism and all that which Islam ordains), then accept their Bai'ah (pledge), and ask Allah to forgive them. Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." [Quran 60:12.]

In regard to societal duties, both men and women are responsible to make contributions for the betterment of society. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضُهُمْ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ﴾

"The believers, men and women, are Auliya (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another, they enjoin (on the people) Al-Ma'ruf (i.e., Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do), and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e., polytheism and disbelief of all kinds, and all that Islam has forbidden); they perform As-Salat (Iqamat- as-Salat), and give the Zakat, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah will bestow His Mercy on them" [Quran 9:71]

Islam also dealt with the customs of the Quraish - for it was to them that the Prophet was initially sent - customs that effectively stripped women of their rights. One of the primary evils that Islam eradicated was that of killing female babies. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطْئًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٣١﴾﴾