

encyclopedia of ISLAMIC LAW

PART 1



By: Yusuf Al-Hajj Ahmad



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Encyclopedia of Islam

(Concerning Muslim Women)

Volume - 1

By: Yusuf Al-Hajj Ahmad

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Introduction



In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

All praise is due to Allah whom we glorify, seeking His divine assistance, repenting to Him alone, and seeking His divine forgiveness. We seek refuge with Him from the evils of our misdeeds as well as our own souls. He who Allah guides is rightly guided, and none can guide whoever Allah has caused to go astray.

I testify that there is no god but Allah, the One with neither partner nor associate. I equally testify that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is the slave of Allah and His final Messenger. He is one whom Allah sent with guidance and the religion of truth in order that He may make it prevail over all other religions even though the disbelievers detest it.

To proceed, I thank Allah for aiding the completion of this work, the reward of which I anticipate to receive on the day when neither wealth nor children shall avail, but only a pure heart with which a man meets God. I ask Allah to accept this work from me and to make it a source of benefit for myself and others.

Dear Muslim sister, it is my sincere intention to present you with a comprehensive book that addresses those matters of your life and religion that are essential in facilitating your role as a mother, teacher and nurturer. I have collected, in this work, the views of great scholars and imams) who have preceded us in their knowledge, laborious endeavors, and virtue.

This book has two very important and distinct qualities:

- Easy to read, succinct and direct.
- The 'question and answer' layout of the book is intended to facilitate effortless comprehensibility and swift memorization. I endeavored to cover all topics deemed necessary by women) whilst also recording all that is useful and comprehensive.

The general contents of the book are: An introduction to the status of women in Islam

- Book of Islamic creed (Aqidah) and related matters such as Islamic monotheism (Tawheed), faith, topics relating to death, the resurrection, and entrance into Paradise or Hell.
- Book of Purification (according to a number of schools of legal thought [madhabs])
- Book of Ritual Prayer (in accordance with the Shafi'i school of legal thought)
- Book of Charity (in accordance with the Shafi'i school of legal thought)
- Book of Fasting (in accordance with the Shafi'i school of legal thought)
- Book of Pilgrimage (in accordance with the Shafi'i school of legal thought, although the legal opinions of other schools are also mentioned).
- Book of Oaths and Vows, Slaughtering, Hunting, Dressings, Adornment, etc.
- Islamic rulings on family matters, Marriage, Divorce, Inheritance, etc.

- Book of Transactions -starting from business transactions, bartering, forward buying, pre-emption; and Islamic rulings relating to contract and lending, as well as rulings pertaining to criminal offences, etc.
- Book of Etiquette and Conduct (and related topics).
- Book of Battles and Uprisings (Signs of the Hour); this topic is particularly important especially in light of contemporary problems.
- Book of Female Role Models (may Allah be pleased with them)

It is in view of the 'questions and answers' format that I have concluded this encyclopedia to be easy to read and comprehensive, hoping that it will enable the Muslim woman to be well informed about matters concerning her religion which will in turn strengthen her faith as well as confidence in herself. The encyclopedia will also provide the reader with reliable knowledge based upon the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger and the sayings of our righteous predecessors.

In conclusion, I sincerely call upon Allah to make this work of mine purely for His pleasure as well as a benefit for all Muslims. I also ask that He bless me, my parents, my offspring and my brethren in faith with well-being in our religion and worldly life.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds. Peace and blessings be upon our leader, Muhammad, his blessed household and his most honorable Companions.

Servant of the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition)

Yusuf Al-Hajj Ahmad

Friday 24 Rajab 1424

Status of Women in Islam

We find in the glorious Qur'an that Allah created femininity as the opposite of masculinity.

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ﴾

"O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female." Al-Hujuraft 49:13.

Femininity has signs that clearly distinguish it from masculinity. These signs are either corporal such as menstruation, or psychological, such a woman's natural disposition.

What is a woman's right in the light of the Shari'ah (law) of Islam?

As human beings, women have the right to be educated, nurtured and cared for during childhood. The Messenger of Allah peace be upon him) said, "Whoever has a daughter who he perfectly refined and educated, and was generous to her with that which Allah generously endowed him with; she will be a shield for him against the Fire."

He also said, If a person assumed the guardianship of these girls and he was kind to them, they will serve as a shield for him against the Fire."

In another Hadith, he said, "And a man who has a slave-girl who he perfectly refined and educated, and then set her free and married her shall have two rewards."

When a young woman attains the age of maturity, she has the right to spend her wealth as she chooses and is entitled to express her views freely, as well as the right to abstain from being married off without her consent. In addition to increased rights, she is required to cover herself while also disassociating herself from males who are not her close relatives.

The Muslim woman, as a female, is required to maintain her femininity. She should adorn herself only with female adornments, that is to say, she is forbidden from imitating men. She is also required to neither mix nor be alone with men who are not her close relatives. This has been aided for her, such as the ruling which requires her to pray at the rear of the men's rows while participating in congregational prayer.

The Muslim woman is required to fulfill all of the obligations of the shari'ah which Allah has ordained, with certain rulings differing to that of men in some forms of worship. For example, Menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth are from among the special characteristics of woman whereby specific legal (fiqh) rulings exist as a means of easing the burden of religious duties. Similarly, it is due to the relative physiological and psychological weaknesses of women that prevents them from assuming responsibilities that may be considered physically and psychologically) demanding, such as political leadership and major roles in the judiciary. She is also, generally speaking, exempted from participating in Jihad, and her testimony is regarded as half that of a man. However, since she is more compassionate and caring, her right to take care of nursing is given priority over that of a man's.

The fundamental principle is that a woman should take care of her home, her husband and her children. That is why her maintenance is the responsibility of her husband, even if she is rich. Allah says,

﴿الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ﴾

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

Does Islam honor or disgrace woman?

Islam honors the woman in the most excellent manner which is exemplified in the following ways:

-Her excellent reception at birth

During the pre-Islamic period, the Arabs used to receive news of the birth of a female contemptuously. Their faces would become overcast with worry, and in a depressed state they would hide away from society. Such behavior stemmed from their regard of a female child as a source of poverty and disgrace, feelings which led them to bury their daughters alive. Their disdain for female children was also manifest by the fact that an Arab would rather spend on his (male) slaves or animals than his daughter. So, due to such depraved behavior, Allah forbade the Muslims from this heinous practice explaining that whoever committed such a horrific act would find himself with nothing but loss. He says,

﴿قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ قَتَلُوا أَوْلَادَهُمْ سَفَهًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ﴾

"Indeed lost are they who have killed their children, from folly, without knowledge" Al-An'am 6:140

Islam also called to the attention of mankind the right of existence, and that life is a blessed gift from Allah, regardless of its gender. He says,

﴿يَهَبُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ إِنثًا وَيَهَبُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ الذَّكَورَ﴾

"He bestows female (offspring) upon whom He wills, and bestows male (offspring) upon whom He wills." Ash-Shoora 42:49.

Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah said, "Allah gives precedence in mentioning that which was delayed during the time of ignorance. Then, the people would bury female newborns alive. It is as if Allah is telling them in this verse: 'That debased sex whose mentioning you delay is given precedence in my estimation'. The purpose is that feeling vexed and irritated at having a female child is one of the characteristics of the age of ignorance. Allah says,

﴿وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ
٥٨ يَتَوَارَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِن سُوءِ مَا بُشِّرَ بِهِ أَيُمْسِكُهُ عَلَىٰ هُونٍ
أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ فِي التُّرَابِ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ﴾

"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." An-Nahl 16:58-59.

Qatadah said, "Allah informs us about the heinousness of their action. As for the believer, it befits him to be pleased by what Allah has apportioned to him. The decision of Allah (for him) is far better than his own. By Allah, he does not know that it is better for him! Many a girl is better for her family than a boy! Allah only informed you of the deeds of the people of Jahiliyyah so that you might avoid it. One of them would feed his dog yet bury his daughter alive in a bid not to feed her)!"

Islam requires a Muslim not only to repeal from the horrific act of burying one's daughter alive, but also seeks to elevate the Muslim to the highest degree of humanity by discouraging him from being upset and grimaced when a girl is born to him. Instead, he should receive her with gratification and recognition of the bounty of God. Salih, son of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal said, "Whenever a baby-girl was born to Ahmad, he would say, "Prophets are fathers of girls", as well as, "you already know what the texts (Qur'an and hadiths) mention about girls."

The Aqiqah

It is from the Sunnah to sacrifice an animal on behalf of a newborn; this applies to both boys and girls. Just as the guardian is required to sacrifice an animal for a male child on the 7th day of his birth, the guardian is also required to do the same for a female child. However, a single goat is slaughtered on behalf of a baby girl while two are slaughtered for a boy.

His/Her naming

It is also from the Sunnah to give both male and female babies good names. Just as the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would rename many of his companions due to the bad meanings or connotations of their names, he would do the same for his female companions. Abdullah ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) narrated that there was a daughter of 'Umar whose name was 'Asiyah (meaning disobedient) and that the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) changed her name to Jameelah (beautiful).

It is also commendable to take a Kunyah (title or nickname) for the child. Imam An-Nawawi said, "It is from good manners to address honorable people and those who are close to them with their kunyah. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was nicknamed Abul-Qasim after his son Al-Qasim. It has also reached us through sound chains of narrators (from Abu Dawud and others) that 'A'ishah (May Allah be pleased with her) said, "O Messenger of Allah, all my colleagues have kunyahs." The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, "Adopt a Kunyah with your son's name, Abdullah." Her son that is referred to here is Abdullah ibn Zubayr who was the son of her sister Asma bint Abu Bakr. Henceforth, 'A'ishah was known as Umm Abdullah. As is evident from the time of the Prophet and his companions, males and females both have equal entitlement to a Kunyah.

Her share of inheritance

Allah apportioned a share of inheritance to females as He did to males. During the time of ignorance, it was customary that Arabs would refuse any share of inheritance for females. Sa'eed ibn Jubayr and Qatadah said, "The polytheists would give their wealth (left behind as estates) only to adult males and would give nothing to females and children. So, Allah revealed:

﴿لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ
مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرُ نَصِيبًا
مَّفْرُوضًا﴾

"There is a share for men and a share for women from what is left by parents and those nearest related, whether the property is small or large -a legal share." An-Nisa 4:7.

This verse implied that all parties have a right to inheritance with due acknowledgment of differences in the amount each (male and female) is entitled to, of course, in accordance with Allah's ordainment. Al-Mawardi commented in his tafseer that, "The cause of revelation of this verse is that the people, during the age of ignorance, would give the estates left behind as inheritance to only male survivors while excluding females."

Ibn Jurayr reported from 'Ikrimah who said, "The seventh verse of Soorah An-Nisa (chapter of Women) was revealed in the case of Umm Kajjah and her daughters, Tha'labah, and Aws ibn Suwaid, all who belong to the Ansar. One of the two men was Umm Kajjah's husband and the other was the uncle of her children. She had come to Allah's Messenger (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)) asking him, "O Messenger of Allah, my husband died and left me and his daughter as survivors." Her child's uncle said, "O Messenger of Allah, her children cannot ride a horse nor help the weak nor ward off the enemy. She is earned for and she cannot earn." It was then that this verse Soorah An-Nisa 4:7) was revealed.

﴿يُوصِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي أَوْلَادِكُمْ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ﴾

"Allah commands you as regards your children's (inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females." [1] An-Nisa 4:11.

Jabir ibn Abdullah (May Allah be pleased with him), concerning the cause of revelation of the above mentioned verse, narrated that Sa'd bin Rabi's wife came to the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, "Messenger of Allah, these are the daughters of Sa'd ibn Rabi' who was killed as a martyr when he was with you at the battle of Uhud, their paternal uncle has taken all of their property and inheritance leaving nothing for them, and they cannot be married unless they have some property." The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Allah will decide regarding the matter." Thereafter the verses of inheritance were revealed. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) then sent for the girls' uncle and told him, "Give them two-thirds and their mother an eighth, and what remains is yours."

Her entitlement to care and equality with male children

Islam shows a great concern for a woman in all stages of her life. It calls for her to be taken care of as a child, such that she becomes a shield against the Hellfire and a way to Paradise for her carer. Anas ibn Malik (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "If a person takes care of two girls until they attain the age of maturity, he shall come on the Day of Resurrection in my company (and he joined two of his fingers together)."

Islam forbids favoring the education and care of a boy over that of a girl. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "If a person has daughter and he did not bury her alive nor disgrace her or favored his son over her, Allah will admit him to Paradise." Anas bin Malik (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that a man was sitting in the company of Allah's Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) when his son happened to come to him with which he kissed the boy and sat him on his lap. Thereafter his daughter came in and he sat her down beside him. Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)) said, "You have not treated them equally." Additionally, Al-Fatafwa Al-Hindiyyah mentions: "It is unlawful to favor a male over female in gifts. The Malikis are of the view that a trust will be invalid if the beneficiaries are only male children to the exclusion of female ones. This is because in doing so the benefactor has re-enacted the actions of the time of ignorance.

Taking care of a girl in her childhood should include grooming her for her future life. Although images and statues are prohibited, the Shari'ah has exempted dolls, and consequently, it is lawful to produce, sell and buy dolls. Playing with dolls is a form of preparation for young girls facilitating a form of experience of taking care of their own offspring when they eventually become mothers.

'A'ishah (May Allah be pleased with her), the Prophet's wife, used to play with wooden dolls along with her friends. Whenever her friends would see the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), they would withdraw away from him in bashfulness. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) used to buy toy dolls for her.

Honoring women as wives

Allah commands that a Muslim man treat his wife kindly, saying,

﴿وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ﴾

"And live with them honorably." An-Nisa 4:19.

Ibn Katheer said, "This means to speak to your wives softly and let your actions towards them be as kind as possible, that is to say, in the manner you would like reciprocated. Allah also says,

﴿وَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ﴾

"And they (women) have rights (over their husbands as regards living expenses) similar (to those of their husbands) over them (as regards obedience and respect) to what is reasonable." Al-Baqarah 2:228.

In an authentic Hadith reported by At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "The best among you is the best one in treatment of his family and I am the best of you in the treatment of his family." Among the characteristics of Allah's Messenger were kindness and cheerfulness. He used to joke with members of his family being extremely amicable with them, to the extent that it is narrated that he would engage in racing 'A'ishah, the mother of the believers (May Allah be pleased with her), thereby showing love to her. She said, "The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) competed with me in a race and I outstripped him (that was before I put on weight). After I had put on some weight, I competed with him and he outstripped me. He then said, "This outstripping is in retaliation for that one." It was also the habit of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to spend some time with his family after performing the 'Isha' (late evening) prayer before he went to bed.

A Muslim is required to exercise patience with his wife even if he dislikes her. Allah says,

﴿فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا﴾

"If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings through it a great deal of good." In his commentary of this verse, Ibn Katheer said, "This Recorded by Ahmad, Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah; and it is an authentic Hadith. An-Nisa 4:19.

Means that your patience by keeping them, though you dislike that, may do you a lot of good in this world and the Hereafter. According to Ibn 'Abbaus, that good may be in form of an abundantly blessed offspring that Allah may bless him with by that woman if he is patient with her and shows compassion to her." Likewise, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "No believing man should hate a believing woman. If he dislikes a behavior of hers, he should be pleased with other aspects of her."

The woman's legal rights upon her husband are clearly detailed in the chapter on marriage. However, we are going to mention here one of the instances cited by the scholars that relates to honoring motherhood.

The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), advised on many occasions that the mother should be treated in the kindest way. He also advised that caring for her should be given

preference over that of the father. Abu Hurayrah (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated, "A man came to Allah's Messenger and said, "O Allah's Messenger! Who is more entitled to be treated with the best companionship by me?" The Prophet said, "Your mother." The man said, "Who is next?" The Prophet said, "Your mother." The man further said, "Who is next?" The Prophet said, "Your mother." The man asked for the fourth time, "Who is next?" The Prophet said, "Your father."

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) also regarded her pleasure as a way to Paradise. A man came to him and said, "Messenger of Allah, I want to fight in the way of Allah, please advise me." The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Do you have a mother?" The man answered in the affirmative. Thereupon the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Go and stay with her, for Paradise is at her feet."

Right to education

The right to education is equally shared by men and women. Although the premise of equality is a general notion in Islamic law, at times differences in legal rulings can be found which, with analysis, are deemed to suit her feminine nature. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim." This Hadith applies to women just as it applies to men. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is also reported to have said, "If a person has a daughter who he refines and educates, as well as spending generously on her from that which Allah has blessed him with, then she shall be a shield for him against the Fire."

During the time of Allah's Messenger, the woman used to strive in search of knowledge. Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudri (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the womenfolk came to Allah's Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, "Messenger of Allah, men have taken all your time. So fix a day for us." On that he promised them one day for religious lessons and commandments. It was such determination that led A'ishah (ra) to comment, "Wonderful are the Ansar women! Shyness did not prevent them from learning knowledge of the religion."

The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) also said, "Command your children to pray when they attain the age of seven and hit them over it when they attain the age of ten, and separate their beds (at that age)." An-Nawawi commented, "The Hadith applies to both boys and girls; there is no difference between them according to the consensus of the scholars." He then said, "Ash-Shafi'i and scholars of his madhhab (school of legal thought) said, 'Fathers and mothers should teach their young children purification, prayer and fasting and other acts of worship. They should teach them that fornication, homosexuality, consumption of alcohol, lying, backbiting and other vices are forbidden. They should teach them that as soon as they have reached the age of puberty, they have become legally obliged. This training is compulsory according to the correct view of the scholars. The wages for such training shall be from the boy's wealth if he has some, but if he does not have any, then it becomes the responsibility of whoever shoulders his responsibility.' Ash-Shafi'i and the scholars of his madhhab also believed in the necessity of educating the mother because training her is part of training the children. Such education is therefore obligatory (like maintenance). There are also some non-Shari'ah sciences that may be regarded as necessary for females such as obstetrics and gynecology so that male doctors are prevented from having to see naked women."

In Al-Fatafwa Al-Hindiyyah, the scholars were questioned regarding a woman with a medical condition requiring a doctor to examine a private part of the body. The scholars determined that it was improper for a male physician to examine her, and instead, a female doctor should take his place. However, in the case of no female doctor or specialist and a fear that her situation may worsen, the male physician may examine her (while lowering his gaze as much as possible) on the condition that her body is covered entirely except for the area that requires examination.

- There is no disagreement among the scholars on the legality of educating females. However, any form of education should take place in a way that does not contradict the injunctions of Islam. The following are regulations that must be observed while educating females:

a. She should not mix with members of the opposite sex (inside the classroom). A female student must not sit beside a male student, which is established from the fact that the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) fixed a day for women in which he admonished them, that day differing from those of men. We find that even in acts of worship women do not mix with men. Instead they are allocated a separate place from where they hear sermons and perform their prayers. However, it is not imperative to create a special place segregated off for them to pray in nor to erect a barrier between their rows and the rows of men for no such thing was found during the Prophet's time.

b. She should lower her gaze and refrain from showing off her adornment. This is in accordance with Allah's injunction:

﴿وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ خُمُرَهُنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنَى إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنَى أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولَى الْإِرَبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوْ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾

"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 (both eyes for necessity to see the way, or outer palms of hands or one eye or dress like veil, gloves, head-cover, apron, etc.), and to draw their veils all over Juyubihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms) and not to reveal their 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 brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their (Muslim) women (i.e. their sisters in Islafm), or the (female) slaves whom their right hands possess, or old male servants who lack vigor, or small children who have no sense of feminine sex. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And all of you beg Allah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful." An-Noor 24:31.

Abiding by the above regulations prevents temptation and the spread of corruption.

Her eligibility for Islamic obligations

Muslim women are expected to fulfill Islamic obligations, just as men are. Her guardian is obliged to command her to perform acts of worship, something which should be instilled from childhood. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Command your children to pray when they attain age seven and hit them over it when they attain age ten -and separate their beds at that age)." According to Imam An-Nawawi, this Hadith unanimously applies to both male and female children.

A Muslim woman is obliged to perform ritual acts of worship from puberty. She is obliged to perform prayers, fast, to give the annual charity (Zakah), and perform the sacred pilgrimage (Hajj) with the right that no one can prevent her from carrying out these obligations. As a general rule, the beliefs,

acts of worship, conducts and rulings that Allah has ordained for man apply to both males and females on an equal basis. Allah says,

﴿مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

"Whoever works righteousness -whether male or female while he (or she) is a true believer (of Islamic Monotheism) verily, to him We will give a good life (in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision), and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do (i.e. Paradise in the Hereafter)." An-Nahl 16:97.

Allah, the High and Exalted, emphasizes this point in another verse:

﴿إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالخَاشِعِينَ وَالخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا﴾

"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 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), the men and the women who observe Saum (fast) (the obligatory fasting during the month of Ramadan, and the optional Nawaffil 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)." Al-Ahzab 33:35.

Ibn Abbas narrated the grounds for which the above verse was revealed was when the believing women inquired from the Messenger as to why he frequently referred to the believing men and not the believing women too. So Allah revealed this verse.

It was also reported that Umm Salamah (May Allah be pleased with her) said that she asked the Messenger of Allah: "O Messenger of Allah, why are the men mentioned in everything and no mention is made of women?" It was then that this verse was revealed. In response to the believers' request, Allah says,

﴿فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَمَلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ بَعْضُكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْضٍ﴾

"So their Lord accepted of them (their supplication and answered them), "Never will I allow to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female. You are (members) one of another." Aal 'Imrafn 3:195