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The Pious Woman in Islam

Introduction

What is the definition of an Islamic woman? How much value does a woman have in the religion of Islam? Does a woman have more rights on herself than a man does? All these kind of questions are asked when the ball drops on a woman who practices the religion of Islam. After reading the book by Abdul Rahman Al-Sheha, "Woman in the Shade of Islam", I learned that woman have a very important role that has to be followed and played according to the Islamic guide lines. For a long time there has been a misunderstanding of the status of a woman in any religion in general and particularly in Islam. Throughout the ages, many nations and cultures have placed women in the lowest position against men. For example, in the Greek culture, women were looked at as an item in the house. She was subjected to being bought and sold in the market. In the Roman society, the woman used to suffer all worst punishments by men such as burning her body with hot oil, and polling her behind speeding horses.

Marriage is not just a physical or emotional necessity but, in fact a sign from God! It is a relationship of mutual rights and obligations based on divine guidance. In Islam, however women are respected as partners of men. The woman in Islam has all rights of property ownership, business dealings and choosing her husband. Women have been given birth to babies and extending their families. Women is ought to be known as "mother who has heaven underneath her feet". The woman doesn't only have important roles as a mother, but also as a wife. The value of a woman in Islam is highly observed

and she has many rights and responsibilities as being a daughter, wife, mother, and as a woman herself.

Women in Islam

In Islam women are recommended to be covered from head to toe. Clothing provides protection and covers the beauty and faults of the body. Each protects the other and hides the faults and compliments the characteristics of both the husband and the wife. To foster the love and security that comes with marriage, Muslim wives have various rights. The first right that a wife has is to receive *mahr*. *Mahr* is a gift from the husband which is part of the marriage contract and required for the legality of the marriage. The second right is to have good maintenance provided for her. It doesn't matter how rich or how much money she has, but her husband should provide her with food, shelter, and clothing. The Quran states "Let the man of means spend according to his means, and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him." (Yasin) The perfect wedding gift for a woman is to have a life of blessing and happiness if she gives practical expression to the advices of the Quran and Sunnah. The path to happiness in married life is not the way of demanding fulfillment of rights. The way to achieve happiness is for the wife to offer humble submission to her husband. The most important part of a marriage is called Nikah. This is when you complete the process of officially being married. Nikah can be best described as a marriage bond. As a result of the holy culture of Islam, Nikah has always been regarded and treated with due respect and reverence by Muslims. It is essential that the Muslim woman understands that of all people be it parents or children, her husbands commands should be her first and highest allegiance. A

quote taken from the Quran declares in the following ayat: *“Men are the rulers over the women because of the excellence which Allah has granted to some of them over others and because of that which they spend of their wealth to maintain women.”* (3:195)

The Significance of Marriage

Marriage is a sacred social contract between a man and a woman. From the beginning of human history, men and women are bonded in marriage to continue the human history. Marriage is a fundamental to human society. In Islam, it is treated as half-faith. Marriage is part of Sunnah and whoever runs away from it is not considered a true Muslim. Marriage gives tranquility of mind in the spouses. Allah has required all Muslims to get married because this is the only way for conjugal relationships and family life in human society to be continued. “When a servant of Allah marries, he has completed half of his religious obligations, and he must fear Allah in order to complete the second half.” (21:15)

Women: Patience and Compromising

The Muslim wife has to understand that her anger directed towards her husband can affect their marriage in many harmful ways. When a woman is taking her anger out on her husband, Allah is cursing at her for doing that to him. With humility and patience, a woman should tolerate his temper and even his injustice. Her modest acceptance of her husband’s excesses will bring the Pleasure of Allah cascading on her. The wife should have lots of patience to make sure this wedding is still on the roll. Her demonstration of anger and displeasure will never benefit her in any way. It is the duty of the wife to always make sure her husband is happy and satisfied. She has to ensure that he stays

happy, for his happiness is her happiness. Her happiness is inseparable from his happiness.

When the Husband Calls his Wife

It is very important for the wife to listen to her husband's commands and hear him before talking back to him. Even if she happens to be involved in cooking or any other work, her husband is her first priority. She should not delay in answering his questions and/or concerns. Rasulullah (the Messenger of God) says "When the husband calls his wife to bed and she refuses, thus causing him to sleep displeased with her, the Mala-ikah curse her until the next morning" (Bukhari). The cause of the Mala-ikah, the angel is tantamount to the Wrath of Allah Ta'ala being invoked. The Quran mentions that the purpose of the wife is to provide peace and unity for her husband. If any woman for any reason fails to complete these duties, she is not only harming her husband's life but also her own the most.

Duties of a Wife

Islam requires that all women make sure their husbands are happy and satisfied. No matter how cruel a husband is, a woman should try her best at all times to keep him happy. With many rights, there are also responsibilities that need to be followed. A wife is to keep her husband's secrets and protect their marital privacy. A wife must also guard the household and property. She must keep her eyes always open on their house and possessions to the best of her ability. She should manage the household affairs wisely so as to prevent loss or waste. She should not allow anyone to enter her house whom her husband dislikes or which he will disapprove. A Muslim woman must cooperate and coordinate with her husband. Sometimes, the husband might want the woman to do

something that may be against her will. She should not fulfill his requests if he wants her to do something unlawful. A husband should not take advantages of his wife, but instead he should concentrate on her needs and happiness. The Quran states “The good women in the absence of their husbands guard their rights as Allah has enjoined upon them to be guarded.” (4:11) A wife’s rights also extend beyond material needs. She has the right to kind and the best treatment she can receive from her husband. Just like Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) says, “The most perfect believers are the best in conduct. And the best of you are those who are the best to their wives.” Allah tells us He created mates and put love, mercy and tranquility between them. Both men and women have a need for companionship and sexual needs and marriage is designed to fulfill those needs. For one spouse to deny this satisfaction to the other, the temptation exists to seek it with someone else.

Relationship with the In-Laws

When a woman gets married, she is not only getting married and will have contact with the husband, but also with his entire family. She will need to learn how to get along with all of her husband’s contacts. For her own happiness and for the sake of her husband it is essential that the wife maintains good relationship with her in-laws. Many marriages have broken down as a result of the wife’s bad attitude towards her in-laws. Sometimes, the fault lies within the in-laws, but most of the time it is the woman’s fault. In Islam, a woman who gets married needs to accept all the new rules and regulations that are posted with her marriage. She needs to accept the new life-style and conditions of her new life. It is so wrong for a wife to impose on her in-laws or to tell the husband to do the wrong things against his family. Some wives even go to a greater length to draw a

line between the husband and his relatives. This is a lanaat, a bad curse on that woman who takes her husband away from his family. Even if a wife succeeds in her evil attempt and imposes her sinful desire on a weak husband, she will never in her life win her husband's love and trust again. On the other hand, the husband will detest her in his heart, but he may not voice himself because he was such a weak person. She might have won the fact that he is drawn away from his family, but she has totally lost him in the eyes of Allah. The Muslim wife should respect her in-laws and follow all the new rules in their house. That is not only her in-laws house, but now hers too. She should go into that home and fill it up with much love and happiness that it doesn't even feel like she was an outsider for them. The true and intelligent Muslim wife will understand the need to keep up with the happiness of her husband. Her happiness is only found when her husband is happy. By putting a dark shadow over his life, she is only making it worse for her and her happiness are going down the drain. A woman will never acquire her husband's love if she attempts to disrupt his relationship with his mother, father, sisters, brothers, and other relatives. Disruption of family ties is among the worst of major sins. In the Quran it is stated that, whenever jealousy and malice are about to take place in a woman's heart or mind, she should recite Istighfaar and calm herself down. No matter how bad she is feeling because her husband is being kind or assisting his relatives, she should never feel jealous and displease her husband. His pleasure should become her pleasure and his displeasure, she be her displeasure. In this way her jannat is assured. In this way she will bring God's mercy that will be falling on her.

Patience Needed for a Man Cheating on Wife

The worse thing that a woman can go through is when her husband is cheating on her. Sometimes we think that we should just call for a divorce when finding out that the husband is cheating. In Islam, according to the religious guidelines and the shariah of marriage, this course will take large depends on the attitude and the reactions of the wife. If she behaves very calmly and has patience, than she can assist her husband and save her marriage. If she loses her mind and gives vent to her emotional feelings, than she will achieve the alienation of her husband. She will drive him away from herself and ruin her marriage. The wife should understand well that she will never be able to persuade her husband to get away from the other woman by getting angry and insulting her husband. When a wife discovers that her husband is cheating on her, she should calm herself down and arrest her emotional feelings. She should understand that she will not succeed to separate her husband from the other woman by getting angry and arguing over the situation. If she gets angry and yells at him, than whatever little love and feeling he had for her will be eliminated in his heart. She will only be driving her husband closer to the other woman. The wife should not be harsh towards her husband because her bad attitude will show him that the other woman has qualities of love and charm which his wife lacks. The wife who is intelligent and understanding will face this situation with sabr, also known as patience. She should discuss the situation with her husband without any negative remarks or insults against him. She should ask Allah to guide her husband in the right direction and to make his mind open up, so he can wake up and face the wrong direction that he is guided towards. She should ask Allah to alert him from this dangerous situation that he is trapped in. She should learn to win her husband's heart with love and tender tones that will be reminding him of the Law, Fear and Punishment

of Allah. If the husband disobeys her, she should still not give up hope. The Holy Quran says, “Those who have Imaan, their hearts find peace with Thikrullah. Verily, with the embrace of Allah do hearts find peace.” (17:31) A Muslim wife who is smart and wants to keep her house from getting ruin will pray for the best. She will ask Allah to guide her in the right direction. She will ask Allah that whatever decision he makes for her that will be the right one. There is a lot of patience that is required in order for this kind of situation to calm down or to get rid of such a situation.

Divorce in Islam

Sometimes women because of their impatience blurt out for divorce. Divorce is also known as talaq. This is a serious situation that takes a lot of time to think about before even asking for one. After a woman is asking for a divorce, she is really denying herself from entering into jannat (heaven). Women should understand this fact more since they stand to lose more and suffer more in the event of a talaq (divorce). A woman’s eyes open to reality only after she is divorced. But than at that time, it is too late for regret, especially if the husband has reacted very badly and issued three divorce which break the nikkah. A woman should understand that her well presence in her parent’s home after a divorce is most unwelcome. A divorced woman will never be at peace in her parent’s home the same way as she was before she got married. In fact, she will be seemed as a burden, liability, and an embarrassment to her people once she has been divorced. Islamic culture is a divine culture. A Muslim woman should not view marriage and the home through others eyes. Divorce is absolutely the very last resort. A woman should not be the one asking for one though. Even if he has a desire for a second marriage, she should still not consider a divorce. Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) says,

“Haste is an act of shaitaan (evil).” When the process of divorce is going on, the one who is the happiest the most is Shaitaan. He never wants to see Allah and his people to be happy. Divorce is known to be the act of Shaitaan. The Quran speaks highly of a woman’s honor and respect. A woman’s respect especially after she is married can be viewed with her husband. A divorce woman will never be able to stay happy again. Especially after the Mughallazah talaq, also known as the final divorce which is the effect of giving three talaqs, the marriage is broken. If for any reason, the woman and the man decide to get married again, she has to marry another man before she gets married to her husband. This process takes place when the woman gets married to a second man, than gets a divorce from him, and then re-marries her first husband.

A Faithful Wife

A faithful wife is who never betrays her husband, neither in thought, gaze or deed. The best for a wife to be to her husband is to be faithful at all times. Her mind, her heart, her gaze, and her body are only for her husband. Even a glance at another man is considered unfaithfulness. A woman shouldn’t even think about flirting and talking to other men that will ruin her relationship with her husband. If she let another man touch her, she has already ruined the relationship between her and her husband. That’s the reason why Islam encourages the covering because woman should cover and guard their purity, honor, and reputation. She shouldn’t do anything behind her husband’s back that will hurt her or her husband. At last, if no one is watching her commit a crime, Allah’s eyes are always watching. She is always being seen from the eyes of Allah Talah.

Child Birth

Childbirth is the time of the moment and that special occasion in everyone home. Allah Ta'ala has given this special opportunity to a woman because she is able to face life and death situation when having a baby. She is the sacred holder for a sacred ammanat which Allah sends to earth for her. The Quran says, "His mother bore him with much difficulty and delivered him with much difficulty." (4:1) Pregnancy increases a woman's stock of good deed and on giving birth to the child she emerges totally purified of all her sins. Her domestic duties and her service for her husband secure for her the thawaab of Jihaad. Rasulullah (p.b.u.h.) said a couple of things that would make the pious woman very honored. He said "a woman who dies during childbirth obtains the rank of a Shaheed. A woman, who exercises Sabr when her child dies during childbirth, will enter Jannat immediately. Miscarriage will take a woman to jannat too. Miscarriage is a blessing for a Muslim woman. A woman should not be lead into being impatience, frustrated because of difficulties.

Children

Children are a wonderful treasure and an ammannat. *Ammanat* means a sacred trust which should never be abused. Parents who abuse this ammanat by failing to carry out their parental duties and obligations are the worst criminals, and paving off the future walkway for themselves and their children. When a mother is training her children, she should always remember that children are naïve and young. You need to teach them the right with love and caring. In Islam, a mother should never frighten her child. Some mothers, in order to get rid of the disobedience in the child, they scare the child by speaking of ghosts, etc. This is known to be very bad because the child will grow up with a weak heart. When the child is able to talk, teach him the first word Name of Allah.

Even way before the child can starting talking, parents should recite Quran verses and the Kalimah (*Laa 'ilaaha 'il-lal-laah Muhammadur-Rasuu-lullaah'*, There is none worthy of worship but God, and Muhammad is His Messenger) to the child. Parents should not become nude in the presence of even a six-month baby. Also breast-feeding is an important role that is played by the mother. In Islam, the hadith emphasizes breast-feeding and speaks glowingly of women who execute their natural and hold duty of breast-feeding their babies. Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said, "...For every gulp of milk sucked by the baby, the mother acquires a good deed. If the mother is constrained to remain awake at night on account of her baby, she receives the reward of emancipating 70 slaves in the Path of Allah." In another hadith, Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said, "When a woman breastfeeds her baby, then for every gulp of milk sucked by the baby, she receives good deed equivalent to the good deed of reviving a dead person. When she weans her baby, a special angel congratulates her on the successful execution of the holy obligation of breast-feeding. All your past sins are forgiven."

Conclusion

Even though many believe that it is easy to be a woman, well seriously if one looks at all the sacrifices a woman goes through, it is very tough. Women have to go through so much stuff in life to achieve something. Also, many people believe that Islam is very strict on women and it permits the men to overrule the women. This is not true at all. There are rights that women have that men don't have or will never have in life. Islam gives the woman her role that most religions don't even provide for you. Islam has been around for many years but many people have been taking advantages of the religion and thinking wrong about it. Women play a very special role in Islam that defines the

best of them. Every non-Muslim with a sound mind and heart should read a little bit of information about Islam from reliable sources that are knowledgeable. It is always going to be good and beneficial knowledge to those who do not know anything about Islam. For those who already know something about Islam, it can only increase your knowledge and Islamic education.