

Al Baiyyinah Magazine

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Husband Wife Relations: Islamic Perspectives

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Editorial

Alhamdulillah, praises be to God for giving us the ability to publish this issue of the *Al Baiyyinah* after a long gap. We apologize for our delay in bringing this issue out which had been planned long ago.

This issue focuses on a very important subject – family life in Islam. The theme of this issue was chosen as part of the series of issues we intend to publish on social aspects of human life from an Islamic view.

In this modern age, the family ties are loosening and so is the societal bond. This, in turn, is leading to various kinds of social problems. Islam plays an important role in establishing peace and justice in society by way of providing guidelines for a harmonious husband-wife relationship. These guidelines will certainly help us lead a better life and gain better rewards in life hereafter. We hope this issue will help us gain an insight on Islamic perception of conjugal relationship and achieve the ultimate goal of creating a peaceful society.

With gratitude to all contributors of this magazine, we would like to reinforce that we always welcome feedback and suggestions from our valued readers on ways to further improve the subsequent issues of the magazine. We also request our readers to become our contributors and help us work together towards spreading Islamic knowledge.

May God accept this effort in His way!

Ma'assalama

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N.B.: The Editorial Board does not necessarily agree with all the views of the authors.

Let Shaytan fail

Selina Akhter

It was a very sunny noon in one weekend. All the household members were preparing for lunch. Ayesha was presenting food on the table. She had prepared rice, dal and vegetables. She had three kids aged 7, 4 and 1 – named Jubair, Junaid and Shannon respectively. She placed them on their chairs so that they could eat comfortably. Mahmood, her husband, sat to eat food, and, immediately started yelling at her:

“Is this daal? You cannot cook. My mom is a good cook. You are a damn stupid. I do not need you anymore if you are doing this way. My mom can take care of my family.”

“What?? You are stupid too. You cannot fulfill my wishes. You know Ms Laila got a pair of precious earrings from her husband which costs \$500. Other wives also get gifts on occasions. Only you cannot satisfy me in any way” – Ayesha replied back in similar anger.

“You are not worth of gifts, are you? You cannot do any of the household works properly. You have no right to get anything from me.”

“You are talking nonsense. Go get your Mom and live with her. I am leaving with my kids”

At this time, Mahmood's personality took over the situation and Ayesha left. She started preparing to leave for her parent's house. Jubair and Junaid were listening to the argument. They were very anxious. Shannon started crying. Jubair started chatting with Junaid:

“Do you think grandma is a good cook?”

“No, my mom is the best.”

“Dad is a liar. He doesn't like mom and mom also doesn't like him.”

“When I grow older, I will kill dad. But Shannon is a problem. She likes dad more than mom. So what will happen, Jubair vai?”

“I will not stay at home in future. When I am 18, I will live on my own.”

Ayesha put Shannon on her lap and took the other kids and left. Mahmood felt alone but his ego stopped him talking to Ayesha. He pretended not to care about what happened.

Soon after, Ayesha arrived at her parents' home. Her mother Zaynab became worried to see her.

"What happened?"

"Everything is over now", she started crying.

"I told you several times to divorce this man"

"But what will happen to kids?"

"I will take care of them all."

"But you are not their Dad. They need their Dad. Only for the kids, I cannot divorce him. My life is finished."

Mahmood went to office. His mother Fatima called him.

"How are you doing?"

"I am OK."

"How about the kids?"

"They went to grandma's house."

"What? They should not grow bond with Fatima's mom. I should be more important. Bring them to me. I can take care of them. Tell Ayesha that she should not go to her parents' house after marriage. She is not of that family now. "

"She will not listen to me."

"Divorce her."

"Let me see what I can do. OK Mom. "

Zaynab had an invitation to a party that night in her neighbor's house. It was only for ladies. Ayesha was also among the invited. All the women were wearing fancy dresses. Nabila, one of them, was talking to one of her friend in front of Ayesha.

"You know, my mother-in-law is very possessive and very much interfering. She thinks that her son should be 100% loyal to her. Life is becoming harder and harder day by day," Nabila complained.

Then suddenly a lady wearing a blue hijab got up and talked to Nabila nicely.

'Let us leave the topic and focus on some other topics. We should respect our husband. As God says in Qur'an: "They are clothing/covering (libaas) for you and you for them...." (2:187).' She added, *"We should not dishonor our husband. If we dishonor his mother then our husband's honor will be gone at the same time. Also you know the hadith, "Jannat is under the feet of mother". If you do not respect your mother-in-law, maybe one day your husband will also disrespect her and lose the heaven. Do you want this to happen?"*

"But my mother-in-law is creating problems all the times," Nabila replied.

"All you can do is to talk to her nicely, have patience. Things will get better if you keep patience. Also, make dua. Only God can solve the problems. Talk to God about the problem, not people."

The discussions soothed Ayesha's mind. She came back home early and started to read Qur'an and came across this verse:

"And among His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find comfort and repose in them, and He put between you love and compassion; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect." (30:21)

Thoughts started coming to her mind.....*"What love I have given to him? How much have I taken care of him?"* she thought. She started crying and after some time made a phone call.

"Salam Alaikum, Who is this?"

"Ayesha."

"What do you want?"

"How are you?" – she spoke softly.

"I am fine." (He was surprised and was cooling down)

"Could you please come tomorrow and bring me back to the house?"

"I will come inshaAllah. How is Shannon? Junaid, Jubair? You sound totally different today."

"Yes, I read the Qur'an and I felt that something must be done to improve our family bond."

Mahmood kept the phone and started thinking. Then he took the Qur'an to read and found:

"And they (women) have rights similar to those of men over them." (2:228)

He was also asking himself and found himself in errors in regard to fulfilling his wife's rights and carried on reading the Qur'an.

And the next day-

Mahmood arrived in the morning with a full basket of flowers for his loving wife to lead a Qur'anic life. Shaitan stood behind, sad as he failed.

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Selection of Spouse in Islam

Young Muslim men and women today seem to be in a dilemma while making one of the most crucial decisions of life – selection of spouse. “Brainwashed” by the western-dominated media, many start to prioritize what seems attractive to them- “cute”, “tall”, “handsome” and “smart” falling among the best used words to describe their “dream guy/gal”. But what does Islam say about this major dilemma of life? Should a spouse be chosen merely for his or her attractiveness or socioeconomic status?

In response to such a question in *www.islamonline.net*, renowned Muftis and scholars replied in a detailed manner, an abridged version of which is given below:

Abu Hurayrah (RA) quotes the Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him), as saying, "*A woman is married for four things, i.e., her wealth, her family status, her beauty, and her religion. So you should marry the religious woman; (otherwise) you will be a loser.*" (Bukhari)

Accordingly, the most important characteristics that one should look for in a spouse are:

1- Religion

In the above hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions various characteristics that people, by their nature and custom, look for in a spouse. He did not advocate any of them, but merely stated them as facts of human nature except for the issue of "religion", i.e., a prospective spouse's piety and religiosity. About this characteristic, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "*So you should marry the religious woman; (otherwise) you will be a loser.*" This order is quite different from the general statement at the beginning of the abovementioned hadith.

We must be careful not to be superficial in this issue. There are many people who at first glance appear to be abiding by Islam, but upon closer inspection have a twisted understanding of Islam and their practice in reality may not be very encouraging. `Umar (may God be pleased with him) once told someone who had testified to the goodness of a person by the fact that he had seen him in masjid that he did not know him as long as he had no dealings with him that involved money, did not live with him, and did not travel with him.

The characteristic of piety applies to the groom just as much as to the bride. This should be the main focus of both the woman's guardian and suitor. In this context, the Prophet (peace be upon him), said: *"If someone with whose piety and character you are satisfied comes to you, then marry him. If you do not do so, there will be disorder in the earth and a great deal of evil."* (Reported by At-Tirmidhi and others and classed as Hasan)

2- Character and Behavior

In the above hadith addressed to guardians and parents, the Prophet (peace be upon him) commands them to facilitate their marriage when they are satisfied with two issues: the faith of the suitor and his character.

Character is of extreme importance in Islam and goes hand in hand with faith and piety. The Prophet, (peace be upon him) has even described it as the purpose of his mission to humankind as we can see in the following hadiths:

"I have only been sent to complete good character." (Reported by Al-Hakim and others and classed as Sahih)

"I am a guarantor of a house in the highest degree of Paradise for one who makes his character good." (Reported by Abu Dawud and it is Hasan)

God establishes the relation of this issue to marriage, saying:

"Corrupt women are for corrupt men and corrupt men are for corrupt women – just as good women are for good men and good men are for good women." (An-Nur: 26)

One of the important issues of character in the spouses is the quality of wudd which means kindness, love and compassion. God says in the Qur'an,

"And among His wonders is this: He creates for you mates out of your kind, so that you might incline towards them, and He engenders love and tenderness between you: in this, behold, there are messages indeed for people who think!" (30:21)

Marriage is one of God's signs and is supposed to establish peace and comfort between the spouses. Thus, while searching for spouses, both men and women should keep this in mind.

3- Beauty

This characteristic has a certain role to play since one of the purposes of marriage is to keep both spouses from sins. The best way to do this is to have a strong attraction between spouses. Although this is something which surely grows over time, initial impressions can in some cases become an obstacle to a successful marriage. The Prophet (peace be upon him), separated Qays ibn Shamas from his wife in the famous case of Khul' and her stated reason was that he was exceedingly displeasing to her. There are many hadiths which urge the prospective spouse to get a look at the other before undertaking the marriage. Once a Companion told the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he was going to get married. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked if he had seen her. When the man answered in the negative, he (peace be upon him) said: *“Go and look at her for it is more likely to engender love between the two of you.”* (Reported by Ahmad and others and it is Sahih)

Ibn `Abidin, a famous Muslim jurist, said, *“The woman should choose a man who is religious, of good character, generous and of ample wealth. She should not marry an evildoer. A person should not marry his young daughter to an old or an ugly man, but he should marry her to one similar.”*

Beauty has its role, but remember that it is way down on the priority list under piety, character and religion. When a person puts beauty above all else, the consequences can be disastrous. This is one of the main reasons that young people seeking to get married must be helped by more mature family members in making their choice.

Elaborating on what one should look for in a partner, the late Sheikh Sayyed Ad-Darsh, former Chairman of the UK Shari`ah Council, adds the following points:

The age difference between potential partners should not be too great. Marriage is not for fun or experience. It is a life-long relationship. For that reason, any factor detrimental to the relationship should be avoided as much as possible.

Highly educated males and females should seek partners with a similar educational background. Cultural and family background is very important. Common language is an essential way of communicating. Such things help the two partners to understand, communicate and relate to one another and are factors of stability and success – as are financial independence and the ability to

provide a decent, acceptable level of maintenance. Again, this is a way of ensuring that outside influences do not spoil an otherwise happy life. All ways and means should be considered, giving a solid basis for a new human experience which is expected to provide a framework for a happy, successful and amicable life.

The questions of common language, background, education and age, etc., are meant, in an ordinary stable context, to maximize the chances of success and stability in a very important Islamic institution, that is marriage.

The most fundamental question when choosing a partner is the religious one. As far as language, background and social position are concerned, these are not equally significant factors. If the prospective partner is of good character, with a strong religious inclination, and the two young people are happy and feel compatible with one another, other considerations are not of great importance.

Source: Internet

Financial Rights of Wife in Islam

Dr. Nazmun Nahar

Marriage is regarded as a sacred act in Islam. The mutual rights and responsibilities of husband and wife in Islam, which stem from the marriage contract, are not simply legalistic rules; they are based on the ethical foundations and principles of marriage in Islam. According to the ethical foundation, which is based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him):

Both husband and wife must keep in mind that they are 'vice-gerents' and are serving the Only One God. This function requires that men and women are especially responsible for supporting each other to obey the commands of God and the role that He has established for them. The Qur'an specifically says that believing men and women are the helpers and supporters of each other. Marriage itself is described by the Qur'an as a solemn covenant, and this should not be taken light-heartedly by any person.

The Qur'an is replete with references suggesting that marriage is a blessing and a gift which allows a relationship of love, compassion and cooperation to develop and is one of the ethical foundations of marriage in Islam. The most expressive of these verses are: 2: 187, 9: 71, 16: 72 and 30: 21. In verse 2: 187, God says: *'Your wives are a garment for you and you are a garment for them.'* This is a striking metaphor because just as a garment beautifies the wearer, so does marriage by enabling husband and wife to complete half of the faith. Just as a garment is the closest thing to one, marriage brings the wife and her husband together. Marriage conceals the faults of husband and wife just as clothes conceal that which should be covered by human being.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also emphasizes the ethical foundations of marriage in Islam. In reply to a questioner who had asked about the best form of wealth, he once said: *"The best wealth is a tongue which is wet with the remembrance of God and a heart which is thankful to God and a believing, pious wife who helps her husband to keep to the practice of his faith."* God says in the Qur'an, *"It is He Who created you from a single person, and made his mate of like nature in order that he might dwell with her in love..."* (7:189). This verse states the great purpose of marriage, that is, tranquility and highlights the equal position of man and woman as both of them are created from 'a single person'.

Rights of Wife

Jurists usually divide the rights of wife into two categories:

- a) The financial rights - maintenance and so on; and
- b) The non-financial rights – that is the way in which the husband must treat and dwell with his wife.

In the following sections, we will focus on the financial rights of a Muslim wife. Following are some of her rights:

- The husband should give her the marriage gift or mahr, and this will be her own property.
- She will get full maintenance from her husband e.g. food, clothing, housing, education, recreation, medication, etc.
- Even if she is rich, she need not spend a single penny for her husband or family. All these are the responsibilities of her husband.
- The mutually agreed conditions signed during the marriage contract become binding on both the spouses.
- She has also the right to divorce her husband if necessary.
- She can go to the court if her husband fails to meet her basic requirements.
- The husband and wife have mutual inheritance rights from the time of marriage.

In addition to these points, it is important to note that the wife continues to be an independent legal personality in the eyes of Islamic law despite her marriage: she does not have to change her religion if she happens to be a Jew or Christian; she keeps her maiden name; if she belongs to a particular school of Islamic thought, she does not have to change this to that of her husband, and continues to enjoy the right to enter into financial or other contracts and to dispose of her personal property as she wishes.

Financial Rights of Wife

It is a principle of Islamic law that no matter how rich a wife may be, she is entitled to full maintenance from her husband: it is his responsibility to provide for all of her needs. This principle is supported by the Qur'an as in verse 4: 34, God says:

“Men are the protectors and maintainers (Quwwamuna) of women because God has made one of them excel over the other, and because they spend out of their possessions (to support them)”.

It is the moral responsibility of the husband to provide for the needs of his family and his fulfillment of this requirement cannot be considered to be an act of charity: it is a duty on him. In Islamic law the husband and wife should co-operate and make their mutual contributions to the marriage; however the wife is not required to contribute financially although she may do so if she wishes.

The husband will provide maintenance to the wife according to his ability. As in verses 65: 6-7 of the Qur'an, God says with regard to maintenance during iddah (the waiting period after divorce):

Lodge them (in the waiting-period) where you yourselves live, according to your means, and do not harass them so as to straiten them. And if they are pregnant, spend on them until they deliver their burden. Then if they suckle (the child) for you, give them their wages, and settle the question of wages) fairly by mutual consultation. But if you have created difficulties for each other (concerning the question of wages), then another woman would suckle the child. Let the rich man spend according to his means and let the one whose means are restricted, spend out of what God has given him. God does not burden anyone with more than what He has given him. It may well be that God brings about ease after hardship.

The wife is entitled to receive maintenance in the following areas:

Residence: The husband must provide appropriate lodging for his wife which is consistent with his financial resources. The minimum requirement for such lodging is that it should be comfortable and afford privacy and independence for the wife. The majority of jurists also say that the husband (and for that matter the wife) cannot lodge relatives in the family home without the consent of the spouse; it is also necessary for the husband to ensure that any relative he brings to his house to stay must be people who will not hurt her.

Food: The husband should provide sufficient food for his household, according to what is customary.

Clothing: In the interests of justice, Islamic jurisprudence contains quite a lot of detail on this subject, see below.

Helpers: Many jurists say that in addition to the above, if the wife comes from a wealthy family and is used to having a domestic help, or if she is a sickly person, then it is the legal responsibility of the husband to provide his wife with an assistant.

Healthcare: Since Islam requires the husband to take care of all of the reasonable needs of his wife and there is no firm evidence in either the Qur'an or the Sunnah that excludes provision of health-care and medication, one can deduce that the husband should pay for any expenses resulting from medical treatment of his wife.

In case the husband cannot support his wife

All the above-mentioned maintenance issues will be effective as long as the husband is able to earn. What happens if the husband loses his job or his business collapses, as a result of which he is unable to support his wife? What options are available to the wife? In such a situation, the majority of jurists agree that a wife has one of two options: to endure the hardship with her husband, or to seek separation from him. In addition to these options, Hanafi jurists say that the wife could be sponsored and supported by her nearest male relatives who would have looked after her if she had not been married; alternatively, they say that the wife could borrow money to tide the family over the crisis and this amount would be considered a debt on the husband, to be repaid by him when his circumstances improve. The minority, Zahiri jurists say that if a wife is capable of supporting her family from her own resources then she should be required to do this because the harm resulting from divorce is greater than any harm she may incur from spending her wealth on the family. They also say that the husband is not required to pay back to his wife the amount she had spent on the family. If however, the husband refuses to provide for his wife or falsified his true financial position at the time of the marriage and neglects the needs of his wife, then she is entitled to seek divorce.

In case the husband is miserly

Let us consider another situation, what happens if a husband is miserly? Can his wife take from his property without his knowledge to provide for herself and for the family? During the life-time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan complained to the Prophet that her husband did not give her enough living expenses for the family, “except for what I take from his property and spend without his knowledge”. The Prophet (peace be upon him) permitted her to continue to take secretly from the property of her husband but simply cautioned her to be 'fair' and to

take only that which was sufficient to meet the needs of herself and her family. This permission is based on an Islamic principle that a Muslim is entitled to use his own hands to take a right that is due to him. If a husband's miserliness cannot be corrected amicably, his wife also has the right to go to court so that a judge can assign maintenance for her.

Conditions for ineligibility to receive maintenance

There are several circumstances which make a wife ineligible to receive maintenance from her husband. There is consensus among jurists that if a wife is obstinate, rebellious, or refuses to yield to reason and fairness, etc. then she is not entitled to be maintained by her husband – especially if she goes to live away from the family home without his permission, or if she travels to some place without his consent and then attempts to present him with the bill for her upkeep. Apart from this, any wife, of whatever age or personal circumstance, is entitled to maintenance; even the wife in her waiting period after divorce is entitled to maintenance, as verses 65: 6-7 suggest.

[Acknowledgements: Dr Jamal Badawi, *Islamic Teaching Course* vol. 3; and an article by Nasima Hasan.]

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Husband and Wife: Mutual Rights and Obligations

Piety is the basis of choosing the life partner. Many are the statements of the Qur'an and the Sunnah that prescribe kindness and equity, compassion and love, sympathy and consideration, patience and good will. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, says, "*The best Muslim is the one who is best to his family.*" Also, he says, "... *and the most blessed joy in life is a good, righteous wife.*" (Reported by Al Tirmidhi)

The role of the husband evolves around the moral principle that it is his solemn duty to God to treat his wife with kindness, honor, and patience; to keep her honorably or free her from the marital bond honorably; and to cause her no harm or grief. God Almighty says: "...*consort with them in kindness, for if ye hate them it may happen that ye hate a thing wherein God has placed much good.*" (An-Nisa': 19)

The role of the wife is summarized in the verse that women have rights even as they have duties, according to what is equitable; but men have a degree over them. God Almighty says, "*And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in kindness, and men are a degree above them. God is Mighty, Wise.*" (Al-Baqaraqh: 228)

This degree is usually interpreted by Muslim scholars in conjunction with another passage which states, among other things, that men are trustees, guardians, and protectors of women because God has made some of them excel others and because men expend of their means. God Almighty says: "*Men are in charge of women, because God has made the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property (for the support of women). So good women are the obedient, guarding in secret that which God has guarded. As for those from whom you fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to beds apart, and scourge them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Lo! God is ever High Exalted, Great.*" (An-Nisa': 34)

The Wife's Rights; The Husband's Obligations

Because the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, have commanded kindness to women, it is the husband's duty to:

1. *Consort with his wife in an equitable and kind manner. God Almighty says, "... and consort with them in kindness." (An-Nisa': 19)*
2. *Have responsibility for the full maintenance of the wife, a duty which he must discharge cheerfully, without reproach, injury, or condescendence. God Almighty says: "Let him who has abundance spend of his abundance, and he whose provision is measured, let him spend of that which God has given him. God asks naught of any soul save that which He has given it. God will vouchsafe, after hardship, ease." (Al Talaq: 7)*

Components of Maintenance

Maintenance entails the wife's incontestable right to lodging, clothing, nourishing, and general care and well-being.

1. The wife's residence must be adequate so as to provide her with the reasonable level of privacy, comfort, and independence. The welfare of the wife and the stability of the marriage should be the ultimate goal.
2. What is true of residence is true of clothing, food, and general care. The wife has the right to be clothed, fed, and cared for by the husband, in accordance with his means and her style of life. These rights are to be exercised without extravagance or miserliness.

Non-Material Rights

A husband is commanded by the law of God to:

1. Treat his wife with equity.
2. Respect her feelings, and to show her kindness and consideration.
3. Not to show his wife any aversion or to subject her to suspense or uncertainty.
4. Not to keep his wife with the intention of inflicting harm on her or hindering her freedom.
5. Let her demand freedom from the marital bond, if he has no love or sympathy for her.

The Wife's Obligations; The Husband's Rights

The main obligation of the wife as a partner in a marital relationship is to contribute to the success and blissfulness of the marriage as much as possible. She must be attentive to the comfort and well-being of her mate. She may neither offend him nor hurt his feelings. Perhaps nothing can illustrate the point

better than the Qur'anic statement which describes the righteous people as those who pray saying: *"Our Lord! Grant us wives and offspring who will be the joy and the comfort of our eyes, and guide us to be models of righteousness."* (Al-Furqan: 74)

This is the basis on which all the wife's obligations rest and from which they flow. To fulfill this basic obligation:

1. The wife must be faithful, trustworthy, and honest.
2. She must not deceive her mate by deliberately avoiding conception lest it deprive him of legitimate progeny.
3. She must not allow any other person to have access to that which is exclusively her husband's right, i.e., sexual intimacy.
4. She must not receive anyone in his home whom the husband does not like.
5. She may not accept their gifts without his approval. This is probably meant to avoid jealousy, suspicion, gossip, etc., and also to maintain the integrity of all parties concerned.
6. The husband's possessions are her trust. If she has access to any portion thereof, or if she is entrusted with any fund, she must discharge her duty wisely and thriftily. She may not lend or dispose of any of his belongings without his permission.
7. With respect to intimacy, the wife is to make herself desirable; to be attractive, responsive, and cooperative.
8. A wife may not deny herself to her husband, for the Qur'an speaks of them as a comfort to each other. Due consideration is, of course, given to health and decency.
9. Moreover, the wife is not permitted to do anything that may render her companionship less desirable or less gratifying. If she neglects herself, the husband has the right to interfere with her freedom to rectify the situation and insure maximum self-fulfillment for both partners. She is not permitted to do anything on his part that may impede her gratification."

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 Source: www.islamonline.net

A Peep into the World of Polygyny

Fathima Zahra Dawood

Yes, polygyny, and not polygamy. A very common misconception, even among the Muslims, is to think that Islam allows polygamy. Astaghfirullah! I seek forgiveness from God! According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the word ‘polygamy’ refers to a marriage in which a spouse of either sex may have more than one mate at the same time; whereas the word ‘polygyny’ refers to the state or practice of having more than one wife or female mate at a time. The misconception is so deep-rooted that even the world’s most popularly used search engine – Google – *asks* me if I meant ‘Islam+polygamy’ when in fact, I searched for ‘Islam+polygyny’.

Wisdom behind polygyny

Men, by nature, are arguably polygynous. This polygynous relationship was practiced way before Islam was established. Even the Prophets practiced it. Abraham (peace be upon him) had 4 wives (as mentioned by Abul Qasim as-Suhaili in his book *At-T’arif wal-A’lam*), Solomon (peace be upon him) had 90 wives, and our beloved Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) had 12 wives.

God says in the Qur’an (interpretation of the meaning):

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 (slaves) that your right hands possess. That is nearer to prevent you from doing injustice. (4:3)

One hadith reads: Yahya related to me from Malik that Ibn Shihab said, “*I have heard that the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, said to a man from Thaqif who had ten wives when he became Muslim, ‘Take four and separate from the rest.’*” (Malik's Muwatta, Book 29, hadith 29.28.76)

Fortunately, for the sake of our relief, God has allowed to a maximum of 4 wives. Of course, there are certain conditions to be met before partaking on this road, such as, being just and fair in treating them (not only with regards to material provision, but also with regards to the time spent with each wife), and to provide them with their needs. Alhamdulillah (praise be to God), this aspect of Islam helps us to be within the law of God, and not transgress it by indulging in extra-marital affairs.

Polygyny helps in:

1. Increasing the Muslim community which in turn will strengthen the nation.
2. Supporting the lives of many of the women that have outnumbered men these days (as stated by statistics) in some societies.
3. Entitling a man to be a father – if his first wife is barren, he gets to enjoy fatherhood through another wife.

These are just a few points of the wisdom behind polygyny.

Polygyny Diaries

Below are some excerpts from the blogs of polygyny followers:

From www.moomtaz.blogspot.com, advice for brothers

There are two major pitfalls in regards to polygyny for the man – one before the second marriage and one after. In everything the most important aspect is communication. In the beginning the main major mistake most men make is that they lie, deceive, misrepresent the truth, lie by omission, swindle, sneak or connive. All of these things violate the foundation of any relationship – trust. Once trust has been violated it is all downhill from there. It is almost impossible to recover from a violation of trust. Even if your woman is exceptionally forgiving, when you violate the trust that she has placed in you, you have broken something very sensitive. So why would you do such a thing? The answer to that is simple: you are unable to communicate your feelings or intentions to your spouse. If this case exists then you probably have larger problems brewing than how you are going to tell your wife you want another woman.

For non-married men the issue of polygyny is something that you must bring up PRIOR to marriage. If you believe that you really want to be a polygynist, then that is something that your future spouse should know. Chances are there that you are not going to change, if you want two now you will want two fifteen years into marriage, and one day the opportunity will present itself and then what will you do? Hem and haw and probably go ahead or worse, cheat and then try to fix it up later with a subsequent nikah (marriage). If she loves you, she may be reserved and marry you anyway. She may not, however that is a decision that you should make before you marry her.

The idea of polygyny never goes away once it is seated, you will always remember it like an old song, word for word (at least the chorus). So you must be real to yourself and your spouse. In all of the conversations that I've had with Muslim women over the years, lying and deceits are the number one turn offs. I'm not saying that women sharing their man for the rest of their lives are a turn on, however your honesty does make a large difference. The most important thing is communication. Women thrive on attention and communication without it Shaytan is there to play all kinds of havoc on your relationship, polygyny or not, so talk. If going polygynist is going to throw your woman into a big fuss, those are fights that you are going to want to take PRIOR to actually going polygynist. Things are usually smoother once you have worked out all of the bugs and laid down basic ground rules. If you never get to that point, then you need to evaluate and reevaluate your situation.

The next single most largest complaint of those who are in polygyny is fairness and time management. Time, money, attention to children, everything. When the Qur'an talks about inability to be fair, it is, if you reflect on the Sunnah is, your inability to love each the same level. However, everything else you can do pretty well at being equal and fair. Your job once you enter into a polygynist relationship is to be a steward of time-management and resource management. You have to enforce the rules strictly and you have to remember who gave permission to have them bent or broken (although it is best not to break any house rules). If you are not on top of your management of time and resources you will have committed a zulm (an act of oppression).

From the blog of 3 wives (www.tryingtopleaseallahonedayatime.blogspot.com): advice for the sisters

My relationship with my two co-wives is so real...we do have our moments and we share our feelings, our dislikes and correct them and move on. I pray if there is ever a fourth she comes correct with her maturity and respect because if not she won't last very long in this marriage, Allahu Alam. Imagine all of the awkwardness and emotions that come with plural marriage, you have to break down barriers and get to know that sister; plural marriage goes so much smoother when the wives get along, really it does. The husband is more relaxed and the wives and children are too.

A few words of advice. You should pause and look at the bigger picture here. Polygyny is truly a blessing from God so treat it as such. Embrace this blessing God has given you, God chose this for you two. Take your husband out of the picture for a minute and look at each other first as sisters in Islam,

not as co-wives; it will go so much smoother. You should take time one day and go out together, get to know each other, and share with each other your feelings, and your likes and dislikes, and share what has hurt you and try to find a solution to fix whatever the problem is, and work together, give and take. Then listen and try to understand each others' feelings, have a good heart-to-heart talk with each other, and keep your heart and intentions pure and sincere. Put everything out in the open with each other. Don't get all defensive either, just listen to what she is saying. When she shares her feelings take yourself out of the picture and try to understand how she felt or is feeling, and vice versa. Be mature about everything and also be prepared to hear the truth and accept it; just be sure to respond in a positive and mature manner.

My co-wives have had to correct me on numerous things early on in our marriage and still to this day. So instead of me feeling like they are picking on me or singling me out, I've learned to see it as they care about me and my wellbeing enough to correct me instead of letting me continue messing up. SubhanAllah, look for the good in every situation; it's there just look Insha Allah. Can't reiterate this enough – keep your intentions and heart clean and strive for one thing and one thing only – "PLEASING ALLAH"; before saying or doing anything to your co-wife, take a second and ask yourself, would this please God? If not, don't say or do it.

Don't see yourself as the better wife or a number; we all are wives 1, 2, 3, 4. I don't see myself any more superior than any of my co-wives because just like them I too can be divorced. Being a 1, 2, 3, or 4 is all equally hard; shoot, being a wife is hard. We all hurt and have the same feeling and insecurities no matter what stage of the marriage you've entered.

Honesty is the best policy. Be honest with each other and be prepared to take it. Respect; you have to give it in order to get it, and treat others how you would want to be treated. If you don't want someone talking about you behind your back, then please don't do it to your co-wives. Fight for your co-wives, and defend their honor in their presence and absence. If you all have different friends, don't tolerate your friends talking about your co-wives. Think about it; they are talking about your family; wouldn't you be upset if someone talked about your children, sister, brother, family? Co-wives are a family, so defend and protect your family and your families' honor. This advice is for myself and co-wives first and then to you all.

From the blog of Minty – who wishes to remain anonymous - answers to one of the questions posed by one of her followers, regarding polygyny affecting children

At this point in time I think my two little ones are a bit young (they are 2&3 years old) to understand the full implications of their surroundings. When I see them interact with the other co-wives, I get the impression they have a lot of attention and social time and seem to enjoy it. From what the older kids say, they sometimes feel proud of the family when we are all out together, like a tribe (in house joke) like a show of strength, but this can really depend on where we are going; if it is to the masjid or highly populated Muslim areas then it is great, they love it; if it is to the town center, we get stared at and they can get very bothered. Also something similar with their friends, if they are Muslim friends they are cool and will talk a little about it. If it is non-Muslim then it is a different story, they clam up, because it can cause some differences between the kids. We have given them answers for when they get asked the silly questions by children (even adults), so they can feel confident. As a family we try to be sensitive to our kids, and talk to them, they sometimes get confused. Communication is always a top priority; if it is left to fester, then trouble is not far away. We teach them to respect and protect the family.

Inequality of women?

Women are completely different from men, be it, physically, psychologically, spiritually, or emotionally. Islam takes all this into consideration when prohibiting polyandry (the state or practice of having more than one husband or male mate at one time, according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary). By allowing women to have multiple husbands, it not only decreases her ability to behave as a wife to all of them, but also puts her to shame as she is unable to pinpoint the father of her child (going to the extent of DNA tests also brings shame upon her), which subsequently will lead to the disorderly upbringing of children. And God Knows Best.

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A Successful Marriage: The Missing Link

Yasmin Mogahed

“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 you; verily, in that are signs for people who reflect.” (Qur’an, 30:21)

We’ve all read this verse on countless marriage announcements. But how many have actualized it? How many of our marriages really embody that love and mercy described by God? What is going wrong when so many of our marriages are ending in divorce?

According to Dr. Emerson Eggerichs, author of *Love & Respect: The Love She Most Desires; The Respect He Desperately Needs*, the answer is simple. In his book, Eggerichs explains that extensive research has found that a man’s primary need is for respect, while a woman’s primary need is for love. He describes what he calls the “crazy cycle”— the pattern of argumentation that results when the wife does not show respect and the husband does not show love. He explains how the two reinforce and cause one another. In other words, when a wife feels that her husband is acting unloving, she often reacts with disrespect, which in turn makes the husband act even more unloving.

Eggerichs argues that the solution to the “crazy cycle” is for the wife to show unconditional respect to her husband and for the husband to show unconditional love to his wife. This means that a wife should not say that first her husband must be loving before she will show him respect. By doing so, she will only bring about more unloving behavior. And a husband should not say that first his wife must be respectful before he will show her love. By doing so, he will only bring about more disrespectful behavior. The two must be unconditional.

When I reflected on this concept, I realized that looking at the Qur’an and prophetic wisdom, there are no two concepts more stressed with regards to the marital relationship. To men, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

Take good care of women, for they were created from a bent rib, and the most curved part of it is its top; if you try to straighten it, you will break it, and if you leave it, it will remain arched, so take good care of women. (Bukhari & Muslim)

The most perfect believer in the matter of faith is one who has excellent behavior; and the best among you are those who behave best towards their wives. (Al Tirmidhi)

A believing man should not hate a believing woman; if he dislikes one of her characteristics, he will be pleased with another. (Muslim)

God says:

“... Live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them – perhaps you dislike a thing and God makes therein much good.” (Qur’an, 4: 19)

In these jewels of wisdom, men are urged to be kind and loving towards their wives. Moreover, they are urged to overlook their wife’s faults when showing that kindness and love.

On the other hand, when addressing the wife, the focus is different. Why are women not told again and again to be kind and loving towards their husbands? Perhaps it is because unconditional love already comes naturally to women. Few men complain that their wives do not love them. But many complain that their wives do not respect them. And it is this sentiment which is most stressed in the Qur’an and sunnah, with regards to wives.

Respect can be manifest in a number of ways. One of the most important ways to show respect is the respect of one’s wishes. When someone says, “I respect your advice,” they mean “I will follow your advice.” Respecting a leader means doing what s/he says. Respecting our parents means not going against their wishes. And respecting one’s husband means respecting his wishes. The Prophet has said: *“When any woman prays her five, fasts her month, guards her body and obeys her husband, it is said to her: Enter paradise from whichever of its doors you wish.” [Al Tirmidhi]*

Why are we as women told to respect and follow the wishes of our husbands? It is because men are given an extra degree of responsibility. God says: *“Men are the protectors and maintainers [qawwamun] of women, because God has given the one more [strength] than the other, and because they support them from their means . . .” (Qur’an, 4:34).*

But won’t this unconditional respect towards one’s husband put us, as women, in a weak, submissive position? Won’t we set ourselves up to be taken advantage of and abused? Quite the contrary. The

Qur'an, the prophetic example, and even contemporary research have proven the exact opposite. The more respect a woman shows to her husband, the more love and kindness he will show to her. And in fact, the more disrespect she shows, the harsher and more unloving he becomes.

Similarly, a man may question why he should show kindness and love towards even a disrespectful wife. To answer this question, one only needs to look at the example of Omar Ibn al Khattab. When a man came to Omar (who was Khalifah at the time) to complain of his wife, he heard Omar's own wife yelling at him. While the man turned to leave, Omar called him back. The man told Omar that he had come to complain of the same problem that Omar himself had. To this Omar replied that his wife tolerated him, washed his clothes, cleaned his home, made him comfortable, and took care of his children. If she did all of this for him, how could he not tolerate her when she raised her voice?

This story provides a beautiful example for all of us – not only for the men. This story is a priceless illustration of tolerance and patience, which is essential for any successful marriage. Moreover, consider the reward in life hereafter for those who show patience: God says, “Only those who are patient shall receive their reward in full without reckoning (or measure)” (Qur'an, 39:10).

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Source: www.suhaibwebb.com

On Husband-Wife Relationship

Sheikh Abdullah Adhami

By getting married you are not just getting a wife, you are getting your whole world. From now until the rest of your days your wife will be your partner, your companion, and your best friend. She will share your moments, your days, and your years. She will share your joys and sorrows, your successes and failures, your dreams and your fears.

When you are ill, she will take the best care of you; when you need help, she will do all she can for you. When you have a secret, she will keep it; when you need advice, she will give you the best advice

She will always be with you: when you wake up in the morning the first thing your eyes will see will be hers; during the day, she will be with you, if for a moment she is not with you by her physical body she will be thinking of you, praying for you with all her heart, mind and soul; when you go to sleep at night, the last thing your eyes will see will be her; and when you are asleep you will still see her in your dreams. In short, she will be your whole world and you will be her whole world. The best description that I personally have ever read describing the closeness of the spouses to each other is the Qur'anic verse which says: "*they are your garments and you are their garments.*" (Surah al Baqarah 2:187).

Indeed, spouses are like garments to each other because they provide one another with the protection, the comfort, the cover, the support, and the adornment that garments provide to humans. Just imagine a journey in the winter of Alaska without garments! Our spouses provide us with the same level of comfort, protection, cover, and support in the journey of our lives on this earth as garments would do in the Alaskan journey. The relationship between the spouses is the most amazing of all human relations: the amount of love and affection, intimacy and closeness, mercy and compassion, peace and tranquility that fills the hearts of the spouses is simply inexplicable. The only rational explanation for these most amazing of all human feelings is that: it is an act of God the

Most High and Pure, "*And God has made for you mates (and companions) of your own nature ...*" (Surah al Nahl 16:72).

Only our Almighty God in His Infinite Power, Boundless Mercy, and Great Wisdom can create and ingrain these amazing and blessed feelings in the hearts of the spouses. In fact God is reminding those who search for His signs in the universe that these feelings in the hearts of the spouses are among the signs that should guide humans to His existence, as He says in the Qur'an: "*And among His signs is this, 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*" (Surah al Rum 30:21).

But God knows that the human heart is not a static entity, it is sometimes weak and at times dynamic. Feelings can and do change with time. Love may wither and fade away. The marital bond might weaken if not properly cared for. Happiness in marriage cannot be taken for granted; continuous happiness requires constant giving from both sides. For the tree of marital love to remain alive and keep growing, the soil has to be sustained, maintained, watered and nurtured.

Remember that our Prophet Muhammad Salallaahu 'aliahi wa'sallaam had found the time to go out to the desert and race with his wife Ayesha. She out ran him but later after she had gained some weight, he outran her. Remember that the Prophet Salallaahu 'aliahi wa'sallaam took his wife to watch the young Ethiopians playing and dancing their folk dances. The show of emotions is necessary to keep the marital bond away from rusting and disintegrating. Remember that you will be rewarded by God for any emotions you show to your wife as the Prophet said: "*One would be rewarded for anything that he does seeking the pleasure of God even the food that he puts in the mouth of his wife.*"

Never underestimate the importance of seemingly little things as putting food in your wife's mouth, opening the car's door for her, etc. Remember that the Prophet Salallaahu 'aliahi wa'sallaam used to extend his knee to his wife to assist her up to ride the camel.

Try to always find some time for both of you to pray together. Strengthening the bond between you and God is the best guarantee that your own marital bond would always remain strong. Having peace with God will always result in having more peace at home. Remember that the Prophet Salallaahu 'aliahi wa'sallaam gave glad tidings for those couples who wake up at night to pray together. He even urged the spouse who rises up first to wake the other spouse up even by throwing cold water on his/her face.

Always try your best to be good to your wife by words and by deeds. Talk to her, smile to her, seek her advice, ask for her opinion, spend quality time with her and always remember that the Prophet Salallaahu 'alaiahi wa'sallaam said: *“the best of you are those who are best to their wives.”*

Finally, it is common that spouses vow to love and honor their spouses until death do them part. I do believe that this vow is good or even great, but not enough! It is not enough that you love your wife. You have to love what she loves as well. Her family, her loved ones must also become your loved ones. Don't be like my colleague who was unhappy about his wife's parents coming to visit for few weeks. He candidly said to her “I don't like your parents.” Naturally she angrily looked at him straight in the eye and said “I don't like yours either”....

Also, it is not enough that you love her until death do you part. Love should never end and we do believe there is life after death where those who did righteousness in this world will be joined by their spouses (Surah al Zukhruf 43:70) and offspring. The best example in this regard is the Prophet Salallaahu 'aliahi wa'sallaam whose love for Khadija, his wife of 25 years extended to include all those she loved and continued even after her death. It was many years after her death and he never forgot her and whenever a goat was slaughtered in his house he would send portions of it to Khadija's family and friends.

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