

The Choice of Every Woman



As-Sayyid bin Ahmad Abu Saif



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Edited By: Abdul Ahad (Alig.)

Published By: Darussalam Publishers

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"In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful"

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَتَ نُوحٍ وَامْرَأَتَ لُوطٍ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا صَالِحَيْنِ فَخَانَتَاهُمَا فَلَمْ يُغْنِيَا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَقِيلَ ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّٰخِلِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا امْرَأَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْرِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَرِّمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتِبَ عَلَيْهَا إِتْقَانٌ ﴿١٢﴾﴾

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

[Quran 66: 10-12]

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Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

Foreword

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿يَأْتِيَا النَّاسَ آتْفُؤًا رَّبِّكُمْ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً﴾

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

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

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

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

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

﴿إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ
وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ
وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّانِعِينَ وَالصَّانِعَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ
اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾﴾

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

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

﴿ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَتَ نُوحٍ وَامْرَأَتَ لُوطٍ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ
عَبْدَيْنِ مِنْ عَبَادِنَا صَالِحِينَ فَخَانَتَاهُمَا فَلَمْ يُغْنِيَا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَقِيلَ
ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّٰخِلِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا امْرَأَتَ
فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَبِخِي مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ
وَبِخِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١١﴾﴾

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

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

﴿يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يَبَايَعْنَكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِيَنَّكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايَعْنَهُنَّ وَأَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُنَّ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾﴾

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

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

﴿وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيَطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَٰئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ﴾

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

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

﴿وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِنَّا لَنَافِعُونَ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطَاً كَبِيراً ﴿٣١﴾﴾

*"And kill not your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them as well as for you.
Surely, the killing of them is a great sin" [Quran 17:31]*

And beyond the right to own property and wealth, Islam also made sure that women got their fair share of inheritance when a relative died. Much of Islam's legislations - such as the details of how to pray and how to perform Hajj - are expiated in the Sunnah. However, when it came to inheritance law, it was not the Prophet in his Sunnah, but Allah in the Qur'an who gave a detailed explanation of how a deceased person's estate must be divided.

﴿ لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا ﴾ (٧)

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

There was another Arab practice that had to be abolished: Some female servants were forced to become prostitutes, in order to bring revenue for their masters. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿ وَلَا تُكْرِهُوا فَتِيَّتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَاءِ إِن أَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا لِّنَبْغُوا عَرَضَ الْحَيَوةِ الدُّنْيَا ﴾

"And force not your maids to prostitution, if they desire chastity, in order that you may make a gain in the (perishable) goods of this worldly life." [Quran 24:33]

Islam's treatment of women follows a more general pattern - that of giving the weak their due right. The poor are given a right over part of the wealth of the rich (2.5%), and similarly women are given all of their rights, which basically are the same as the rights of men.

But just as men have duties that are not binding upon women - such as praying in congregation, providing for one's family, fighting in the way of Allah, etc. - women have duties that are not binding upon men - such as wearing Hijab, raising children while the men are gone out to work, etc. This involves nothing more than a distribution of duties. Allah created both man and woman, and Allah knows best what duties are befitting of each. Therefore, it is important to make a distinction between rights and religious duties. In Islam, women are given all of their rights, but they have certain duties that they must fulfill; and the same goes for men.

The choice is with every woman: will she follow the ideas and morals that are formulated by men, men whose minds are inherently deficient, or will she follow what her Lord has commanded her to do? All praise is for Allah, many women who live in the West today have decided to obey Allah: their modest attire is like a badge of faith, and they are like beacons of light in societies that are veiled in darkness. No one has coerced them into dressing modestly; they do so of their own volition. Sadly, however, other women have chosen to follow a different path - in their attire and lifestyle. And each woman will be rewarded in accordance with the choices she makes in her life. May Allah make us from those who obey Allah and His Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) Amin?

The Soul

Your soul calls upon you to act wrongly, to pursue worldly enjoyment, and to help it in satisfying all of its desires. Conversely, Allah calls upon you to fear Him and to prevent your soul from arbitrarily satisfying its desires. Now, your heart, like the hearts of all human beings, is torn between these two invitations: at times, you might heed the invitation of your soul, and at other times you might heed the invitation of your Lord. And this is where the test of life lies.

Sister in Islam, you must be very cautious in dealing with your soul. If it is not a serene soul but is instead the kind of soul that constantly invites a person towards evil and wrongdoing, following its whims and desires will lead you to the path of destruction. Allah informed us that this latter kind of soul is 'Ammarah Bis-Su' - it constantly commands one to do evil. It is worthy to note here that Allah didn't use the word 'Aamirah, which simply means to command, but instead used the word 'Ammarah, which means to incessantly command.

By its very nature, a soul is 'Ammarah Bis-Su'. But if Allah has mercy on it and makes it purified, it invites its possessor to all that is good. Therefore when it is good, we attribute that goodness to Allah's mercy. But why don't we attribute it to the soul itself? We don't because the soul in its natural state is ignorant and evil; justness is an unusual state for the soul, one that is brought about by the guidance of Allah. If Allah does not guide a person's soul, it inevitably remains in a state of darkness and ignorance. And had it not been for Allah's favor, grace, and mercy upon the believers, not a single one of them would have been purified.

You must realize that if you don't take care of your soul, if you don't prevent it from arbitrarily getting what it wants, and if you don't discipline it, your heart will soon die. Whenever the 'Ammarah Bis-Su' soul (which incessantly invites one towards evil) takes control of a person, his heart becomes sick and begins to waste away.

To avoid this wretched outcome, you must purify your soul; furthermore, you must strictly hold it accountable and carefully scrutinize its faults. If you never bother to study the faults and defects of your soul, you can never begin the process of rectifying them. Once you actually do find a defect in your soul, begin by hating that defect for Allah, and then by beginning the process of rectifying it.

Now, if you are to purify your soul, you must continually strive to discipline it. You must not only prevent it from gratifying its evil lusts, you must also at times, in order to keep it in check, prevent it from some of its lawful desires. As a strict disciplinarian, you must fulfill only some of its desires, only some of the time; this is to say that it is you who must be in the driver seat; once you give your soul all that it desires, it and not you will be in control.

Although the natural state - i.e., the state of a soul that is not guided by Allah - of an adult soul is ignorance and wickedness, its original state, the one that it is upon when a human being is born, is that of the Fitrah, or inherent soundness (Islam). Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ﴿٧﴾ فَأَلَمَّهَا تَجْوَرَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ﴿٨﴾﴾

"And by Nafs (Adam or a person or a soul), and Him Who perfected him in proportion; then He showed him what is wrong for him and what is right for him"
[Quran 91:7, 8]

And the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«مَا مِنْ مَوْلُودٍ إِلَّا يُولَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ، فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ، وَيُنَصِّرَانِهِ،
وَيُمَجِّسَانِهِ، كَمَا تُنْتَجُ الْبَيْهَمَةُ بِبَيْهَمَةِ جَمْعَاءَ، هَلْ تُجِسُونَ فِيهَا مِنْ جَدْعَاءَ»

"Every single newborn is born upon the Fitrah (inherent soundness; Islam), but then it is his parents who make him into a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian, just as an animal reproduces an animal that is in sound physical state (it has all of its body parts, etc.) - Do you find any jad'a' in it (i.e., any defect, such as an ear or a nose that is cut off)?" [Al-Bukhari: 4775 and Muslim 2658]

Then Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) said: "And recite if you wish

﴿فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ﴾

"Allah's Fitrah (i.e., Allah's Islamic Monotheism), with which He has created mankind. No change let there be in Khalq-illah (i.e., the religion of Allah – Islamic Monotheist). [Quran 30:30]

When it comes to purifying your soul and keeping it in check, you must appreciate the fact that Allah does not burden a person with more than he can bear.

﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾

"Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope" [Quran 2:286.]

It is from the vast mercy of Allah - the Most Merciful, the Most Gracious - that the religion of Islam is made easy and not difficult or harsh. That being the case, one might ask, how can one go about disciplining one's soul and habituating it to the obedience of Allah?

In answering this question, we need to consider it from various vantage points.

First, you must have sure knowledge that sins are from your own self, while good deeds are from Allah. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ﴾

"Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allah, but whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourself" [Quran 4:79]

So when a person is afflicted with evil, he is being rewarded for the evil he previously did. "Is from yourself" in the above Verse means: Is a result of your sinning.

Consider the situation of the best generation that mankind has seen - that of the Prophet's Companions (May Allah be pleased with them all). On the day of Badr, the Prophet's Companions decided to ransom their prisoners, for which they were reproached. Then certain Companions disobeyed the Prophet's orders during the Battle of Uhud. As a result, 70 of the Prophet's Companions (May Allah be pleased with them all) died, one of Prophet's teeth broke, his helmet smashed into his head, and blood poured down his noble face. About the cause and effect nature of this occurrence, Allah (SWT) said:

﴿أَوَلَمَّا أَصَبْتُمْ مُمْسِيَةً قَدْ أَصَبْتُمْ مِثْلَهَا قُلْتُمْ أَنَّى هَذَا قُلْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِكُمْ﴾

"(What is the matter with you?) When a single disaster smites you, although you smote (your enemies) with one twice as great, you say: "From where does this come to us?" Say (to them), "It is from your selves (because of your evil deeds)" [Quran 3:165.]

In another Verse, Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ إِثْمًا فَإِنَّمَا يَكْسِبُهُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ﴾

"And whoever earns sin, he earns it only against himself" [Quran 4:111]

So whereas good deeds are profitable to the soul, evil deeds are detrimental to it.

Second, you must know with certainty that Allah advised and informed human beings about the truth. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَصَائِرُ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ. وَمَنْ عَمِيَ فَعَلَيْهَا . . .﴾

"Verily, proofs have come to you from your Lord, so whosoever sees, will do so for (the good of) his own self, and whosoever blinds himself, will do so to his own harm" [Quran 6:104]

Allah has made clear to us both the path of goodness and the path of evil. Each one of us knows both truth and falsehood. Whoever then chooses to see, or in other words to follow the truth, then he does so for his own benefit. And whoever decides to remain blind, or in other words to refuse to accept the truth, to turn away from the truth, to follow his soul and the Devil - then he does so to his own harm. In order to understand the internal vision, or lack thereof, that I am referring to here, contemplate this Verse:

﴿فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِن تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ ﴿٤٦﴾﴾

"Verily, it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts which are in the breasts that grow blind" [Quran 22:46.]

Third, you should appreciate the fact that Allah has appointed a protector over each and every soul:

﴿إِنْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ ۝٤﴾

"There is no human being but has a protector over him (or her) (i.e., angels in charge of each human being guarding him, writing his good and bad deeds, etc.) [Quran 86:4]

Fourth, if you truly want to discipline your soul, constantly remind it of the terrifying events it will be faced with in the Hereafter. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي غَمَرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَاسِطُوا أَيْدِيهِمْ
أَخْرِجُوا أَنفُسَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ . . .﴾

"And if you could but see when the Zalimun (pol theists and wrong-doers, etc.) are in the agonies of death, while the angels are stretching forth their hands (saying):
"Deliver your souls! This day you shall be recompensed with the torment of degradation" [Quran 6:93]

Say to your soul:

'O rebellious soul of mine: what will your situation be like at the moment of death if you continue to be one of the wrongdoers? How will you be able to contend with angels that have black faces and that will strike you violently with severe punishment until they are done removing you from your body? O soul of mine, when you are steered towards your Lord so that you will be asked about your negligence, how wretched indeed will your situation be!

﴿وَجَاءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّعَهَا سَاقِبٌ وَشَهِيدٌ ۝١١﴾

"And every person will come forth along with an (angel) to drive (him), and an (angel) to bear witness" [Quran 50:21.]

At that time, a witness will come and bear witness to what you did. What excuse will you have when you stand before the All-Mighty, before He Who takes His slaves to account for their evil deeds? You will be looking for some way to ransom yourself, but you will not find any. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِكُلِّ نَفْسٍ ظَلَمَتْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَافْتَدَتْ بِهِ. وَأَسْرُوا النَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا
رَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ وَفُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ۝٥٤﴾

"And if every person who had wronged (by disbelieving in Allah and by worshipping others besides Allah), possessed all that is on earth, and sought to ransom himself

therewith (it will not be accepted), and they would feel in their hearts regret when they see the tenant and they will be judged with justice, and no wrong will be done unto them." [Quran 10:54]

You will then be willing to ransom yourself with all that is on the earth. And then, when it is too late, you will come to know the base value of this world. You will come to know how negligent you really were in fulfilling Allah's rights over you. You will come to the painful realization about the reality of wealth, children, status, power, and all material things in this world: that none of them are worth anything at all; in fact, all of them put together are worth less than two units of prayer you can now perform in the darkness of the night, and less than charity that you can now give to an orphan. O rebellious soul of mine: return to the truth and repent to your Lord!

Fifth, you must make sure that you have the necessary requisites that lead to repentance, namely you must fear Allah and then forbid your soul from sinning. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ﴾

"But as for him who feared standing before his Lord, and restrained himself from impure evil desires, and lusts" [Quran 79:40]

Therefore, you should fear standing before your Lord, Creator, and Provider, Who on that Day (the Day of Resurrection) will indeed be angry. And you must be afraid of Allah's judgment regarding you. If you fear Allah as you truly should fear Him, then you will stay away from all that He is not pleased with.

Sixth, you must not obediently surrender to your soul; but rather you must stand up to your soul and hold it accountable for its actions, as did Adam and his wife. When they disobeyed their Lord, they didn't surrender to their soul; rather they held it accountable and said:

﴿رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾﴾

"Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If you forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers" [Quran 7:23.]

This is the way of those who repent, those who do not allow one sin to lead to another, as opposed to Iblis (the Devil). After worshipping Allah for a long time, Iblis disobeyed Him. After he sinned, Iblis didn't try to wipe out his sin by holding himself accountable and feeling contrite for his actions; to the contrary, he followed up his sin with another sin - that of pride and arrogance. Because of that, his final abode is the Hell-fire. The problem with many human beings is that, in this regard, they follow in the footsteps of the Shaitan, and not of Adam and his wife Allah said:

﴿سَاءَ مَثَلًا الْقَوْمُ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَأَنفُسُهُمْ كَانُوا بِظُلْمٍ ﴿١٧٧﴾﴾

"Evil is the parable of the people who reject Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, signs, etc.), and used to wrong their own selves" [Quran 7:177]

Allah mentioned to us the example of a person upon whom He bestowed knowledge. Forgetting that he would one day stand before his Lord, that person clung to the earth and followed his desires. About him Allah said:

﴿وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَنْكُنَّهُ بِهَا أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَفِثْلُهُ
كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحَمَلَ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثُ أَوْ تَتْرُكُهُ يَلْهَثُ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ
الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٧٦﴾﴾

"So his parable is the parable of a dog: if you drive him away, he lolls his tongue out, or if you leave him alone, he (still) lolls his tongue out. Such is the parable of the people who reject Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) So relate the stories, perhaps they may reflect." [Quran 7:176]

For such a person - one who does not hold himself accountable for his actions - it makes no difference whether he has knowledge or not, for in both cases he will yearn for the world, not the Hereafter.

Seventh, always bear in mind that the Shaitan (the Devil) is going to disassociate himself from you in the Hereafter. The Shaitan is the one who makes evil deeds seem comely to your eye or to your inner eye; he is the one who encourages you to sin; he is the one who cheers you on when you are disobeying your Lord; but he is also the one who is going to completely disassociate himself from you in the Hereafter, by saying that he shares no blame in your wrongdoing. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعَدَ الْحَقُّ وَوَعَدْتُكُمْ
فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ وَمَا كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي فَلَا
تَلُمُونِي وَلَوْلَا أَنْفُسَكُمْ مَا أَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُصْرِخِيَّ إِنِّي
كَفَرْتُ بِمَا أَشْرَكْتُمُونِ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾﴾

"And Shaitan (Satan) will say when the matter has been decided: "Verily, Allah promised you a promise of truth. And I too promised you, but I betrayed you. I had no authority over you except that I called you, so you responded to me. So blame me not, but blame yourselves. I cannot help you, nor can you help me. I deny your former act in associating me (Satan) as a partner with Allah (by obeying me in the life of the world). Verily, there is a painful torment for the Zalimum (polytheists and wrongdoers, etc.)."[Quran 14:22]

This is what our souls will be faced with tomorrow. The Shaitan will say: Don't blame me! Blame your own selves! This is why we must blame ourselves now, before the day comes when doing so will be of no avail! Eight, sell your soul to your Creator. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ﴾

"And of mankind is he who would sell himself, seeking the pleasure of Allah" [Quran 2:207]

When you do so, the chains that tie you down will be broken, so that when you pass through this transient life, you will enter into the bliss of the eternal Hereafter.

Ninth, avoid passionate love, particularly of the unlawful kind, but even of the law up kind when it goes beyond proper bounds. Of course, a husband loves his wife and vice versa. And of course, when a man looks at the woman he wants to marry (when he is about to lawfully propose and not when he is staring at stranger women), the seeds of love begin to grow. But what is unhealthy is to uncontrollably and passionately love someone beyond the bounds of normal love, whereby one's heart is consumed by love for that person; more than being just unhealthy, such love can often, depending on the circumstances, be forbidden. Many people have wasted away as a result of passionate love, a love that came at the price of their physical health and even of their religion.

That is why, from the very beginning, one should lower his gaze, for prevention is the best remedy. The disease of passionate love is especially dangerous; the further one falls in love with another person, the less chance one has of recovering from that attachment.

To ward off this disease, one needs to fear Allah' to discipline one's soul, and, in order to gain perspective, to remember the inner faults of the object of one's love.

Tenth, you must not satisfy all of your soul's desires; otherwise, you will be relegated from the role of leader to that of follower. What raises a human being above an animal is that he possesses a mind that warns him against following false desires. If you do not take control with your mind, then your desires will take over, and then even an animal will have a better excuse than you will.

In order to overcome false desires, you will have to endure many hardships, but enduring hardships is easier than facing the consequences of fulfilling false desires. If a person constantly fulfills a given desire, he will not be able to stay away from it; in essence, he will become an addict, like a person who is addicted to sex or alcohol.

Eleventh, just as a people will desperately attempt to drive the plague outside of their city, you must drive pride and arrogance out of your heart. Indeed, Allah \MJ has, in many Verses of the Qur'an, promised the proud and the arrogant nothing but misguidance and destruction. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ آيَاتِيَ الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ﴾

"I shall turn away from My Ayat (Verses of the Qur'an) those who behave arrogantly on the earth, without a right." [Quran 7:146]

What this means is that Allah prevents them from perceiving the proofs and the signs that lead to guidance, to an understanding and appreciation of Allah's religion, and to the obedience of Allah. And because they behave arrogantly without having the right to do so, Allah humiliates them by imposing upon them ignorance.

In another Verse, Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَأَسْفَتْحُوا وَخَابَ كُلُّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ ﴿١٥﴾﴾

"But they (the Messengers) sought victory and help [from their Lord (Allah)], and every obstinate, arrogant dictator (who refuses to believe in the Oneness of Allah) was brought to a complete loss and destruction" [Quran 14:15]

And in yet another Verse, Allah said:

﴿الْقِيَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ كُلُّ كَفَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ مَنَاعٍ لِلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ مُّرِيبٍ ﴿٢٥﴾﴾

"(Allah will say to the angels): "Both of you throw (Order from Allah to the two angels) into Hell, every stubborn disbeliever (in the Oneness of Allah, in His Messengers, etc.). Hinderer of good, transgressor, doubter" [Quran 50:24; 25]

The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«اِحْتَجَّتِ النَّارُ وَالْجَنَّةُ، فَقَالَتْ هَذِهِ: يَدْخُلْنِي الْجَبَّارُونَ
وَالْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ، وَقَالَتْ هَذِهِ: يَدْخُلْنِي الضُّعَفَاءُ وَالْمَسَاكِينُ فَقَالَ
اللَّهُ - عَزَّ وَجَلَّ - لِهَذِهِ: أَنْتِ عَذَابِي أُعَذِّبُ بِكَ مَنْ أَشَاءُ، وَرَبِّمَا
قَالَ: أُصِيبُ بِكَ مَنْ أَشَاءُ، وَقَالَ لِهَذِهِ: أَنْتِ رَحْمَتِي أَرْحَمُ بِكَ مَنْ
أَشَاءُ، وَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِنْكُمَا مِلْؤُهَا»

"The Hell-fire and Paradise argued with one another. This one (i.e., the Hell-fire) said, 'The arrogant and proud ones will enter me.' And this one (i.e., Paradise) said, 'The weak and the poor will enter me.' Then Allah - 'Azza WA Jall (the Possessor of might and majesty) said to this one (i.e., to the Hell -fire), 'you are my punishment: through you I will punish whomsoever, I please. 'Perhaps He said, ' I will afflict with you whomsoever I please. 'And He said to this one (i.e., to Paradise), you are my mercy: through you I will have mercy on whomsoever I please. And each one of you both will have its fill" [Muslim: 2846]

Therefore, every person of sound mind must forsake arrogance and pride. In doing so, you must not distinguish between small and large matters; pride in anything, no matter how insignificant it may seem, can be the cause of your ruin. Consider the example of the man who, while in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), ate with his left hand. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«كُلْ بِيَمِينِكَ»

"Eat with your right hand" [Muslim 2021].

The man said, "I am not able to do so." The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«لَا اسْتَطَعْتُ»

"May you not be able to do so?" [Muslim 2021]

After which he said, "It was only pride that prevented him (from eating with his right hand)." Becoming paralyzed, the man never thereafter raised it to his mouth. Certain commentators pointed out that the Prophet did not invoke against the man because he ate with his left hand, but because of his pride, which prevented him from obeying the Prophet's Command to eat with his right hand.

Twelfth, you must stay far away from Riya. In defining Riya, Shaikh Muhanunad bin 'Uthaimin said in Al- Qawlul-Mufid (p. 426): "It is to do a deed with the intention of showing it off to other people." The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) Said:

«مَنْ رَأَى رَأَى اللَّهُ بِهِ وَمَنْ سَمِعَ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ بِهِ»

"Whoever does (good deeds) for show (i.e., not for Allah but instead to show them off to people), then Allah will expose him (before everyone on the Day of Resurrection). And whoever does (good deeds) for reputation, then Allah will make manifest his intentions to the creation" [Muslim 2986]

If a person truly knows Allah, then he will perform good deeds purely for Him. It is only when one has little knowledge about Allah, and when one holds important the opinions of other people, that one commits the sin of Riya. Considering Riya to be a disease, which it in fact is, we can correctly say that people who are afflicted with it are at various stages of their illness. By performing a good deed, some seek nothing other than the praise of people; others want to please Allah, but at the same time want people to praise them; and yet others initially seek only the pleasure of Allah, but then when they realize that other people are watching them, they beautify and improve their performance of a good deed, hoping to be praised. In this last case, we see how the disease of Riya taints an otherwise good deed.

Generally speaking, Riya is a form of minor Shirk (Shirk being to associate partners with Allah in worship), because in being guilty of Riya, one does a good deed for other than Allah. In some cases, however, Riya can even reach the level of being major Shirk. When he gave an example of minor Shirk, Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim - may Allah have mercy on him, said, "To be guilty of a small amount of Riya?" We can infer from this statement, therefore, that a great amount of Riya might lead to major Shirk.

What happens, though, when a person performs an act of worship that is tainted, at least to some degree, by Riya? We cannot give one answer that applies to every person and every situation; rather, the answer differs from person to person.

First, consider the case of a person who, from the very outset, intended not the pleasure of Allah ' but the pleasure of people. For example, a man stands up to pray in order to show off his worship to other people; in no way whatsoever was he seeking the pleasure of Allah - Such a person is guilty of outright Shirk (associating partners with Allah in worship), and his act of worship is false, or in other words, null and void.

Second, consider the case of a person whose intention becomes tainted during an act of worship. What I mean by this is that in the beginning, one is sincere and is seeking only the pleasure of Allah, but then

during the act of worship, he is, at least to some degree, seeking the pleasure of people. In such a situation, the beginning part of a person's act of worship is correct, whereas the latter part of it is null and void. If for example, a man has set aside \$100 for charity. He gives away \$50, sincerely seeking the pleasure of Allah - But as for the remaining \$50, he shows off his generosity to others when he gives it away. His first act of charity was correct and sound, while the second was false and nullified. The two are not bound to one another, which is not the case in another situation, as we will shortly see.

When a person is performing an act of worship purely for Allah, and is then suddenly overcome with a desire to show off his worship to people, how he reacts to this desire is what counts most. If he is not at peace with the desire to show off his worship to others, if he hates the idea of doing so and turns away from it, then he has done no wrong. This is because the Prophet said:

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَجَاوَزَ عَنْ أُمَّيِّ مَا حَدَّثَتْ بِهِ نَفْسَهَا، مَا لَمْ تَعْمَلْ، أَوْ تَكَلِّمْ»

"Indeed, Allah pardoned (the people of) my nation for what they say [to their souls (in terms of thoughts of doing evil, thoughts that come and go)], as long as (one of them) does not act (out that evil) or speak (that evil)." [Al-Bukhari: 5269 and Muslim: 127]

For example, a man stands up to pray with the intention of pleasing no one but Allah. Then, in the second unit of his prayer, he senses an inner desire to show off his prayer; but he then strives hard to ward off that desire. Such a person is not guilty of Riya, and his prayer is not negatively affected in the least.

Conversely, if one does not ward off the desire to show off one's deeds, but instead welcomes it and acts upon it, then his entire act of worship is nullified. This is because the latter part of his worship is based on its beginning part, and is inextricably linked to it (as opposed to the charity example mentioned above: the two acts of charity were distinctly separate from one another).

Finally, if the thought of Riya creeps into a person's heart only after he completes an act of worship, it has no negative impact on that act whatsoever, though other issues, such as pride and self-conceit, might come into play.

Thirteenth, you must ward off the disease of jealousy. AL-Hasad is the Arabic word for jealousy. When one harbors feelings of Al-Hasad towards someone else, he does not necessarily want the same blessing or one of equal value; rather, he simply longs for that person to lose the blessing that he enjoys. The inner pain he feels can only be removed from his heart when the other person loses the blessing that aroused his jealousy in the first place.

The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«لَا تَحَاسَدُوا، وَلَا تَقَاطَعُوا، وَلَا تَبَاغَضُوا وَلَا تَدَابَرُوا، وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا»

"Do not be jealous of one another; do not cut one another off; do not hate one another; do not show enmity towards one another; rather, be Allah's slaves, brothers unto one another." [Muslim: 2559].

He also said:

«إِيَّاكُمْ وَالظَّنَّ، فَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ أَكْذَبُ الْحَدِيثِ وَلَا تَحَسَّسُوا وَلَا
تَجَسَّسُوا، وَلَا تَنَافَسُوا، وَلَا تَحَاسَدُوا، وَلَا تَبَاغَضُوا، وَلَا
تَدَابَرُوا، وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا»

"Beware of false suspicion, for indeed, false suspicion is the most lying kind of speech. Do not listen in on the private affairs of others; do not spy on one another; do not vie with one another (for worldly gain); do not be jealous of one another; do not hate one another; do not show enmity towards one another; rather, be Allah's slaves, brothers unto one another." [Al- Bukhari: 6066 and Muslim:2563 Abu Dawod:4918]

You would do well to remember that the first sin ever perpetrated was jealousy: Iblis was jealous of Adam for the ranking he enjoyed. Also, jealousy was the root cause of the first murder that took place on the face of the earth. This occurred when one of the sons of Adam killed his brother because of the jealousy he felt in his heart. It therefore behooves us to search out for means to protect ourselves from the disease of jealousy, which is one of the greatest and most dangerous of diseases that the human heart can be afflicted with. As with all diseases that afflict the heart, jealousy can only be combated with knowledge and action. As for knowledge, you must know with certainty that jealousy will hurt you both in your worldly prosperity and in your religion. When you are jealous of another person, you are in fact bitter about Allah's Divine Preordainment. By being jealous, you question Allah's justice and wisdom in distributing His blessings among His slaves. This, without doubt, is a grave sin that puts your very faith into question. And furthermore, by being jealous, you are not being sincere to your Muslim brothers, and you are parting from the ways of the Prophets and the righteous ones who wanted nothing but goodness to befall their brothers; and you will have become like Iblis and the rest of the disbelievers, who all long for hardships and affliction to befall the believers.

Certainly, therefore, you can see how jealousy is filth in a person's heart. In fact, jealousy consumes the good deeds of the heart, just as fire consumes wood; and erases the good deeds of the heart just as the night erases the day.

How does jealousy affects your material, worldly prosperity? By being jealous, you will feel pain in your body, and you will continue to be in a state of wretchedness and misery. With each additional blessing that Allah bestows upon your enemy, you will feel an additional amount of pain and wretchedness. You will feel what you want your enemies to feel, and what your enemies want you to feel; so in the end, the only person that suffers is the jealous person. To really understand this reality, contemplate the saying of Allah,

﴿وَلَا يَحِيقُ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئُ إِلَّا بِأَهْلِهِ﴾

"But the evil plot encompasses only him who makes it" [Quran 35:43.]

The Shaitan (The Devil)

Allah said:

﴿وَيَدْعُ الْإِنْسَانُ بِالشَّرِّ دُعَاءَهُ بِالْخَيْرِ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ عَجُولًا ﴿١١﴾﴾

"And man invokes (Allah) for evil as he invokes (Allah) for good and man is ever hasty (i.e., if he is angry with somebody, he invokes (saying): "O Allah! Curse him," and that one should not do, but one should be patient). "[Quran 17:11.]

Ever hasty as he is, man can just as easily follow the Shaitan as he can the truth. The direction man takes in life depends upon whether he embraces his desires and follows after them as does a dog its master, or whether he disdainfully turns away from his whims and desires. If a man acts in accordance with his anger, lust, and other emotions that we can group under the title 'desires,' then it is through those desires that the Shaitan takes control over him, so that his heart is like a nest for the Shaitan.

Conversely, if one combats his desires and does not allow them to take control of him, he resembles, in terms of his manners, angels, also, he forms a close link to angels, who supplicate for him. But no human heart is free from some form of negative desire - lust, anger, avarice, greed, long-term worldly ambitions, etc. It is no surprise, therefore, that the Shaitan is free to roam a person's heart and whisper evil thoughts to it. Since lusts and desires are mixed in the blood and flesh of a human being, the Shaitan can easily flow throughout his body. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَجْرِي مِنْ ابْنِ آدَمَ مَجْرَى الدَّمِ»

"Verily, the Shaitan flows through the son of Adam just as blood flows through him." [Muslim 2174, Abu Dawood 4719.]

Here are some of the characteristics that make it easy for the Shaitan to enter a person's heart:

- 1) Anger and lust.
- 2) A desire to fill oneself with food.
- 3) A love for adornment in one's furniture, clothing, and home.
- 4) Greed and avarice.
- 5) Hastiness and a general lack of deliberation in one's affairs.
- 6) A desire for wealth.
- 7) Miserliness and a fear of poverty.
- 8) Blind adherence to desires and to schools of thought.
- 9) A preoccupation with differences of opinion in general, and differences between schools of thought in particular.

10) The thinking and talking of commoners about the reality of Allah's Self.

11) Harboring evil thoughts about other Muslims.

You must vigilantly protect yourself from the evil plots of the Shaitan. Remember that he is the one who caused your father to be expelled from Paradise and that he is the one who tirelessly works to prevent you from returning to it. Your enmity to the Shaitan dates back to the creation of Adam . It was, after all, his superior attitude towards your father and his refusal to perform prostration before him that led to his being removed from the company of angels. When that happened, he lost all hope of mercy; he knew then, and he knows now, that he will spend eternity in the Hell-fire. His only burning desire now is to make as many children of Adam join him in the Hell-fire as he possibly can. He tries to convince human beings to commit Shirk (to associate partners with Allah in worship), and if he fails in that regard, he is content to make people commit vile and lewd acts. Despite Shaitan's tireless efforts to lead you astray, you have no excuse to follow him, for Allah warned you about him. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿يَبْنَىِٔ ءَادَمَ لَا يَفْنِنَنَّكُمْ الشَّيْطٰنُ كَمَا اَخْرَجَ اٰبَوَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ﴾

"O Children of Adam! Let not Shaitan (the Devil) deceive you, as he got your parents [Adam and Hawwa (Eve)] out of Paradise" [Quran 7:27]

It is strange indeed to see someone who knows his Lord yet disobeys Him, and knows the Shaitan (the Devil) yet obeys him. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿اَفَتَسْخٰدُوْنَهُ وَاٰلِيَّاهُ مِنْ دُوْنِيْ وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ يٰۤاٰنَسَ لِلظَّالِمِيْنَ
بَدَلًا﴾

"Will you then take him (Shaitan) and his off spring as protectors and helpers rather than me while they are enemies to you? What an evil is the exchange for the Zalimun (polytheists, and wrong-doers, etc.)." [Quran 18:50].

Repeated Warnings in the Qur'an about the Shaitan (The Devil)

Allah said:

﴿وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوْا خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ اِنَّهٗ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٦٨﴾﴾

"And follow not the footsteps of Shaitan (Satan). Verily, he is to you an open enemy." [Quran 2:168.]

Over and over again in the Qur'an, Allah forbids us from falling prey to the tricks of Shaitan and from following in his footsteps. After all, it is Shaitan who:

﴿يٰۤاْمُرْكُمۡ بِالسُّوْءِ وَالْفَحْشَآءِ وَاَنْ تَقُوْلُوْا عَلٰى اللّٰهِ مَا لَا نَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٦٩﴾﴾

"[Shaitan (Satan)] commands you what is evil and Fahsha (sinful), and that you should say against Allah what you know not." [Quran 2:169.]

This Verse describes the full-time job of Shaitan: he orders people to do evil and wicked deeds, and he commands them to speak lies against Allah ' by deeming lawful that which is forbidden, and forbidden that which is lawful.

One of the ways in which he achieves these ends is by threatening people with poverty.

﴿الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ﴾

"Shaitan (the Devil) threatens you with poverty." [Quran 2:268.]

What this means is that he instills the fear of poverty into their hearts, so that they refrain from giving Zakat, the charity that Allah has made obligatory upon Muslims.

Throughout history, Shaitan has been setting traps for human beings; sadly, he has ensnared many. Of them, some returned to the truth and repented to their Lord; but others continued to degenerate and sink to lower and lower depths until they finally became rank and file members of Shaitan's army. Examples of the former category are those who turned away from battle on the Day of Uhud; basically, these were all of the Muslims with the exception of 12 men. Shaitan was able to lower them because of their sins. But then they repented, and Allah forgave them. Regarding their actions, Allah said:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوا وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٥﴾﴾

"Those of you who turned back on the day the two hosts met (i.e., the battle of Uhud), it was Shaitan (the Devil) who caused them to backslide (run away from the battlefield) because of some (sins) they had earned. But Allah, indeed, has forgiven them. Surely, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing. [Quran 3:155.]

Among those who fell prey to the tricks of Shaitan and continued to follow his way down the path of destruction is the man described in the following Verse:

﴿وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْفَاوِيسِ ﴿١٧٥﴾ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحْمِلَ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ أَوْ تَتْرُكْهُ يَلْهَثُ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَاقْصِصْ الْقِصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٧٦﴾﴾

"And recite (O Muhammad) to them the story of him to whom we gave Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.), but he threw them away, so Shaitan (the Devil) followed him up, and he became of those who went astray. And had we willed, we would surely have elevated him therewith but he clung to the earth and followed his own vain desire. So his parable is the parable of a dog: if you drive him away, he lolls his tongue out, or if you leave him alone, he (still) lolls his tongue out. Such is the parable of the people who reject Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.). So relate the stories, perhaps they may reflect"
 [Quran 7:175,176.]

Though effective with people of weak faith, Shaitan's tricks do not have a potent effect upon those who believe and know the truth. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا ﴿٧﴾﴾

"Ever feeble indeed is the plot of Shaitan (the Devil)" [Quran 4:76.]

Strong believers have a sort of immunity to Shaitan's tricks because they cling firmly to the rope of Allah. When Shaitan whispers to them, they immediately remember Allah's punishment and reward. Discerning clearly between truth and falsehood, they cling to the truth and seek refuge in Allah from the evil plots of Shaitan. Therefore, Shaitan has a very weak effect on those who seek refuge in Allah.

﴿وَأَمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٠﴾
 إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٠١﴾﴾

"And if an evil whisper comes to you from Shaitan (the Devil), then seek refuge with Allah. Verily, He is All- Hearer, All-Knower. Verily, those who are Al-Muttaqun (the pious), when an evil thought comes to them from Shaitan (the Devil), they remember (Allah), and (indeed) they then see (aright)." Quran 7:200, 201.]

Shaitan adorns evil deeds in the eyes of people, but when he himself sees Allah's signs, he washes his hands of his fellow devils from mankind. On the Day of Badr, Shaitan went to the polytheists in the form of a man named Suraqah bin Malik, who at the time was one of the chieftains of the polytheists. He said to the polytheists, "You will not be defeated today. I am your neighbor (i.e., I will help you in your affairs), and I will fight alongside you. "But when he saw the approach of the angels, he fled from the battlefield. "Are you forsaking us?" the people called from behind. In a panic-stricken tone, he answered, "Indeed, I see that which you do not see (i.e., the angels)! Indeed, I fear the punishment of Allah!"

﴿وَإِذْ زَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَلَهُمْ وَقَالَ لَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ
النَّاسِ وَإِنِّي جَارٌ لَكُمْ فَلَمَّا تَرَأَتِ الْفِئْتَانِ نَكَصَ عَلَى عَقَبَيْهِ وَقَالَ
إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنْكُمْ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ
الْعِقَابِ ﴿٤٨﴾﴾

"And (remember) when Shaitan (the Devil) made their (evil) deeds seem fair to them and said, "No one of mankind can overcome you this Day (of the battle of Badr) and verily, I am your neighbor (for each and every help)" But when the two forces came in sight of each other, he ran away and said, "Verily, I have nothing to do with you. Verily! I see what you see' not. Verily! I fear Allah, for Allah is Severe in punishment." [Quran [8:48,]

Consider the utter vileness of the accursed Shaitan: he is the one who caused our parents to be removed from Paradise; he is the one who caused Adam's son to kill his brother; and he is the one who incited problems between Yusuf and his brothers. These were righteous people imagine, then, the effects of Shaitan's plots on people of weak faith, people like us today. Throughout history, whenever any Prophet came, hoping that all of his people would believe, Shaitan stood in his way, so that while some believed, other disbelieved. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّى أَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ
فِي أَمْنِيَّتِهِ فَيَنْسَخُ اللَّهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ وَاللَّهُ
عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٥٢﴾﴾

"Never did we send a Messenger or a Prophet before you, but when he did recite the Revelation or narrated or spoke, Shaitan (the Devil) threw (some falsehood) in it. But Allah abolishes that which Shaitan (the Devil) throws in. Then Allah establishes His Revelations. And Allah is All- Knower, All-Wise" [Quran 22:52]

Shaitan's Persistence in Misguiding People

Shaitan knows fully well that, in the end, truth will overcome falsehood. He has even lost all hope of being worshipped by true Monotheists (i.e., Muslims). But despite these realities, he is content to misguide Muslims and to sow the seeds of dissension among them. He knows that he will fail in the end, but fueled by unmitigated hatred for mankind, he desperately and tirelessly tries to bring them down with him.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ قَدْ آيَسَ أَنْ يَعْبُدَهُ الْمُضَلُّونَ، وَلَكِنْ فِي التَّحْرِيشِ
بَيْنَهُمْ»

"Indeed, Shaitan has lost all hope of being worshipped by those who pray (i.e., Muslims), but he (is content to) sow dissension between them" [Muslim: 2812]

He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) also said:

«إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ قَعَدَ لِابْنِ آدَمَ بِأَطْرُقِهِ، فَقَعَدَ لَهُ بِطَرِيقِ الْإِسْلَامِ، فَقَالَ: تُسَلِّمُ وَتَذَرُ دِينَكَ وَدِينَ آبَائِكَ وَأَبَاءِ آبَائِكَ؟ فَعَصَاهُ فَأَسْلَمَ، ثُمَّ قَعَدَ لَهُ بِطَرِيقِ الْهِجْرَةِ، فَقَالَ: تُهَاجِرُ وَتَدَعُ أَرْضَكَ وَسَمَاءَكَ - وَإِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْمُهَاجِرِ كَمَثَلِ الْفَرَسِ فِي الطَّوْلِ - فَعَصَاهُ فَهَاجَرَ، ثُمَّ قَعَدَ لَهُ بِطَرِيقِ الْجِهَادِ فَقَالَ: تُجَاهِدُ! فَهُوَ جَهْدٌ لِلنَّفْسِ وَالْمَالِ، فَتَقَاتِلُ، فَتُقْتَلُ فَتُنكَحُ الْمَرْأَةُ، وَيُقَسَّمُ الْمَالُ، فَعَصَاهُ فَجَاهَدَ، فَمَنْ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ كَانَ حَقًّا عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يُدْخِلَهُ الْجَنَّةَ...»

"Verily, Shaitan sits (i.e., lies in ambush) upon the pathways of the son of Adam. He sits waiting for him on the path of Islam and says, 'Will you accept Islam and forsake your religion, the religion of your fathers and forefathers?' He (the son of Adam, i.e., a human being) disobeys him (Shaitan) and embraces Islam. He (Shaitan) then sits waiting for him on the path of Hijrah (migration). He says, 'Will you migrate and leave your land and your sky?' - He disobeys Shaitan and migrates. Then Shaitan sits waiting for him on the path of Jihad. He says, 'Will you perform Jihad? It is nothing but strain on your soul and on your wealth. You will fight and be killed, and then your woman will be married (to someone else), and your wealth will be distributed.' He disobeys Shaitan and performs Jihad. Whosoever does that, then it is a right upon Allah to admit him into Paradise" [Sahihul-jami: 1652]

Shaitan is the archenemy of mankind; he works tirelessly to lead mankind astray; and his chief goal is to make human beings perform unlawful acts; all these things being true, any person of sound mind will make the necessary preparations to defend himself against Shaitan's plotting. After all, Shaitan vowed by the Might of Allah to continue to lead human beings astray until their souls part from their bodies. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ قَالَ: وَعِزَّتِكَ! يَا رَبِّ! لَا أَبْرِحُ أُغْوِي عِبَادَكَ مَا دَامَتْ أَرْوَاحُهُمْ فِي أَجْسَادِهِمْ، فَقَالَ الرَّبُّ: وَعِزَّتِي وَجَلَالِي لَا أَزَالُ أَغْفِرُ لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَغْفَرُونِي»

"Verily, the Shaitan says, 'By Your Might, my Lord, I will continue to misguide your slaves as long as their souls are in their bodies.' And then the Lord (Allah) says, 'By My Might and My Majesty, I will continue to forgive them as long as they ask me for forgiveness.'" [Sahihul-jami: 1650].

If Shaitan wages a continuous and unmitigated war against us, the only sensible thing we can do is to busy ourselves in launching counterattacks and in foiling his evil plots.

Shaitan and Aqidah (Beliefs)

Shaitan knows that having a correct set of beliefs is the path that leads to Paradise. He knows that if a person dies upon 'La ilaha illallah (None has the right to be worshipped but Allah),' he will enter Paradise. If Shaitan knows that a person believes in La ilaha illallah, he will not necessarily attack his faith directly; rather, if he knows that the person's heart is weak, he will try to further weaken his faith in an indirect manner. For example, shaitan will make him think about matters regarding: which only Allah has knowledge.

Noble sister, you must know and appreciate the fact that your mind has limits; in fact, everything on earth has limits. The mind is only able 'to picture something based on previous knowledge or experience. If you were to mention a predatory animal to someone, an immediate picture would pop up in his mind. He would see two eyes, a mouth, sharp claws, and four legs. He is basing his imagined form of the animal on previous knowledge. If what you were referring to is different from the thing he is imagining, the difference will at best be slight, perhaps in color or in size. But the overall shape of the animal will be similar enough, for when you mention a predatory animal, he will surely not, for example, picture a plant or a tree.

But if you mention something regarding which he has no previous knowledge, then the matter is altogether different. For example, if you asked him the meaning of a word he never heard before, for all he knows the word can denote an animal, a plant, a country, an inanimate object, or anything else. He will not correctly be able to picture in his mind the thing to which you are referring.

Therefore, how can you - or any other person for that matter - be expected to go beyond the set limits of your mind. If you are asked to give a precise description of one of the fruits in Paradise, you will not be able to do so, because you have never seen it before, and because you know that it does not resemble anything you've seen before on earth. So what will you do when, for example, Shaitan comes to you and asks you, who created Allah? In such a situation, you must rely on the guidance of the Messenger of Allah and upon the knowledge of the fact that your mind is limited. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ يَأْتِيهِ الشَّيْطَانُ، فَيَقُولُ: مَنْ خَلَقَكَ؟ فَيَقُولُ: اللهُ،
فَيَقُولُ: فَمَنْ خَلَقَ اللهُ؟ فَإِذَا وَجَدَ ذَلِكَ أَحَدَكُمْ فَلْيَقُلْ: آمَنْتُ بِاللهِ
وَرَسُولِهِ، فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ يُذْهِبُ عَنْهُ»

"Indeed, Shaitan comes to one of you and says, 'Who created you?' 'He (i.e., one of you) says, 'Allah.' 'He then says, then who created Allah?' 'If one of you finds this (happening in his self), then let him say, 'I believe in Allah and His Messenger, 'for doing so will drive him (Shaitan and his whisperings) away.' [Sahihul-jami: 1542]

Noble sister, your mind is a blessing from Allah ; use it to discern between truth and falsehood; use it within the realm of its scope and ability. As for what is beyond its scope and ability, you must submit to Allah and have faith. And you must say what the Messenger of Allah commanded you to say: "I believe in Allah and His Messenger."

The Shaitan and Prayer

If Shaitan fails to corrupt a person's beliefs, he doesn't just give up and go away. To the contrary, he tries to attack that person through a different route. He will come to a worshipper and attempt to corrupt his prayer; his goal in doing so is to break the connection between that person and his Lord, or at the very least to prevent him from gaining rewards for his prayer. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ إِذَا قَامَ يُصَلِّي؛ جَاءَ الشَّيْطَانُ، فَلَبَسَ عَلَيْهِ، حَتَّى لَا يَدْرِي كَمْ صَلَّى؟ فَإِذَا وَجَدَ ذَلِكَ أَحَدُكُمْ؟ فَلْيَسْجُدْ سَجْدَتَيْنِ وَهُوَ جَالِسٌ»

"When one of you stands up to pray, Shaitan comes to distract and confuse him, until he no longer knows how many (units) he prayed. If one of you finds this happening to him, let him perform two prostrations while he is (still) seated." [Sahihul-jami:1539]

He also said:

«إِذَا شَكَّ أَحَدُكُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِ، فَلْيُلْقِ الشَّكَّ، وَلْيَبْنِ عَلَى الْيَقِينِ، فَإِنْ اسْتَيْقَنَ التَّمَامَ؛ سَجَدَ سَجْدَتَيْنِ، فَإِنْ كَانَتْ صَلَاتُهُ تَامَةً؟ كَانَتْ الرَّكْعَةُ نَافِلَةً وَالسَّجْدَتَانِ نَافِلَةً، وَإِنْ كَانَتْ نَاقِصَةً؛ كَانَتْ الرَّكْعَةُ تَمَامَ الصَّلَاةِ، وَالسَّجْدَتَانِ تُرْغِمَانِ أَنْفَ الشَّيْطَانِ»

"If one of you doubts (how many units he performed) while he is praying, then let him cast off the doubt and base (his prayer) on certainty (i.e., if he doubts whether he prayed 3 or 4 units, he is sure that he performed at least 3 units, so he should continue to perform his prayer based upon that certainty). When he is sure that he is finished (i.e., when he is finished praying, having relied on the lower number of units), let him perform two prostrations. If his prayer was (already) complete (i.e., he ended up performing an extra unit after having followed the above mentioned instructions), then the (extra) unit is Nafilah (i.e., equivalent to a voluntary unit of prayer), and the prostrations are Nafilah (voluntary acts of worship). But if the prayer was deficient (i.e., in the above example, he did actually perform only 3 units), then the (additional) unit completes his prayer, and the two prostrations force Shaitan's nose to be stuck in dirt (or: the two prostrations humiliate Shaitan)." [Sahihul-jami: 633.]

Therefore, do not be needlessly upset when you are not sure how many units of prayer you have performed; that is what Shaitan wants to accomplish. Instead, be calm and composed, and do not allow Shaitan to ruin your prayer. All you have to do is perform your prayer based on the number of units you are certain of having performed (i.e., the lower number).

Also, heed the following command of the prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِذَا صَلَّى أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَى سِتْرَةٍ فَلْيَدْنُ مِنْهَا، لَا يَمُرُّ الشَّيْطَانُ بَيْنَهُ
وَبَيْنَهَا»

*"When one of you prays with a barrier before him, then let him draw near to it.
Shaitan cannot pass by between him and the barrier." [Sahihul-jami: 637]*

By drawing near to the barrier, you are giving no room for Shaitan to pass by, and you are blocking ways through which he can negatively affect your prayer.

Shaitan Lies In Ambush Waiting For You to Leave Your Home or To Enter It

In general, Shaitan tries to waylay man at all times and in all places; more particularly, he waits for one to leave his home, so that he can begin his job of tempting, of adorning unlawful things, of encouraging one to lie and cheat, and so on. But he especially relishes the task of waiting for a woman to leave her home. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«الْمَرْأَةُ عَوْرَةٌ، فَإِذَا خَرَجَتْ اسْتَشْرَفَهَا الشَّيْطَانُ»

"A woman is 'Awrah; when she leaves, Shaitan raises his gaze to her (or accosts her)." [Sahihul-jami: 6690]

'Awrah literally means private parts or anything that one is shy of when it comes into plain view. It is said that a woman is called 'Awrah because one is shy to look at her when she comes into plain view. Another opinion in the matter is that a woman is called 'Awrah because most of her body must be covered in the presence of men, or in other words, almost her entire body is private. What this Hadith means is that, when a woman leaves her home, Shaitan makes her appearance comely in the eyes of men or it could also mean that Shaitan fixes his gaze upon her in order to lead her astray. Shaitan is all too well acquainted with the dangers that a misguided woman poses to men and to society at large. He makes her appearance comely in the eyes of weak men, in the hope that they will continue to look at her. The prolonged stare is, after all, the preliminary step of fornication: when the eye looks, the heart wants. The way out of this is to adhere to the rope of Allah 'to remember Allah ' and to overcome and defeat the accursed Shaitan.

The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِذَا خَرَجَ الرَّجُلُ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ فَقَالَ: بِسْمِ اللَّهِ، تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ، لَا
حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ، فَيَقَالَ لَهُ: حَسْبُكَ قَدْ هُدَيْتَ وَكُفِّيتَ،
وَوُفِّيتَ، فَيَتَنَحَّى لَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ، فَيَقُولُ لَهُ شَيْطَانُ آخَرَ: كَيْفَ لَكَ
بِرَجُلٍ قَدْ هُدَيْتَ، وَكُفِّيتَ، وَوُفِّيتَ؟»

*"When a man leaves his home and says, 'In the Name of Allah; I place my complete
trust upon Allah; there is neither might nor power except with Allah,' then it is said to
him, 'That is sufficient for you: you have indeed been guided, provided for, and*

protected.' Shaitan then moves out of his way, and another devil says to him (to the first one), 'How can you take control of a man who has been guided, provided for, and protected? ' [Sahihul-jami: 499]

What harm can the accursed Shaitan inflict upon you when you seek help from Allah? When you say, 'In the name of Allah,' or in other words, 'I begin leaving my home in the name of Allah,' Allah protects you from being harmed by Shaitan. When you say, 'I place my complete trust upon Allah,' remember that Allah is a sufficient guardian, protector, and provider for one who places his complete trust upon Him. And when you remember the weakness of your own soul and acknowledge that you have neither might nor power - by saying, 'There is neither might nor power except with Allah' - Allah makes you firm, and as a result, Shaitan moves out of the way, giving you room to pass by.

Even if Shaitan fails to misguide you when you leave your home, he waits for you to return, in the hope of sharing your food and spending the night with you. Many Muslims today do not know what they are supposed to do when they enter their homes; they are completely oblivious of the fact that Shaitan is lying in ambush for them, ardently hoping that they forget to mention Allah's name when they enter their home, eat their food, and partake of their drink. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِذَا دَخَلَ الرَّجُلُ بَيْتَهُ، فَذَكَرَ اسْمَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى حِينَ يَدْخُلُ، وَحِينَ يَطْعَمُ، قَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ: لَا مَيْتَ لَكُمْ، وَلَا عَشَاءَ هَاهُنَا، وَإِنْ دَخَلَ فَلَمْ يَذْكُرِ اسْمَ اللَّهِ عِنْدَ دُخُولِهِ، قَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ، أَذْرَكْتُمُ الْمَيْتَ، وَإِنْ لَمْ يَذْكُرِ اسْمَ اللَّهِ عِنْدَ مَطْعَمِهِ. قَالَ: أَذْرَكْتُمُ الْمَيْتَ وَالْعَشَاءَ»

"When man enters his home and mentions the Name of Allah upon entering and upon eating, Shaitan says (to his fellow devils), 'You cannot spend the night here, and you have no dinner here.' If he enters without mentioning Allah 'same as he is entering, Shaitan says (to his fellow devils), 'you have found a place to spend the night. 'And if he doesn't mention Allah's name when he eats, Shaitan says, 'You have found both a place to spend the night and dinner. [Muslim: 1297]

If you dedicate your efforts to protecting yourself from Shaitan, you will find that doing so is easy. Relative to the strength one gets from adhering to the rope of Allah ' remaining firm upon the truth, and consistently invoking Allah ' Shaitan's plots are weak and ineffective.

Shaitan Doesn't Leave You Even When You Are Asleep

When you are asleep, Shaitan ties knots over you and strikes the place of each knot; he does this in order to make you lazy, to make you miss your prayer, and to make you wake up in a foul state of mind. It might seem like a harmless ploy on the part of Shaitan to make you lazy, but it is most certainly not; in fact, it is a very insidious ploy that leads to further evil: the lazy person is not strong enough to combat his desires, never mind ward off the whisperings of a tenacious archenemy - Shaitan.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«يَعْقِدُ الشَّيْطَانُ عَلَى قَافِيَةِ رَأْسِ أَحَدِكُمْ - إِذَا هُوَ نَامَ - ثَلَاثَ عُقَدٍ،
يَضْرِبُ مَكَانَ كُلِّ عُقْدَةٍ: عَلَيْكَ لَيْلٌ طَوِيلٌ، فَارْقُدْ، فَإِنِ اسْتَيْقَظَ
فَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ؛ انْحَلَّتْ عُقْدَةٌ، فَإِنِ تَوَضَّأَ؛ انْحَلَّتْ عُقْدَةٌ، فَإِنِ صَلَّى
انْحَلَّتْ عُقْدُهُ كُلُّهَا؛ فَأَصْبَحَ نَشِيطًا طَيِّبَ النَّفْسِ، وَإِلَّا أَصْبَحَ خَبِيثَ
النَّفْسِ كَسَلَانَ»

"Shaitaan ties three knots on the back of the head of each one of you -when he is sleeping. He then strikes the place of each knot: 'before you is a long night, so rest.' If he remembers Allah when he wakes up, one of the knots unravels. If he performs Wudu(ablution), one of the knots unravels. And if he then performs prayer, all of the knots unravel (i.e., the final knot unravels): Then he wakes up energetic, peaceful, and cheerful. Otherwise, he will wake up anxious, uneasy, and lazy". [Mukhtasir-Muslim: 387]

Shaitan Makes Every Effort to be in the Marketplace or Anywhere Else Where Business Transactions Take Place

The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«يَا مَعْشَرَ التَّجَارِ! إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ وَالْإِثْمَ يَحْضُرَانِ الْبَيْعَ؛ فَشُوبُوا
بِيعَتِكُمْ بِالصَّدَقَةِ»

"O group of businessmen, both Shaitan and sin are present during a business transaction (or in places of business), so mix charity into your business" [Sahihul-jami: 7973]

Shaitan lies in ambush for man in places where business transactions take place, because he knows that the soul of man is weak when it comes to money and that marketplaces are the most evil parts of the earth. Marketplaces are not inherently evil: buying and selling, after all, are lawful activities. They are evil because of the evil that is perpetrated in them: people swearing by other than Allah ' people making false oaths, people lying, and people cheating, and so on. Hence Shaitan's efforts to always be present in the marketplace. Noble sister, in order to protect yourself from Shaitan when you are in the marketplace, be not only honest in your dealings, but go one step further: be easy to deal with, generous, and forgiving in your business transactions.

When a Man and a Woman (Who is neither his Wife nor a Female Relative that he is allowed to be Alone with) are Alone Together

Shaitan takes a great deal of pleasure in tempting people towards evil, but particularly so in tempting them to fornicate - and we seek refuge in Allah from perpetrating this grave offence. A prolonged stare is probably the first preliminary step that leads to fornication; but the step that comes after it is for a man

and a woman to be alone together. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«أَلَا لَا يَخْلُونَ رَجُلٌ بِامْرَأَةٍ، إِلَّا كَانَ ثَالِثُهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ . . .»

"Lo! A man is never alone with a woman (i.e., a woman who is neither his wife nor a female relative that he is allowed to be alone with) except that the third one with them is shaitan" [Sahihul-jami: 2546]

Noble sister, you must therefore take all precautions to avoid being alone with a man that you are not allowed to be alone with. And here I am not referring only to strangers, but also to male cousins, brother-in-laws, and any man who is not your Mahram (a Mahram is a woman's husband, or any male relative that she is allowed to be alone with, such as her father, brother, son, etc.).

How to Repel Shaitan

These are but a few of many steps you can take to repel Shaitan:

When you become angry, seek refuge in Allah from Shaitan, for doing so will drive away your anger. Once when a man became angry in his presence, the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِنِّي لَأَعْلَمُ كَلِمَةً لَوْ قَالَهَا لَذَهَبَ عَنْهُ مَا يَجِدُ، لَوْ قَالَ: أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ذَهَبَ عَنْهُ مَا يَجِدُ»

"Indeed, I know a word (a phrase) that, if he were to say it, would result in the thing he finds [in himself (i.e., his anger)] parting from him. If he were to say, 'I seek refuge in Allah from the Accursed Shaitan,' what he finds [in himself (i.e., his anger)] would leave him" [Mukhtasir- Muslim: 1792]

Be careful and deliberate in your affairs, for hastiness is from Shaitan. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«التَّأَنِّي مِنَ اللَّهِ، وَالْعَجَلَةُ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ»

"Deliberation is from Allah, and hastiness is from Shaitan" [Sahihul jami: 3011]

Hold fast to the rope of Allah by always remembering Him. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«قُلِ: اللَّهُمَّ؛ فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ، عَالِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ،
رَبِّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَمَلِيكُهُ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ
نَفْسِي، وَمِنْ شَرِّ الشَّيْطَانِ وَشِرْكِهِ، قُلْهَا إِذَا أَصْبَحْتَ، وَإِذَا
أَمْسَيْتَ، وَإِذَا أَخَذْتَ مَضْجَعَكَ»

"Say: 'O Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the seen and the unseen, Lord and Sovereign of all things, I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except you. I take refuge in you from the evil of my soul and from the evil and shirk (to associate partners with Allah in worship) of the devil.' Say this in the morning, in the evening, and when you betake yourself to your bed (to sleep)."
[Sahihul-jami: 4402.]

Do not allow Shaitan to eat with you or spend the night with you: Mention Allah's name both when you are entering your home and when you partake of food or drink. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَحْضُرُ أَحَدَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مِنْ شَأْنِهِ، حَتَّى يَحْضُرَهُ
عِنْدَ طَعَامِهِ، فَإِذَا سَقَطَتْ مِنْ أَحَدِكُمْ اللَّقْمَةُ؛ فَلْيُمِطْ مَا كَانَ بِهَا مِنْ
أَذَى، ثُمَّ لْيَأْكُلْهَا وَلَا يَدْعُهَا لِلشَّيْطَانِ، فَإِذَا فَرَعَ فَلْيَلْعَقْ أَصَابِعَهُ،
فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَدْرِي فِي أَيِّ طَعَامِهِ، تَكُونُ الْبَرَكَةُ»

"Indeed, Shaitan is present with one of you in all of his affairs; he is even present when one (of you) is eating. If a morsel of food falls down from one on you, then let him remove the filth that is on it and then eat it, and let him not leave it for Shaitan. When one of you is finished [his meal], let him lick his fingers, for indeed, he does not know in which part of his food there is blessing" [Mukhtasir-Muslim: 1304.]

Recite those Verses of the Qur'an that call upon the reciter and the one who hears him to perform prostration, for doing so makes Shaitan cry. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِذَا قرَأَ ابْنُ آدَمَ السَّجْدَةَ، فَسَجَدَ؛ اغْتَرَلَ الشَّيْطَانُ يَبْكِي، يَقُولُ: يَا
وَيْلَهُ! أُمِرَ ابْنُ آدَمَ بِالسُّجُودِ؛ فَسَجَدَ؛ فَلَهُ الْجَنَّةُ، وَأُمِرْتُ بِالسُّجُودِ
فَعَصَيْتُ فَلِي النَّارُ»

"When the son of Adam recites As-Sajdah (this refers, and Allah knows best, to any of the Verses of prostration) and then performs prostration, Shaitan withdraws and cries. He says, 'Woe unto me! The son of Adam was ordered to perform prostration,

and he then performed prostration. And for him is Paradise. And I was ordered to perform prostration, but I disobeyed (Al lah's command). And for me is the Hell-fire.
"[Sahihul-jami: 727]"

When it first becomes dark, prevent your children from leaving your home, close the doors, and mention Allah's name. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِذَا كَانَ جُنْحُ اللَّيْلِ، فَكُفُّوا صِبْيَانَكُمْ، فَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ تَنْتَشِرُ حِينَئِذٍ،
فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ سَاعَةٌ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَخَلُّوهُمْ، وَأَغْلِقُوا الْأَبْوَابَ، وَادْكُرُوا
اسْمَ اللَّهِ، فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَا يَفْتَحُ بَابًا مُغْلَقًا، وَأَوْكُوا قِرَبَكُمْ،
وَادْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ، وَخَمِّرُوا آيَاتِكُمْ، وَادْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ، وَلَوْ أَنْ
تَعْرَضُوا عَلَيْهِ شَيْئًا وَأَطْفِئُوا مَصَابِيحَكُمْ»

"When it becomes dark at night, restrain your children (i.e., prevent them from leaving), for the devils spread out at that time. Then, when one hour of the night passes by, release them (allow them to enter and leave), close the doors, and mention Allah's name, for indeed, Shaitan doesn't open a closed door. Seal your bottles, and mention Allah's name (i.e., for protection, do both). Cover your containers, and mention Allah's name - even if you place something (such as a stick) over its width (i.e., if you can only find something to cover it widthwise and not lengthwise, then do so, in addition to mentioning Allah's name). And extinguish your lamps." [Mukhtasir-Muslim: 1281.]

Heed the following advice of the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«اقْرَأُوا سُورَةَ الْبَقَرَةِ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ، فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَا يَدْخُلُ بَيْتًا يُقْرَأُ
فِيهِ سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ»

"Recite Surah Al-Baqarah ("the Cow Chapter") in your home, for indeed, Shaitan does not enter a home in which Surah Al-Baqarah is recited." [Sahihul-jami: 1170]

Rather than curse Shaitan, which will not protect you from his harm, seek refuge with Allah from Shaitan's evil. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«لَا تَسُبُّوا الشَّيْطَانَ، وَتَعَوَّذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ»

"Do not curse Shaitan; rather, seek refuge with Allah from his (the Shaitan's) evil." [Sahihul-jami: 7318]

When you are sitting down outside, do not position half of your body in the shade, and the other half where it will be exposed to the sun. When he forbade Muslims from this practice, the Prophet said, "It is the sitting position of Shaitan."

Refrain from using the word 'had' in the sense of, 'Had I done so and so, such and such would have happened.' Or in other words, do not express regretful dissatisfaction over what happened in the past (unless you are feeling regretful for a sin you perpetrated). The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«الْمُؤْمِنُ الْقَوِيُّ خَيْرٌ وَأَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الضَّعِيفِ، وَفِي كُلِّ
خَيْرٍ، وَاحْرِصْ عَلَى مَا يَنْفَعُكَ، وَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ، وَلَا تَعْجِزْ، وَإِذَا
أَصَابَكَ شَيْءٌ، فَلَا تَقُلْ: لَوْ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ كَذَا وَكَذَا، وَلَكِنْ قُلْ:
قَدَّرَ اللَّهُ وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ فَإِنَّ لَوْ تَفْتَحُ عَمَلَ الشَّيْطَانِ»

"The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer - though there is goodness in both of them. Strive to achieve that which benefits you, seek help from Allah, and do not be incapable (i.e., do not be lazy in striving to do well and in seeking help from Allah). And if you are afflicted with something, do not say, 'Had I done such and such,' but instead say, 'Allah has made His decree, and what He wills He does.' For indeed, 'had' ('Lau' in Arabic) opens the way for the deeds of Shaitan." [Sahihul-jami: 6650]

The Tongue

The tongue is - or at least potentially is - one of the bitterest enemies of mankind. Both men and women are susceptible to its evils. But since women judge matters according to their emotions and hearts - at least more so than men do - they must be especially aware of the tongue's evils.

If women are afflicted with some form of hardship, they tend to lose hope rather quickly; that inner reality will then translate into evil speech. And although gossip is commonly practiced by both sexes, it is especially prevalent among women. Therefore, in this chapter, I will endeavor to warn my sisters about the dangers of the tongue.

I said that the tongue is a very dangerous instrument, but this is not a categorically true statement. Tools or instruments - the tongue included - are intrinsically neither good nor evil; whether they are good or evil depends upon how one uses them. Since the tongue is a body part that we can use to speak and communicate with others, it is a tremendous blessing from Allah. And it is a blessing well employed if one uses it for the obedience of Allah.

The amazing thing about the tongue is that, though it is so small in size, the greatest act of obedience - to pronounce the Testimony of Faith - and the greatest act of disobedience - to pronounce words of disbelief - are performed with it. When it comes to the performance of good deeds, there are virtually no limits to what the tongue can do; but the same can be said about the performance of evil deeds.

We know from the Sunnah that people will be thrown onto their nostrils in the Hell-fire only as a result of what their tongues have reaped. Of all of man's body parts, it is one's tongue that is most often culpable when it comes to sinning: it doesn't require much energy to use, and so most human beings are negligent in protecting themselves from its evils. In fact, the tongue is the greatest weapon that Shaitan wields in leading people astray. The only way to protect yourself from the evils of your tongue is to limit its usage to what the Sharf'ah permits.

The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ، فَلْيُكْرِمْ جَارَهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ، فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ»

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak goodness or remain silent. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honor his neighbor. And whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honor his guest." [Al-Bukhari: 6018 and Muslim: 47.]

Ibn Hajar said, "This is a characteristic example of concisely worded advice from the Prophet • any given speech is either good or evil, or leads to one of the two." Good speech encompasses compulsory speech (such as returning greetings of peace) and recommended speech. What remains is speech that is evil or that leads to evil. Whenever you intend to utter this latter kind of speech, you must, as the Prophet commanded you to do, remain silent.

At-Tabarani and Al-Baihaqi reported a similar Hadith with a slightly different wording: "... then let him speak goodness and gain (profits and rewards), or let him remain silent, speaking no evil, and hence remain safe."

Based on the preceding Hadith, we see that a person who has Iman (Faith) is one who is compassionate to other people when he speaks to them: if he speaks, he speaks well; otherwise, he refrains from evil speech. Other Ahadith also indicate that one must refrain from evil speech. Abu Musa and 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin Al-'as narrated that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ يَدِهِ وَلِسَانِهِ»

"The Muslim is he from whose hand and tongue other Muslims are safe." [Muslim: 41]

At-Tabarani reported that Ibn Mas'ud said, "O Messenger of Allah, which deeds are best?" One of the deeds the Prophet then mentioned was, "For Muslims to be safe from your tongue."

In another hadith that is recorded in the Musnad Imam Ahmad and that is reported by Al-Bara' the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) mentioned a number of good deeds to a Bedouin, after which he said:

«فَإِنْ لَمْ تُطِقْ ذَلِكَ؛ فَكُفَّ لِسَانَكَ إِلَّا مِنْ خَيْرٍ»

"And if you are not able to do that (i.e., any of that), then (at the very least) restrain your tongue except from goodness (i.e., good speech)."

Ibn 'Umar narrated that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«مَنْ صَمَتَ نَجَا»

"Whoever remains silent is saved."

He also narrated that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«كَثْرَةُ الْكَلَامِ يَغَيِّرُ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ تَقْسِي الْقَلْبَ»

"Speaking a lot without remembering Allah hardens the heart."

Sufyan Ath-Thaqafi once said, "O Messenger of Allah, what do you fear most for me?" Pointing to his tongue, the Prophet said, "This." In another Hadith, after he mentioned a number of good deeds, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«أَلَا أَخْبِرُكَ بِمَا لَكَ ذَلِكَ كُلُّهُ؟ كُفَّ عَلَيْكَ هَذَا»

"Shall I not inform you about what strengthens all of that? Restrain this."

As Prophet gave this command, he pointed to his tongue. And 'Uqbah bin 'Amir once said, "O Messenger of Allah, what is safety?" He said:

«أَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ لِسَانَكَ»

"Hold back your tongue."

Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ
عِنْدَ مَسْئُولٍ ۝۳۶﴾

"And follow not (O man, i.e., say not, or do not or witness not, etc.) that of which you have no knowledge (e.g., one's saying: "I have seen, "while in fact he has not seen, or "I have heard, "while he has not heard). Verily, the hearing, and the sight, and the heart, of each of those you will be questioned (by Allah). "[Quran 17:36]

Regarding, "and follow not," Ibn 'Abbas said that it means, and speak not [(about) that of which you have no knowledge]." Muhammad bin Al-Hanafiyyah said that, "And follow not that of which you have no knowledge," refers to the false oath. Qatadah said it means: "Do not say you have seen (something) when you really have not seen (it); do not say you have heard (something) when you really have not heard (it); and do not say you know (something) when you really do not know it. For indeed, Allah will ask you about all of that." All of these views are driving at the same point: do not speak without knowledge. This also means that you must not talk based upon your imagination or false suspicion. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ﴾

"Avoid much suspicions; indeed some suspicions are sins." [Quran 49:12]

And the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِيَّاكُمْ وَالظَّنَّ، فَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ أَكْذَبُ الْحَدِيثِ . . .»

"Stay away from false suspicion; for indeed, false suspicion is the most lying kind of speech..." [Al-Bukhari: 5143 and Muslim: 1413]

At the end of the aforementioned Verse, Allah informs us that He will question us on the Day of Judgment about what we did with our hearing, sight, and heart. In a Verse with a similar meaning, Allah (SWT) said:

﴿يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾﴾

"On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their legs or feet will bear witness against them as to what they used to do." [Quran 24:24]

What this means is that everything, our tongues included, will testify to the truth before Allah. So the tongue of each person will bear witness to all of the sins that it performed on behalf of its possessor. In the following sections, we will - In sha' Allah- cover a number of sins that are related to the tongue:

- 1) Lying.
- 2) Slander.
- 3) Backbiting.
- 4) Witnessing falsehood.
- 5) For a woman to describe another woman to her husband.
- 6) For a husband or wife to divulge bedroom secrets to a third party.
- 7) An-Niyahah, or to wail over the. Corpse or grave of the deceased.
- 8) The Choice of Even; Woman

Lying

Noble sister, lying is one of the vilest of characteristics by which a person can be known. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«وَأِنَّ الْكَذِبَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْفُجُورِ، وَإِنَّ الْفُجُورَ يَهْدِي إِلَى النَّارِ، وَإِنَّ
الرَّجُلَ لَيَكْذِبُ؛ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَذَّابًا»

*"Indeed, lying leads to wicked deeds, and indeed, wicked deeds lead to the Hell-fire.
And a man continues to lie until he is written (down) as a liar with Allah." [Al-
Bukhari: 6094 and Muslim: 2607]*

If you know that lying leads to wicked deeds and then to the Hell-fire, you must strive to never lie. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾﴾

"O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah, and be with those who are true (in words and deeds)." [Quran 9:119]

Noble sister, it is better to refrain from lying now than to be among the ranks of liars on the Day of Resurrection, liars who will be desperately waiting for intercession or for mercy from Allah; some among them will lose all hope of being saved. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ، وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ،
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ: شَيْخٌ زَانٍ، وَمَلِكٌ كَذَّابٌ، وَعَائِلٌ مُسْتَكْبِرٌ»

"As for three (people), Allah will neither speak to them, nor purify them, nor look at them on the Day of Resurrection, and for them is a painful torment: the old man who fornicates, the king who is a liar, and the poor person who is proud and arrogant.

"[Muslim: 107]

In regard to this Hadith, An-Nawawi reported that Qadi 'Iyad said, "Each one of them adhered to a sin that he did not need to commit, that was prompted by a weak motive, and that was far-fetched for him considering his situation." It is the young man who has the energy, the desire, and the physical strength that make the motivation behind his lust for women at least understandable (though of course not justifiable if directed towards unlawful ends); and this is not so for the old man. A struggling businessman's motive for lying is understandable (but of course not acceptable): he wants to become rich. What motive does a king have for lying? And if he does have one, it is weak when compared to those below him. Finally, arrogance and pride are forbidden traits for every person. But the motive for arrogance with a rich person is at least understandable (though of course not condonable). What motive or justification does a poor person have of being arrogant and haughty towards others? Basically, all of these sins - fornication, lying, and arrogance - are wicked, but especially wicked when perpetrated by those who have little reason to resort to them.

Coming back to your situation, if you are not a king or queen of a country or land, you are at least a queen in your home. What need do you have to lie to your husband, children, or relatives? Always keep in mind that lying begets even more lying and that lying leads to wicked deeds and then to the Hell-fire.

A person who does not outright lie might say, "I am not lying, I am merely conveying to you what I have heard." But it is not correct to convey to others everything that one hears. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ كَذِبًا أَنْ يُحَدِّثَ بِكُلِّ مَا سَمِعَ»

"It is enough of a lie for a person to say all that he hears." [Muslim: 5]

As An-Nawawi pointed out in Sharh Muslim, the sum of what one hears inevitably consists of both truths and lies. So if one repeats all that he hears, he will, without a doubt, end up uttering lies. A lie is to speak about or describe something not according to how it really is, regardless of whether one does so on purpose or not. That one does so on purpose is, however, a condition for the lie to be considered a sin. And Allah knows best.

Lying is one of the characteristics of the hypocrites. This is especially disconcerting since we know that the hypocrites are in the lowest part of the Hell-fire, lower even than the disbelievers. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«أَرْبَعٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ كَانَ مُنَافِقًا خَالِصًا، وَمَنْ كَانَتْ فِيهِ خُلَّةٌ مِنْهُنَّ
كَانَتْ فِيهِ خُلَّةٌ مِنْ نِفَاقٍ حَتَّى يَدَّعِيَهَا . . . إِذَا حَدَّثَ كَذَبًا، وَإِذَا
عَاهَدَ غَدَرَ، وَإِذَا وَعَدَ أَخْلَفَ، وَإِذَا خَاصَمَ فَجَرَ»

"As for four (characteristics), whoever possesses (all of) them is a pure and complete hypocrite. Whoever possesses one of them possesses one of the characteristics of hypocrisy until he forsakes it. If he (a hypocrite) speaks, he lies; if he enters into a covenant, he acts treacherously; if he makes a promise, he breaks it; and if he gets into a dispute, he curses and hurls vile invective." [Al-Bukhari: 34 and Muslim: 58.]

This Hadith does not mean that a liar is guilty of the hypocrisy of the disbelievers, who will be in the lowest depths of the Hell-fire; rather, as An-Nawawi pointed out, it means that due to this characteristic, liars are very similar to hypocrites. And is it not a sufficient deterrent from lying to be potentially very similar to those who will be punished in the lowest depths of the Hell-fire?

Noble sister, if you want to refrain from lying, you must make a concerted effort to avoid getting into debt. The Messenger of Allah used to seek refuge in Allah from getting into debt. When he was asked about this, he said:

«إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ إِذَا غَرِمَ؛ حَدَّثَ فَكَذَبَ وَوَعَدَ فَأَخْلَفَ»

"Indeed, when a man is in debt, he speaks and then lies; and he promises and then breaks his promise." [Muslim: 589]

As much as you can, therefore, steer clear from falling into debt.

As the manager of your household, do not place too many financial burdens on your husband; otherwise, it will lead to you or him lying, in order to gain more time to pay back your creditors.

Lying is a universally disparaged and despised characteristic. Consider the case of Abu Sufyan who, while being a disbeliever, was asked by a foreign ruler about the Prophet. Despite the fact that the Prophet was his chief enemy at the time, Abu Sufyan abstained from lying, feeling disgust at the idea of taking on such a vile trait. And so, even though doing so was to his disadvantage, he spoke truthfully about the Prophet.

An-Namimah (Slander)

The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ نَمَّامٌ»

"ANammam (a slanderer) does not enter Paradise" [Al-Bukhari: 6056 and Muslim: 105]

A Nammam is a person who is guilty of An-Namimah, which Imam An-Nawawi, in Sharh Muslim, defined as follows: To convey sayings from one person to another in order to sow dissension among them.

To paraphrase the words of Imam Al-Ghazali in Al -Ihya, An-Namimah is to divulge people's secrets and to expose that which people do not want to be exposed - that which is private to them. Whenever you see people doing what is generally disliked, you must remain silent. The exception to this rule is to speak in order to benefit a Muslim or to prevent a sin from occurring. For example, if you see someone stealing another person's wealth, you must bear witness against the thief, thus making sure that the actual owner of the wealth gets his due right. But if, for example, you see someone hiding his own wealth, and if you tell others what he did, you will be guilty of divulging his secret and, in short, of An-Namimah.

Sometimes, it is easy to avoid slandering others, but rather difficult to deal with a slanderer when he comes to you with information about someone else. When faced with such a situation, there are six things that you must do:

- 1) You must not believe him, for he is a slanderer and an evildoer.
- 2) You must forbid him from committing slander. Advise him and try to show him the wickedness of his deed.
- 3) hate him - because of his action - for the sake of Allah (at least until he stops being a slanderer).
- 4) Do not entertain suspicious thoughts about the person he is slandering.
- 5) As a result of what he says, do not go spying about in order to find out whether what he is saying is true; in other words, completely forget and disregard the slander he utters.
- 6) Do not forbid him from slandering and then go about yourself conveying to others the same news he came to you with.

We have hitherto related that the slanderer does not enter Paradise. As if that is not bad enough, he will also be punished in his grave. Once, when he passed by two graves, the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«أَمَّا إِنَّهُمَا لِيُعَذَّبَانِ، وَمَا يُعَذَّبَانِ فِي كَبِيرٍ، أَمَّا أَحَدُهُمَا فَكَانَ يَمْشِي
بِالنَّمِيمَةِ، وَأَمَّا الْآخَرُ فَكَانَ لَا يَسْتَتِرُ مِنْ بَوْلِهِ»

"Lo! Indeed these two are being punished, and they are not being punished regarding something big. As for one of them, he would walk about spreading An-Namimah (slander). And as for the other, he would not screen himself from his urine (i.e., he would not take the appropriate steps to protect himself from urine splashing up and soiling his body or clothing). "[Al- Bukhari: 218 and Muslim: 292]

In Sharh Muslim, Imam An-Nawawi mentioned two interpretations for the phrase, "... and they are not being punished for something big":

- 1) People guilty of those sins claim that what they are doing isn't big or important or grave.

2) It is not big, or in others words not difficult, for such people to refrain from committing those sins.

Al-Qadi 'Iyad - may Allah have mercy on him - mentioned a third interpretation: The sins they are guilty of are not from the greatest of grave sins.

While explaining the previous Hadith, Imam An-Nawawi said, "Therefore, this warning was meant as a deterrent for others... In other words, no one should think that punishment is reserved for those who perpetrate the gravest and most wicked of deeds; rather, lesser sins are also punishable. And Allah knows best." Noble sister, if you are guilty of slander, repent to Allah before the time comes when your scroll of deeds will be folded up, a time when feelings of regret will not avail you in the least.

Backbiting

The people of knowledge unanimously agree that it is forbidden to backbite a Muslim; this ruling is established both in the Qur'an and in the Sunnah. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَلَا يَغْنَبُ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا أَيُّحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا
فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ﴾

"Neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting). "[Quran 49: 12]

In this Verse, Allah not only forbids us from backbiting, but also mentions an example that illustrates its wickedness as a sin. The image that jumps up at you from the Verse should make you feel disgust for the act of backbiting. Every human being (barring deranged savages) instinctively finds it utterly repulsive to eat the flesh of another human being, even if it is the flesh of one's enemy; imagine, then, how much more one will be disgusted when it is the flesh of his brother - blood brother or brother in faith; or how completely disgusted he will feel when he finds out that it is the flesh of his dead brother. One should therefore feel the same disgust at the thought of backbiting one's brother.

«أَتَدْرُونَ مَا الْغَيْبَةُ»

"Do you know what back biting is?"

"Allah and His Messenger know best," his Companions answered. He said:

«ذِكْرُكَ أَخَاكَ بِمَا يَكْرَهُ»

"It is to say about your (absent) brother that which he dislikes."

Someone asked, "But what if what I am saying about my brother is true?" The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِنْ كَانَ فِيهِ مَا تَقُولُ، فَقَدْ اغْتَابْتَهُ، وَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِيهِ، فَقَدْ بَهَّتَهُ»

"If what you say about him is true, you have backbitten him. And if (what you say about him) is not true, then you have slandered him." [Muslim: 2589]

And both backbiting and slander are grave offences.

Witnessing Falsehood

Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا ۗ﴾ (٧٢)

"And those who do not witness false hood, and if they pass by some evil play or evil talk, they pass by it with dignity." [Quran 25: 72]

Scholars disagree about the exact meaning of 'falsehood (Az-Zur)' in, "And those who do not witness falsehood." Some say it means Shirk (to associate partners with Allah in worship); some say it means to worship idols. Lying, wickedness, frivolous speech, and singing - these are yet other interpretations of 'falsehood' in the Verse. Ar-Rabi' bin Anas and others maintain that 'witnessing falsehood' means: celebrating the festivities of polytheists. 'Amr bin Qais said that witnessing falsehood means: attending gatherings wherein evil is perpetrated. Yet, in reality, the Verse is comprehensive of all of the above opinions, because each one refers to a form of falsehood.

Therefore, noble sister, listening to music falls under the meaning of the above Verse; so does celebrating the festivities of polytheists; and so on. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«أَلَا أَنبئُكُمْ بِأَكْبَرِ الْكِبَائِرِ؟ - ثَلَاثًا - : الْإِشْرَاكُ بِاللَّهِ، وَعُقُوقُ
الْوَالِدَيْنِ، وَشَهَادَةُ الزُّورِ - أَوْ قَوْلُ الزُّورِ -»

"Shall I not inform you about the greatest of grave sins? They are three: To associate partners with Allah in worship, to be undutiful to one's parents, and to witness falsehood - or to speak falsehood (for example, by making a false oath) [Al- Bukhari: 2654 and Muslim: 87]

The Messenger of Allah was in a reclined position, but then he sat (up) to say these words. And he continued to repeat them until his Companions said, "Would that he stopped (repeating that)."

Imam Ibn Hajar clarified that the Prophet sat up to say the last part of the Hadith: "and to witness falsehood..." This was to add emphasis to the gravity of the sin, but also because it is a sin that many people take lightly. A Muslim is instinctively repelled by the idea of perpetrating Shirk or of being undutiful to his parents. As for witnessing falsehood, there are many motives for perpetrating it: enmity, jealousy, etc. Extra attention was given to witnessing falsehood not because it is a more heinous sin than Shirk or being undutiful to one's parents, but instead because a Muslim is more likely to perpetrate it. Furthermore, the harm of witnessing falsehood usually extends beyond the person who is guilty of it, whereas the harm of committing Shirk is usually limited to its perpetrator.

To be sure, the sin of witnessing falsehood - in all of its forms - is very prevalent in the Muslim societies of today. People celebrate holidays that are of special religious significance to Christians and then say, 'These are spring holidays,' calling them by other than their true names. This is a clear example of witnessing falsehood. Many Muslims listen to music, which also is a form of witnessing falsehood. As for bearing false witness (such as in a courthouse), this form of witnessing falsehood is prevalent in all sectors of our societies. For example, when a government worker signs the work attendance sheet on behalf of his absent co-worker, he is bearing false witness; the examples of such abuses are too many to mention here. And we ask Allah to keep us safe and protect us from all forms of falsehood.

For a Woman to Describe another Woman to her Husband

'Abdullah bin Mas'ud narrated that the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«لَا تُبَاشِرُ الْمَرْأَةُ الْمَرْأَةَ فَتَنْعَتَهَا لِزَوْجِهَا، كَأَنَّهُ يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهَا»

"Let no woman mix with another woman and then describe that woman to her husband, so that it is as if he is looking at her (so vivid or stimulating is her description)" [Al Bukhari: 5240.]

The wisdom behind this prohibition is that a man might become fascinated by the woman being described, so that one thing leads to another until he divorces his wife or succumbs to temptation by trying to meet and then seduce the woman that was described to him.

A woman might, albeit naively and innocently, describe a woman she met, having been impressed by her character and her beauty. Since she struck up a friendship with that woman, she is excited to tell her husband all about her, telling him more and more after each subsequent meeting. Sadly, she does not realize that, at times, the heart precedes the eyes in the process of falling in love. She might have a candid and loving relationship with her husband, and then suddenly things begin to go awry between them, but she doesn't know why. Then, finding an opening through which to attack, the Shaitan (the Devil) intervenes to complete the destruction of their family. Shaitan plants the idea of trying to see that woman in the mind of the husband, and a willing victim that he is, he loses no opportunity to see her and, if possible, speak to her. Not only that, but he tries to find out as much as he can about her, including her marital status, her age - and her address. Shaitan helps him to constantly strike up an image of her in his mind's eye, so that even when he is with his wife in bed, he is imagining her. Then he begins to hate his wife and, since he needs an excuse in order to get rid of her, finds ways to fight with her and to ascribe evil qualities to her in front of others. This all began when his wife described the beauty of another woman to him. He might have children, but no matter: momentum has its way with him, and as he is falling to lower and lower depths, life becomes more and more unbearable. Because of financial or psychological or societal concerns, he does not outright tell his wife that he is in love with the other woman. Having to bottle up his feelings, he finds ways to create problems that undermine the stability of his family.

For a Husband or Wife to Divulge Intimate Bedroom Secrets to a Third Party

In an authentic Hadith, Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri narrated that the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِنَّ مِنْ أَشْرِّ النَّاسِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَنْزِلَةَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ، الرَّجُلُ يُفْضِي إِلَى
امْرَأَتِهِ وَتُفْضِي إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يَنْشُرُ سِرَّهَا»

"From the most evil of people in ranking with Allah (i.e., in His Judgment) on the Day of Resurrection is a man who goes to his wife (an expression that refers to sexual intercourse) or his woman who goes to him, and then one of them spreads the secret of his (or her) companion" [Muslim: 1437]

Men prefer women who keep their secrets preserved. But perhaps the most dangerous of all the secrets that a man expects his wife to keep is what goes on between him and her in their bedroom. Whether it is the actual act of sexual intercourse or its preliminaries, all descriptions thereof should remain secret between husband and wife.

As for mentioning that one engaged in sexual intercourse with one's spouse without going into details, then doing so is Maknllh (disliked) if there is no valid reason to do so. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا، أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ»

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, then let him speak well or remain silent." Al-Bukhari: 6018 and Muslim 47]

But if there is a need to affirm or deny that one had sex with one's spouse, then it is not disliked to speak about the matter. For example, a woman might need to complain to a judge that her husband refuses to have sexual relations with her or that - and we seek protection from Allah - he is not capable of having sexual relations with her. And Allah knows best.

An-Niyahah (To Weep Loudly Over the Body or Grave of the Deceased, While Repeating Words of Resentment)

The tongue can cause a great deal of harm to one's own self, but it is especially dangerous to one's welfare when one uses it to inflict harm upon others, for the sin of doing so is greater.

Therefore, you would do well to know that the harm of wailing loudly before, during, or after a funeral extends to the dead person himself. Once he dies, his scroll of deeds is rolled up. He therefore wishes to benefit through the supplications of his friends and family, hoping that they invoke Allah to have mercy on him. What he does not need is for people - female relatives in particular, for they are especially culpable in this regard - to weep loudly over him. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِنَّ الْمَيِّتَ لَيُعَذَّبُ بِبُكَاءِ الْحَيِّ»

"The dead person is punished by (or through) the crying of the living." [Al- Bukhari: 1290]

He also said:

«مَنْ نَيَّحَ عَلَيْهِ يُعَذَّبُ بِمَا نَيَّحَ عَلَيْهِ»

"Whomsoever is wept loudly over (with words expressing resentment), is punished for the Niyahah (to weep loudly over the body or grave of the deceased, while repeating words of resentment) that is performed over him." [Al- Bukhari: 1291]

In Sharh Muslim, Imam An-Nawawi said, "A group (of scholars) said: This refers to a (dead) person who had advised others to cry and weep loudly, or who did not advise others to refrain from those two actions. If a person advised others to cry and weep loudly over him, or if he didn't advise them not to do so, then he will be punished for his negligence in not advising them to refrain from crying and weeping loudly (that is, if they actually do those things). But if a person advised others not to do those two actions, then he will not be punished even if people do them. What this view implies is that it is an obligatory duty to advise one's friends and relatives to refrain from weeping loudly upon his death.

Another group (of scholars) explains the above- mentioned Ahadith as follows: The actual punishment that the deceased receives in this context is that he has to listen to the weeping of his family, which results in his feeling sad on their account. Muhammad bin Jarir at Tabari is one of the proponents of this view. Al-Qadi 'Iyad said, "It is the strongest of the various views."

The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«أَرْبَعٌ فِي أُمَّتِي مِنْ أَمْرِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ، لَا يَتْرُكُونَهُنَّ: الْفَخْرُ فِي الْأَحْسَابِ، وَالطَّعْنُ فِي الْأَنْسَابِ، وَالْإِسْتِسْقَاءُ بِالنُّجُومِ، وَالنِّيَاحَةُ»

"There are four matters from the affairs of ignorance (i.e., the ignorance of pre-Islamic times) that the people of my nation will not forsake: Being proud because of one's ancestry; attacking (or finding fault with) others because of their lineage; supplicating for rain through the stars; and An-Niyahah (to weep loudly over the body or grave of the deceased, while repeating words of resentment). [Muslim: 934.]

And he said:

«النَّايِحَةُ إِذَا لَمْ تَتُبْ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهَا، تُقَامُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَعَلَيْهَا سِرْبَالٌ مِنْ قَطِرَانٍ، وَدِرْعٌ مِنْ جَرَبٍ»

"If a Na 'ihah (a woman who weeps loudly over the body or grave of the deceased, while repeating words of resentment) does not repent before she dies, then, when she will be raised on the Day of Resurrection, she will be wearing a long garment made of Qatiran (a black, sticky substance) and a shirt made of jarab (a disease that affects one's skin). [Ibid]

The Blessing of Marriage

Truly, marriage is one of the greatest of blessings that Allah has bestowed upon both man and woman. Whenever a man feels lonely or perturbed, he can turn to his wife for comfort, and vice versa. In so many ways a man needs a female partner, and likewise a woman needs a male partner. A single man or woman goes through life alone, in an incomplete state of being. On the other hand, husband and wife share each other's joys and hardships; participate with one another in acts of worship; partake of food and drink together; trust one another with their most intimate secrets; and unite in one of the most pleasurable of activities.

These days, one appreciates the blessings of marriage to an even greater degree, being that there are so many obstacles one must overcome before one gets married. The financial costs of getting married and then staying married are barriers for some; but for most social barriers represent the greatest obstacles to marriage. In earlier centuries, it was much easier to get married. Consider the earlier generations of Islam, when women would be content with the Qur'an (their husband teaching it to them) as a form of dowry.

That it is difficult for one to get married these days is especially a painful reality when we contrast that difficulty with the ease with which one can find unlawful means of gratifying one's sexual desires. A man can toil day and night to earn enough to support a wife, yet he still finds no father who is willing to give him his daughter's hand in marriage. But since that same man's daughter goes out of the house scantily dressed, and ready to succumb to the advances of almost any man, the same young man who wanted to marry her (and was refused) stands a good chance of fornicating with her. This exemplifies the woeful state of our nation today: we allow immoral, illegal acts to take place between young men and women; in fact we facilitate such acts; yet we place as many barriers as possible to stop those young men and women from marrying one another.

What makes matters worse is that most fathers bring into their homes a window to the world of lewd and licentious behavior; of course, I am referring to the television and the Internet. Rather than monitor the programs their children watch or the websites they visit, many parents let their children do as they please.

No longer do Muslims go to the Masjid in order to learn what is right and what is wrong from scholars; instead, they take their morals from the latest sitcom or daytime drama. In our countries, a man might not have a sofa or a cabinet in his home, because he cannot afford such things, but he certainly has a satellite dish.

Therefore, during every single day of television viewing, the members of the average family are exposed to acts of fornication - either the preliminaries of fornication or the Actual act itself - being enacted on the television screen. Then when young teenagers go out of the house, it is 'normal' for them to see women who lay bare their legs and part of their chests. It is 'normal' to see young men fondling and kissing young women in the streets.

What we are seeing more and more of in our societies is an increase in the rates of sexual relations outside of marriage; an increase in the incidents of rape; an increase in the rates of women who turn to prostitution in order to make a living, and a decrease in the rates of men and women who marry at a young age. The sources of many of these evils are the television and the Internet; and the blame lies squarely on the father particularly but also the mother (in some instances). Allah commanded each man to protect himself and his family from the Hell-fire. A man does just the opposite when he allows the members of his family to watch anything on television and surf freely on the Internet. Some fathers even justify their actions. One of them might say, for example, "My son knows what is right and wrong. What he watches has no impact on his character." But the reality of our societies and of our families proves him wrong. These days, children don't see the Prophet's Companions as being their role models; they don't

even see the righteous people of today as being their role models; their role models are actors and actresses who drink alcohol and fornicate, who don't pray and are ignorant of Allah's religion, and who don't fear Allah . The children of today actually fantasize that they are the heroes and heroines that are portrayed in television programs; they don't fantasize about being righteous, good, and productive members of society. They don't do so because they are constantly bombarded by television shows that portray evil characters as being good.

O nation of Islam, to what base levels have we sunk to! How is it that sins are now considered to be good deeds! What will we say to our Lord tomorrow? What excuse will we give to Allah on the Day of Resurrection? Do we actually think that Allah is unaware of what we do? Do we actually think that the angels are not transcribing our every deed? Do we actually believe that we will not die? Do we actually believe that we will live on this earth forever? How did we sink so low that we are satisfied with humiliation and baseness? Don't we want to enter Allah's Paradise? Do we really want to enter the Hell-fire?

Here is an invitation to every father, to every man who loves Allah ' who loves His Messenger 'who loves the righteous believers - to fear Allah regarding himself, his children, and his wife: Do not allow your family to watch television programs that depict evil as being good. Television, among other evils, has weakened the resolve of our nation, so that we can no longer repel Shaitan and our desires; and so that we no longer have the will or the strength to do good deeds and to strive for Paradise.

While we strive to get rid of the evils that are hidden in our homes and manifest throughout society, we must also strive to raise the status of marriage in our societies. Let us bring back the Hijab and modest clothing among women, who, when they are ready to get married, can marry young men and then enjoy one other's company in a lawful manner. Let us also learn how to be married, or in other words, how to fulfill the rights of our spouses. In what follows, we will take a look at some of Islam's teachings regarding the institution of marriage.

Dealings between Husband and Wife

We are constantly reminded in the Qur'an and Sunnah about the need and desirability of treating one's spouse with kindness and compassion. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَعَايِشُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ﴾

"And live with them honorably"[Quran 4:19]

In another Verse, Allah said:

﴿فَأَنبِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِّئَلَّامُنَّ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ﴾

"Either take them back on reasonable basis or set them free on reasonable basis. But do not take them back to hurt them, and whoever does that, then he has wronged himself." [Quran 2: 231]

A husband must take the middle road when it comes to spending on his wife. Although it is true that he must not spend extravagantly upon her - or upon himself for that matter - he must not act like a miser, even refusing to provide for her basic needs. Where the middle road. Depends upon how much money one has. A 100\$ dress might be extravagant to a poor man, but not so for a rich man; and in this regard, the norms of society also come into play. Allah said:

﴿لِيُنْفِقَ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّن سَعَتِهِ. وَمَن قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا﴾

"Let the rich man 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. [Quran 65:7]

Generally, a man must be kind and compassionate to his wife. However, when she acts rebelliously or rudely with him, by refusing to fulfill his rights, he must take the appropriate steps to discipline her. But still, such steps are curative rather than punitive in nature. The goal is to bring back a state of harmony into one's marriage. The steps a man should take when disciplining his wife are outlined in the following Verse:

﴿وَالَّذِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَأَفْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَأَضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِن أَطَعْنَ كُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا﴾

"As to those women on whose part you see ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (next), refuse to share their beds, (and last) beat them (lightly, if it is useful); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance). [Quran 4: 34]

If a man sees ill conduct on the part of his wife, he should first admonish her. This does not mean that he should scream at her or hurl vile invective upon her, for by doing so, he will not be helping matters in the least; rather, he will be exacerbating an already tense situation. When he admonishes her, he should choose to say those things that will have a positive impact on her. Hence wisdom and an overall understanding of the situation should dictate the words a husband chooses to speak when he is admonishing his wife.

If she does not heed his admonition, he should proceed to the following step, which is to refrain from sleeping with her in their bed. A man's intention in executing this step is not to prevent his wife from enjoying physical pleasure with him for days or weeks. Rather, more than anything else, the impact of this punishment is psychological. A woman instinctively knows that, relative to her husband, she is weak, but that does not bother her as long as she knows that she has control over him through her feminine powers. For one thing, she holds sway over him through physical attraction; but as any woman knows, a wife holds sway over her husband through other means as well - coquettish behavior, for example. Knowing that she controls her husband through what we can call her overall feminine prowess, a woman does not care whether her husband is stronger than her in other regards. So when she resorts to coquettish behavior to attract her husband and get his attention, and he then responds indifferently, by ignoring her and forsaking her bed, she will definitely hurt on the inside and, the hope is, return to being an obedient wife who fulfills the rights of her husband.

As for the final stage of hitting one's wife, it is only resorted to when the first two steps don't work; and even then, the condition is that a man must not hit his wife severely. He may only lightly hit her; the purpose, after all, is not to hurt her physically - which he is not allowed to do - but to notify her that she has gone too far. This form of punishment, like cauterization for a patient, is a last resort. To hit one's wife lightly at so late a stage in a fight harms the wife only, but to divorce her hurts her and her children. So again, as with the other steps, this form of disciplining is curative and not punitive in nature.

The Rights of a Husband over His Wife

When it comes to dealing with her husband, a woman must realize that she has many rights to fulfill. After all, her husband is one of primary means of her entering Paradise. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِذَا صَلَّتِ الْمَرْأَةُ خَمْسَهَا، وَصَامَتْ شَهْرَهَا، وَحَفِظَتْ فَرْجَهَا،
وَأَطَاعَتْ زَوْجَهَا؛ دَخَلَتْ جَنَّةَ رَبِّهَا»

"When a woman prays her five (daily prays), fasts her month (Ramadan), guards her private parts (from illegal sexual activity), and obeys her husband, she will enter the Paradise of her Lord." [Sahihul-jami: 661]

Noble sister: should you then disobey your husband and consequently lose out on one of the means of entering Paradise. In various Ahadith, the Prophet pointed out the great right a husband has over his wife. For example, he said:

«لَوْ تَعْلَمُ الْمَرْأَةُ حَقَّ الزَّوْجِ لَمْ تَقْعُدْ مَا حَضَرَ غَدَاؤُهُ وَعَشَاؤُهُ حَتَّى
يُفْرَغَ مِنْهُ»

"If a woman knew what right her husband has (over her), she would not sit down while his lunch and dinner are served to him until he finishes (his meal)" [Sahihul-jami: 5259]

The preceding narration indicates the great right a husband has over his wife; the following narration indicates that whether a woman's prayer is sound or not hinges upon how she deals with her husband. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِنَّهُنَّ لَا تُجَاوِزُ صَلَاتَهُمَا رُؤُوسَهُمَا: عَبْدٌ أَبَى مِنْ مَوْلَاهُ؛ حَتَّى
يَرْجِعَ، وَامْرَأَةٌ عَصَتْ زَوْجَهَا، حَتَّى تَرْجِعَ»

"As for two (people), their prayers do not go beyond their heads: a slave who runs away from his owners, until he returns (to them), and a woman who disobeys her husband, until she returns (to obedience). [Sahihul-jami:136]

One of the rights a husband has over his wife is that she must honor and respect him; every single man, no matter how rich or how poor he may be, no matter how deserving or undeserving he may be, wants to be respected by his wife. When a woman does not respect her husband, her home will be bereft of harmony and peace. To emphasize the importance of this point, the Messenger of Allah said:

«لَوْ أَمَرْتُ أَحَدًا أَنْ يَسْجُدَ لِأَحَدٍ؛ لَأَمَرْتُ الْمَرْأَةَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِزَوْجِهَا
مِنْ عِظَمِ حَقِّهِ عَلَيْهَا»

"Were I to order anyone to perform prostration (out of respect and honor, and not as an act of worship) to another person, I would have ordered a woman to perform prostration to her husband, because of the great right that he has upon her" [Sahihul-jami: 5294]

Just as the soundness of your prayer hinges upon your obedience to your husband, so his happiness hinges upon your obedience and overall righteousness. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«سَعَادَةُ لِابْنِ آدَمَ ثَلَاثٌ، وَسَقَاوَةٌ لِابْنِ آدَمَ ثَلَاثٌ. فَمِنْ سَعَادَةِ ابْنِ
آدَمَ: الزَّوْجَةُ الصَّالِحَةُ، وَالْمَرْكَبُ الصَّالِحُ، وَالْمَسْكَنُ الْوَاسِعُ.
وَسَقَاوَةُ لِابْنِ آدَمَ ثَلَاثٌ: الْمَسْكَنُ السُّوءُ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ السُّوءُ،
وَالْمَرْكَبُ السُّوءُ»

"The happiness of the son of Adam is in three (matters), and the wretchedness of the son of Adam is in three (matters). From the happiness of the son of Adam are a righteous wife, a good means of conveyance, and a spacious home. The misery of the son of Adam is in three: a bad home, a bad wife, and a bad means of conveyance. [Sahihul-jami: 3629]

Another Hadith also illustrates your importance to your husband: The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِذَا تَزَوَّجَ الْعَبْدُ فَقَدْ اسْتَكْمَلَ نِصْفَ الدِّينِ، فَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ فِي النُّصْفِ
الْبَاقِي»

"When the slave (of Allah) marries, he has completed half of his religion; then let him fear Allah regarding the remaining half. [Sahihul-jami: 430]

Contemplate the following Hadith, which also points to the huge right a husband has over his wife. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«حَقُّ الزَّوْجِ عَلَى زَوْجَتِهِ أَنْ لَوْ كَانَتْ بِهِ قَرْحَةٌ فَلِحَسْتِهَا مَا أَدَّتْ حَقَّهُ»

"The right of a husband over his wife is such that, if he had an open sore (out of which pus matter issued forth) and were she to then lick it, she would still not have fulfilled his right (over her)" [Sahihul-jami: 3148]

One of the rights a husband has over his wife is that he may gratify his sexual desires through her at any time; or in other words, she must never - unless she is sick, for example, and will suffer health-wise - refuse his sexual advances. The reason behind this ruling is obvious: the urgency of a man's sexual desire is clear to all, and so if his wife refuses to gratify his sexual desire, he might seek to do so through unlawful means. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِذَا دَعَا الرَّجُلُ زَوْجَتَهُ لِحَاجَتِهِ فَلْتَأْتِيهِ، وَإِنْ كَانَتْ عَلَى التَّنُورِ»

"When a man calls his wife for his need (i.e., his sexual need), then she must go to him, even if she is (standing) over the oven." [Sahihul-Jami: 534]

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said 'oven' in this Hadith because one of the most important, tiring, and difficult of duties for a woman of that time was to make bread in an oven. So if a woman is required to answer the sexual summons of her husband when she is busy tending to the oven, when she is tired from doing difficult work, then it is all the more obvious that she must do the same when she is busy tending to less strenuous tasks.

If a woman is unwilling to have sex with her husband, she brings upon herself the curse of the angels. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِذَا بَاتَتِ الْمَرْأَةُ هَاجِرَةً فِرَاشَ زَوْجِهَا؛ لَعَنَتَهَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ حَتَّى تُصْبِحَ»

"If a woman spends the night away from the bed of her husband, the angels curse her until the morning." [Sahihul-jami: 408]

Another right a husband has over his wife - and it is related to the previous one - is that she may not perform a voluntary fast without his permission. This is related to the previous right because, by performing a voluntary fast, a woman prevents her husband from having sex with her. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«لَا يَجِلُّ لِمَرْأَةٍ أَنْ تَصُومَ وَزَوْجُهَا شَهِيدٌ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ، وَلَا تَأْذَنُ فِي بَيْتِهِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ»

"It is not permissible for a woman to fast (a voluntary fast) while her husband is present (i.e., not away on a journey), unless she obtains his permission. And she may

not grant permission (for someone to come) in his house, unless he grants permission (for that persons to enter)."[Al- Bukhari 5195 and Muslim 1026]

When a woman harms her husband, his wife from the Al- Hurul - 'Een (the fair maidens of Paradise) comes to his defense. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«لَا تُؤْذِي امْرَأَةً زَوْجَهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا قَالَتْ زَوْجَتُهُ مِنَ الْحُورِ الْعِينِ :
لَا تُؤْذِيهِ قَاتِلِكِ اللَّهُ! فَإِنَّمَا هُوَ عِنْدَكَ دَخِيلٌ يُوشِكُ أَنْ يُفَارِقَكَ إِلَيْنَا»

"No woman harms her husband in this world, except that his wife from the Al-Hurul-'Een (the fair maidens of Paradise) says: 'Do not harm him, may Allah fight you! For indeed, he is only a guest with you; the time draws near when he will part from you and come to us.'"[Sahihul-jami: 7192]

As for a husband, he must fulfill many rights as well. For example, he must spend on the needs of his wife and children. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "It is sufficient sin for a man to cause those he must feed to waste away." In another Hadith, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«دِينَارٌ أَنْفَقْتَهُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، وَدِينَارٌ أَنْفَقْتَهُ فِي رَقَبَةٍ، وَدِينَارٌ تَصَدَّقْتَ
بِهِ عَلَى مَسْكِينٍ، وَدِينَارٌ أَنْفَقْتَهُ عَلَى أَهْلِكَ، أَعْظَمُهَا أَجْرًا الَّذِي
أَنْفَقْتَهُ عَلَى أَهْلِكَ»

"A dinar you spend in the way of Allah, A dinar you spend to free a slave, a dinar you spend in charity on a poor person, a dinar you spend on your family (wife) - the greatest of these in terms of reward is the one you spend on your family (wife)."
[Muslim: 995]

And in yet another Hadith, the Prophet said:

«وَإِنَّكَ لَنْ تُنْفِقَ نَفَقَةً تَبْتَغِي بِهَا وَجْهَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا أُجِرْتَ بِهَا؛ حَتَّى مَا
تَجْعَلُ فِي فِي امْرَأَتِكَ»

"And indeed, you will not spend on some expenditure, seeking thereby the Countenance of Allah, except that you will be rewarded for it – even for what (food) you put into the mouth of your wife."[Al- Bukhari: 1295 Muslim: 1001]

And when it comes to divorce, a man must be especially careful not to wrong his wife. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Indeed, the greatest of sins with Allah (i.e., in His Judgment) are: for a man to marry a woman and then, when he has fulfilled his desire from her, divorce her, leaving with her dowry (i.e., he takes her dowry or doesn't give it to her); for a man to hire the services of another man and then to leave with his wages (i.e., to not pay him his wages); and finally, for a man to kill a beast uselessly (i.e., without a valid reason)

The Ideal Woman You Should Strive To Become

You might ask: what must I do to become an ideal woman and wife, one who follows the teachings of Islam? Here is a general answer. Adhere to your home as much as possible; try not to talk too much (in following the general principle that applies to both men and women: speak well or remain silent). Preserve the rights of your husband both when he is home and when he is absent. Do not cheat your husband regarding yourself and his wealth. Do not leave home without his permission. If you have obtained his permission to leave, do not be a source of temptation to others. Dress modestly, wearing the full Hijab. Even if you dress modestly, men may still try to approach you with an evil intent. Ignore them and continue on your way.

Do not engage in conversation with your husband's friends: when it comes to adultery, people you know are often more dangerous than people you do not know. Be a good manager of your household. Perform well all obligatory acts of worship. Be satisfied both with your husband and with the sustenance that Allah provided him with; never complain about his income. Be organized and clean, and always look your best for your husband. It is not enough to be a willing partner when your husband wants to have sex; you must also take the initiative in this regard, so that your husband feels that you are attracted to him. Be kind and compassionate to your children, and train them to be good Muslims. Avoid using vile language with your children, and refrain from talking back to your husband.

Noble sister, your husband is your Paradise or your Hell- fire. If you obey Allah first and then your husband, you will have taken the appropriate steps to achieving Paradise. If you do not obey your husband, you have needlessly made him your enemy, for your destruction lies in your disobedience of him.

Islam and a Woman's Role in Society

Some think that it is progressive for women to take off their clothes out in the open, to mix with men in the workplace and elsewhere, and to compete with men in all fields of employment. We know what such 'progressive' attitudes have done for women in the West: Very few women are married, and many among the unmarried ones openly admit that the threat of lifelong spinsterhood depresses them; and this is nothing to be surprised about, since marriage is something that women instinctively yearn for. With fewer women married in the West, more and more of them feel that they lack stability and peace in their lives. This is also nothing to be surprised about, since women instinctively seek stability and peace through their husbands, just as men seek peace and comfort through their wives. In some Western countries, divorce rates are almost as high as 50%; this results in a huge number of single mothers who are forced to both work and raise their children. Pre-marital sex and teenage sex outside of marriage is rampant; millions of women then choose between various evils - abortion or giving up their babies for adoption; or, sometimes, raising the children on their own after their boyfriends have moved on with their lives. Is this emancipation? In Western countries, women who take off their clothes are admired for their bodies and not for their minds, thousands of women sell their bodies, if not literally through prostitution, then at least to the camera. Is this the respect that women are longing for? And even if some women do make it in the workplace without being seen as sex objects, without being taken advantage of by men, at what cost do they achieve their success? They lose out on their femininity; many of them are not married and even if they are married, their careers are more important to them than their children. Is it any surprise, then, that their children, who are raised in a daycare center, will later feel no affection towards their mothers and look for the first opportunity to send them to an old-age home? The list of evils goes on and on.

Islam raises the status of women and honors their minds and abilities, but without making women like men. In Islam, like men, women are charged with religious duties. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ
وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ
وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّانِعِينَ وَالصَّانِعَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ
اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾﴾

"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, etc.), the men and the women who observe Saum (fast) (the obligatory fasting during the month of Ramadan, and the optional Nawafil fasting), the men and the women who guard their chastity (from illegal sexual acts) and the men and the women who remember Allah much with their hearts and tongues. Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward (i.e., Paradise) [Quran 33:35.]

Women are responsible for their own actions and are not held accountable for the actions of their fathers and husbands. So if a woman is righteous, she is not harmed by the wickedness of her husband. Conversely, if she is evil, she does not benefit from the righteousness of her husband. Each is an individual who is accountable for his or her own actions. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَتَ نُوحٍ وَامْرَأَتَ لُوطٍ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ
عِبْدَيْنِ مِمَّنْ عِبَادِنَا صَالِحِينَ فَخَانَتَاهُمَا فَلَمْ يُغْنِيَا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَقِيلَ
ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّٰخِلِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا امْرَأَتَ
فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَبِحْنِي مِن فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ
وَبِحْنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١١﴾﴾

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

In an Islamic country, women are citizens just as men are; the Prophet would accept pledges of allegiance - pledges to obey and to follow the teachings of Islam - from both men and women. Allah (SWT) said:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعُنَكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعصِيَنَّكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعُهُنَّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾﴾

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

And, yes, women do have an important role to play in society:

﴿وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَٰئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾﴾

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

Some Final Words of Advice

Noble sister, now that you know your duties in life, strive hard to fulfill them. If your husband is harsh or unfair at times, be patient with him not for his sake but for the sake of Allah. Your main concern is to enter Paradise, so do whatever it takes to achieve that aim, even if at times it means to swallow your pride.

And if you are not married, be sure to choose a man not for his wealth or status, but for his righteousness. There are many men of wealth and status who are led away from Paradise by their arrogance and evil ways; many of them think that they will live on this earth forever; such men will not help you in your religion. Choose a man who will help you establish an Islamic household, so that as a team, you can help

one another reach safety in the Hereafter. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«أَلَا كُتُّكُمْ رَاعٍ، وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، فَالْأَمِيرُ الَّذِي عَلَى
النَّاسِ رَاعٍ، وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ،
وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُمْ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ عَلَى بَيْتِ بَعْلِهَا وَوَالِدِهِ، وَهِيَ
مَسْئُولَةٌ عَنْهُمْ، وَالْعَبْدُ رَاعٍ عَلَى مَالِ سَيِّدِهِ، وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُ، أَلَا
فَكُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ، وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ»

"Lo! Each one of you is a shepherd, and each one of you is responsible for his flock. The one who is leader over the people is a shepherd, and he is responsible for his flock. A man is shepherd over the members of his household, and he is responsible for them. A woman is shepherd over her husband's house and children, and she is responsible for them. The slave is shepherd over the wealth of his master, and he is responsible for that wealth. Lo! Each one of you is a shepherd, and each one of you is responsible for his flock. [Al- Bukhari: 893 and Muslim: 1829]

Safety from the Hell-fire, freedom from anxiety, protection from poverty, safety from Allah's punishment, protection from the evil that abounds in society - the only way to achieve these aims is to fear Allah and adhere to the teachings of His religion. And success lies with Allah.

Polygamy, and its Benefits towards Women

In Islam, a man may, at any given time, have up to and no more than four wives. There are, however, conditions that he must fulfill. He must be confident that he can provide for each of his wives. In regard to material things, things over which he has control, he must do justice between his wives, providing them equitably with food, drink, clothing, and housing. So he may not provide one wife with a mobile home, and the other with a four- bedroom cottage. And furthermore, he must spend an equal number of nights with each wife. If one fears that, by keeping two wives, he will not be able to do such justice between them, then he must limit himself to one wife.

The Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the consensus of scholars establish that polygamy is permissible in Islam. As for the Qur'an, Allah (SWT) said:

﴿وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ
وَتِلْكَ وَرَبْعًا فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ذَلِكَ آدَبُ اللَّهِ
تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣﴾﴾

And if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphan-girls, then marry (other) women of your choice, two or three, or four but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one or (the captives and the

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

The meaning of this Verse is as follows:

If you fear that, by marrying the female orphans that grew up in your house, your wealth will get mixed with their wealth and that this will lead to them being wronged, leave them alone and marry other women instead, thus saving yourself from any wrongdoing and from doubtful matters. For indeed, Allah has given you a great deal of latitude in this regard: He has made it lawful for you to marry two, three, or four wives, as long as you are able to do justice between them and spend equitably on all of them. If you fear that you will not be able to do so, then limit yourselves to one wife, or to satisfying your desires with what your right hand possesses (captives and slaves, which of course do not exist in these times). That is nearer to prevent you from doing injustice.

The Sunnah is replete with proofs that establish the permissibility of polygamy in Islam. The clearest examples have to do with people who, upon embracing Islam, had more than four wives. For example, Qais bin Al-Harith said, "When I embraced Islam, I had eight women (i.e., wives). When I went to the Prophet and mentioned that to him, he said, 'Choose from them four (that you will keep as wives).'

[Abu Dawood: 2241, and ibn Majah 1952]

In another narration, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar said, "When Ghailan Ath-Thaqafi embraced Islam he had under him ten women from the days of ignorance (i.e., pre-Islamic times). They too embraced Islam along with him. The Prophet then ordered him to choose from them only 4 (women to keep as his wives)."

[Ahmad 2\44]

During the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah ' most of his companions practiced polygamy. And the Prophet approved of them doing so. In fact, when he spoke about the matter, he wouldn't discourage men from marrying more than one wife. If he did admonish men about polygamy, it was to remind them that they had to do justice between their wives, justice according to the conditions we have hitherto outlined. The Prophet's approval of any given action is actually one of the categories of the Sunnah, one of the foundations of legislation in Islam.

As for the consensus of the scholars, the Prophet's companions ' the Tabi'un (the generation that followed that of the Prophet's Companions), and the Islamic jurists from all preceding centuries unanimously agree that, given the conditions we mentioned, it is permissible for a man to marry more than one wife.

The Main Reasons that make Polygamy the only Viable Option to many Societal Problems

There are many reasons why society should condone and often encourage polygamy; here are three important ones:

- 1) Natural concerns.
- 2) Societal concerns.
- 3) Specific needs that sometimes arise during married life.

Natural Concerns

Demographic studies have established that the cases of infant and child deaths are more common among boys than among girls. Therefore, young women outnumber young men. Even in societies wherein there are more male births than female births, the greater number of deaths among male children results in there being more young women than young men. Young girls tend to have a stronger immune system to childhood diseases than young boys do. This reality necessitates the need of polygamy; otherwise, of course, many young women will have to reconcile themselves to a life of spinsterhood, which is actually the case for many women today.

Societal Concerns

The way in which duties are divided among the sexes throughout the centuries has made men more susceptible to death than women are. When it comes to war, policing society, and working dangerous jobs, men are always the main players. Consider World War II: about 20 million men as opposed to only thousands of women died from military causes. Even without war, men are most often the ones who are involved in violent crimes.

If you were to look at the statistics of developed countries, you would find that women have a greater life expectancy than men do; imagine, then, how things are in developing countries, where crime and killing represent the norm, where the law of the jungle reigns. In such countries, most of those who are killed through violence are men.

However, in some countries, such as Egypt, women outnumber men by only a small margin. So demographics do not represent the only problem. Another problem is that, in practically all societies, a man can marry a wife only if he has enough money or earns enough money to support a wife and family. For this reason, many men remain single throughout their life, or until their thirties or forties when they will have saved enough money to get married. You probably know of many men who want to get married but can't afford to do so. On the other hand, a girl is ready and able to get married as soon as she reaches the age of puberty. Therefore, women who are ready to get married greatly outnumber the number of men who are ready to do the same. So for many women, polygamy can be a practical means of getting married.

Specific Needs that Arise Sometimes during Marriage

If one looks at the statistics of Western societies, one finds a very high rate of middle-aged married men cheating on their wives, usually with desperate single women who can't find husbands. Whatever feminists say to the contrary, the reality we see around us is that women are generally monogamous in nature: they yearn for the stability and prosperity that married life has to offer. Once they reach their mid-thirties, they generally worry about the years to come, and not about young handsome men. Men in their mid-thirties and early forties, however, still lust for women. "No, not true," screams the feminist. But reality proves her wrong. If a beautiful young woman walks down the street, all men are tempted to look at her only those who fear Allah do not. If a handsome young man walks down the street, no one gives him a second look.

Now, what happens in Western societies when a forty-year old man is no longer attracted to his wife? Chances are that he will either cheat on her or divorce her. He cannot control his desires, and society offers him no third option. In Islam, however, there is a viable third option. If one loves his wife but is no longer attracted to her, he doesn't have to cheat on her, and he certainly doesn't have to divorce her. He can simply marry another wife. This solution is both practical and fair to the first wife. If he divorces her

when she is forty years old, she will be faced with many difficulties in her old age, not the least of which is earning enough for her up keep. But if he marries another woman, she can at least enjoy the same domestic and financial stability that she feels she deserves. Also, with the option of polygamy, a man is not faced with the hard decision of divorcing his wife of 20 years whom he loves very much, but to whom he is no longer physically attracted. If monogamy is forced upon a man and he keeps a mistress, he takes no responsibility for his actions. But by marrying a second wife, it is legally binding upon him in Islam to take on the financial obligations of raising two families.

Consider also the situation of women who cannot have children, for whatever reason. Instead of divorcing his wife and forcing her to take care of her own self, a man has the option of marrying a second wife, having children with that wife, while still being able to be a good husband to his first wife.

In societies wherein polygamy is outlawed, a high percentage of men - as proved by reliable surveys - end up cheating on their wives at one time or another. More and more children these days cannot know for certain who their fathers are. What does this do to the moral fabric of society? Illicit sex, prostitution, a high divorce rate, sexually transmitted diseases - these are the results of a society that fosters sex outside of marriage. Let there be no doubt: forbidding polygamy is partly to blame for the above-mentioned evils.

Consistently throughout its legislations, Islam seeks for the betterment of the individual and society. With the legislation of polygamy, many evils are prevented. True, polygamy is not the solution to all problems and is not desirable for all individuals, but there are many cases in which the betterment of the individual as well as of society hinges upon the permissibility of polygamy. Men must have the option to marry more than one wife, and women must submit to Allah's judgment in the matter, for He is the One Who created us, and He is the One Who best knows what is in our best interests. And success lies with Allah.

Arguments from the Detractors of Polygamy

Western societies as a whole, and some individuals in our societies, criticize the practice of polygamy. They say that polygamy serves only the animal-like lusts of men and that women are stripped of their rights. They argue that women are mistreated in polygamous relationships, that co-wives of the same man will fight one another, and that the children of various co-wives will naturally hate one another.

The answer to these and other criticisms is simple: The blame lies not with polygamy itself but with men who act unjustly. As a whole, polygamy serves the needs of society; the problem lies in men who abuse the powers they are entrusted with. It is not correct to find fault with a law that is for the good of society just because a few individuals abuse that law. And furthermore, a woman does have recourse when things go awry. If her husband favors another wife over her or mistreats her, she can take her case before a judge.

Furthermore, Muslims who criticize the practice of polygamy would do well to remember that our outlook on life is different from that of non-Muslims. Our one goal in life is to worship Allah %. We don't allow our minds to determine what is lawful and what is unlawful; rather, we use our minds to come to the conclusion that Islam is the religion of truth, and there after we submit to the commands of Allah and His Messenger - We know that polygamy has a positive impact on society - if men practice it according to the teachings of Islam - and that Allah legislates only that which is better for us, but we accept the permissibility of polygamy simply because Allah informed us that it is permissible. We don't need any other reason; nevertheless, if we look at the overall benefits of polygamy and the overall harms of forced monogamy, we will certainly appreciate the importance of polygamy in any given society.

A Dangerous Interpretation put forward by some Muslims

Despite the fact that they pray and fast and generally accept most of the teachings of Islam, many Muslims today claim that polygamy is outlawed in Islam. They make this claim even though the permissibility of polygamy in Islam is established by clear proofs. The main proofs in Islam are four: the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and Ijma' (consensus of the people of knowledge in any given generation), and Qiyas (analogy); of these, the first three are more fundamental and less disputed by the people of knowledge. For something to be legislated in Islam, it must be established by at least one kind of proof: either by the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and Ijma', or Qiyas. So even if a legislation is not established in the Qur'an and Sunnah, it is still a valid legislation if it is established through Ijma' or Qiyas (because Ijma' and valid Qiyas are established in the Qur'an and Sunnah). When it comes to polygamy - as we have seen earlier in this chapter - its permissibility is established through the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and Ijma'. Yet certain Muslims today still have the temerity to question its permissibility.

They go to great lengths in arguing their claim, but what they mainly rely on are clearly false interpretations of the Qur'an. Their attitude towards polygamy can be traced back to two main reasons. First, some Muslims today desperately want to bring the teachings of Islam in line with Western culture and norms. And since polygamy is frowned upon in the West, some Muslims are willing to falsely interpret the Qur'an in order to show that they are 'progressive-minded' people. Second, the rise in feminism in many Muslim societies has led many women to reject polygamy without even caring about what Islam says about the matter. Many such women believe in Islam, pray, fast, give charity, and so on, but when it comes to polygamy, they say, "No man can do justice between his wives; therefore, polygamy is Haram." Such talk is especially dangerous because one of the gravest of sins is to speak without knowledge, to utter lies against Allah

. And one utters a lie against Allah when one says that something is Haram (forbidden) when it is actually Halal (permissible), or when one says that something is Halal when it is actually Haram.

The detractors of polygamy generally cite the following two Verses to further their claims:

﴿وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مِمَّا
وَتَلَّكَ وَرَبِّعٌ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةٌ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ذَلِكَ آدَابُ
الَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ﴾

"And if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry; (other) women of your choice, two or three, or four but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them) then only one or (the captives and the slaves) that your right hands possess. That is nearer to prevent you from doing injustice" [Quran 4: 3]

﴿وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمَيْلِ فَتَذَرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ وَإِنْ تُصْلِحُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٢٩﴾﴾

"You will never be able to do perfect justice between wives even if it is your ardent desire, so do not incline too much to one of them (by giving her more of your time and provision) so as to leave the other hanging (i.e., neither divorced nor married). And if you do justice, and do all that is right and fear Allah by keeping away from all that is wrong, then Allah is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. "[Quran 4: 129]

In interpreting these two Verses, they say that, in the first Verse, Allah permitted the practice of polygamy, stipulating that one must be just between his wives; and that, in the second Verse, Allah made it clear that doing justice between wives is impossible. Based on these premises, they come to the conclusion that polygamy is Haram (forbidden). Or in other words, they say that Allah wanted to forbid polygamy, but instead of outright saying it is forbidden, He said that it is lawful if a man can do justice, but then clarified that such justice is not attainable to man.

This interpretation represents the pinnacle of brazenness that a person can reach in distorting and falsely interpreting Allah's speech. For in reality, the two previous Verses actually prove the opposite of what they are trying to prove. The two Verses actually ease the conditions that must be fulfilled if a man is to practice polygamy; so they actually make it easier for more men to practice polygamy, and not the opposite. In the first Verse, Allah said:

﴿وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبْعَ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ذَلِكَ آذَنُكَ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا ﴿٣﴾﴾

"And if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry (other) women of your choice, two or three, or four but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one or (the captives and the slaves) that your right hands possess. That is nearer to prevent you from doing injustice. "[Quran 4: 3]

This Verse establishes the permissibility of having up until and no more than four wives at any given time. The Verse does stipulate, however, that a man must do justice between his wives and that he must be confident of being able to do so. If he fears that he will not be able to do justice, then he must limit himself to one wife. The question now arises: what, islamically does it mean to do justice between one's wives. Does it mean that one must treat his wives equally in matters over which he has control - such as providing food, clothing, and a home; and spending an equal amount of time and nights with each wife? Or does that justice include matters over which a man does not have control, such as feelings of extra-love in his heart for one particular wife.

Well, it is clear that it is possible for a man to treat his wives equally in regard to material matters: how much food and drink he provides for each wife; the quality of housing he provides for each wife; the

number of nights he spends with each wife, and the overall time he spends with each wife, and so on. On the other hand, it is hardly possible for a man to love each of his wives equally; therefore, he cannot share exactly the same degree of intimacy with each wife. All such matters have to do with the heart, over which a man has no control. Now, the important question is this: Is the justice that Allah.; stipulated limited to matters over which a man has control, or does that required justice also encompass matters over which a man has no control?

First, it does not make sense that Allah charges man with the duty of being just between his wives in the amount of love he feels for each wife, because such a duty is beyond the scope and ability of man. And one of the most fundamental of principles in Islam is that Allah does not charge man with duties that he cannot possibly bear. He said:

﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾

"Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope." [Quran 2: 286]

Therefore, the only thing that can make sense in the matter is that the justice that is required of man in polygamous relationships is limited to material matters over which he has control, as we have outlined before. This is clearly what Allah Himself explained in the second Verse, in which He said:

﴿وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمِيلِ فَتَدْرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ﴾

"You will never be able to do perfect justice between wives even if it is your ardent desire, so do not incline too much to one of them (by giving her more of your time and provision) so as to leave the other hanging (i.e., neither divorced nor married). [Quran 4: 129]

What this Verse means is that a man cannot do perfect justice between his wives, no matter how hard he tries, for there are matters - such as love - over which he has no control. Men are therefore not held accountable for such matters; they are, however, held accountable for being just in matters over which they do have control.

So, as the above mentioned Verse makes clear, it is forbidden for a man to deal unjustly between his wives when he does have the ability to do justice between them. Just because he loves one wife less than another, he may not, under any circumstances, favor the other wife with more of his time, provision, and so on. If he does favor one wife regarding such matters, the other wife will effectively be left hanging: she will not be divorced and set free, nor, for all effective purposes, will she really be married. She will not be getting her full rights as a wife; and she will not be set free, so that Allah can provide for her from His vast blessings.

Furthermore, the Messenger of Allah clarified the meaning of the aforementioned Verse both through action and speech. Wherever it was possible to do justice, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) distributed equally among his wives. And he would say:

«اللَّهُمَّ! هَذَا قَسْمِي فِيمَا أَمْلِكُ، فَلَا تُؤَاخِذْنِي فِيمَا تَمْلِكُ وَلَا
أَمْلِكُ»

"O Allah, this is my distribution regarding that over which I have control, so do not hold me accountable for that over which you have control while I have no control." [Abu Dawud: 2134]

Here, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is of course referring to love and the degree to which a man's heart leans towards each wife. And the Prophet's Companions, most of whom practiced polygamy, understood exactly this point from the Verse and from the Prophet. It is clear, therefore, that the two a fore mentioned Verses prove the detractors of polygamy to be in the wrong, rather than proving them to be in the right. They freely quote the first part of the second Verse to advance their views, but it is as if they never even bothered to read the rest of the Verse. The argument they propose is ludicrous, in that they want people to believe that Allah made an act lawful and then, in order for people to do that act, stipulated conditions so impossible that no man can fulfill them! They want people to believe that instead of forbidding polygamy with clearly expressed words, Allah resorted to the kind of confused speech that any person of sound mind would not utter: Indeed, Allah is far, far above from what they ascribe to Him!

A Final Word on Polygamy

Before we leave polygamy behind us and move on to the next topic, we would do well to correct certain fallacies that are widely accepted. Many people believe that Islam is the one religion that allows polygamy and that polygamy is common only to backwards countries, and not to Christian countries, since Christianity forbids the practice of polygamy. These are outright lies.

Historically speaking, polygamy was practiced in many societies even before the advent of Islam. And even today, it is not a practice that is exclusive to Islam - consider the Mormons, certain African tribes, certain areas of China and Japan. Furthermore, Christianity did not, in earlier centuries, forbid polygamy. In fact, there is no clear text in the Injil (the Bible) that outlaws the practice of polygamy. And throughout many centuries of Christianity, polygamy was deemed permissible. For example, in the eight century, the famous figure Charlemagne had two wives and a number of female slaves. And in the sixteenth century, Frederic the Second married more than one wife, having obtained the permission to do so from Lutheran priests. Luther himself acknowledged the permissibility of polygamy.

What some people think is that polytheistic peoples practiced polygamy and that Christianity then came to civilize them and force monogamy upon them. This is the exact opposite of what actually happened. The peoples of polytheistic societies practiced monogamy. Then when they became Christians, they accepted some Christian doctrines, but rejected the Christian doctrine of polygamy, instead choosing to follow in the footsteps of their forbears. Thus polygamy was forbidden for social reasons, and the original teachings of Christianity regarding polygamy were discarded, as occurred throughout the centuries regarding many teachings of that religion. But even today, there are some Christians - the Mormons - who openly practice polygamy and openly say that it is a part of their religion. And so you will find many Mormons, in Utah and British Columbia in particular, who marry more than one wife; in fact, some of them have 20 or more wives. In this matter, the Mormons have a stronger case than do other Christian sects since nowhere in the Bible is it mentioned that polygamy is forbidden. Polygamy, therefore, is not something that began with the advent of Islam. Rather, Islam upheld this practice - which was applied by previous Prophets; from the Children of Israel - though it modified its applicability, limiting the number of lawful wives for each man to four.

Immodest Attire and the Women of Hell-fire

Indeed, all praise is for Allah, Who created man, taught him speech, and sent down for him the Qur'an. All praise is for Allah, Who has guided us to Islam and showered down upon us innumerable blessings.

Noble sister, what will you do if you are from the women of the Hell-fire? Will you be able to endure the Hell-fire, even if you have to do so for only a few moments? If you want, try a simple test to help you answer these questions: Light a small fire (and remember: the fire of earth is much less intense than the fire of Hell) and place your hand in it; observe how long you will be able to endure this small fire.

Verily, Allah expelled the accursed Iblis from Paradise and from the station he enjoyed simply because he refused to perform one prostration before Adam. Allah created Adam with His own Hand, made him honorable, and made the angels perform prostration before him.

Then, when Adam ate from the fruits that Allah; forbade him from, Allah removed him from His Paradise. Adam then endured years of toil and fatigue in this world. Consider the example of Yilnus 'who was one of Allah's Prophets. He left his people, being angry with them for not believing. His anger was for the sake of Allah' but he didn't leave with Allah's permission. As a result, a fish swallowed him up. Then we have the example of Musa. He asked Allah if he could see Him; the result of this request was that Musa was made to faint. When Musa was asked about the most knowledgeable person on earth, and when he answered that it was he who enjoyed that honor and status, Allah sent Khidr to him in order to instruct him. We also have the example of our Prophet, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He once turned away from a blind man while he was busy inviting others to Islam, and as a result, Allah reproached him through Revelation. The best generation of Muslims is of course that of the Prophet's Companions . But because they accepted to ransom the prisoners of Badr, they were afflicted with many losses on the Day of Uhud. When they felt that they were a mighty force on the Day of Hunain, Allah made them taste the hardships of battle. And Allah warned His Prophet in the Qur'an that, if he were to associate partners with Allah in worship, his deeds would be rendered null and void.

Why am I mentioning all of these examples? Well, these were Allah's close and obedient slaves. And if even they did something that was against Allah's command, Allah punished them and made them go through hardships.

Then what about the likes of us, who sin day and night, who have strayed from the teachings of Islam, who have very little knowledge and a weak understanding of Allah's religion. If Allah's obedient slaves went through such hardships and if they were reproached for their mistakes, then we have to ask ourselves some very serious questions. What have we contributed to the religion? What acts of worship have we performed that make us deserving of Allah's forgiveness? As you can see, our situation is very precarious. Indeed, we ask Allah to pardon and forgive us.

Here, I am addressing my sister in Islam who leaves her home with makeup on her face, with tight clothing, and with parts of her body exposed - such as her legs, arms, or part of her chest. I ask you, noble sister, do you love Allah? If you say, "Yes," then I ask you: How can you so blatantly disobey the One you love. A general principle in life is that one does not disobey the object of one's devoted love and veneration; this would especially be true for the topic we are discussing here, since one's love for Allah is greater than any other love.

Do you not know that sound faith (Iman) hinges upon loving Allah and His Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Allah (SWT) said:

﴿قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾ قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾﴾

"Say (O Muhammad to mankind): "If you (really) love Allah then follow me (i.e., accept Islamic Monotheism, follow the Qur'an and the Sunnah), Allah will love you and forgive you of your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." Say (O Muhammad): "Obey Allah and the Messenger (Muhammad)." But if they turn away, then Allah does not like the disbelievers." [Quran 3: 31, 32]

Reflect on Allah's saying, "If you really love Allah." This indicates a great trial and test for mankind, for if a person answers, "Yes, I do love Allah," then Allah mentioned a clear way to test whether or not one is truthful in this claim: "Then follow me," or in other words, follow what Muhammad has commanded you with and forbidden you from. If you do that, then what is your reward? It is the love of Allah ' for the reward of goodness is nothing other than goodness itself. So the reward of you loving Allah is Allah loving you: "Allah will love you" And as always is the case, Allah rewards with more: "And forgive you your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

Noble sister, if you love Allah %, then why do you so blatantly disobey His commands? Why do leave your home attired in immodest clothing? Is Allah pleased with you for doing that? Will the angels include your immodest choice of clothing in your record of good deeds? When you dress in a way that makes men look at you lustfully, do you feel that you are one of the believers?

Instead of upholding your honor as a woman who should be respected for her mind, why do you turn yourself into a mere object? One man looks at one part of your body; another looks appraisingly at other parts of your body; the first is very much attracted to you; the second, after giving you an overall appraisal, is attracted to certain of your features yet turned off by other aspects of your appearance. Are you a commodity that is displayed for sale? Do you think that Allah is not looking at you? Or do you think that Allah will not be able to punish you? Do you think that you will be able to win over the Angel of Death with your stunning looks, just as you do with the men of this world? Do you think that the black-faced angels in the grave will be tempted by your attractive shape, and then wanting to gain your favor, will admit you into Paradise? Or do you think that Allah does not punish those who disobey Him?

Whatever the delusions are that you might entertain, you must wake up from your state of heedlessness. You must no longer be a commodity in the hands of men. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«صِنْفَانِ مِنَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ لَمْ أَرَهُمَا، قَوْمٌ مَعَهُمْ سِيَاطٌ كَأَذْنَابِ الْبَقَرِ يَضْرِبُونَ بِهَا النَّاسَ، وَنِسَاءٌ كَاسِيَاتٌ عَارِيَاتٌ، مُمِيلَاتٌ مَائِلَاتٌ، رُؤُوسُهُنَّ كَأَسْنِمَةِ الْبُخْتِ الْمَائِلَةِ، لَا يَدْخُلْنَ الْجَنَّةَ، وَلَا يَجِدُنَّ رِيحَهَا، وَإِنَّ رِيحَهَا لَتُوجَدُ مِنْ مَسِيرَةٍ كَذَا وَكَذَا»

"Two categories of the people of Hell-fire I have not yet seen: A people who have with them whips that are like the tails of cows; they strike people with them. And women who are dressed yet naked, who are Mumflat (i.e., who shake their shoulders when

they walk, who draw the attention of those who are looking at them) and Ma'ilat (i.e., they lean away from the truth or they walk in a slanting manner, strutting, with a kind of fluidity of motion, so as to attract others); their heads are like the humps of inclined long-necked camels. They will not enter Paradise, nor will they find (perceive, sense, smell) its fragrance (or wind), and its fragrance (or wind) is felt from such and such distance [i.e., even from very, very far off, one can smell the fragrance (or feel the wind) of Paradise; this is to say that the two above mentioned categories of people will be very, very far away from Paradise]. "[Muslim: 2128]

The women described in this Hadith are dressed yet naked. Or in other words, they reveal parts of their body, the shape of their body through tight clothing, or the texture of their skin through transparent clothing, so that it makes no difference whether they wear clothing or not: they are, for all effective purposes, naked. And the hairstyle of many women today exactly fits the description of the hairstyle described in the above mentioned Hadith. Referring to such women, the Prophet said, "They will not enter Paradise, nor will they find (perceive, sense, smell) its fragrance (or wind)."

Noble sister, are you satisfied with the Hell-fire for yourself? Consider your attire and ask yourself: "Am I a true believer?" The welfare of our nation depends on the morals of women. Our societies suffer today for many reasons, but one of the main reasons is the moral turpitude of the female members of our society. The way in which they go about the streets and mix with men has caused more damage than any one of us can imagine.

Allah has charged both men and women with important religious duties, some of which are common to both sexes, and others of which are specific to one of the two sexes. Only when the members of each sex fulfill the duties they are charged with can our nation rise from its present slumber. Noble sister, obey your Lord and fulfill the duties He has charged you with. Toil day and night for Paradise, and protect yourself from the Hell-fire. And success lies with Allah -

Regarding the topic at hand, here are some questions that the noble Shaikh 'Abdul-'Aziz bin Baz, President of the Fatwa Council of Saudi Arabia (May Allah have mercy on him), answered.

1) What is the ruling concerning the removal or trimming of additional or unwanted hair from the eyebrows?

A: It is not permissible to remove or trim any hair from one's eyebrows. This is because the Prophet cursed both the An-Namisah (a woman who removes hair from her face or eyebrows) and the Al-Mutanammisah (a woman who has another person remove hair from her face or eyebrows). And the people of knowledge have clarified that a woman is a Namisah if she removes any hair from her eyebrows.

2) Is it permissible for one to allow one's nails to grow long? And what about wearing nail polish? I do perform ablution before putting the nail polish on, but then I wait 24 hours before removing it.

A: To allow one's nails to grow is a practice that is contrary to the Sunnah. It is established that the Prophet said:

«الْفِطْرَةُ خَمْسٌ: الْخِتَانُ، وَالْإِسْتِحْدَادُ، وَقَصُّ الشَّارِبِ، وَتَقْلِيمُ الْأَظْفَارِ»
«الْإِبْطِ، وَتَقْلِيمُ الْأَظْفَارِ»

"The Fitrah (Fitrah can have different meanings; as for this Hadith, some scholars say that it refers to the Sunnah, to the Sunnah of the Prophet it is maintained by others that it refers to the religion) consists of five (practices): circumcision, removing the hair that surrounds the private areas, trimming the moustache, plucking out armpit hairs, and clipping fingernails"

[Abu Dawud 4198, Al-Tirmidhi: 2756 and Ibn Majah: 292]

With the exception of circumcision (which, of course, is performed only once in one's lifetime), it is not permissible to put off these acts of hygiene for more than 40 days. Anas said, "Trimming the moustache, clipping the nails, plucking out armpit hairs, and shaving the hair that surrounds the private parts - the Messenger of Allah set a time limit for these practices: we may not refrain from any of these deeds for more than 40 days." By not performing these acts of personal hygiene, one resembles animals and certain disbelievers (those that do not apply these practices). As for nail polish, it is better to avoid using it. And if one does use it, one must remove it before performing ablution, because it prevents water from reaching one's fingernails.

3) What is the ruling in Islam for wearing high-heels?

A: At the very least, doing so is disliked. First, a woman who wears high heels is trying to deceive people into thinking that she is taller than she really is (taller than the height Allah created her upon). Second, by wearing high-heels, a woman subjects herself to the danger of falling. And third, doctors have established that wearing high-heels has a negative impact on a woman's health.

4) Is it permissible for women to wear tight clothing? And is it permissible for women to wear white clothing?

A: It is certainly not permissible for a woman to appear before strangers or to walk out into the streets and market areas wearing tight clothing that delineates and describes her form to those who look at her. By wearing tight clothing, a woman is, in effect, naked; she will be guilty of tempting (others towards wrongdoing); and she will be the cause of great evil. As for white-colored clothing, if the color white is specific to men in a country, whereby one who wears a white garment is automatically assumed to be a man (such as in Saudi Arabia), then a woman (in that society) may not wear white-colored clothing. Otherwise, she will be guilty of imitating men. And the Prophet cursed women who imitate men (and men who imitate women).

5) May I shorten the length of the hair that is in the front of my head, for such hair often hangs down to the eyebrows of a woman? May Allah reward you well?

A: I don't know of anything that is wrong with a woman shortening her hair. True, it is forbidden for women to completely shave their heads, but shortening the length of the hair on their heads is permissible. However, if you do cut your hair, you should do so in a nice manner, one that pleases both yourself and your husband. You should come to an agreement with him (about the style you want), but your haircut may not resemble the haircut of a disbelieving woman (i.e., the kind of haircut that is specific to non-Muslims). Maintaining long hair is certainly difficult, in terms of washing and combing. So if a woman has long hair and wants to shorten its length, it will not harm her (in her religion) to do so. A woman may also want to do so for aesthetic purposes, to have a hairstyle that her husband will be pleased with. I know of nothing that is wrong with this practice. But I repeat: it is forbidden for a woman to completely shave her head, unless she does so from necessity, because of some sickness or disease.

Some Glimpses from the Life of Muslim Women

Noble sister, in striving to be a better Muslim, remember the many sacrifices made by women during the first generations of Islam. Like male and female Muslims in Makkah were tortured unless they recanted their beliefs. In fact, the first martyr in Islam was a woman, the mother of Yasir (May Allah be pleased with them).

In the early struggles of the Muslims, women made significant contributions. For example, we know that 'Aishah bint Abu Bakr and Umm Sulaim (May Allah be pleased with them) were present during the battle of Uhud, racing back and forth with containers of drinks for the Muslims. Anas bin Malik said, "The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would go out for battles, taking (along with the army) Umm Sulaim and women from the Ansar. When he (and the Muslims) would fight, they (the women) would give drink (to the fighters) and treat the wounded." Umm 'Atiyyah Al-Ansariyyah said, "I fought seven battles with the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). I would stay behind where they set camp, and I would prepare food for them, treat the wounded, and tend the sick (Muslims)." We have the example of Khadijah, who generously spent her wealth for the cause of Islam. And we have the example of 'Aishah' who, after the death of the Messenger of Allah ' was a rich source of knowledge and a prolific narrator of Hadith. May Allah be pleased with her and with all of the Prophet's Companions?

These are just a few examples of the many sacrifices and contributions made by women from the first century of Islam. Khadijah, 'Aishah, Fatimah, and other of the Prophet's female Companions (May Allah be pleased with them all). These should be the role models of Muslim women today, and not singers or actresses. O Allah, guide us to the straight path, the path of those upon whom you have bestowed your grace.

﴿وَأَخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠﴾﴾

"And the close of their request will be: Al-Hamddu Lillahi Rabbil-'Alamin [All the praises and thanks are to Allah, the Lord of 'Alamin (mankind, jinn, and all that exists)]" [Quran 10: 10]