

Women or Half of the Body of Society

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The Solution to Social Problems

The greatest difficulty that one encounters while solving social problems is that one is bound to be influenced by factors like local customs, traditions, habits, emotions, blind imitation and so on. Subsequently, one is very likely to deviate from the path of truth, and fail to distinguish between right and wrong.

In problems pertaining to logic and science however, this difficulty does not arise. In science, one first gathers primary premises and through logical inferences, one can arrive at a correct conclusion. In other words, in case differences or misunderstandings do crop up in scientific or philosophical issues, these can be usually attributed to a lack of adequate means and equipment or an absence of logical inferences.

Social problems, on the other hand, concern the benefits and losses, ideals and desires of the various classes in society, and here, most differences and disputes emerge as a result of rights and duties coming very often into conflict, and the reason why some individuals adhere to certain theories, opposing the views of others is because they do not base their motives which are other than truth seeking, social justice and assuring an orderly functioning of society, on reason.

It is here that often oratory, poetry, and misleading propaganda replace rational thinking. The result is that instead of seeking the help of experts, impartial scientists and scholars and initiating conferences to be attended by leading scholars, unbiased discussions and investigations, resort is often made to hooting, brawls and rows and efforts are directed at misleading and inciting the fickle-minded.

Following this, things are likely to get worse. The enlightened, the geni and pride of humanity, may be forbidden from guiding the people and freedom of expression and of the pen may severely be repressed. The lewd tongues and hireling poisonous pens would not only come to dominate, but would be further encouraged in their selfish endeavours. With such a corrupt order prevailing, one can easily imagine

what society's destiny would be.

Thus, one basic condition for making well-grounded judgements in such issues, will be to analyze them from an objective angle which seeks only the truths devoid of all emotions, the thick veils of passion or all influence that habits or customs may exercise. In this way only, can one arrive at truth and proper judgements be made.

Moreover, while objectively investigating such issues and for an understanding true to the facts, one must bear in mind the various dimensions which govern man's life, his social interactions and the law of causality. So, before a categorical conclusion, the weak and strong points of the material, spiritual, individual and social aspects must be weighed carefully. So also, on finding that some factors contravene others, the more important ones should be given priority.

Unfortunately, in the analysis of these issues, there usually is a strong subjective inclination. Consequently, rational and peaceful ways give place to colonialistic and violent ones.

Blind imitation is one factor which has exerted a negative influence upon the solving of social problems. Indeed, too many rights are being trampled and a high degree of deviation can be witnessed as a result of blind, ignorant imitation of the ancestors and aliens' cultures, crippling many societies which come to find themselves in a sad state of helpless strangulation.

So, as said before, for a rational, logical study of these issues and opinions true to scale, one must beware the negative influence that such factors may exercise. One should further have an objective mind, free from all subjection, whether by westerners or easterners, and a pure insight free from all passion or selfish motive

The Logic of Human Nature

The woman's rights issue, lately, has come to shed a lot of ink in our country. This was followed by events of which all of us are more or less aware. However, here is not the place to discuss them. For a well-founded study of the woman's rights, (note that she forms half of the world's population), we should consider her position in nature and society and find out what are the privileges and values granted her in nature or in religious terms, by Divine Power and Wisdom.

The Holy Quran—the last, perfect Divine Book and man's eternal guide, leading him towards prosperity and salvation both in this world and the hereafter, tells us that social laws must be framed in accordance with human nature:

فَطَرَتَ اللَّهُ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ۖ لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ...

.. The nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation,

that is the right religion, but most people do not know. (30:30)

The logic of the Quran is unique and no scholar or scientist till now has been capable of such logic, no matter how much we study them. We challenge all those claiming to have found a better logic, to prove the contrary. Indeed, is there any logic as good and decisive? This question will be clearly answered once it is explained why human nature should be the basis of all laws and regulations.

It is a commonly accepted fact, both by past and present philosophers, that every living being is endowed with a mechanism through which its survival becomes possible. Experimentation and the subsequent results have proved this beyond all doubt. Obviously there is little need for proofs or advanced technical reasoning and a brief study of the life of living beings, plants or animals will easily point to this fact.

For instance, it is common knowledge that a living being needs food for its survival. However, every living being or species needs different kinds of food according to its bodily needs. Moreover, nature has equipped each living being with a certain digestive mechanism which speaks for itself, for the purpose it has been created and the food that suits it.

A study of the digestive system of the herbivorous and carnivorous animals and the existing differences between their teeth, stomachs, bowels and so on, can be a true testimony and a decisive evidence to prove our point. Hence, a scientist, instructing how animals should be fed, must take into account the difference in the digestive mechanism of these animals and upon which, he should subsequently base his instructions.

Of course, since animals act through instinct, and not reason, they do not need to be instructed as far as their nourishment goes, though animal husbandmen may need instruction in feeding and breeding the animals.

Again, so as to obtain an optimum use from a living being's potentials, one should study its natural mechanism to better understand its potentials, its strength, its limitations and the way it functions. So, the best way to determine the duties or rights of a human being will be to study its natural potentials and qualities. No measure is in fact better than human nature.

Woman's Natural Constitution

Man, being a spiritual, materialistic and intellectual animal, in addition to his individual characteristics, his social relations must also be considered. Therefore, a comprehensive discussion on the rights of the woman should include studies in physiology, psychology, sociology and other related sciences.

An attempt to explain the basics of each of these may prove too much time, consuming. But for a proper understanding of our discussion, a brief explanation of these disciplines is deemed necessary.

That both man and woman are human beings is indisputable. Likewise, they both possess common human characteristics and values. But these cannot be taken as yardsticks in measuring the differences which exist between their rights and duties. Such differences do exist because of their peculiar characteristics on the basis of which they can be distinguished. To begin with, we must consider those differences present in the physical constitution of both the man and the woman. In other words, we must find out what does the concept of womanhood mean and what is its basis.

The most pointing difference between a man and a woman is their sex. They do differ of course in their nervous systems as well as their other systems, but a study of such differences lies within the confine of physiology.

Man differs from the woman to a large extent from a psychological viewpoint. Women are normally more emotional, while in man, the intellect dominates over the emotions. This difference is directly related to their nervous systems and a critical psychological and physiological examination can prove very fruitful here. From a sociological viewpoint, studies in the emergence of the family unit as a strong factor and the role it plays in uniting the married couple must be undertaken.

Though the difference in sex of both the male and the female may seem normal and be regarded as a weak factor in determining their rights and duties, careful examination will prove that this very difference may determine to a high degree, their social status, material rights and duties. To even claim that other differences in their nervous systems, in their psychological set-up and so on are basically rooted in this basic difference will not be an exaggeration.

Between the woman and the man, there exists a reciprocal love and affection. A strong mutual sexual attraction and the pleasures that come with it help to lay the foundation of their union, enabling nature in this way to arrive at its goal, which is man's survival. Yet the man and the woman do not play an equal role in realizing this goal.

For instance, if man has to some extent, a certain degree of freedom in sexual activities, (like he cannot be forced into sexual intercourse), with the woman, the opposite holds true. Again, man's reproductive role is instantaneous, while the woman has to bear the burden of pregnancy for several months. If we add to it the time she must spend on suckling, nurture, cherishing and bringing up her child, then we see that her role is much longer than the man's.

Oddly enough, a certain woman representative in the ex-regime's Senate had stated: "Childbirth is the simplest of things coming naturally to women, the same way as man would make a simple move to meet his needs." But as we all know, pregnancy and childbirth are sacred duties which are arduous, time consuming and momentous, and should not be compared in any way to ordinary daily activities or discussed so crudely as done by this woman senator.

A pregnant woman has to bear the indispositions and cravings that come with pregnancy and needs rest and medical treatment like does a sick person. As the doctors say, the pregnancy period resembles an

illness. All through that period, the woman must see to it that she remains in good physical and mental shape, while at the same time, and avoid getting nervous, excited or exhausted. A neglect of these might prove detrimental to both the mother and the foetus.

Childbirth must also by no means be regarded as something instantaneous. Rather, it is preceded, accompanied and followed by pains, indispositions and possible side-effects. It is further known that after delivery, the woman needs rest for the first few weeks, so as to regain her normal disposition.

Now, it is fitting to note that the reason as to why the Quran has restricted the woman's role in social affairs is not because it looks upon her as a means to procreating more people. Neither do we intend to argue to the contrary. We rather want to stress the more important reproductive role of the woman. We mean that man's role in the reproduction process cannot be compared to that of the woman, which entails a long period of pregnancy, pains of delivery and the sufferings that follow it.

Thus, we should recognize the woman's natural and innate role and duty in society and consider why has she been endowed with such natural characteristics and what are her natural demands and capabilities.

Since the burden of reproduction is the woman's only, Almighty God has bestowed on her such a power as to enable her to perform this important natural task, while at the same time to derive pleasure in the performance of it. This divine gift is the spiritual force of motherly affection.

No doubt, man would have found it unbearable had he been the one to bear the burden of motherhood. But this is the greatest ambition of a woman possessing a sound morale and a healthy temperament. In fact, there are many barren women who are ready to spend a fat sum so that they can be impregnated through medical treatment.

Usually, man does find it a pleasurable experience to have children, but is he ready to bear the same troubles as does the woman for her child's sake? Is he ready to wash his young child as affectionately as would do a mother? Will he sacrifice his rest, comfort and leisures for the child or more important still, does he derive satisfaction in such arduous, exhausting tasks?

If you do come across such a man, then rest assured that he is an exception to the rule. And as we know, while framing social regulations, such exceptions cannot be considered. Furthermore, the mentalities of the man and the woman about concepts like child bearing differ basically.

Can we rightly claim that both sexes manifest an equal, natural inclination towards the duty of child rearing and it's like? Here we can say that the difference between the man and the woman in their psychological and physical make-up is very well-defined.

Man is usually more aggressive and quarrelsome, which qualities do not accord with motherly sentiments and care. On the contrary, woman is more convivial and peaceable in her feelings, in

particular, motherly affection which can be regarded as the main source of her other emotions, the driving force behind her most willing acceptance of these heavy duties, of which she makes ideals in life.

Here, it must be pointed out that to argue (taking into consideration man's physical and psychological make-up) that man should shoulder equally the duties of motherhood with the woman (which duty is considered a most sacred one for the woman and a determining factor in maintaining the existence of man), would be wrong.

Likewise, one cannot argue that the woman should engage in certain tasks which have been designed especially for man by creation and act shoulder to shoulder in cooperation with him. This reality becomes more pointing after a study of man's anatomy, which study would show how the apparatus of creation has constituted and built man so that he can naturally perform certain tasks, which fact will be discussed in the pages to come.

Physiologists and anatomists have also pointed to the difference which exists between the autonomic nervous system of the male and that of the female. For example, man's brain has been found to be anatomically larger than the woman's and is, on the average, one-hundred grams lighter than a man's. So also, the front half of the woman's brain is more than fifty cubic millimeters smaller than the man's. In addition, as far as the brain structural components of both sexes go, physiologists have proved that the male's brain is anatomically distinguished from the female's, showing signs of superior intelligence and mental growth.

These were some of the most remarkable differences between a normal man and a normal woman. There might be exceptions, like in cases where a woman's brain proves to be larger than a man's. But as already mentioned, such exceptional cases cannot be taken into account while framing regulations and rules for society.

The Root of the Family Unit

So far, in as much as the scope of this discourse has permitted, we have pinpointed the most striking structural differences between both sexes, whether physical or psychological, the former having a direct relation to the latter.

Now we come to a third point, namely the natural attraction of both sexes and the formation of the family. It is an indisputable fact that man, in the course of his life, finds himself in perpetual need of cooperation and assistance from his fellow-creatures, so much so, that he is regarded to be by nature, a social animal. This characteristic has indeed been decisive in the establishment of human societies which have existed since ages.

But can one consider this need for cooperation and assistance for survival, for defense against the enemy and for keeping the economy going, as the fundamental factor behind the creation of the family

unity? Or should this assertion be rejected? Is it the same factor which brings man to cooperate with his fellow-creature that leads both sexes to a union to form a family?

In other words, is the most genuine and natural human union, the result of man's pecuniary needs, his need to defend himself and so forth, or is it above all, the result of the mutual sexual attraction that naturally manifests itself in both sexes and the love for children that are the actual factors behind the establishment of the family?

Has not the same Creator Who has created both the male and the female as to be mutually attracted to each other (a feeling exerting a tremendous influence in the course of our life, dominating all other feelings and one of the most powerful forces in nature) meant this attraction to be the motive force behind the establishment of the social unit called the family?

As mentioned earlier, a similarity characterizing two creatures cannot be taken as the cause behind the occurrence of a phenomenon peculiar to one of them. Further, if cooperation between two persons were to lead to the formation of the family unit, then two persons of the same sex could establish a family considering the principle of similarity and group-cooperation.

The necessity would not arise for the union of two members of the opposite sex whereas the foundation of a family unit invariably necessitates such a union, where exists a perpetual appeal between each other.

Therefore, a study of the natural being of the human male and the female, taking into account the sexual instinct, the natural, spiritual peace, tranquility and pleasures governing family life, and the unique marital relation, there will remain no doubt if any, that the family is basically founded on that very natural, mutual attraction between them.

Nature's Guidance in Determining the Woman's Role

Humanity and the characteristics in common to both sexes would be meaningless if any human being¹ is denied certain fundamental rights; rights which are natural, genuine and innate. Some of these rights are the right to be independent, the right to think and act freely, the right to property, the right to equal justice, the right to defense of one's legitimate rights and so on.

No person can be deprived of these rights on the basis of his colour, sex, status, nationality or academic level. One and all should enjoy the e rights equally regardless of their being white or black, male or female, ruler or subject, Eastern or Western, city-dweller or villager, educated or uneducated.

Thus, the rules governing ancient civilizations, encouraging social privileges, bestowing the right to ownership, freedom, education and other material and spiritual rights upon an exclusive class, or those civilizations where the woman was considered a merchandise and salvation, a prerogative belonging only to the male sex, both in this world and the hereafter, went against human nature.

Unfortunately, even at present, in some western nations, which are regarded by many as the pioneers of the so-called "caravan of civilization", one can still witness vestiges of these anti-human rules. One obvious example is the current discrimination against the black man on the basis of his colour.

However, there are those who by birth, possess superior qualities and peculiar aptitudes and when we come across them, we should not ignore them. The same thing applies to the difference that exists in the biological and physical constitution of the man and the woman. In fact in the legislation of the social rules, this factor should be seriously considered.

For instance, after conception, the woman, as per her physical build-up, becomes ready for suckling. Thus the right to suckle the baby becomes an innate right of hers. No law can deny her this right. If a particular law stated that a father had full authority to give his child to anyone he pleased for suckling, then this law would definitely be against human nature.

Likewise, if a law stated that the woman should go on the battle-fields to fight and defend the country against the enemy, this law would be in contravention with human nature, because man, by birth, is endowed with a stronger physique, is mentally more strong and therefore, naturally more fit to fight than the woman.

Of course, if it happens that there is not enough men to fight, then the right of defense which belongs to both sexes exacts that the woman too should come forward to fight; but when the number of men suffices for defense, and there is no need for women, it would not be right to ask the latter to fight on the ground that she also has an equal claim to the right of defense.

In such a case, it would be wrong to place the heavy and arduous burden of war and fighting upon the woman's shoulders, because the laws and regulations based on the common human characteristics can be applied only in cases pertaining to those very basic and common human rights and not in cases where the human characteristics differ. This is so because individual characteristics call for particular regulations as per the individual nature.

Therefore, regarding the woman, it is necessary to consider the demands of her natural constitution in connection with social regulations. Nature has gifted her with the unique emotion of motherly affection, which certainly is one of her inborn qualities.

The momentous role that such emotions play in human society and their considerable influence upon the child's upbringing and the human emotions that they encourage in the young child is meat for discussion. Unfortunately, the limited scope of this discourse does not permit us to do so. We content ourselves with just mentioning that many proponents of free sex are now giving up this crazy, corrupt philosophy on realizing that it results in illegitimate offspring who are denied motherly affection during their growth and the supreme human emotions that it entails.

So, while formulating rules and regulations pertaining to the female sex, one should invariably keep in

mind that these should in no way contradict the sacred duty of motherhood or be incompatible with the innate, divinely gifted emotions of the female.

Moreover, researchers have proved beyond all doubt, that a society based on the family system is the most natural and genuine of societies. Such a society is the outcome of the natural urge that both sexes feel towards each other. Any law contravening this natural order will therefore be inhuman, detrimental to society and repressive to the woman and the whole of mankind.

Another noteworthy point is that, the same as the woman² by birth is more emotional than the man, the latter is physically and mentally stronger. It is this very difference between them that makes the evolution of human society and man possible. The wide research of physiologists and psychologists tells us that this superiority is an indisputable reality. History also, all through, has pointed to this truth.

So, certain tasks which accord with man's physiological and mental structures, tasks like fighting which demands a lot of courage, should be reserved for him, whether they bring pleasure or pain. Indeed, this shall benefit mankind as a whole and be in accordance with the natural order.

The Woman in Islam

Before plunging into this discussion, we must mention a few points:

1- For a realistic understanding of the fund aments of Islam, a primary careful examination of the Quranic verses, the undistorted narrations of the Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.) and the impeccable Imams (A.S.) and their life becomes imperative.

One must not analyse the dictates of Islam on the basis of the action of some Muslims at a certain time or place. For instance, if some Muslims abuse the woman's rights, this injustice should not be attributed to Islam.

Likewise, it would be wrong to affirm that Islam has ignored the legitimate rights of the woman on hearing or observing that somewhere or at a certain period, the Muslims have been denying the woman her legitimate rights. When one observes Islamic tenets being negated in some Muslim lands, which prefer rather to copy Western cultures, one should not conclude that the governing laws agree with Islam, even if millions of Muslims do follow these Westernized ways.

Again, the distortions, carried so often to extremes and the wrong conceptions of the Westerners cannot be attributed to the religion of Jesus Christ (A.S.). We know that some Christian sects hold that the woman is not a full human being and that she is a link between animals and mankind or that her soul (excepting that of Virgin Mary) is not eternal, eternal salvation being the prerogative of man alone. These far-fetched conceptions cannot be attributed to Christ's teachings. So also, it would be totally wrong to associate the reigning corruption and prostitution in the Western world with Christianity.

2- Civil and Penal Laws are framed while considering the average normal citizen of a society and exceptions have no room here. There are in fact very few constitutional articles which are based on exceptions. Thus, if there are exceptional cases which contravene existing laws, these laws cannot be called invalid. One cannot blame the legislator when such cases do crop up.

3- The religious laws and precepts, do not only preserve the order of society and safeguard its material interests, but also take stock of the spiritual and intellectual aspects. It would be wrong to imagine that Islamic injunctions bother themselves only with worldly interests.

In fact, how can one suppose that the Exalted Legislator—Almighty God, Who has given utmost importance to man's eternal salvation and Who has, so splendidly exhibited the spirit of Tawhid (Divine Unity) and Divine worship in all the manifestations of life, has neglected the spiritual aspect, giving sole importance to what is material?

This however does not imply that in the sacred teachings and precepts of this perfect Divine religion, the material is totally absent. Indeed, how can one believe that God—the Almighty Legislator, Who has established such a perfect balance between body and soul to fulfil the goal of creation and has made of this world a farm where man sows the seeds of his eternal life and reaps the fruits in the here after according to his deeds and beliefs in this world, could have neglected the material aspects in the religious teachings of this sacred religion.

We should be invariably mindful that God has created man in this earthly world so that he can attain perfection for which he has been ordained in the evolutionary course of his life. His earthly life is the foundation for his eternal life. His beliefs, ways and deeds in this world will directly determine his eternal life, a life of salvation or chastisement as the case may be.

Divine Legislation directs man, in the course of his life, to recognize the straight path in the light of Divine Guidance and instructions so that journeying on that divinely illuminated path he can reach the ideal destination. Man by instinct, like the animal fails to recognize and distinguish between good and evil. This explains his need for Divine Legislation as a discussion on prophecy would reveal.

Thus, man's instincts do not help him to differentiate between right and wrong in this earthly world, affecting life in both the worlds. His intellect also fails to satisfy this purpose of creation.

The human brain, limited in its capacity, cannot fore see all things which bring salvation, in particular, salvation in the next world—eternal life. Having not yet entered the next world, the human intellect fails to perceive the means, conditions and causes which bring prosperity and salvation in that world, or the obstacles on the way to eternal salvation.

Due to this, man often fails to distinguish between good and evil in the course of his life, preventing him from directing his actions in the way of eternal salvation. That is why he becomes in need of Divine revelation by the One Who has command over all lives, affairs and Who Knows the ins and outs of the

apparatus of creation.

So, both Divine Creation and Divine Legislation have one goal. Each complements the other. It is obvious! that the Creator of man Who places him on the Divine Path in nature through guidance and instructions about Divine Creation and Legislation so that he may attain the ideal, does so for man's progress and well-being. He is the One and Only, the All-Knowing and All-Seeing, whether it stands in relation to the material, the spiritual or the world after.

Is there anyone besides God, the One and Only, Who can be All-Knowing and All-Seeing and Who can frame regulations governing man's life in such a comprehensive way which covers all aspects, whether material or spiritual?

Hence, we can state that Muhammad (S.A.W.), the Seal of all Prophets, was sent Divine Revelation which he communicated to mankind so that the latter through Divine Guidance, can attain an ideal state of perfection and well being in both worlds and that this Revelation does not err in the least.

So, anyone who considers himself a Muslim and who believes Islamic injunctions to be defective and inadequate in meeting society's needs, or that they are relevant only at a certain time or place, is either definitely ignorant of the fundamentals of Islam, or lacks the intellect for its understanding.

4- With the conflicting opinions and thoughts ever since the beginning of man's history and the continuous advance in some fields of knowledge, we know that the ideal, the highest stage of perfection has, till now, not yet been experienced by man. At no period of time, and in no places, has he been able to grasp all the mysteries and truths of creation.

At present, scientists are perplexed by many mysteries and realities of creation which they have not yet come to solve. And no one, in his right mind, can claim that man will not gain new fields of knowledge. Some have foolishly asserted that man of the atom age has solved all the mysteries of creation. Yet, it has been a long time since they have realized how baseless their assertions have been.

One cannot expect to understand all the puzzles of creation. The same as we do not understand the enigmatic being of a human, we certainly cannot expect to understand the complex system of Divine Legislation in regard to the material, the physical, intellectual and other worldly aspects.

No doubt, new mysteries will become known to man of the future, the same way the unknown of the past few centuries have become the known to contemporary man. And still, there are mysteries yet to be discovered by man and there are others which go beyond his understanding.

5- The fact remains that the invaluable collection of Islamic teachings, comprising beliefs, morals, and individual and social rules is an electuary healing the pains and ailments of society and ensuring salvation of man in this world and the hereafter. Yet it shouldn't be concluded that Islamic injunctions and rules will all by themselves bring the ideal result under any condition.

And hence, statements like, "This rule of Islam is anachronistic to our contemporary society" must be avoided. The time factor must not be attributed to Islamic dictates and these must not be thought defective.

Careful examination will reveal that if an Islamic dictate seems apparently ineffective (if at all it is), this is due to a neglect of other Islamic dictates, inadequate religious education, moral and spiritual decadence in our present society and not because Islamic laws are defective or are limited to a certain period of time or place.

Concerning the woman's position in Islam, it is to be noted that Islam regards the woman as an independent, perfect member of society and places no difference between her and the man as far as human virtues go.

Islam maintains that salvation will be attained only through piety, virtue, knowledge and good deeds. As says the Holy Quran:

.. يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَاكُمْ

"Oh you men! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other, surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty)..." (49: 13)

And:

أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِنْكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ ۖ بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ

"I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other."(3: 195)

Therefore, Islam does not differentiate between the virtuous, dutiful man and the woman possessing the same qualities. In Islamic society, the woman has the right to own and sell property, to inheritance, to seek knowledge and even to engage in legitimate trade. In Prophet Mohammad's (S.A.W.) time, there was a woman named Zeinab 'Aattaare who sold perfumes and had the Prophet as one of her clients. In Islam, the woman can also take part in social activities in so far as her participation is consistent with chastity and virtue:

فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

"There is no blame on you for what they do for themselves in a lawful manner," (2:234)

In Early Islam, the women used to accompany the Muslim combatants (Mujahedeen) to the war fronts and helped in cooking and nursing the wounded and so forth.

There however does exist a certain difference between the rights and duties of both sexes in Islam. For instance, only the men can engage in the administration of justice, in governing, and embarking on Jihad (excluding defense). Also, the woman's share in inheritance is half against that of the man.

The right to divorce and polygamy under certain conditions belong to man alone. The woman must obey her husband in the marital relations and that is why she should not leave her home without prior permission from him. The latter on his part, should support his wife and provide her with the necessities of life to the best of his financial capacity. In some cases even, Islam says that, if necessary, the husband must employ a servant for his wife.

In Islam, the duty of house-keeping like laundry, cooking, cleaning and even child-rearing does not necessarily belong to the woman and she can claim a salary from her husband in return for such tasks.

All these are considered legal in Islam. Again, when religious training and Islamic morality is encouraged, the family enjoys peace, pleasure, respect, mutual love, affection and sincerity. Obviously, in those families, educated and trained in accordance with Islamic precepts and values, few cases of dispute are reported.

Now, we should see whether Islam contradicts the natural order when it differentiates between the man and the woman as far as their rights go. As said before, a proper understanding of this question would necessitate a careful examination of the demands of both sexes' innate dispositions in view of their rights and duties. The time factor however does not permit a detailed explanation of this. So we shall be content with giving only a brief account, hoping that in future, an elaborate discussion can be presented.

As common experiences have proved, man is physically and intellectually superior to the woman who herself is more emotional. Hence, jobs demanding more of intellect and where emotions are impediments should go to man as per the natural order. This must be so because it is the rulers and judges who must preserve the rights of all classes in society. If emotions are allowed to permeate government and judgement, then the rights of many will be violated by the authorities in charge.

So, government and legal judgement should lie where reason dominates over feelings. But one should not conclude that the mere fact of being a man is the sole criterion for governing and exercising judicial functions. Other conditions which have been explained in Islam must also be satisfied.

We rather mean that considering both sexes, man is naturally born for certain activities. Thus, when Islam makes such a distinction between them, it can in no way be said to be oppressive to the women or debasing to their values and dignity. The same must be said when Islam calls the man to be the bread-earner, or the warrior.

Man cannot take this to be derogatory to his status and values. These Islamic dictates aim at ensuring cooperation and mutual assistance for society's order and interests, through a proper usage of the divinely bestowed gifts to all human beings, no matter their sex.

Since man is physically and mentally superior, he should indulge in social activities calling for these two qualities, while the woman, being more emotional, should undertake duties like house-keeping and child-rearing so that she can bring up pious and dutiful children.

As mentioned, the Omnipotent Creator, in view of the family being the core of society, has provided us with conditions which would establish its foundation. For instance, the natural sex magnetism, to unite into a lifelong companionship where peace and happiness can be sought.

The family also awakes that innate nature, namely the natural affection that any human being feels towards its offspring. The illuminating religion of Islam considers family life to be of great significance. In Islam, the woman brings mental peace and happiness and the mutual affection between the couples is in accordance with the natural order.

.. وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً

"And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion..." (30:21)

This verse makes clear the harmony that exists between Divine Legislation in the natural order of creation and human nature. Now we should see what laws and regulations should be framed in relation to the demands and requirements of the family institution.

The vital significance of the family society can be understood through meditation on the Quranic verses, which significance has been testified and confirmed by researchers and sociologists.

The family comprising these two main elements, namely man and woman, calls for their mutual cooperation and provides for their needs. In reality, both of them together form one body, enabling the tree of humanity to grow and eventually bear fruit. So, it is through cooperation that the couple can nurture and educate the seed of their fruits.

No doubt, man's natural role in the process of reproduction differs from that of the woman. His is instantaneous while hers is time-consuming and painful. A woman cherishes this fruit inside her body for several months, nurturing it with the juice of her life and after child-birth, she embraces it as she would her own life and soul, suckles it and instinctively, sacrifices rest, comfort and peace for it.

Really, would not we be oppressing the woman, if apart from the heavy duties that womanhood entails, we do impose the arduous, exhausting duties of the man upon her? Does the natural order call the

woman to leave her child in nurseries and go struggling for a living? What will the woman do with her breasts full of milk? How should she tolerate being separated from her child since her motherly love and affection can bring insanity to her if such a painful separation does occur? Should not the man be the one to financially support the family to compensate the woman for the heavy ordeal of pregnancy, child-birth, suckling, nurturing and the other duties that come with motherhood?

Should the man think selfishly of satisfying his sexual desires and forget all about the woman's heavy burden and duties? Can it correctly be affirmed that the woman's sexual promiscuity thereby killing all her motherly feelings, benefit her since by so indulging, she frees herself from natural and innate bonds? Can it be claimed that when we deny the child motherly affection, a divinely bestowed gift, making of the family a cold and lifeless unit (as so often is the case with western countries, especially America), is a fundamental step towards reforming society and securing women's rights? Can such actions which go against the natural order benefit society?

Answers to these questions can easily be found if one looks at the ever-increasing social miseries, sufferings and the mind-blowing statistics on suicide, murder, theft, and so on in the western world and at the pains of the apparently so-called civilized world as a result of its being deprived of the comfort, mental peace and happiness of family life.

As a famous orientalist says: "The pleasure that a Muslim derives from kissing his child is not imaginable to many westerners, because in the civilized world of today, few men are positive that their children are really their own." He adds: "I do not think that the westerners can bear to see the easterners enjoying this privilege. Perhaps they will take it away from them soon."

Those who are under the illusion of the industrialized world of the westerners, and allow themselves to be subject to their poisonous propaganda, still imagine the west to be like paradise, that anything western is worthy of commendation and imitation. These people, upon realizing their wrong conceptions, will regret painfully. But this painful realization, however, comes to them too late, i.e. when the person or the family has already been ruined through continuous deviations.

As a matter of fact, many western scientists and writers are beginning to realize the harm done by such misconceptions of life and values and are now directing efforts at solving this dilemma. Unfortunately, western societies, in corruption and immorality, have already reached a state of no return.

As states an American writer: "To remove these problems, it is necessary to reform and strengthen the family life and once more, put into practice the useful principles and rules which once governed the happiness of the family members and nations and which have been lost now. Women should obey and respect their husbands while the latter should love their wives and observe their respective rights."

An English woman writes: "I wish our country were like the Muslim countries, where an atmosphere of chastity and purity has embraced even the bondswomen. Really, why isn't such an atmosphere encouraged in our society where women, as per their nature, would engage in house-keeping, leaving

outdoor jobs to men, whereby safeguarding their own honour?

Here we recommend those who upon witnessing the western cabarets and other centres of corruption, argue that scientists and inventors like Pasteur, Edison and Einstein are products of such centres of corruption to at least take a glance at the unprejudiced investigations and writings of some western researchers, scientists, writers and publications. By so doing, they might recognize the value of Islamic teachings and not give away the divinely bestowed, invaluable gift that is Islam.

Now, having shown that the social rules should be so formulated as to be in accordance with human nature, it becomes clear that child-rearing and house-keeping are duties which should go to the woman. On the other hand, those duties which accord with man's natural constitution, such as the duty of supporting the family should be reserved to him. Thus, the family unit which guarantees the survival of the human race and nurtures competent, pious individuals will serve its purpose in the best way.

When we regard the duties of both sexes, we see that the greater share of man in property inheritance is quite just and moreover, in reality, the woman does share this property with him. In this connection, can it be said that Islam violates the woman's rights? We leave it to the just to answer this question.

We should further not neglect to mention that man has not been merely created for material and sexual pursuits. Rather, the sexual instinct is one among many endowed in human nature for the attainment of certain goals, though one should not neglect one's sexual instinct for satisfying other instincts by going to extremes.

Nor is it proper to undermine all humane virtues and supreme goals of creation so as to satisfy the sexual instinct. Today, many are the sexual perverts, who in their vain attempt to satisfy their sadistic sexual desires, supposedly fight for the emancipation and freedom of the woman. Their only aim is to satisfy their sexual desires while watching the exposed bodies and painted faces of the women and indulge in illegitimate, anti-human sexual relations with them.

But Islam which looks at all matters from all possible angles and recognizes only the truth, distinguishing between good and evil, strictly prohibits unchastity and sexual exploitation of women, regarding this to be detrimental to humane virtues and the family.

Islam commands the woman to cover herself from head to toe once she leaves her house and outside the family environment (according to many Islamic jurists, the covering of the face and hands up to the wrists is not necessary). This is so to prevent men other than her husband, or close relatives with whom marriage is prohibited, such as brothers, uncles and so on from seeing her physique. The woman outside the family environment must also not use make-up so as to attract the men and engage in coquetry in any way. As says the Holy Quran:

...وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ

"And let them wear their head-coverings over their bosoms and not display their ornaments."

(24:31)

فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ

"Then be not soft in (your) speech, lest be in whose heart is a disease yearn," (33:32)

Islam also regards the right to divorce as exclusive to man. To understand why that is so, we must consider the following basic points:

On one hand, the preservation of the family institution is of vital importance while on the other hand, there are factors which do cause disagreement and discord in the family, so that the couple finds life unbearable together. Here, it becomes important for the marriage contract to be terminable.

The woman, being by nature more emotional and quick to take offence, is likely to misuse the right of divorce had it rested with her. Being hurt for a trivial reason, out of emotions, she can ruin the family by a misuse of this right.

The rising rate of divorce in European and American societies are clear testimonies to this fact. As statistics reveal, a least one out of every five marriages in America, ends in divorce and eighty percent of the appeals for divorce come from women, on petty excuses. Therefore, man, a more rational and less emotional animal, has a right claim to the right of divorce.

Yet, in Islam, divorce is regarded as a bitter medicine which should not be applied except in extreme cases, with hard conditions and careful observance of the rights of both parties. In the Quranic verses pertaining to divorce, Allah the Compassionate strictly addresses men, giving them instructions, advices, admonitions and warning them not to misuse this right:

وَإِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ ۚ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِنَعْتَدُوا ۚ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ ۚ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوعًا ۚ وَادْكُرُوا لِقَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

"And when you divorce women and they reach their prescribed time, then either retain them in good fellowship or set them free with liberality, and do not retain them for injury, so that you exceed the limits, and whoever does this, he indeed is unjust to his own soul; and do not take Allah's communications for a mockery, and remember the favour of Allah upon you, and that which He has revealed to you of the Book and the Wisdom, admonishing you thereby, and be careful (of your duty to) Allah, and know that Allah is the Knower of all things." (2:231)

Thus, if one observes an abuse of the right to divorce, one should understand that this is a result of

deviation from the teachings of the Quran and not because the Islamic dictates are defective in any way. This deviation is effected by those who keep the people away from Islamic teachings and keep them busy with corruptive entertainments like pornographic films, immoral publications

Another right given to man by Islam is the right to polygamy. Now let's see whether this is an extreme idea and against the natural order, or whether it benefits society and accords with nature. The following points will help in giving a better understanding:

1) Man becomes potentially reproductive in early puberty and till late in his life, he is able to fulfil his own role in reproduction, while the woman usually becomes barren after the age of fifty.

Thus, a twenty-year-old male married to a fifteen-year old female will presumably be potentially reproductive for a thirty-five year period. After this period, the man will still be potentially reproductive until the age of ninety. However, the woman won't be so in the second phase of her marital life. There will thus be no ground for rearing the seeds put in man's loins by nature.

2) Man faces no natural obstacle, whether seasonal or non-seasonal in his reproductive functions. But the woman is subject to these natural obstacles which hinder her reproductive role even at a very early age, such as menstruation which occurs monthly and lasts for a few days and all through her menstruation, the woman is not fit for sexual coitus.

In addition, during pregnancy, when the womb is nurturing the foetus as well as a few weeks after conception, the woman's reproductive organs cannot rear new seeds and that is so also in many cases during the suckling phase.

3) It is harmful for a woman to have sexual intercourse at the time when her womb is not ready for impregnation. Hence, Islam has prohibited sexual intercourse during the menstruation and Lochia period. Obviously, if in such cases, men are not allowed to satisfy their sexual urge in a legitimate way, they may seek illegitimate relations, in particular, those men living in tropical countries and those who are sexually hot-blooded.

4) Girls naturally become ready for marriage several years earlier than boys, and this difference is so pointing that while determining the legal age of marriage, this fact has to be taken into account.

Thus, even if we suppose that both sexes are equal in number (though the number of women mostly exceeds that of the men), still we have to admit that there will invariably be more females of marriageable age than males.

5) Since man is more likely to be exposed to dangers like war, mine accidents, explosions and the like, there are invariably many widowed women and many girls who are ready for marriage but remain unmarried. As in Germany and some other countries where, though many years have passed since the end of World War II, its effects are still being felt, explaining the reason for the high number of those who

are in favour of polygamy in those regions.

The above facts and taking notice that the natural goal of the marriage institution is the survival of the human race and the magnification of the human generation, clearly show why Islam allows polygamy for men.

However, it should be noted that in Islam, the prescription for polygamy is subject to the perfect observance of justice among the wives. That is, Islam holds that a man is allowed to practice polygamy on condition that he can treat all his wives on an equal basis. Moreover, Islam has also presented ways which can enable the woman to restrict this right of man as well as his right to divorce.

It is known by all that in countries where the law of polygamy is not officially recognized, actually men do not content themselves with one wife and indulge in illegitimate extra-marital promiscuous relations (single and double adultery), whether temporary or permanent. In a lecture given at a gathering of members from the churches of Germany, Isaac Teeler disclosed this fact. He said: "It is true that apparently the Christians do not marry more than one woman, but we know that how heinously they engage in illegitimate extra marital relations in secret."

Moreover, in such Christian communities, homosexuality is shamefully so common, as in England where presumably this satanic act is considered somewhat more disgraceful than it is in other western countries. The 'Kenzy' and 'Lefindon' reports and others on this issue reveal how the so-called aristocrats indulge in this shameful act which has so often ended in suicide and murder.

It is indeed extremely surprising that in countries where "concubinage" – (practice of living as man and wife when not lawfully married) is not legally prohibited, abnormal sex is the rule. Again, more shocking still, is the fact that in spite of such rampant corruption and sexual deviations in these countries, they are still pessimistic about polygamy and temporary marriage – factors which aim at checking corruption and adultery.

1. The expression "any human being" is here meant to include every mature and intelligent person who is rated as a perfect member of society by religion and the intellect. Children and those insane are excluded.

2. Of course, the woman is superior to the man in certain qualities, one of which is her power of resistance against certain diseases and ailments.

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