

Interpretation of the Quran- Surat Al-Nisa' (4)- Lesson (17)- Verses [33-34]: Good woman and Qawama

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of Creations, and Peace and blessings be upon our prophet Muhammad, the faithful and the honest.

Oh, Allah, we know nothing but what You teach us. You are the All-Knowing, the Wise. Oh Allah, teach us what is good for us, and benefit us from what You taught us, and increase our knowledge. Show us the righteous things as righteous and help us to do them, and show us the bad things as bad and help us to keep away from them.

O Allah our Lord, lead us out from the depths of darkness and illusion, unto the lights of erudition and knowledge, and from the muddy shallows of lusts unto the heavens of Your Vicinity.

The Prophet ordered us to take brothers

Honorable brothers, this is the seventeenth lesson of Surat Al-Nisaa, where we look at the verse thirty three, which is, as Allah the Almighty said:

(33. And to everyone, We have appointed heirs of that (property) left by parents and relatives. To those also with whom you have made a pledge (brotherhood), give them their due portion (by Wasiya - wills, etc.). Truly, Allah is Ever a Witness over all things).

(An-Nisa', verse : 33)

The Arabic word maw ali "heirs" is the plural of maw la, it could mean the slave or the master and it is an example of antonym "word that has two contradicted meanings". We say "Allah Maw lai" (Allah is my master) and we say maw lai (my slave, a person I own)

An example from for antonym is the verb "Shara": shop: To search with the intent to buy (I shopped for a book at several stores) or to search with the intent to sell (I shopped my manuscript to several publishers).

(And to everyone, We have appointed heirs)

Muslims, Allah has appointed a brother to each one of you.

Brothers in Islam had right in inheritance in the life of the prophet

When Muslims immigrated to Al-Madinah, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) established the brotherhood (pledge) between the Muhajireen (the immigrants from Makkah) and the Ansar (those who lived in Al-Madinah) and united every one of the Muhajirun to one of the Ansar. This brotherhood was a very strong relationship and on the basis of this pledge each brother should, help, protect, visit and love his brother. This brotherhood reached a level in which some of them were willing to give up half of their wealth in order to help their brothers.

And even there was an inheritance right between them

(And to everyone, We have appointed heirs of that (property) left by parents and relatives)

which means that you should give them their share of the inheritance which is left by parents and relatives and this share was one sixth;

The giving of a share on the basis of a pledge was a practice during the initial period of Islam which was later abrogated by the 75th verse of Al-Anfal.

(But kindred by blood are nearer to one another regarding inheritance)

(Al-Anfal, Verse: 75)

Another example of abrogation in Quran

(Approach not As-Salat (the prayer) when you are in a drunken state)

(An-Nisaa, Verse: 43)

This was before liquor was forbidden under all conditions.

It would be great if we implement this concept of brotherhood in our lives, I wish that each one of you would take a brother, at least if he used to attend a lesson with you in the mosque and he could not come for any reason, it would be a marvellous thing if you call him and check upon him to see why he did not come and to tell him that you were worried about him. If two people become brothers and pledged they should advise each other, check upon each other, be responsible of each other financially and physically, fix each other problems and be there for each other.

Honorable brothers, let's move to the next verse (34), which concerns the issue of marital relations in Islam, as Allah the mighty said:

(34. Men are the protectors and maintainers of women)

(An-Nisa', Verse : 34)

Origin of the word "Qawwam":

The Arabic word qawwamoon "maintainers" is the plural of qawwam which is an exaggerated version of qayyim and it stands for a person who holds the responsibility of his family and has the duty of earning livelihood for it. He should be able to protect his wife and his children, raise his children in an Islamic way and take care of their health, education and behavior.

Wrong understanding of "Qawama"

Qawwam "maintainer" means that he should not rest till he makes sure that his family is safe, good and practicing Islam and he should control all the related factors therein which is not an easy job.

This does not mean that men are above women in honor and excellence but man is the governor and protector. An impressive example of this was pointed by Khalifa Umar bin al-Khattab (may Allah Almighty be pleased with him) when he said to the Muslim umma (people) he was ruling: "I am appointed to govern you, although I'm not the best of you".

Unfortunately, some Muslims interpret this as meaning that men have an everlasting superiority over women and thus they have the authority to beat, humiliate and divorce her at any time he wants.

This Qawwama obliges men to be responsible for maintaining their female relatives, not only his wife and children, he is also responsible for his younger brothers, sisters and his unmarried sister.

It is necessary to have a decision maker in every small establishment

Life is like a ship and there should be only one captain "Two captains will sink a ship" and this captain should be the man and all others should obey him and his decisions.

An example of an ideal family: the man is in his work, the woman takes care of the house and cooks for the family, the daughters help their mother in the clean, and the sons do the shopping; all of them contribute to the dinner that they would have together in a lovely warm home without any one being superior over the others. Most of the families today are suffering from the absence of this concept "the maintainer" no one obeys the man of the house, the wife takes his place and takes over his role being the one who controls everything while the leadership should be his responsibility. As Allah the mighty said: "Men are the maintainers of women"

(Men are the protectors and maintainers of women)

However, the quantum of difference that must be recognized here is: Men have a 'step' above women. Allah the Almighty said:

(but men have a degree (of responsibility) over them)

(Al- Baqarah, Verse: 228)

Qawama is only one step, it is leadership

Some husbands see that man is everything and woman is nothing. This is not qawaman. Qawama is only one step, the leadership, and it should not be a dictatorship, men should consult their wives and listen to their advice.

Allah the Almighty said:

(and let each of you accept the advice of the other in a just way)

(At -Talaq, Verse: 6)

So men should consult their wives, ask for their opinion and their advice, but at the end the decision is for the man.

Allah the Almighty said:

**(and consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision,
put your trust in Allah)**

(Al - Imran, Verse: 159)

In the previous verse Allah the Almighty said: (Then when you have taken a decision) and "you" here refers only to the man (in English when you speak to one man or to a group of men in both situation you use "YOU", but in Arabic we use different words, we use "anta" for the singular and "antum" for the plural and in

this verse in Arabic, Allah the Almighty used the singular not the plural which means that Allah gave the last decision to the man).

Men are better than women in earning and spending:

Again, the man is the maintainer of the woman because he is the leader and the decision maker, the one who earns money to support his family and the one to provide the house they live in, while the woman is better than the man in being the place of rest and peace for him, she should take care of him, cook for him, raise his children in an Islamic way, take care of their health, food and study and she should make the house a place for the man to relax in after being back from work, since it's hard being the one who has to work out the house and try to earn lawful money (according to Islamic laws). Doing all these things is the women priorities in Islam.

Men's responsibilities versus women's responsibilities in Islam:

Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) said,

"If a woman performs the five prayers, fasts in Ramadan, protects her honor and obeys her husband; then she will enter Paradise."

(Ibn Hibban, narrated from abu hurairah)

Only four things should women do in order to enter the Paradise versus hundreds of things to be done by men.

As mentioned above man should earn his money according to the principles of Sharia (Islamic laws) including that he should not lie, not cheat or deal with usury "riba" and a lot of other principles he should follow.

In Islam it's the duty of the man to earn the money and to spend it on his family, while woman does not have to spend any of her money even if she is wealthy, she takes the money she needs from her husband (father or brother if she is not married).

When a man wants to marry, he should provide the house, furniture and dowry (a gift of money, possessions or property made by the husband to the wife, which becomes her exclusive property); on the other hand the woman does not pay anything in the marriage.

Allah the Almighty said:

(to the male, a portion equal to that of two females)

(An- Nisaa, Verse: 11)

We should respect the roles of men and women as set in the Quran

The above verse is about the distribution of inheritance and it indicates that the share of the male shall be double that of the female, and this is very sound and just after what we mentioned about the male economic responsibilities which keep the female almost free from it.

If we have a look at our modern life where the woman leaves the house and goes to work, we can see that these women suffer from work problems and being nervous most of the time adding to that the family

responsibilities; cooking, cleaning and looking after the children. She ends up exhausted and she is no longer able to provide the warm house the man needs to live and relax in.

Being a housewife is the best and noblest job that a woman can have, because then she would have the time to raise up her children in a right and good way (the Islamic way) and by that she would give the society good members. The children learn everything from their mother; she could raise them up to be scientists, leaders or teachers instead of leaving their upbringing issues in the hand of the nanny or the childcares. Woman is not in a competition with man, they are not in a race, they rather complete each other, if the woman leaves the children to the man, they will be lost; and if the man leaves them they will starve.

As an example, if the pilot says that he wants to leave the cockpit because it is very small and he does not feel comfortable in it and he wants to be free like the passengers; by doing this he would put the passengers' lives in danger, but if he knows that he is responsible for the safety of the passengers he would no longer see that room as a limitation of his freedom.

Women are in highest ranks when they do their best for their families

Being a housewife does not mean that the woman is uneducated, she could have a lot of scientific degrees and she could be a religious woman but she should always be there to serve her husband and children.

Back to the verse:

(Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient (to Allah and to their husbands), and guard in the husband's absence what Allah orders them to guard (e.g. their chastity, their husband's property, etc.)).

(An-Nisa', Verse : 34)

She is obedient to the orders of Allah by taking care of her husband and children. The marriage for woman is her whole life but for the man the marriage is only a part of his life.

Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) said,

“Understand O woman, and inform other women. Indeed a woman's perfection of her relationship with her husband, seeking his pleasure, and doing that which he approves of is equivalent to jihad”

The woman should worship Allah by doing what Allah has asked her to do and that is done by taking care of her husband and children.

If Allah gave man money, he should worship Allah by spending this money on his family, relatives and in helping the needy people. If Allah gave a man the strength he should worship Allah by protecting and helping the weak and oppressed people and if Allah gave man knowledge he should worship Allah by teaching other Muslims.

The virtue of the woman who does her best in raising up her children:

Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) said,

“I am the first one to hold Paradise door ring, when a woman is quarrelling intending to enter paradise before I do, so I asked: O Jibreel (Jabreal) who is she? He replied: she is a widowed woman with children, who refused to get married for the sake of her children”

(Al Adab Al Mufrad, Imam Bukhari)

Raising children is a great thing in the sight of Allah, when I hear about a woman who is taking care of her kids and their health, education, food and clothes I can tell that the nail of this woman is better than a million of useless men.

(32. And wish not for the things in which Allah has made some of you to excel others. For men there is reward for what they have earned, (and likewise) for women there is reward for what they have earned).

(An-I Nisaa, Verse: 32)

Men and women, who obey Allah, will be rewarded with Paradise and given a high rank. Allah created men and women and he has assigned jobs for both of them that suit their nature, therefore men should not wish to be like women and women should not wish to be like men. If both (men and women) do the jobs that were assigned to do by Allah they will be rewarded with high ranks in Paradise and this should be the aim for both males and females.

Good women are the good of this world:

A righteous woman advised her husband saying: "O husband fear Allah, and the provisions you bring us, for we can persevere through hunger but we cannot stand and persevere through the punishment of hell fire". Other women push their husband to steal or to take money that does not belong to him to spend it on silly things such as furniture replacement, and she does not take care of him or his food, health and needs she might leave him alone for weeks to spend time with her married daughters and sons. These things lead men to be dissatisfied with their wives and cause the moral corruption in society.

(Therefore the righteous woman) is the good of this world

Allah the Almighty said:

**(Our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good
and in the Hereafter that which is good)**

(Al-Baqarah, Verse: 201)

The best woman

What is the good of this world? The answer is that the good of this world is the good woman, the one who pleases you when you look at her not only because of her external beauty. Some men think that the external beauty is everything about women and that it is the reason for his happiness and they forget other major issues like being faithful, honest, wise, and fearing Allah.

External beauty will eventually fade away and what will remain is her good or bad nature and behavior. The female might be very beautiful but she would never appreciate anything the male does for her, she would talk about him in a bad way in front of other people, neglect his children and she would be mean to him.

Man should marry the woman for her religion and her moral conduct. I want to advise you to marry this good woman because it will lead you to the good in this world and the good in the hereafter, the woman who pleases you when you look at her or in other words, the woman who pleases you when you look, wherever you look. If you look at the kitchen, bedroom or any spot in your house you will find it clean and tidy, if you look at your children you will find them clean. If you tell her to do something she obeys you, and if you are away from her she protects you with regard to herself and your wealth (and guard in the husband's absence). She takes your permission in everything she does; never leaves the house without telling you. She is honest and never lies.

Believing women guard themselves according to Allah's approach

Once I was travelling, in the seat behind me there was a woman not wearing the hijab, and she was talking to a strange man sitting next to her and was laughing and joking with him, when we arrived to the airport she wore hijab and a long coat then she went to meet her family, she didn't protect her family with regard to herself when they were away from her. You don't need this kind of woman in your life, you should trust her if you are going to leave her alone. This is the meaning of (and guard in the husband's absence) and this should be according to the teachings of Allah (what Allah orders them to guard (e.g. their chastity, their husband's property, etc.)).

Honorable brothers, there is a point may Allah help me to explain it, in life there is the law of recognizing, feeling and then acting. If one of us sees a snake for example, the brain recognizes that this snake is dangerous according to the previously acquired conceptions (recognizing), then he will be frightened by it (feeling) then he will do things to be safe (acting). You will never act unless you feel, and you will never feel unless you recognize.

Once a young man told me that he doesn't fear Allah, I replied and said to him that he was right. If we go back to the snake example, if a kid was the one to see that snake he would not recognize or be afraid of it. The same applies to the one who does not fear Allah, it means that he does not recognize Him.

You will never act unless you feel, and you will never feel unless you recognize, Allah will only ask us about our act and not about our feelings or our recognizing. As an example, if you saw a beautiful house, when you first looked at it you recognized that it was beautiful (recognizing) and you wished to have one like it (feelings) Allah will not punish you because of these feeling, but if you go inside the house and steal stuff from it (act) then Allah will ask you and punish you for what you did.

In the relation between men and women, one is asked for the first step

But it is a different story with looking to strange women; Allah will ask you about this look. The reason for that is when a man looks at a woman he will become sexually excited, so this look forced him to feel that way, and this feeling forced him to act. So you should cast down your look. Allah the Almighty said:

(30. Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts, etc.)).

(An-Noor, Verse: 30)

Back to the verse

(Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient (to Allah and to their husbands), and guard in the husband's absence what Allah orders them to guard (e.g. their chastity, their husband's property, etc.). 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). Surely, Allah is Ever Most High, Most Great).

(An-Nisa', Verse : 34)

The second part of the verse needs to be explained deliberately because it states the solutions of the family

problems.

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