



Women and the Koran

Second Edition

Bernard Payeur

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Front Cover

The front cover is from a photograph by John Goddard of the *Toronto Star* that has been embossed for artistic purposes and to obscure the identity of the participants in prayer in the cafeteria of a Toronto, Ontario (Canada) public school.

At the very top of the picture are prostrated boys and men. Behind them are the women and girls.

At the bottom of the cover you can make out school girls sitting and watching. They cannot participate in the prayer because they are menstruating, and in the eyes of Allah, are unclean.

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**These are the exalted cranes
Whose intercession [with Allah] is to be hoped for.**

To the memory of al-Lat, al-Uzza and Manat,
and all that was lost when their existence
was denied
and
to the women and girls of Afghanistan.

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Love, Sex and Islam

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Foreword

Afghan women to have rights within Islamic law,
Taliban say.

BBC August 17, 2021

What does women's rights "within Islamic law" mean?

I have revamped *Women and the Koran* in the hope that more will seek to understand what life is like for women and girls living under Islamic law, of which the Koran is the foundation. I have included in this edition additional hadiths, sayings and examples of the Prophet Muhammad, which have a forceful impact (no pun intended) on women and girls in a world governed by the Sharia, i.e., God's law. For example, revealed truth¹ 4:34 grants the husband the right to beat his wife: "And those of them that you fear might rebel, admonish them and abandon them in their beds and beat them." But, it is a saying of Muhammad which pretty much guarantees the wife-beater immunity from prosecution unless he beats her about the face.

Narrated Umar ibn al-Khattab:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: A man will not be asked as to why he beat his wife.

Abu Dawud 11.2142

Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet said, "If somebody fights (or beats somebody) then he should avoid the face."

Bukhari 46.734

¹ An immutable fact revealed to a mortal by a god

Revelations and Generalizations

THE PEOPLE

114 An-Nâs

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful*

114:1 Say: "I seek refuge with the Lord of the People,

114:2 "The King of the people,

114:3 "The God of the people,

114:5 "From the evil of the slinking whisperer [Satan],

114:6 "Who whispers in the breasts of people,

114:7 "Both jinn and men."

Both jinn and men! That is it, the last verse of the Koran. What a read! What a revelation! What is a jinn? Jinns are spirits that inhabit another dimension. There are good and evil jinns. The caricature of the genie is probably based on this creature of the Koran. When I decided to read and study the Koran with the intention of writing about it, I was determined to get a Muslim's interpretation, one that could only be viewed as being favourable to Islam. I also wanted a translation that was easy to read and understand. The edition that seemed to satisfy these requirements was a translation by Majid Fakhry, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the American University of Beirut, which received the seal of approval of Al-Azhar University of Egypt, a world-renowned center for Islamic study for more than 900 years.

Messrs Garnet Publishing Limited, with reference to your letter dated 5 July, 2000, in respect of your request that this department (Islamic Research) may review your book titled: *An Interpretation of the Qur'an, English Translation of the Meanings. A Bilingual Edition translated by Majid Fakhry.*

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After having reviewed this book as requested we have the pleasure to declare that we have no objection to approve this book and put it in circulation or introduced for republication.

Islamic Research Academy, Al-Azhar University

In the translator's own words, "We have tried to express ourselves in a simple, readable English idiom." *Publishers Weekly* wrote of Fakhry's notable accomplishment that it "succeeds in expressing the meanings of the original Arabic in simple readable English."

My goals in reading the Koran were diverse. At the top of my list was gaining an understanding of what makes this book so special; to understand what makes the religion based on its content so attractive to so many; and yes, to satisfy my curiosity about what God sounds like, or more accurately, reads like. I also read the Koran in the hope of dispelling prejudices and apprehensions I had developed after reading about Islam from authors – devoted Muslims, most of them – who had nothing but praise for Allah and His 'perfect religion'.

I am not a religious scholar and don't pretend to be. It would be the height of presumption on my part to think that I could properly mine the Koran for purported hidden meanings behind "Verses which are elaborately formulated and clearly expounded from the Wise, the All-Aware," to quote Allah Himself. I prefer to let Allah and His Messenger, the Prophet Muhammad, speak for themselves, offering only a layman's opinion, or an expert's explanation, where I feel one is warranted. When Fakhry's crisp translation is not sufficient, it is Moududi I most often turn to.

Abul A'la Moududi's (also spelt Maududi) [1903-1979] credentials as a pre-eminent Islamic scholar are impeccable: journalist, theologian, Muslim revivalist, Islamist philosopher, and first recipient of the *King Faisal International Award* for his services to Islam and Islamic studies. Of the more than 120 books he wrote, he is most famous for his magnum opus *The Meaning of the Qur'an*.

The Koran is the book upon which the Taliban, the Islamist fundamentalist movement that ruled most of Afghanistan from 1996 until 2001, based their concept of God's government on Earth. The Taliban, like all believers, are required to at least attempt to commit to memory the entire Koran. Believers are also expected to accept Allah's Revelations in their totality without question. This has not been my approach in presenting my impressions, as a former Catholic, now an agnostic, upon first reading the Koran.

As an unbeliever, I hope I can safely express my opinions about the Koran and the Prophet Muhammad, although nothing is certain. It is an unfortunate fact of life that authors who choose to write about Islam, the Koran or the life of the Prophet must tread carefully lest believers perceive their writings as an insult to Islam. I hope that I have achieved that fine balance of respect and critique, if such an equilibrium is even possible where Islam is the topic.

Translations of the Koran are usually called interpretations because believers claim that only the Arabic version of the Koran can convey the true meaning of God's words. If you can't read the Koran in the original, they say, you are bound to misinterpret Allah's words. Do they have a point, or is this just pre-emptive rationalisation, a ready excuse for some of the frightening revelations contained within the Muslim Holy Book, revelations that may leave some unbelievers wondering if these are the words of God or those of His nemesis?

The Koran is written in verses or ayats, therefore it is true that you cannot appreciate the rhythm and rhyme that only the original can convey; however, any good translation will be able to communicate the original meaning of the poet's words, and the meaning of the words is what you should be concerned with.

An English translation of the Koran will run to about 77,700 words, the approximate size of a standard 300-page book. This is a book, Allah reveals, in which you can study "whatever you choose."

68:35 Shall We consider those who submit like those who are criminals?

68:36 What is the matter with you; how do you judge?

68:37 Or do you have a Book in which you study?

68:38 Wherein there is whatever you choose.

It is a bold statement for a relatively small book where boundless repetitions occupy space that could, perhaps, be put to better use. The Koran is made up of 114 chapters; when referring to these, I use the Arabic transliteration (conversion from one alphabet to another) of chapter, which is surah. Each surah is further divided into verses, a term I have chosen to retain over the Arabic transliteration of ayat. There are 6,346 verses in the Koran if you include the 112 unnumbered Basmalahs, the formulaic invocation "in the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful," which appears at the beginning of every surah except the first and the ninth.

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I refer to passages by the surah and verse numbers—for example, 2:282 is Chapter 2, Verse 282—or by surah name and verse: *The Cow, Verse 282*. A verse can be just a few words long or more than 200 words, such as the aforementioned, the longest verse in the Koran that addresses the virtue of good bookkeeping practices and why, when it comes to transactions involving money or chattel, women cannot be trusted.

Just a few editorial notes before we get down to business and let God speak for Himself. All quotes from the Koran are from Majid Fakhry's interpretation unless otherwise indicated. Text added by Fakhry within a quoted verse to improve understanding is enclosed within square "[]" parentheses or brackets. Other clarifications by Fakhry, including footnotes, are enclosed in round "(")" brackets.

On rare occasions, you will find italicised bracketed comments within a verse: these are the author's, usually included to identify someone whom Allah does not explicitly name and, when it is not evident to the casual reader, whom He is informing when He tells Muhammad how to respond to questions and observations. Any underlining for emphasis is also my doing, not Fakhry's. I hope Majid will forgive my use of the more familiar Koran instead of his preferred spelling, Qur'an.

Where warranted, verses are accompanied by the Prophet's recorded sayings or descriptions of actions, called hadiths. (Ahadith, often used to indicate the plural form of hadith, is not used herein). Hadiths, of which there are more than ten thousand, are hearsay evidence collected approximately 200 years after the Prophet's passing that describe what Muhammad said and did, including the silent approval of actions done in his presence. An authentic (sahih) or good (hasan) hadith, i.e., one that can be traced to a legitimate witness, passed down via of chain of reliable transmitters, is usually considered a legal precedent so long as it does not contradict the Koran².

In at least 300 revelations, what Allah reveals of his Koran is in the form of telling Muhammad how to respond to questions or observations from believers and unbelievers regarding the latest batch of revelations, delivered to the Prophet by Allah's intermediary

² Sunni Islam gives credence to the hadiths collected by six men (al-Bukhari, Imam Muslim, At-Tirmidi, Ibn Majah, Abu Dawood and An-Nisa'i), with the largest the al-Bukhari collection considered the most authoritative of the "six canonical collections." Imam Bukhari (d. 870) is said to have gathered over 600,000 hadiths, of which 7,275 are considered authentic. The Koran and these "hadith collections" inform every facet of a believer's existence.

Messenger, the angel Gabriel. When you encounter 'say' followed by a colon in a revelation (with no other qualifier, e.g., "they say" or, on rare occasions, "you said"), unless otherwise indicated, assume this is Allah directing His Messenger on what to say.

Another editorial observation: all quoted verses have been carefully reviewed to ensure that Fakhry's interpretation has been faithfully rendered. Many verses, such as 44:43-44, must be read together to form a complete sentence or thought; therefore, do not assume a typographical (typo) or grammatical error if a verse does not end with the expected punctuation.

44:43 The Tree of Zaqqum (the Tree of Bitterness) will certainly be

44:44 The food of the sinner.

Finally, some of the quoted verses from Fakhry's interpretation of the Koran have no end quotations due to an often misunderstood rule of English grammar. If a quote is more than one paragraph long, i.e., verses, opening quotation marks (") will appear at the beginning of each verse but closing quotation marks (") are only required at the end of the complete quotation.

Is it a translation or an interpretation? Most translators of the Koran are careful to highlight, by enclosing in round or square brackets, additions to the original text such as explanations of particular words or phrases. Fakhry is one of those, an exception being what Allah may have intended to say when He revealed that He had made the sun and the moon "subservient" to man.

14:33 And He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon pursuing their courses, and subjected also the night and the day.

Yusuf Ali's translation closely parallels Fakhry's, the main difference being "*subject to you*" instead of "subservient to you," with 'also' enclosed in round brackets.

14:33 And He hath made subject to you the sun and the moon, both diligently pursuing their courses; and the night and the day hath he (also) made subject to you.

Muhammad Assad uses square brackets to show what he believes Allah means by 'subservient'.

14:33 And has made the sun and the moon, both of them constant upon their courses, subservient [to His laws, so that

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they be of use] to you; and has made the night and the day subservient [to His laws, so that they be of use] to you.

All three renderings of Revelation 14:33 could be considered translations. Such is not the case in a fourth example by M. M. Pickthall, a Christian convert to Islam, who paraphrases the original.

14:33 And maketh the sun and the moon, constant in their courses, to be of service unto you, and hath made of service unto you the night and the day.

All translations consulted are from recognized Islamic scholars of the Koran.

A Divine Bias

For Allah, the Hereafter is not very complicated; everything is pleasure or pain, with fire providing most of the pain and sex, most of the pleasure. God's description of the pain unbelievers can expect is both graphic and crude. Not so with the pleasure that loyal believers can anticipate, both in the here-and-now and when they join Allah in Paradise. His description of the pleasures that believing men will experience in heaven and on Earth is filled with the pornographic undertones of a Harlequin novel, with the exception that in God's Earth-bound sex scenarios, it is the men whose repressed sexual yearnings are satisfied with the eventual conquest of the objects of their affection (if not, their contempt).

In Allah's uncomplicated Universe, sex is His way of rewarding Muslim men for their loyalty. In Paradise, the sex providers will be mainly wide-eyed, round-breasted maidens³ and houris⁴.

Mu`adh reported God's Messenger as saying that no woman annoys her husband in this world without his wife among the large-eyed maidens saying, "You must not annoy him. God curse you! He is only a passing guest with you and is about to leave you to come to us (in Paradise)."

Tirmidi and Ibn Majah

44:54 Thus it will be; and we gave them wide-eyed houris in marriage.

55:70 Therein are beautiful virtuous maidens

55:72 Wide-eyed, cloistered in pavilions.

³ Scholars are all over the place as to the identity of these maidens. Respected Islamic information site Islamicstudies.info speculates that these maidens are probably "innocent girls who died immature and Allah will recreate them as young and beautiful women." That is as good a farfetched explanation as any.

⁴ "Houris are pleasure mates who are soulless and programmed to please believing men's every carnal desire." Yahiya Emerick

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78:33 And round-breasted mates,

78:34 And a brim-full cup.

As it is for maidens and female facsimiles in Paradise, women in the here-and-now exist to serve men; for them, serving men is its own reward. When you find women and sex mentioned in the same verse, you will usually find Allah explaining how women are naturally drawn to men, that wanting to have sex with men is what they yearn for. This irrepressible longing to want to touch and be touched is why they must be restrained from their natural tendencies to seduce every man in sight and bring chaos to the orderly world of the Koran.

Narrated Abdullah bin Umar:

Allah's Apostle said, "Evil omen is in the women, the house and the horse."

Bukhari 62.30

Narrated Usama bin Zaid:

The Prophet said, "After me I have not left any affliction more harmful to men than women."

Bukhari 62.33

Jabir reported that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) saw a woman, and so he came to his wife, Zaynab, as she was tanning a leather and had sexual intercourse with her. He then went to his Companions and told them: The woman advances and retires in the shape of a devil, so when one of you sees a woman, he should come to his wife, for that will repel what he feels in his heart.

Sahih Muslim 8.3240

In the Koran, it is females (married and unmarried) who lust after the naked male body and are almost always the sexual aggressor. They can also be expected to lie about sexual assault, for example, falsely accusing a man of attempted rape when, in reality, she initiated the act. From the story of Joseph in Egypt whose benefactor's wife would have him sleep with her, by force, if necessary:

12:25 They raced to the door, and she ripped his shirt from behind. When they met her husband at the door, she said: "What is the penalty of one who intended evil for your wife except imprisonment or severe punishment?"

Exceptionally, God, when recounting this encounter, acknowledges that men can, on rare occasions, be the aggressors and describes how you can tell.

12:26 He (Joseph) said: "She sought to seduce me." And a member of her household bore witness: "If his shirt was torn from the front, then she is telling the truth and he is a liar.

12:27 "But if his shirt is torn from behind, then she lies and he is one of the truthful."

While admitting that men can, on occasion, be forceful in the pursuit of intimacy, Allah makes another generalization about women: *that they are skilled in the art of deception*. Notice the plural form of woman, "you women," in Verse 12:28.

12:28 When he (the husband) saw that his shirt was torn from behind, he said: "This is part of your guile, you women. Your guile is indeed very great.

It is less clear in Verse 12:29 whether God considers women, in general, as being sinners. The tone of the husband in admonishing his wife and the fact that he doesn't refer to her by name or her relationship to him, e.g., "you, my wife" but as a member of a group, would suggest a certain contempt for her sex; such contempt as a sinner might elicit from a god.

12:29 "Joseph, overlook this matter; and you woman, ask forgiveness for your sin. You are indeed one of the sinners."

When it comes to women and their sexual allure, God doesn't give men much credit either. For Allah, the sight of a single strand of a woman's hair can cause a man to experience a Pavlovian-like reaction, an uncontrollable urge to hump the owner then and there.

Women, like men, have been endowed with free will by their creator, so how does a god ensure that men get all the sex they desire in this world without taking away a woman's right to choose⁵? What God

⁵ The concept of free will or freedom to make your own choices is very narrowly defined in Islam. In practical terms, for believers, it means surrendering yourself to God or rejecting Him. Once you have surrendered your "will" to God, your free will is effectively extinguished. A verse to that effect:

31:22 Whoever surrenders his will to Allah while doing the right, has surely grasped the firmest handle. Unto Allah is the ultimate issue of all affairs.

Then there is Verse 33:36:

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giveth, God can take away and Allah, in a god-like way, leaves instructions with His Messenger that make it difficult, if not impossible, for women to deny men their sexual favours.

Why would God have to do this if, as I claim, He believed women want to have sex all the time? Could Allah have been wrong in His assessment of women and, instead of admitting they are more complicated than He first imagined, piled on a complicated set of rules that would ensure His creations behaved the way He intended. In Allah's account of the creation of the first couple—the first man, actually—Eve is barely mentioned, and not by name. In fact, when it comes to women and girls, the only one mentioned by name in the entire Koran is Mary, mother of Jesus, and then mainly to emphasise that she was *not* the mother of a god.

God admits to putting some thought into Adam's creation, a creation He is extremely proud of, and rightly so. Eve, however, appears to be an afterthought. She sort of appears out of the blue. Adam gets most of the attention whenever the couple is mentioned, including the following verses where we first meet the *first couple*.

2:34 And when We said to the angels; "Prostrate yourselves before Adam", they all prostrated themselves except Iblis (Satan), who refused, out of pride and was one of the disbelievers.

2:35 Then we said: "O Adam, dwell in Paradise, you and your wife, and eat from it as much as you wish and wherever you wish, but do not approach this tree (meaning to not eat from it) or you will be unjust.

In Revelation 2:34, the proud Creator does not ask Satan to prostrate himself before the happy twosome, only before Adam. The sole reference to Eve is in the second verse and even then, God does not mention her by name, just as 'the wife of Adam'. Allah not only cast the first couple out of Paradise but on at least two occasions admits to having made them enemies of one another.

2:36 But Satan caused them to fall down from it and be turned out of the bliss they had been in. And We said: "Go down [from Paradise to earth] being enemies one to the

33:36 It is not up to any believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have passed a judgement, to have any choice in their affairs. Whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger have gone astray in a manifest manner.

other. And you will have in the earth an abode and sustenance for a while.”

20:123 He (Allah) said: “Go down from it both of you, as enemies of one another; but should guidance from Me come to you, he who follows My Guidance will not go astray or suffer.

It is not clear if God ever forgave Eve for eating the fruit of the forbidden tree. If He did not, this would explain a great deal.

20:120 But the Devil whispered to him, saying “O Adam, shall I show you the Tree of Immortality and a kingdom which will never perish?”

20:121 And so they both (Adam and Eve) ate from it; whereupon their shameful parts were revealed to them and they started fastening upon themselves leaves of Paradise. Adam thus disobeyed his Lord and so went astray.

20:122 Then, his Lord favoured him, and so he relented towards him, and guided him.

2:37 Then Adam received words from his Lord, Who forgave him. He is indeed the All-Forgiving, the Merciful.

Could a male god⁶ who shuns female companionship and is obviously enamoured with the male side of humankind be expected to know anything significant about the other half? Would any woman feel comfortable with such a god telling her what to do, what to wear, what men expect of her? Would most women fear that such a god would harbour the same prejudices and insecurities as normal men when it comes to dealing with her sex? Would a god that understood women leave instructions that will make it difficult, if not impossible, for any believing woman to deny her husband her body under almost any circumstances? Would a god that understood women leave the impression that they crave sex all the time, and will have sex with any man, anywhere, any time?

⁶ Islamic scholars have argued that Allah is a sexless being and has no gender. The use of the pronoun “He” is made necessary when referring to Allah in the third person because Arabic has no word for ‘it’.

If women are just one big, yearning sexual machine, then Allah is indeed All-Knowing. If they are more than that, then Allah is all wet and the God of the Koran doesn't know women at all, therefore His advice is suspect. Being preoccupied with sex and knowing anything about sex are two different things—just ask the Pope.

As aforementioned, sex, for Allah, is a means to an end, weaponized to gain and reward the loyalty of men. Having come to the conclusion that men aspire to no higher ideal than fornicating to their heart's content, He promises sex in spades, in this world and more so in the next, if they worship Him and only Him. Women's loyalty, on the other hand, is assured by making men their overlords and in the process, providing His loyal, believing men with their fill of Earth-bound sex while awaiting its overabundance in heaven.

Why Muslim Men Are Always Right

Men will be men and gods will be gods, and both will show a bias towards their gender when dealing with the opposite sex. The Greeks and Romans probably meant to reduce this divine bias by honoring goddesses, while the Indians revered gods that combined both male and female attributes. Pre-Islamic Arabs worshipped goddesses, the most famous being al-Lat, al-Uzza and Manat. Depending on the favour in question, believers prayed to a god or goddess; for example, an aspiring mother might pray to the fertility goddess, Al-Lat.

Allah and His Messenger changed all that. Why? Why did they create what some would call "the men's religion," one that objectifies women and gives men ownership rights? Allah, you could say, was a "real man's" god. He went out of His way to ensure believing men were sexually satisfied, and for most men, that is a good thing. Many believing women seem to be satisfied with this arrangement as well.

Why would what appears to be a majority of believing women be satisfied with a god giving men complete control over their sexual, home, and public life, including denying them the right not to have children or refuse sex, whether it be for pleasure or procreation? Is this the Stockholm syndrome on steroids? The believing woman, having been a prisoner for so long, learns to cherish her captivity, her divinely appointed male guardian and to fear the words of a vengeful God who says that is the way it must be lest she spend an eternity burning in Hell.

Many questions remain. Did Muhammad feel threatened by women? Does God feel threatened by women? Was the Prophet looking to Allah for more than help with his love life? Did God's

Messenger nurture some deep-seated resentment? Did they believe pre-Islamic women were becoming too full-of-themselves, too independent, and had to be brought down a peg or two, to be put in their place?

Muhammad owed his success as a merchant to an older woman who hired the good-looking, allegedly illiterate young man to lead her caravans and later, bankrolled his operations. Did he resent the fact that it was a woman who helped him get started, probably kept him in business, and later, spent her wealth in support of his ministry? It was this same successful manager-turned-wife who re-assured her husband that God was speaking to him, not Satan or some other godless creature, when he began having visions.

Gheorghiu, author of *La vie de Mahomet*, tells the touching story of how, when Muhammad had a vision in his home and was unsure if it was Satan or an angel, his wife Khadijah proved it was an angel. She told her husband to get undressed and she did the same, then they embraced. Do you still see him, she asked? No! said God's new Messenger. Then it must have been an angel, she said, because an angel would not have remained to witness a couple's embrace.

Why would a man who had married such a bright, successful woman as Khadijah, the woman to whose intelligence, financial and moral support he owed much of his success, accept Allah's conclusion that women were not as smart as men, that women had trouble doing simple arithmetic and had poor memories? Why did Khadijah's husband not at least tell God, when he received the following revelation, that based upon his experience with Khadijah, women were not dummies. Revelation 2:282 instructs the believer, among other things, on the number of witnesses required to legitimize the contracting of debt by the mentally or physically handicapped.

2:282 O believers, when you contract a debt for a fixed period, write it down. Let a scribe write it for you with fairness. No scribe should decline to write as Allah has taught him. So let him then write and let the debtor dictate⁷. He should fear his Lord and not diminish the debt in the least. If the debtor is feeble-minded or weak or ignorant, then let his

⁷ On the road and no bookkeeper to be found?

2:283 If you are travelling and cannot find a scribe, a security should be taken. But if you trust one another, then let him who is entrusted deliver the security and fear Allah his Lord. Do not withhold the testimony. He who withholds it has a sinful heart. Allah has knowledge of what you do.

guardian dictate with fairness. And call to witness two witnesses of your men; if not two men, then one man and two women from such witnesses you approve of, so that if one of them (the two women) fails to remember, the other will remind her. The witnesses should not decline [to testify] when they are called upon [to do so]. So do not be averse to writing down the debt, be it small or large, as well as when it is due. This is more equitable in Allah's sight; more suitable for testimony and less likely to rouse your doubts. If it is an instant transaction among yourselves (involving no debt); then it is no offence if you do not write it down. And let there be witnesses when you sell one to another; but neither the scribe nor the witness should be harmed, because if you do that, it is an act of transgression. Fear Allah; Allah teaches you. He has knowledge of everything.

If Revelation 2:282 had been interpreted as God asserting that women were not good at business, this would have been the lesser of two evils. Unfortunately, it has been interpreted as meaning that women require more witnesses in court proceedings that have nothing to do with commercial or financial transactions, including accusations of adultery or sexual assault.

God is not satisfied with just claiming that women are bad at math and can't remember details as well as men. For Allah, men are superior in all matters by at least one degree—whatever a degree measures. He emphasizes this rule when He instructs women on how long to wait after divorce before being seen in the company of men, and what the couple can or cannot do during this waiting period.

2:228 Divorced women should keep away from men for three menstrual periods. And it is not lawful for them to conceal that which Allah has created in their wombs, if they truly believe in Allah and the Last Day. Their husbands have the right in the meantime to take them back, should they seek reconciliation; and women have rights equal to what is incumbent upon them according to what is just, although men are one degree above them (what is meant here is that the men have a superior authority). Allah is Mighty, Wise.

For all practical purposes, Verse 2:228 decrees that if there is any disagreement between a man and a woman, the man's view shall prevail.

Who Gets What

Which came first: the divine instructions that led to the seclusion of believing women, or the divine instructions that made it easier for men to accumulate wealth at the expense of believing women? An argument could be made that the first made the second inevitable.

The Invisible Woman

Allah's instructions on how women should dress, with whom they can be seen in public, and how they should behave at all times have been traditionally interpreted as meaning believing women should be invisible except to their immediate family, their husband and, with certain restrictions, his family. A good wife will not invite *anyone* into her husband's home of whom he would not approve.

In keeping with God's commands, traditional Islamic societies require that post-pubescent girls (teenagers, sometimes children) and women remain secluded in their father's or husband's house. If they must go out in public they are required to be accompanied by their father, husband or a close male relative while covered head to toe in a voluminous, sack-like garment with a mesh grid over the eyes (the burqa) or a shapeless black robe and black gloves with a face-covering black veil with a slit for the eyes (the niqab).

Traditional Islamic societies guided by God's ideal of the perfect woman see the post-pubescent female's role in simple terms: baby-making machine, stay-at-home mother, housekeeper, religious indoctrinator, and object of sexual gratification. Daughters are married off as soon as they start menstruating, if not sooner.

In *Tahrir al-Wasilah*, a monumental collection of commentaries on Islamic jurisprudence and morality, Ayatollah Khomeini claims it is better in the eyes of God if a girl starts menstruating in the home of her husband instead of that of her father, and that any father marrying his daughter so young will have a permanent place in heaven.

Believing mothers are expected to raise their daughters until a husband can arrange an advantageous, ideally profitable marriage. Wedding a relative is preferable, usually an uncle or a nephew, so as to

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keep wealth and strengthen ties within the family, clan, or tribe. Mothers are also responsible for raising sons up until the age of seven, when the proud father will take over their upbringing.

Considering the onerous restrictions placed on women in traditional Islamic societies and a limited role in their children's education—which consists mostly of having them mouth the Koran and familiarizing them with Islamic laws and traditions—it is understandable, only reasonable, that educating girls beyond reading would be seen as a luxury by many in the ummah, the community of believers.

The severe dress code, denial of an education equal to a man's, and the restrictions placed on women's freedom of movement in traditional Islamic societies makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for women to work in a well-remunerated job outside the home that will earn their independence. The lion's share of any wealth they accumulate must, under Allah's inheritance and property laws, sooner rather than later, end up in the pockets of their husband, his brothers and parents, and their male offspring. The net result is that it is next to impossible for believing women to earn an income of their own or accumulate any real wealth, rendering them subservient and beholden to men with the means to provide them with the basic necessities of life and, if they're lucky, some of its simple luxuries.

I suspect that Muhammad's first wife, an independent, wealthy woman in her own right, would not have been pleased. Muhammad, we are told, loved and respected his first wife, which is why I believe the forced seclusion of girls and women with all the ills that it entails may have had nothing to do with God wishing to condemn them to a prisoner-like, subsistence existence at best. This forced seclusion may just have been God's way of helping His middle-aged Messenger manage his burgeoning household of beautiful young wives, concubines and slave-girls. Some of His revelations pertaining to the close supervision of females may also have been meant to ensure that Muhammad was never again embarrassed by rumours such as those that circulated when the youngest of his fourteen wives, Aisha, got lost in the desert and was returned the next day by a young man, as well as to stop his wives from gossiping about what went on behind closed doors.

While the seclusion of women may have been an unintentional consequence of God aiding His Messenger, He effectively closed a number of loopholes in pre-Islamic laws and traditions that could have led women to *accidentally* accumulate more wealth than a man, for

example, from an inheritance. To avoid such an eventuality, Muhammad received a number of revelations on the disposition of the deceased's wealth.

Wills and Witnesses

5:106 O believers, when death approaches any of you, let two just men from among you act as witnesses at the time of testament; or two other from another folk if you happen to be travelling abroad and are overtaken by the calamity of death. You will detain them (the two others) after the prayer and they will swear by Allah if you are in doubt: "We will not sell Him [Allah] for any price, even if a near kinsman is involved and we will not keep secret the Testimony of Allah (the testimony which Allah enjoins); for then we would surely be sinners."

On first reading of Revelation 5:106, it would appear that only men can bear witness to a will. Allah's inclusion of "another folk" may have given Islamic scholars a way of allowing women to bear witness without running afoul of God's men-only decree.

Where Islamic law is permitted, or it is the law of the land, an attempt must be made to find two believing men to witness a will. If two male believers cannot be found, one or two male non-believers may be sought out. If no more than one man can be found, up to four women may be called upon in keeping with Allah's observation in Revelation 2:282: "And call to witness two witnesses of your men; if not two men, then one man and two women from such witnesses you approve of, so that if one of them (the two women) fails to remember, the other will remind her." The witnesses should, of course, be sinless and swear to that effect.

5:107 If, however, it is discovered that they have committed a sin, then two others shall take their places from among those against whom the first two had sinned. Whereupon they shall swear by Allah: "Our testimony is more truthful than their testimony and we have not transgressed, or else we would surely be evildoers."

5:108 Thus, it is likelier that they will bear witness properly, or fear that other oaths will contradict their own oaths. Fear Allah and listen well; for Allah does not guide the wicked people.

Another revelation details what to do when death approaches which, "According to some classical commentators," writes Fakhry in a footnote, "was abrogated by the law of inheritance."

2:180 It is prescribed for you that when death is imminent for one of you and he leaves wealth, he should equitably make a testament in favour of the parents and the near of kin. This is incumbent upon the righteous.

A self-evident revelation about falsifying a will is followed by what should be an equally manifest revealed truth: that helping a dying man and his kin come to an understanding as to the fair dispossession of his estate is not a sin.

2:181 Whoever then changes it after he had heard it, the sin committed is that of those who change it. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

2:182 Should anyone, however, fear any inequity or offence from a testator and reconciles them (the testator and the beneficiary), he shall incur no sin. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

Husband Dies

The following revelations pertain to the disposition of a recently deceased male's property. As you may already be aware, male offspring get the lion's share. Sisters are entitled to half the share of a brother and, if there are more than two females, the male is entitled to one-third, with the rest divided equally among the females (I assume sisters), whatever their number.

4:11 Allah commands you, with respect to your children, that the male shall inherit the equivalent of the share of two females. If there be more than two females, then they should receive two-thirds of what he (the deceased father) leaves; but if there is only one female, she is entitled to one-half...

If he did not father any children and he has no brothers.

4:11 ... To each of his parents, one-sixth of what he leaves, if he has any children; but if he has no children, then his parents will inherit him, the mother receiving one third...

If he has brothers and dies childless, the formula changes. No mention is made of sisters of the deceased being entitled to anything.

4:11 ... But if he has any brothers, then his mother receives one-sixth, after any will he had made or any debt he had incurred [is taken care of]...

The verse ends with God's acknowledgement that it is difficult to choose the better investment, fathers or sons (no mention is made of daughters or mothers), when it comes to the proceeds of an inheritance and finishes with the usual praise for the rule maker.

4:11 ... Your fathers and sons – you know not who of them is of greater advantage to you. This is a law from Allah; Allah surely is All-Knowing, Forbearing.

Lest they missed it the first time, God reminds the believers of His two-for-one rule when addressing the disposition of an inheritance should the only beneficiaries be brothers and sisters of the deceased.

4:176 [If] they consult you, say: "Allah enjoins you regarding him who dies leaving neither children nor parents. If he leaves a sister; she is entitled to half of what he leaves behind; and he inherits her if she has no children. If he leaves two sisters, they are entitled to two-thirds of what he leaves behind; but if they are brothers and sisters the male will have the equivalent of the share of two females. Allah makes it clear to you lest you go astray. Allah has full knowledge of everything!"

What about the family home? The following would suggest that former wives of the dearly departed are permitted to remain in the family home for up to a year before the deceased's relatives move in and they have to move out.

2:240 Those of you who die leaving wives behind should bequeath to them a year's provision without turning [them] out (from their homes). If however, they leave [their homes], then you (the relatives of the dead) incur no offence for what they do in a rightful way to themselves. Allah is Mighty, Wise.

Wife Dies

Allah's instructions as to the dispositions of a deceased wife's property, as far as I can tell, are all contained in Verse 4:12. The key provision here again is that the husband who has lost his spouse is entitled to

more than a wife who has lost hers. The two-for-one rule appears to still apply. I will let you do the math.

4:12 You are entitled to half of what your wives leave, if they have no children; but if they have any children, then you are entitled to one-quarter of what they leave, after any will they had made or any loan they had incurred [is taken care of]. And they are entitled to one-quarter of what you leave, if you have no children; but if you have any children, then they are entitled to one-eighth of what you leave, after any will you had made or loan you had incurred [is taken care of]. And if a man or a woman dies having no children or parents, but has a brother or sister, then each shall have one-sixth; if they are more than that, then they shall share one-third, after any will made or debt incurred [is taken care of] without prejudice. This is a Commandment from Allah, and Allah is All-Knowing, Forbearing.

Islamic scholars like writer and American convert Yahiya Emerick dismiss this double standard because “in Islam only the man is compelled to spend money in support of his family therefore he should be entitled to a bigger share of the inheritance.” How convenient. *A woman, under a system that has made her less wealthy than her partner, is denied her fair share because she is less wealthy than her partner.* Divine circular reasoning! Accept this decreed, biased distribution of inherited wealth and you will be amply rewarded in the hereafter; don't, and the Fire will be waiting.

4:13 These are the Ordinances from Allah, and whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will admit into Gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever. That is the great victory!

4:14 But whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses His bounds, He will admit into the Fire, wherein he shall abide forever, and his will be a demeaning punishment.

Since God's ordinances pertaining to wills overwhelmingly favour men, they are unlikely to transgress, therefore the promise of eternal pain is probably meant for women who would seek a more equitable share. Remember, the pronouns he, him and his are considered the default, regardless of gender.

Parents Die

Allah's revelations briefly consider bequests from deceased parents or relatives, though the details are hazy.

4:7 Men should have a share of what parents and kinsmen leave behind; and women a share of what parents and kinsmen leave, whether big or small, as an obligatory portion.

4:8 And if the division is attended by kinsmen, orphans or poor men, then give them a share of it and speak to them kindly.

4:33 To every one We have appointed heirs to inherit part of what the parents or the kinsmen bequeath. Those with whom you made a compact, give them their share. Surely Allah is witness to everything.

Slave-Girls

Allah said you should be kind to your slave-girls, but the following revelation reminds that kindness must not extend to sharing with them the favour that God may have given you. This may explain why there are no revelations about what slave-girls were entitled to upon the death of their owners.

16:71 Allah has favoured some of you over others in provision; but those favoured will not give their provision to those whom their right hands possess so as to be equal therein. Will they then deny Allah's blessings?

A Vicious Circle

Allah's revelations regarding the disposition of an inheritance are part of a vicious circle of self-serving regulations that favour men and ensure that Muslim women will always have difficulty accumulating the resources to look after themselves. Should they succeed in accumulating any wealth, upon their death the lion's share must go, by order of God, to the male members of her husband's family and their male offspring; their daughters, and their daughter's daughters... doomed in perpetuity to begin their adult life at a disadvantage.

It is a vicious circle that ensures wealth, and the power it conveys, will invariably accumulate in the pockets of men. And what can a

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Muslim man do with the wealth so generously provided by Allah? Purchase the object of his affection. The woman—or girl—dares not oppose the transaction; her very survival depends on the buyer's beneficence, God having denied her the means to look after herself. In most societies, and Islamic society is no different, whoever pays the piper calls the tune. Whoever pays is in charge.

4:34 Men are in charge of women, because Allah has made some of them excel the others, and because they spend some of their wealth. Hence righteous women are obedient, guarding the unseen which Allah has guarded. And those of them that you fear might rebel, admonish them and abandon them in their beds and beat them. Should they obey you, do not seek a way of harming them; for Allah is Sublime and Great!

It really is a clever set-up worthy of a god. Making women dependent and beholden to the very men who, because of a divine ordinance, legally deprive them of what is rightfully theirs and would give them the freedom to make their own choices about how they wish to live their lives.

Marriage

Allah turned women into a commodity that could be bartered and bargained for, befitting a god that selected a merchant as His Messenger. He also encouraged the accumulation of wealth in the pursuit of that commodity, making women beholden to men who invested in their acquisition and provided for their basic necessities of life.

Women as a Field to Be Ploughed

How were women expected to repay the generous men who put food on their table, a roof over their heads and protected them from other men? Sex comes to mind. Beholden women will not necessarily consider sex an appropriate repayment for room and board. Anyone who has ever paid a restaurant bill expecting sex to follow will understand this, but for Allah, such an ungrateful attitude was unacceptable. Not only that, but if a man decided to take what he felt was his due, what he thought he had bought and paid for, he could be punished for rape under pre-Islamic laws and traditions. To perhaps avoid accusations of rape if a wife declined her husband's request for intimacy, Muhammad announced a revelation from God informing him that women had no right to refuse sex.

2:223 Your women are a tillage for you. So get to your tillage whenever you like. Do good for yourselves, fear Allah and know that you shall meet Him. And give good news to the believers⁸.

⁸ A companion of the Prophet said that what Allah meant was that a woman must submit to whatever sexual position demanded by her husband to avoid having a child with a birth defect.

Narrated Jabir:

Jews used to say: "If one has sexual intercourse with his wife from the back, then she will deliver a squint-eyed child." So this Verse was revealed: "Your wives are a tilth unto you; so go to your tilth when or how you will" (2.223).

Bukhari 60.51

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It was good for you but was it good for her? Women as a field to be ploughed?! What if the field is busy making dinner?

Ali reported God's messenger as saying, "When a man calls his wife to satisfy his desire she must go to him even if she is occupied at the oven."

Tirmidhi

What if the field doesn't want to be ploughed? What if the field has a headache? For the answer to this question we must return to an already quoted verse, paying particular attention to when a wife is deserving of a beating.

4:34 ... And those of them that you fear might rebel, admonish them and abandon them in their beds and beat them. Should they obey you, do not seek a way of harming them; for Allah is Sublime and Great!

Islamic scholars and learned clerics have long struggled with how much of a beating wives should be forced to endure, and whether the Koran allows for the use of implements in the beating of one's beloved. According to Muhammad, the beating should avoid the face, and yes, implements are allowed but should not be bigger than a toothbrush. (The Prophet was said to be brushing his teeth when he answered this question.) The toothbrush in question was probably some kind of reed, therefore a small whip would probably be allowed, but don't flog the one you intend to have sex with in the way you would a slave or a camel.

Narrated Abdullah bin Zam'a:

The Prophet said, "None of you should flog his wife as he flogs a slave and then have sexual intercourse with her in the last part of the day."

Bukhari 62.132

Narrated 'Abdullah bin Zam'a:

The Prophet forbade laughing at a person who passes wind, and said, "How does anyone of you beat his wife as he beats the stallion camel and then he may embrace (sleep with) her?"

Bukhari 73.68

If a beating doesn't get a wife to change her mind and consent to sexual intercourse, God's angels will curse her "till morning." Being cursed by not one, but a chorus of angels is no trivial matter. Allah will be displeased, with all that entails.

Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet said, "If a man invites his wife to sleep with him and she refuses to come to him, then the angels send their curses on her till morning."

Bukhari 62.121

The Koran grants a husband the right to beat his wife, but it is a saying of Muhammad's that pretty much guarantees a wife-beater immunity from prosecution unless he beats her about the face.

Narrated Umar ibn al-Khattab:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: A man will not be asked as to why he beat his wife.

Abu Dawud 11.2142

Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet said, "If somebody fights (or beats somebody) then he should avoid the face."

Bukhari 46.734

A solid punch to the chest would probably not be out of the question based on the legal precedent that is the example of the Prophet (see appendix *What Aisha Saw*).

A Contractual Affair

The marriage contract formally recognizes a husband's God-given right to rape his wives, for they cannot refuse his demand for intimacy. In a marriage contract, the bride guarantees unrestricted access to her "private parts." As Muhammad makes clear in the following hadith, there is no derogation from this written undertaking allowing a husband to have his way with a wife whenever and wherever he pleases.

Narrated Uqba:

The Prophet said: "The stipulations most entitled to be abided by are those with which you are given the right to enjoy the

(women's) private parts (i.e. the stipulations of the marriage contract)."

Bukhari 62.81

The silence of those too young to understand what is being asked of them is assumed to be their consent.

Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet said, "A matron should not be given in marriage except after consulting her; and a virgin should not be given in marriage except after her permission."

The people asked, "O Allah's Apostle! How can we know her permission?"

He said, "Her silence (indicates her permission)."

Bukhari 62.67

Aisha, who was nine when Muhammad had his way with her, knew from experience that this was a specious justification, and said so to her husband who simply repeated his claim.

Narrated Aisha:

I said, "O Allah's Apostle! A virgin feels shy."

He said, "Her consent is (expressed by) her silence."

Bukhari 62.68

Believers do not usually marry for love⁹. Like any property, men acquire wives and, during the Prophet's time and the subsequent wars to expand God's Dominion, sex-slaves, what Allah refers to as "what your right hand possess." Marriage is usually contracted between members of the same clan, meaning most newlyweds are relatives, offspring of the same father a few generations removed¹⁰.

⁹ **Narrated Abu Huraira:**

The Prophet said, "A woman is married for four things, i.e., her wealth, her family status, her beauty and her religion. So you should marry the religious woman (otherwise) you will be losers."

Bukhari 62.27

¹⁰ The knowledge of the risk of reduced mental acuity and increased physical abnormalities due to inbreeding has not stopped marriages between close relations in traditional Muslim societies. "In some parts of Saudi Arabia, particularly in the south the rate of marriage among blood relatives ranges from 55 to 70 percent according to the Saudi government. Widespread inbreeding in Saudi Arabia has produced several

Marriage is usually an arranged affair and, not unlike arranged marriages of the Middle and Dark Ages, the primary consideration is what benefits in wealth and influence will accrue to the contracting parties, i.e., the families of the bride and groom. If a man is unhappy with any of his matrimonial choices, getting out of a marriage agreement under Islamic law is probably easier than any other type of contractual arrangement. This is because a marriage contract, unlike other contractual arrangements, is a one-sided affair that can be terminated at the discretion of the male signatory. The soon-to-be-divorced wife cannot object to the unilateral breaking of the marriage contract by her husband.

Women of the Faith

For reasons unknown, you should not marry a woman who was previously married to your father.

4:22 And do not marry women that your fathers had married, unless it has already happened. Surely it is indecent and hateful, and is an evil course!

In Revelation 4:23, Allah enumerates the types of relatives a man may not marry, a list that includes “the wives of your sons” and “two sisters together.”

4:23 Unlawful to you are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your paternal and maternal aunts, your brother’s daughters and sister’s daughters, your foster-mothers who gave you suck, your foster-sisters, your wives’ mothers, your step-daughters who are in your custody, born to your wives whom you have lain with. But if you have not lain with them then, then you are not at fault. [It is also not lawful to marry] the wives of your sons who are of your loins, or to take in two sisters together, unless this has already happened. Allah is truly All-Forgiving and Merciful!

In addition to encouraging men to use their wealth to purchase wives not on God’s prohibited list, Verse 4:24 makes it legal to marry the wives of another man if they have been taken as captives.

4:24 Or married women except those your right hands possess (slave-girls). This is Allah’s decree for you. Beyond

these it is lawful for you to seek, by means of your wealth, any women to marry and not to debauch. Those of them you have enjoyed, you should give them their dowry as a matter of obligation; but you are not liable to reproach for whatever you mutually agree upon, apart from the obligatory payment (the dowry). Allah is indeed All-Knowing, Wise.

In a saying of the Prophet, Revelation 4:24 was sent to reduce the resistance of believers to raping their married female captives, i.e., "those your right hands possess," in front of their husbands.

The Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) sent a military expedition to Awtas on the occasion of the battle of Hunain. They met their enemy and fought with them. They defeated them and took them captives.

Some of the Companions of the Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) were reluctant to have intercourse with the female captives in the presence of their husbands who were unbelievers. So Allah, the Exalted, sent down the Qur'anic verse: (4:24) "And all married women (are forbidden) unto you save those (captives) whom your right hands possess."

Abu Dawud 2.2150

Women of the Book and Slave-Girls

Muslim women are not allowed to marry outside the faith but Muslim men are permitted so long as they marry Women of the Book: Jews, Christians and members of a religious sect called Sabians¹¹.

5:5 This day the good things have been made lawful to you; the food of the People of the Book is lawful to you, and your food is lawful to them; and so are the believing women who are chaste, and the chaste women of those who were given the Book before you, provided you give them their dowries and take them in marriage, not in fornication or as mistresses. If any one denies the faith, his work shall be of no avail to him, and in the Hereafter he will rank with the losers.

As you can appreciate, this last revelation greatly expanded the available stock of virgins that a believing man could choose from. If

¹¹ "The Sabians were a Middle Eastern monotheistic religious group who worshipped in the names of stellar angels. Most of what is known of them comes from the Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides [1135:1204] and classical Arabic sources." (Wiki)

this still was not enough to satisfy your sexual appetite, or you could not afford a believing woman, you could always take wives from among your believing slave-girls.

4:25 Whoever of you cannot afford to marry a free, believing woman, let him choose from whatever your right hands possess (captives of war or slave-girls) of believing girls. Allah knows best your faith; you come one from the other. So marry them with their parents' leave and give them their dowry honourably, as chaste women, neither committing adultery nor taking lovers...

The pain a former slave-girl can expect, should she cheat on her husband with another man, must take into account her previous status as a man's right hand possession.

4:25 ... If they are legally married and commit adultery, their punishment shall be half that of a free women. Such is the law for those of you who fear committing sin; but to abstain is better for you. Allah is All-Forgiving and Merciful!

Why all the rules about the women and girls a man can marry? It's a question of lust and God's Mercy.

4:26 Allah wants to explain to you [His laws] and to guide you along the paths of those who preceded you, and to be Merciful to you. Allah is All-Knowing, and Wise!

4:27 Allah also wants to be Merciful to you, but those who follow their lust want you to deviate greatly from the right course.

Some must have found Revelation 4:27 amusing coming from a man with a penchant for girls and young women, with fourteen official wives—one of whom was previously married to his adopted son Zayd but he just had to have after seeing her almost naked—and an undisclosed number of concubines and slaves-girls.

Widows

Widows must wait four months and ten days before seeking a replacement for a deceased spouse. During this time they must not be seen in the company of men and must refrain from anything that might attract the attention of eligible suitors.

2:234 As for those of you who die leaving wives behind, their wives should observe a waiting period (during this period

they should stay away from men) of four months and ten days. When they have completed that period you incur no offence on account of what they may do to themselves (such as adorning themselves or looking out for suitors) in a lawful manner. Allah has knowledge of what you do.

A man may, however, communicate to a widow, during this waiting period, his interest in making her his wife.

2:235 You incur no offence by disclosing your marriage proposals to women or by concealing them; Allah knows that you will remember them. And do not arrange anything secretly with them unless you speak what is recognized as true; and do not resolve on contracting the marriage until the prescribed period (the waiting period) ends. And know that Allah knows what you have in mind, and that Allah is Forgiving, Clement.

Can a man obtain a widow as an inheritance?

4:19 O believers, it is not lawful for you to inherit the women [of deceased kinsmen] against their will; nor restrain them in order to take away part of what you had given them, unless they commit flagrant adultery. Associate with them kindly; and if you feel aversion towards them, it may well be that you will be averse to something, from which Allah brings out a lot of good.

What about trading one wife for another? Yes, but don't ask for your money back.

4:20 If you wish to have one wife in the place of another and you have given either of them a heap of gold, do not take any of it back. Would you take it by recourse to injustice and manifest sin?

4:21 For how can you take it back, when you have been intimate one with the other, and they had taken from you a solemn pledge?

Daughters-in-Law

Daughters-in-law whom your "adopted son" has divorced are eligible to an *adoptive father*. The precedent was set by none other than God's Messenger. Muhammad walked in on his daughter-in-law Zaynab when she was almost naked and he just had to have her. His adopted

son divorced her so that the man he considered his father could marry her. A revelation concerning the *righteousness* of the whole thing was followed by others affirming that the Prophet was in no way at fault.

33:37 And [remember] when you said to him whom Allah favoured and you favoured: (this is addressed to Zayd regarding his wife Zaynab) "Hold on to your wife and fear Allah", while you concealed within yourself what Allah would reveal and feared other men, whereas Allah had a better right to be feared by you. Then, when Zayd had satisfied his desire for her, We gave her to you in marriage; so that the believers should not be at fault, regarding the wives of their adopted sons, once they have satisfied their desire for them. For Allah's Command must be accomplished.

33:38 The Prophet was not at fault regarding what Allah prescribed for him as was His Way with those who were gone before. And Allah's Command is a pre-ordained decree.

33:39 Those who were delivering Allah's Message and feared Him, fearing none other than Allah. Allah suffices as a Reckoner.

Orphaned boys were almost unknown in the Arab world until Allah changed their status so that His Messenger could marry his adopted son's wife. Marrying your son's former wife was taboo. It did not matter if he was adopted; the same ethical and moral restrictions applied as to a natural born son. Before God changed the status of adopted sons from sons to "brothers in religion," Revelation 33:5, Arab fathers made no distinction between adopted sons and those they had fathered.

33:4 Allah did not create two hearts within the breast of any man; and He did not make your wives, whom you compare to your mothers' backs; and He did not make your [adopted] sons your sons in fact. That is your own claim, by your words of mouth. Allah speaks the truth and He guides to the Right Path.

33:5 Assign them to their own fathers. That is more equitable in the sight of Allah; but if you do not know their real fathers, then they are your brothers in religion, your adopted fellow Muslims. You are not at fault if you err therein; but only in what your hearts intend. Allah is ever All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.

Demoting adopted sons to “brothers in religion” made their wives, upon divorce, eligible to be taken in marriage by their *adoptive* father. The revelation changing the relationship between adopted sons and their surrogate parent—so that Muhammad could add to his collection of wives, concubines and slave-girls his former daughter-in-law—have been interpreted to mean that Islam is against Western style adoption, resulting in an untold number of children in the Islamic world who have no one to call father.

Orphaned Girls

In Islam, if a problem, real or imagined, involves a female and has nothing to do with sex outside marriage, then marriage is most often the solution. Marriage is also Allah’s recommended course of action in dealing with female orphans. The male guardian of female orphans could, at his discretion, “marry such of the women as appeal to” him once they reach the age of nine (the age at which females can legally be married off under Islamic law, i.e., the Sharia). By doing so, he maintains effective control of whatever property the female orphan might possess, to use and dispose of at his discretion.

4:2 Render unto the orphans their property and do not exchange worthless things for good ones, and do not devour their property together with your property. That indeed is a great sin!

4:3 If you fear that you cannot deal justly with the orphans, then marry such of the women as appeal to you, two, three or four; but if you fear that you cannot be equitable, then only one, or what your right hands own (captives of war or slave-girls). That is more likely to enable you to avoid unfairness.

Spinsters and Prostitutes

God, in the following revelations, makes his views on spinsterhood, pre-marital sex, the emancipation of slaves, and abstinence crystal clear. He is less forthcoming as to whether a man forcing a slave-girl into prostitution, or one who profits from his slaves prostituting themselves, will face any sanctions.

24:32 Encourage the unmarried among you and the righteous among your servants and maids to marry. If they are poor, Allah will enrich them from His Bounty. Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.

24:33 Let those who do not find the means to marry be abstinent, till Allah enriches them from his Bounty. Those whom your right hands own and who wish to pay for their emancipation, conclude a contract with them, if you know that there is some good in them, and give them of Allah's wealth which He gave you. Do not force your slave-girls into prostitution, if they wish to be chaste, in order to seek the fleeting goods of this life. Whoever forces them, surely Allah, after their being forced, is Forgiving, Merciful.

24:34 And We have sent down to you signs making everything clear, and an example of those who have gone before you, and an exhortation to the God-fearing.

While prostitution per se is forbidden, the Prophet did allow for temporary marriages so that men at war with no female captives to rape could still have sex. Sunnis consider temporary marriages haram¹² while Shiites have made it part of their legal code and accessible to just about everyone¹³. Two hadiths on the subject of temporary marriages:

Narrated Abdullah:

We used to participate in the holy wars carried on by the Prophet and we had no women (wives) with us. So we said (to the Prophet). "Shall we castrate ourselves?"

But the Prophet forbade us to do that and thenceforth he allowed us to marry a woman (temporarily) by giving her even a garment, and then he recited: "O you who believe! Do not make unlawful the good things which Allah has made lawful for you." (*Qur'an 5:87*)

Bukhari 60.139

Sabra Juhanni reported:

Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) permitted temporary marriage for us. So I and another person went out

¹² Nonetheless, you will find the largest brothel in the world in a Sunni country. It's an entire village, that of Daulatdia in Bangladesh, one of twenty government sanctioned brothels (2019).

¹³ The greatest number of temporary marriages are performed in Shia Iran, held in unofficial brothels where you will find an imam who is prepared, for a price, to proffer a temporary marriage certificate. The payment for sex is deemed to be her dowry, so believers can avoid going to hell for having sex with a woman outside of actual marriage.

and saw a woman of Bana 'Amir, who was like a young long-necked she-camel.

We presented ourselves to her (for contracting temporary marriage), whereupon she said: What dowry would you give me?

I said: My cloak.

And my companion also said: My cloak. And the cloak of-my companion was superior to my cloak, but I was younger than he. So when she looked at the cloak of my companion she liked it, and when she cast a glance at me I looked more attractive to her.

She then said: Well, you and your cloak are sufficient for me.

I remained with her for three nights, and then Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said: He who has any such woman with whom he had contracted temporary marriage, he should let her off.

Sahih Muslim 8.3252

The Suckling Imperative

According to Ya'qubi, an Arab historian and geographer, Muhammad once said that his first wet nurse was the nastiest of women and that she would burn for all eternity in the fires of Hell. To quench her thirst she would only have the small amount of milk she allowed him to suckle in the days following his birth. The Prophet also reported having a vision of Hell where women who had not suckled their children had snakes biting at their breast.

The revelations on how long a mother or wet-nurse must suckle a child, and what the parents must do if they choose to shorten the weaning period decreed by Allah, may have had something to do with God's awareness that His Messenger had not been adequately breastfed as a baby.

2:233 Mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years; [that is] for those who wish to complete the suckling. Those to whom the children are born (the fathers) shall maintain and clothe them kindly. No soul is charged beyond its capacity. No mother should suffer on account of her child and he to whom a child is born should not suffer on account of his child. The same [duties (the maintenance and clothing

of divorced women)] devolve upon the [father's] heir (if the heir is a child and has a guardian the latter would be charged with those duties). But they commit no offence if by mutual agreement and following consultation they choose to wean the child. You also commit no offence if you engage wet-nurses, provided that you give them what you promised to give kindly. Fear Allah and know that Allah has knowledge of what you do.

If the decreed suckling period is 24 months then Allah, in the following verse where He reveals a gestation and weaning period totaling 30 months, has underestimated the gestation period of the human fetus by three months ($30 - 24 = 6$ months in the womb).

46:15 We have commanded man to be kind to his parents; his mother bore him painfully and delivered him painfully, his gestation and weaning totalling thirty months. When he is fully grown and turns forty, he will say: "Lord, inspire me to be thankful for the favour, with which You have favoured me and favoured my parents; and to do a righteous deed, well-pleasing to You. Grant me righteousness in my progeny; I have truly repented to You and one of those who submit."

The Prophet ruled that a woman who suckled an adult male who was not a close relation rendered marriage to him not only impossible but undesirable; he became the equivalent of a close relation and therefore could spend time with her alone without temptation.

The Ulema'A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) reported that Salim, the freed slave of Abu Hadhaifa, lived with him and his family in their house.

She (i. e. the daughter of Suhail) came to Allah's Apostle (may peace be upon him) and said: Salim has attained (puberty) as men attain, and he understands what they understand, and he enters our house freely, I, however, perceive that something (rankles) in the heart of Abu Hudhaifa, whereupon Allah's Apostle (may peace be upon him) said to her: Suckle him and you would become unlawful for him, and (the rankling) which Abu Hudhaifa feels in his heart will disappear.

She returned and said: So I suckled him, and what (was there) in the heart of Abu Hudhaifa disappeared.

Sahih Muslim 8.3425

The Coitus Imperative

8:68 But for a prior ordinance of Allah, you would have been afflicted on account of what you have taken (an ordinance which made it lawful for Muslims to take spoils and captives) by a terrible punishment.

Booty, which includes wives and daughters of the unbelievers killed or enslaved—a reward that Allah rendered legal for believers and believers only—played a significant role in attracting men to Islam. In making war on the unbelievers, God reminded the believers not to let ‘the booty’ distract them from their immediate goal: shedding the blood of the enemy.

8:67 It is not up to any Prophet to take captives except after too much blood is shed (after the enemy is hard hit and subdued) in the land. You desire the fleeting goods of this world, but Allah desires the Hereafter, and Allah is Mighty, and Wise.

It was a given that sex was permitted with female captives. However, until Muhammad ruled on the matter, some holy warriors were unsure about whether coitus interruptus was halal.

Narrated Abu Said Al-Khudri: that while he was sitting with Allah's Apostle he said, "O Allah's Apostle! We get female captives as our share of booty, and we are interested in their prices, what is your opinion about coitus interruptus?"

The Prophet said, "Do you really do that? It is better for you not to do it. No soul that which Allah has destined to exist, but will surely come into existence."

Bukhari 34.432

Abu Sirma said to Abu Sa'id al Khadri (Allah be pleased with him): O Abu Sa'id, did you hear Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) mentioning al-'azl?

He said: Yes, and added: We went out with Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) on the expedition to the Bi'l-Mustaliq and took captive some excellent Arab women;

and we desired them, for we were suffering from the absence of our wives, (but at the same time) we also desired ransom for them.

So we decided to have sexual intercourse with them but by observing 'azl (withdrawing the male sexual organ before emission of semen to avoid conception).

But we said: We are doing an act whereas Allah's Messenger is amongst us; why not ask him?

So we asked Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him), and he said: It does not matter if you do not do it, for every soul that is to be born up to the Day of Resurrection will be born.

Imam Muslim 8:3371

Polygamy – For or Against?

In Verse 4:3, Allah grants men the right to marry up to four wives if he can treat them all equally.

4:3 If you fear that you cannot deal justly with the orphans, then marry such of the women as appeal to you, two, three or four; but if you fear that you cannot be equitable, then only one, or what your right hands own (captives of war or slave-girls). This is more likely to enable you to avoid unfairness.

In a later verse, God states that it is impossible for a man who has more than one wife to treat them equally.

4:129 You will never be able to treat wives equally, even if you are bent on doing that. So do not turn away altogether [from any of them] leaving her, like one in suspense; and if you do justice [to her] and guard against evil. He (Allah) is surely All-Forgiving, Merciful.

Muhammad Abduh, (1849-1905), “Egyptian jurist, religious scholar and liberal reformer, regarded as the founder of Islamic Modernism” (Wiki), argued that these two verses taken together mean the Koran is against polygamy. The Prophet would not allow his son-in-law Ali to take another wife after Fatima. This also suggest that polygamy is not a hard and fast rule in Islam.

Narrated Al-Miswar bin Makhrama:

I heard Allah's Apostle who was on the pulpit, saying, "Banu Hisham bin Al-Mughira have requested me to allow them to marry their daughter to Ali bin Abu Talib, but I don't give permission, and will not give permission unless Ali bin Abi Talib divorces my daughter in order to marry their daughter, because Fatima is a part of my body, and I hate what she hates to see, and what hurts her, hurts me."

Bukhari 62.157

Divorce

Divorce in pre-Islamic laws and traditions must have been abysmal for Allah's revelations to be considered an improvement where women were concerned. Some of His revelations pertaining to the separation of legally married couples were said to have been introduced because of one woman pleading with the Prophet.

THE PLEADING WOMAN

58 Al-Mujadilah

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful*

58:1 Allah has heard the words of that woman who disputes with you, concerning her husband, and complains to Allah, while Allah hears you both conversing. Allah is truly All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

The improvements introduced by Allah have mainly to do with the disposition of the dowry, which in Islam is the gift a husband makes to his new wife.

2:236 You incur no offence if you divorce women before the consummation of marriage or fixing the dowry. And provide for them in a rightful way: the wealthy according to his means, and the less fortunate according to his means. This is incumbent on the righteous.

2:237 If, however, you divorce them before the consummation of marriage, but after fixing the dowry, then [give them] half of the fixed dowry, unless they forgo that, or the man in whose hand is the marriage tie (the husband) forgoes his half. To forgo it is more righteous. And do not forget to be bountiful to each other. Allah sees what you do.

A husband does not need a reason to divorce any of his wives or obtain anyone's permission to do so. He simply has to tell her, "I divorce you" and wait until his soon-to-be-ex-wife has experienced three menstrual

cycles, and it's over. For a woman it is a little more complicated. She can, however, simplify the process *and* remain in Allah's good books if she agrees to pay her husband a ransom. The price of freedom usually includes returning much of what he has ever given her, including the dowry.

2:229 Divorce may be pronounced twice. Then they (women) are to be retained in a rightful manner or released with kindness. And it is unlawful for you [men] to take back anything of what you have given them unless both parties fear that they cannot comply with Allah's Bounds (by obeying His commands). If you fear that they cannot do that, then it is no offence if the woman ransoms herself [pays money to be set free]. Those are the bounds set by Allah. Do not transgress them. Those who transgress the bounds set by Allah are the wrongdoers.

"Divorce may be pronounced twice" in the preceding verse means that the husband can divorce his wife twice. If he divorces her a third time, he can never take her back. Then, once her third menstrual cycle has passed, the officially divorced woman is expected to leave the family home. Her former husband can allow her to stay longer if he wishes, so long as it is not for ulterior motives, for example to obtain a larger ransom.

2:231 If you divorce [your] women and they reach the end of their [waiting] period, retain them in an honourable manner or release them in an honourable manner. Do not, however, retain them for the sake of causing them harm and in order to commit aggression (by forcing them to ransom themselves, or by retaining them for a longer period). Whoever does that shall do wrong to himself. Do not make a mockery of Allah's Revelations; and remember the Grace Allah has bestowed upon you, and the Book (the Koran) and the wisdom He has revealed to you in order to admonish you. Fear Allah and know that He knows everything.

Allah recommends that your divorced women receive an "affordable provision"; for how long, He does not say. For widows it is determined to be one year (2:240). They may have to pay for their sustenance depending on your interpretation of 'affordable'.

2:241 Divorced women should be provided with an affordable provision. This is incumbent on the righteous.

2:242 Thus Allah makes clear to you His Revelations, so that you may understand.

If you have never touched a lawfully-wedded spouse you can send her away on a moment's notice, as long as it is done in an *honourable* way.

33:49 O believers, if you marry believing women then divorce them, before touching them, you owe them no fixed term to reckon. So make provision for them and set them free in an honourable way.

I am assuming the following does not apply to the Prophet only.

THE DIVORCE

65 At-Talâq

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful*

65:1 O Prophet, if you divorce your women, divorce them when they have completed their menstrual period. Calculate the period and fear Allah your Lord. Do not drive them out of their homes, and let them not go out, unless they have committed a manifest foul act. Those are the bounds of Allah. He who transgresses the bounds of Allah has surely wronged himself. You do not know, Allah may perhaps bring about something new after that.

If the divorce leaves the divorcer inconvenienced in any way and he has followed Allah instructions to the letter, God will make it better. As for the divorcee, she is on her own, unless her former husband decides to keep her in some other capacity.

65:2 Then, when they have reached their term, retain them honourably or part with them honourably, calling two just witnesses from among yourselves. Administer the witnessing to Allah Himself. By that is exhorted whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day. He who fears Allah, He will grant him a way out;

65:3 And He will provide for him from sources he could never conceive. He who puts his trust in Allah, Allah will be sufficient unto him. Allah shall attain His goal. Allah has meted out a measure for everything.

50 Women and the Koran

How long should you retain a woman or a girl who is not menstruating, such as a child-bride, or one who is pregnant?

65:4 As for those of your women who have despaired of menstruation, if you are in doubt, then their term shall be three months; and those too who have not menstruated yet. As to those women with child, their term shall be upon delivering their burden. He who fears Allah, Allah will grant him relief in his affair.

65:5 That is Allah's Command, which He has sent down to you; and he who fears Allah, He will acquit him of his sins and amplify his reward.

Revelations about marriage made women out to be very much like chattel to be bargained for and disposed of at the buyer's discretion, except in the case of a soon-to-be-divorced spouse who is pregnant with her soon to be ex-husband's child. In this instance, her status goes from chattel to employee for the duration of the suckling, if she is willing to accept the wages offered by her former husband for breastfeeding her newborn. If not, the former husband can choose another woman to suckle what is, in Allah's Sight, his child. According to the Koran, a baby is created perhaps exclusively from the man's contribution, with the woman relegated to a mere receptacle for his sperm to grow into a baby.

I do not know of any mother who would let another woman suckle her child because of a disagreement over wages; even after a divorce, which will undoubtedly leave her lacking many of life's bare necessities and dependent on the charity of others, mostly her family, unless she can quickly find another husband. For all practical purposes, Revelation 65:6 leaves a mother who cares about the child to whom she has just given birth with no negotiating position whatsoever, and it is not like a god of Allah's stature to pretend otherwise, unless I am missing something.

65:6 Put them up where you are lodged, according to your means, and do not badger them so as to make life difficult for them. If they are with child, support them until they deliver their burden; and if they suckle for you, then pay them their wages. Confer with each other honourably; but if you are at odds, let another woman suckle him.

From each according to his means but not to each according to her needs:

65:7 Let the man of means spent out of his means, and he whose provision has been constricted, spend out of what Allah gave him. Allah does not charge any soul except with what He gave it. Allah will cause relief to follow every hardship.

God is unclear, apart from that ransom deal, as to how a believing woman can get a divorce without the money to buy her freedom. Maybe that is why in countries that are governed by the Koran, this is a matter decided by religious courts operating under the Sharia or Islamic Law, the law derived from the Koran and the sayings and example of the Prophet Muhammad. A woman seeking a divorce will usually appeal to an all-male Sharia Tribunal, forced to state a compelling reason for a divorce to be granted, since Allah prefers reconciliation.

4:35 And If you fear a breach between the two (the husband and wife), then send forth for an arbiter from his relatives and another arbiter from her relatives. If they both desire reconciliation, Allah will bring them together. Allah is indeed all knowing, Well-Informed.

God favours reconciliation even if a spouse has been mistreated or fears being mistreated by her husband. What Allah favours, you ignore at your risk and peril. Revelation 4:128 is an effective way of eliminating battering or other forms of abuse as grounds for granting a wife's request for a divorce. Revelation 4:128 is also the logical consequence of Revelation 4:34, which grants a husband the unassailable right to beat his wives "... Hence righteous women are obedient, guarding the unseen which Allah has guarded. And those of them that you fear might rebel, admonish them and abandon them in their beds and beat them."

4:128 And if a woman fears maltreatment or aversion from her husband, they would not commit an offence if they are reconciled amicably; reconciliation is best. Souls are prone to

avarice, and if you are charitable and if you ward off evil, He is surely Well-Aware of what you do!¹⁴

To get her divorce a wife must usually agree to give up all or part of the dowry, the amount dependent on her reason for seeking a divorce, as compensation to her husband. Allah promises that if they do separate, He will ensure that both former husband and wife are provided for.

4:130 And if they separate, Allah will give each one plenty of His Abundance; and Allah is Munificent and Wise.

4:131 And to Allah belongs what is in the heavens and on earth. We have enjoined those who received the Book before you, as well as yourselves: "Fear Allah, and if you disbelieve, surely to Allah belongs what is the heavens and on earth. Allah is All-Sufficient, Praiseworthy."

A husband's wealth remains largely undiminished due to a divorce—and, in fact, may increase, not only because of the return of all or part of the dowry but also the ransom he may demand and obtain for giving a wife her freedom. As to what a recently divorced woman can expect from Allah's Abundance is far from clear.

Can a divorced couple get remarried? Yes, if the former wife has, in the interim, been married, consummated the marriage, and then been divorced by her latest husband. If her former husband was impotent, the Prophet ruled, she could not remarry; in effect, she was condemned to never knowing the intimacy of intercourse again.

Narrated Aisha:

The wife of Rifa'a Al-Qurazi came to the Prophet and said, "I was Rifa'a's wife, but he divorced me and it was a final irrevocable divorce. Then I married Abdur Rahman bin Az-Zubair but he is impotent."

¹⁴ **Narrated Aisha:**

Regarding the explanation of the following verse: "If a wife fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part" (4.128). A man may dislike his wife and intend to divorce her, so she says to him, "I give up my rights, so do not divorce me." The above verse was revealed concerning such a case.

Bukhari 43.630

The Prophet asked her "Do you want to remarry Rifa'a? You cannot unless you had a complete sexual relation with your present husband."

Bukhari 48.807

Yahya related to me from Malik that Rifa'a ibn Simwal divorced his wife, Tamima bint Wahb, in the time of the messenger of Allah three times. She then married 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn az-Zubayr and he turned from her and could not consummate the marriage and so he parted from her.

Rifa'a wanted to marry her again and it was mentioned to the Messenger of Allah, and he forbade him to marry her.

He said, 'She is not halal for you until she has tasted the sweetness of intercourse.'

Al-Muwatta 28 7.17b

The most recent husband should not interfere with his now ex-wife's plans to marry a former spouse.

2:230 If he divorces her, she shall not be lawful to him again until she has married another husband. If the latter divorces her, then it is no offence if they go back to each other, if they both think that they shall keep within Allah's Bounds. Those are Allah's Bounds which He makes clear to men who have knowledge.

2:232 If you divorce your women and they reach the end of their [waiting] period, do not prevent them from marrying their [former] husbands if they agree among themselves in a rightful manner. With this are admonished those who believe in Allah and the Last Day; it is better and more decent for you. Allah knows and you do not.

The Perfect Wife

Previously, we talked about how Allah made believing women and girls dependent on men for everything from the bare necessities to life's simple luxuries, thereby making them especially beholden to older, wealthy men and those in positions of power. We also presented a revelation, Verse 2:223, where Allah informs believing men that "Your women are tillage for you. So get to your tillage whenever you like."

The Koran does contain a number of verses that impose some mostly minor restrictions on the beneficiaries of this "carte-blanc" dispensation when it comes to the sexual demands they may make of the fair and vulnerable sex. Verse 2:222, for example, forbids a man from demanding sex from his wife when she is menstruating.

2:222 And they ask you about menstruation say: "It is an impurity." So keep away from women during their menstruation and do not approach them (do not have sexual relations with them) until they are clean. Once they get clean get to them as Allah commanded you. Allah loves the repentant and loves those who purify themselves.

This is not out of consideration for his spouse but because in Allah's eyes she is unclean, not only for sex but for prayer. There are a few other occasions that have nothing to do with a woman's reproductive cycle where God prohibits a man, for a precise period of time, from demanding sex from his lawfully wedded spouse. For instance, a husband must wait at least four months before being intimate with his wife if he previously swore that he would never have sex with her again but then changes his mind.

2:226 Those who swear not to approach their wives should wait for four months; then if they change their minds, Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

2:227 If they resolve on divorce, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

The time penalties for believing men and God's prohibition against sex with a menstruating spouse notwithstanding, a believing wife cannot refuse her husband's request for sex. If she resists, she not only risks a beating at the hands of her husband but also eternal damnation. Revisiting the relevant portion of Verse 4:34 quoted in its entirety in "Who Gets What."

4:34 ... Hence righteous women are obedient, guarding the unseen which Allah has guarded. And those of them that you fear might rebel, admonish them and abandon them in their beds and beat them. Should they obey you, do not seek a way of harming them; for Allah is Sublime and Great!

Why would God not only allow, but seemingly encourage a husband to beat his wife for a variety of reasons including, in the author's opinion, refusing access to her body? Could it be an unintended consequence of Muhammad discovering the joys of a varied sex life, especially with younger women and girls, when he was well past his prime?

A Man and His Wives

The Prophet had fourteen official wives. For twenty-three years God's Messenger was married to one woman, Khadijah. It was Khadijah's third marriage, Muhammad's first. He was twenty-five and she was forty when they tied the knot. We are told that he was faithful to her and loved her dearly. He would even have Adam, of the Adam and Eve, pay her the supreme compliment. From *La vie de Mahomet* by Virgil Gheorghiu, my translation:

One of the things that Allah gave to Muhammad and not to me, was a wife like Khadijah who helped him carry out God's will, while my own wife, Eve only encouraged me to disobey (God).

Adam

Khadijah gave birth to two, maybe three sons—depending on what you read—and four girls. All of the Prophet's sons would die in infancy. The youngest daughter, Fatima, was the only offspring of Muhammad to have descendants. She was married to Ali, the fourth caliph (successor to the Prophet).

Shi'ites (meaning partisan or a faction of Ali) maintain that the proper successor of the Prophet was Ali, followed by the son of Ali and Fatima, Hussain. Shi'ites consider the first three caliphs who succeeded the Prophet Muhammad, and those who followed Ali, usurpers.

The Sunni-Shi'ite division of Islam originated because of this succession dispute shortly after the death of the Prophet in 632 A.D. followed by the murder of Ali and his son Hussain. Every day Sunnis and Shi'ites faithful are reminded of their irreconcilable divergence in the simple declaration of faith that is part of their daily prayers, the Shahadah.

The Sunni version:

I declare there is no god except God, and I declare that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.

The Shi'ite version:

There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, Ali is the Friend of Allah. The Successor of the Messenger of Allah and his first Caliph.

After the death of his first wife Khadijah, Muhammad did not marry again until he was past fifty. His next wife was a widow. He then married Aisha, the daughter of his good friend and close collaborator Abu Bakr. Aisha was the first child born to parents who were believers. The progeny of believers are born Muslim. The founder of Islam was to marry the first child born a Muslim.

Traditional Muslim scholars and clerics maintain that a grateful Abu Bakr offered his nine-year-old daughter, with whom Muhammad had fallen in love, to the Prophet to cement his relationship with God's Messenger. Ayaan Hirsi Ali, in *The Caged Virgin*, writes that Aisha's father pleaded with Muhammad to wait until his daughter reached adulthood before marrying her.

He fell in love with Aisha, his best friend's nine-year-old daughter. Her father said: "Please wait until she has reached adulthood." But Muhammad would not wait... In other words, Muhammad teaches us that it is fine to take away your best friend's child. By our Western standards Muhammad is a perverse man.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali, The Caged Virgin, p. 81

A hadith recorded by Bukhari would appear to support Hirsi Ali's assertion that Aisha's father was not keen on marrying his daughter to a man of his generation:

Narrated Ursa:

The Prophet asked Abu Bakr for Aisha's hand in marriage. Abu Bakr said "But I am your brother."

The Prophet said, "You are my brother in Allah's religion and His Book, but she (Aisha) is lawful for me to marry."

Bukhari 62.18

Aisha's recollection of her wedding day suggests that the bride was not yet a teenager when she joined Muhammad on the matrimonial mat. The fact that Aisha's wedding was not celebrated—the meaning of, "Neither a camel nor a sheep was slaughtered on behalf of me" in the following account by Tabari—may be an indication that God's Messenger was not proud of or praised for what he was about to do and did not want it to become an example for others, which it did.

My mother came to me while I was being swung on a swing between two branches and got me down. My nurse took over and wiped my face with some water and started leading me. When I was at the door she stopped so I could catch my breath.

I was brought in while Muhammad was sitting on a bed in our house. My mother made me sit on his lap. The other men and women got up and left. The Prophet consummated his marriage with me in my house when I was nine years old.

Neither a camel nor a sheep was slaughtered on behalf of me.

Tabari IX:131

The late Ayatollah Khomeini and Islamic law would also appear to support Hirsi Ali's claim of Aisha's young age when she lost her virginity to God's Messenger. Sharia Law is based on the Koran and the Prophet's *Sunnah* (the sayings or hadiths and example of the Prophet Muhammad, including the silent approval of actions done in his presence). For the believer, the Koran is the literal word of God; the divine instructions it contains cannot be questioned and must be rigorously adhered to. The same can be said for the Prophet's *Sunnah*, as long as it does not contradict the Koran.

Muhammad, to believers, is the personification of the perfect human being. Like his patron, he *cannot be faulted for anything he has said or done*. When the Ayatollah Khomeini lowered the age at which a girl

could be legally married to nine years old¹⁵, he may simply have been making Iranian law conform to the Prophet's example. In Islam, there is no higher law than the Koran and the Prophet's Sunnah, so no Muslim *can be faulted* for following the law laid down by Allah and His Messenger.

While the claim that Muhammad had sexual intercourse with a nine-year-old girl can never be conclusively proven, it is reasonable to assume that Aisha moved into the Prophet's house when the engagement was announced or after her wedding, based on a previously quoted observation by Khomeini that "it was better in the eyes of God if a girl started menstruating in the home of her husband instead of that of her father."

If I dwell at some length on the marriage of the young Aisha to a middle-aged man, it is because this child, this girl was arguably the most significant influence on God and His Messenger's view of women, a view to which we will return later. As discussed, Muhammad's conduct as the embodiment of human perfection was beyond reproach. His is a reputation so highly valued that, as demonstrated during the "cartoon protest," one questions the basis of that reputation at their own risk and peril. Muslims, especially men, are expected to closely follow the Prophet's example in how they conduct themselves in private and in public. In the opinion of Ayaan Hirsi Ali, by Western standards, the believers are following the example of a "perverse man."

After Aisha, Muhammad would marry many, many times over. The official number is fourteen wives not counting slave-girls¹⁶ and

¹⁵ In May 2006, the Iranian Parliament voted to make it compulsory for girls under the age of 15 and boys under 18 to have court approval to get married. This vote was quashed by the Guardian Council, which is responsible for ensuring that any laws passed by Parliament are compatible with Islam. The clerics on the Council ruled that such a move would break Islamic law, which sets the minimum marriage age at 9 for girls and 14 for boys.

¹⁶ A hadith on how believers decided if the Prophet had taken a wife or a slave:

Narrated Anas:

The Prophet stayed for three days between Khaibar and Medina, and there he consummated his marriage to Safiyya bint Huyai.

I invited the Muslims to the wedding banquet in which neither meat nor bread was offered.

He ordered for leather dining-sheets to be spread, and dates, dried yoghurt and butter were laid on it, and that was the Prophet's wedding banquet.

The Muslims wondered, "Is she (Saffiyya) considered as his wife or his slave girl?"

concubines. The beautiful twenty-year-old widow Hafsah would become wife number four. God's Messenger was fifty-four at the time. All of the Prophet's young wives were reputed to be women of exceptional beauty. Over the next ten years he would marry ten more times. His last wife was, depending again on who you read, between thirty and thirty-nine years his junior; his second-to-last wife was forty-seven years younger. This may not be that surprising. After Aisha, Muhammad, in a hadith recorded by Bukhari, did express a preference for younger women – girls, actually.

Narrated Jabir bin Abdullah:

While we were returning from a Ghazwa (Holy Battle) with the Prophet, I started driving my camel fast, as it was a lazy camel. A rider came behind me and pricked my camel with a spear he had with him, and then my camel started running as fast as the best camel you may see.

Behold! The rider was the Prophet himself.

He said, "What makes you in such a hurry?"

I replied, "I am newly married."

He said, "Did you marry a virgin or a matron?"

I replied, "A matron."

He said, "Why didn't you marry a young girl so that you may play with her and she with you?"

When we were about to enter (Medina), the Prophet said, "Wait so that you may enter (Medina) at night so that the lady of unkempt hair may comb her hair and the one whose husband has been absent may shave her pubic region.

Bukhari 62.16

Muhammad also took a number of concubines from among his slave-girls, including the beautiful Rayhanah, the widow of the Beni

Then they said, "If he orders her to veil herself, she will be one of the mothers of the Believers; but if he does not order her to veil herself, she will be a slave girl.

So when the Prophet proceeded from there, he spared her a space behind him (on his she-camel) and put a screening veil between her and the people.

Bukhari 62.22

Qurayzah Jewish clan of Medina whose men and teenaged boys were beheaded for strategic reasons.

A middle-aged man, even in the best of emotional and physical condition, would have difficulties controlling this ménage of post- and pre-pubescent girls and young women in the prime of their sexual lives. The Messenger of God could not depend upon soldiers or others to keep his collection of females from wandering or being tempted by young men of their generation. That would have been embarrassing, to say the least. He had to solve his female management difficulties some other way. The solution was obvious. He was God's Messenger after all, and he not only listened to God, God listened to him.

In Revelation 4:3, Allah had set a limit of four wives per husband. Muhammad wanted to exceed this God ordained matrimonial limit. Not a problem. Allah provided a revelation making the whole thing legal... *for His Messenger and His Messenger only*. Here is the verse that granted God's Messenger an unlimited number of wives and concubines.

33:50 O Prophet, we have made lawful, for you, your wives, whose dowry you have paid, what your right hand owns (slave-girls) out of the spoils of war that Allah gave you, the daughters of your paternal uncles, the daughters of your paternal aunts, the daughters of your maternal uncles, the daughters of your maternal aunts who emigrated with you, and any believing woman who gives herself freely to the Prophet, if the Prophet desires to marry her, granted exclusively to you, but not the believers. We know what We have prescribed for them regarding their wives and what their right hands own, so that you may not be at fault. Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful.

33:51 You may defer any of them you wish, and take in any of them that you wish or any that you may have cut off. So you are not liable to reproach, For thus it is more likely that they will be delighted and will not grieve, but be content with what you have given each one of them. Allah knows what is within your hearts; and Allah is All-Knowing, Clement¹⁷.

¹⁷ Perhaps not surprisingly, of the few people for whom the Prophet could ask forgiveness were the women who paid him homage.

60:12 O Prophet, if believing women come to you to pay you homage, pledging not to associate anything with Allah, steal, commit adultery, kill their children,

In a Bukhari hadith, Aisha offers a rather wry comment about Allah hastily fulfilling her husband's wishes when it came to sex after this new revelation was received.

Narrated Aisha:

I used to look down upon those ladies who had given themselves to Allah's Apostle and I used to say, "Can a lady give herself (to a man)?"

But when Allah revealed: "You (O Muhammad) can postpone (the turn of) whom you will of them (your wives), and you may receive any of them whom you will; and there is no blame on you if you invite one whose turn you have set aside (temporarily)," (33.51) I said (to the Prophet), "I feel that your Lord hastens in fulfilling your wishes and desires."

Bukhari 60.675

God, it is clear, was extremely concerned that His Messenger be sexually fulfilled, so it should come as no surprise when He raised the matrimonial limit exclusively for His Messenger. This was perhaps too much of an indulgence that inevitably led to a wife management problem, which would compel Allah, on numerous occasions, to intervene and help His Messenger with his wives. The only problem: God's solutions for His Messenger became every Muslim man's solution when it comes to "managing" their wives.

It is perhaps unfortunate that Muhammad did not heed Allah's warning to take only as many wives as you can handle, or that Allah did not compel him to stay within the prescribed limit like everybody else. After all, God's Messenger, like every believing man, could still have as many slave-girls and concubines as he could handle. If Allah had tempered His Messenger's lust for young women and girls, Muslim women would probably be much better off today.

When it came to sex there would be one law for the believers and another for God's Messenger. Is it Allah or His Messenger who realises that He may have gone too far? Is the following verse meant to reassure believers that no further exceptions will be granted to Muhammad when it comes to the females with whom he can have intimate relations?

come up with a lie they invent between their hands and feet (allege that an illegitimate child is their husband's) or disobey you in any honourable matter, then accept their homage and ask Allah's Forgiveness for them. Allah indeed is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.

33:52 Thereafter, other women are not lawful to you, nor is substituting other wives for them, even if you admire their beauty, except for what your right hand owns. Allah is Watchful over everything.

Why would God, in a book meant to be a moral guide for mankind for centuries to come, spend so much time on the sex life of just one man? If that sex life was to be held up as an example to the faithful then perhaps it would have its place in such a book, but as an exception to Allah's rules for the ordinary believer...?

In the Prophet's House

In Verse 24:27, Allah warns believers not to "enter houses other than your own before you ask leave and greet their occupants." There are additional restrictions as to when you could enter the Prophet's houses, how to behave once inside, and what types of interaction are permitted, if any, with his wives.

33:53 O believers, do not enter the houses of the Prophet, unless you are invited to a meal, without awaiting the hour; but if you are invited, then enter; but when you have eaten, disperse, without lingering for idle talk. That is vexing to the Prophet who might be wary of you, but Allah is not wary of the truth. If you ask them (the wives of the Prophet) for an object, ask them from behind a curtain. That is purer for your hearts and theirs. You should never hurt the Messenger of Allah, nor take his wives in marriage after him. That is truly abominable in the sight of Allah.

33:54 Whether you reveal a thing or conceal, Allah has knowledge of everything.

Allah ends this curious revelation, Verse 33:53, with an admonishment for the men, warning them to keep their distance from His Messenger's wives if they were to divorce (they never did) or he left this world on route to a better one. Why would Allah, in a book meant to guide humanity till the end of time, include a prohibition that disappeared with the passing of the Prophet's last wife? It only served to make His Messenger out to be a jealously obsessive man, one who would seek to control the lives of his widows from beyond the grave¹⁸.

¹⁸ Making matters worse, the Prophet's widows were deprived of most of their inheritance by his immediate successor Abu Bakr, who claimed Muhammad had told him that after his death, if they were in need, they should "accept alms."

For Muslim women, sex with a man other than their husband is flirting with a gruesome death and risking an eternity burning in the depths of Allah's Hell. The interdiction against taking "his wives in marriage after him" condemned the Prophet's young wives to never enjoying intimacy again after his passing.

A Taste of Honey

God's revelations to His Messenger when it came to controlling his wives, slave-girls and concubines give us a view into the mind of the Almighty when it comes to women. Here is one case that most would consider trivial in which the Almighty feels compelled to intervene.

Muhammad tells one of his wives, in secrecy, that he has eaten some honey. This wife tells another of his wives. Allah, who sees and hears all, decides to tell His Messenger part of what has happened. We are not told about the part Allah leaves out, although this is what seems to hold the key to the story. It is an infantile story that could easily have been dismissed if God had not chosen this opportunity to express his views on what constitutes the perfect wife. First, Allah informs His Messenger of part of the conversation He has overheard.

66:3 And when the Prophet confided to one of his wives a certain matter (his eating of honey); and she divulged it, and Allah disclosed it to him too, He made known part of it, but withheld the other part. Then, when he told her about it, she said: "Who told you this?" He said: "The All-Knowing, All-Informed told me."

God suspects a conspiracy against His Messenger. To put an end to the gossip, He informs the two women of the formidable force allied against them: God himself, His most honourable believers, and all the angels, including the mighty Gabriel support the Prophet. This has to be about more than divulgence among wives that their husband-in-common has eaten some honey, for Allah to put His own prestige on the line to silence the two women.

66:4 If you two (the two wives of the Prophet) repent onto Allah, then your hearts will have certainly inclined; but if you band together against him, then Allah is his Master. Gabriel, the righteous among the believers and the angels thereupon are his supporters, too.

Then back to the really big threat—especially in the Prophet’s time—*divorce*. God would grant His Messenger a divorce so that He may receive in exchange “the perfect wife,” which He describes:

66:5 Perhaps, his Lord will, if he divorces you, give him in exchange wives better than you, submissive, believing, obedient, penitent, devout, fasting, either previously married or virgins.

Do you measure up? Allah follows his instructions about how wives should behave, backed up with the usual threat about burning to a crisp those who don’t scrupulously follow His instructions.

66:6 O believers, guard yourselves and your families against a Fire whose fuel is people and stones; its overseers are harsh, terrible angels who do not disobey what Allah commands, but will do what they are commanded.

A Child Bride’s Indiscretion

After the honey calamity came the incident with Muhammad’s child bride. The lovely Aisha had wandered into the desert and gotten lost, only to be rescued by a young man who brought her back to Medina...*the next day*. Needless to say, this started people talking. Talk, if revelations pertaining to the incident are to be believed, that really distressed the Messenger. Again, God intervened, not only to vouch for Aisha’s faithfulness, but also to make sure that none of the Prophet’s wives would ever put His Messenger in an embarrassing situation again, in a position where he would be the object of “chatter,” as Allah calls it.

It is worth presenting this series of verses so the reader can gain a real appreciation of the mindset of Allah and His Messenger in relation to the beautiful, young Aisha’s alleged indiscretion under an Arabian moon more than a thousand years ago.

24:10 And, but for Allah’s Bounty towards you and His Mercy and that Allah is a remitter of sins and is All-Wise;

24:11 Those who spread the slander (against Aisha, wife of the Prophet, according to the commentators) are a band of you. Do not reckon it an evil for you; rather it is a good thing for you. Everyone of them will be credited with the sin he has earned, and he who bore the brunt of it shall have a terrible punishment.

24:12 Would that the believers, men and women, when you heard it (the slander) had thought well of themselves saying: "This is manifest slander!"

24:13 And would that they had brought forth four witnesses [to vouch for it]! But since they did not bring any witnesses, those are, in Allah's sight, the real liars.

24:14 And but for Allah's Bounty to you and His Mercy, in this world and the next, you would have been visited, due to your chatter, by a terrible punishment.

While God makes a big deal of the whole situation with Aisha, He readily admits that His Messenger's friends and neighbours thought the situation with Aisha was no big deal and thought nothing of discussing it openly.

24:15 Since you received it on your tongues and you uttered with your mouths what you had no knowledge of, deeming it a simple matter; whereas in Allah's Sight it was very grave.

But they would be wrong; this was not a trivial matter.

24:16 And would that, upon hearing it, you were to say: "It is not for us to speak about this. Glory be to You; this is truly a great calumny."

And let us never talk about this again.

24:17 Allah admonishes you never to return to the like of this, if you are real believers.

24:18 And Allah expounds clearly for you the Signs. Allah is all Knowing, Wise.

Aisha's alleged sexual indiscretion appears to be the source of God's condemnation of what he sees as the spread of indecency among the believers, what Muslim clerics today would call *Western libertinism*. His condemnation is followed by the usual promise of a very painful punishment in the next world and, a less frequent occurrence, the added promise of a very painful punishment in this life.

24:19 Indeed, those who love to see indecency spread among the believers will have in this world and the next a very painful punishment. Allah knows, but you do not know.

24:20 And but for Allah's Bounty to you and His Mercy and that Allah is truly Clement and Merciful;

24:21 O believers, do not follow in the footsteps of Satan; for he who follows in the footsteps of Satan, simply bids to indecency and disrepute. But for Allah's Bounty to you and His Mercy, no one of you would have ever been pure; but Allah purifies whomever He pleases. Allah is All-Hearing, All Knowing.

A reminder from Allah about forgiveness: it's all about quid pro quo.

24:22 Let not the bounteous and wealthy among you swear off giving freely to kinsmen, the destitute and the Emigrants in the Path of Allah. Let them pardon and forgive. Do you not wish that Allah should forgive you? Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful.

It was the tradition of the Arabs of the Peninsula, during the time of the Prophet, that if there was any doubt about a wife's faithfulness, she was divorced on the spot and then stoned to death. In Virgil Gheorghiu's biography of the Prophet, *La Vie de Mahomet*, Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet, suggests as much in his remark to Muhammad that "Allah has not placed any limits on the choices of a wife. They are plentiful." (Author's translation of « Allah n'a point limité le choix de femmes. Elles sont nombreuses.¹⁹)

It is obvious that the Prophet cherished his child-bride and did not wish to part with her. This may explain God's attack on those who would "slander married women."

24:23 Surely those who slander married women, who are heedless and believing, are accursed in this world and the next, and they shall have a terrible punishment.

And who will be your accusers? On Judgement Day, your limbs, the organs by which you sinned, will speak and tell everyone how you used them to sin against Allah and in this particular instance, His Messenger.

24:24 On the Day when their tongues, their hands and their feet shall bear witness against them, regarding what they used to do.

24:25 On that Day Allah will pay them their just dues and they will know that Allah is the Manifest Truth.

¹⁹ Aisha would not forgive Ali. Gheorghiu maintains that this remark was central to the great schism in Islam that saw the rise of Shia Islam as a competing sect to the Sunnis.

In this verse, somewhat off-topic, God makes his views known on how men and women should be paired based on whether they've been bad or good.

24:26 Foul women for foul men, and foul men for foul women; and good women for good men, and good men for good women. Those are acquitted of the burden of what they say; they will have forgiveness and a generous provision.

In an extraordinary and revealing series of verses, Allah also has a few instructions for men should they perchance come into contact with an unsupervised woman to whom they are not related or married.

24:27 O believers, do not enter houses other than your own before you ask leave and greet their occupants. This is better for you, that perchance you may remember well.

24:28 If you find no one in them, do not enter until you are given permission; and if it is said to you: "Go back", then go back. That is purer for you, and Allah knows well what you do.

24:29 It is no offence for you to enter uninhabited houses in which you have some means of enjoyment. Allah knows what you reveal and what you conceal.

And if they do come into contact with a woman or girl to whom they are not married or related, they must not look at her directly and make sure their "private parts" are covered.

24:30 Tell the believers to cast down their eyes and guard their private parts. This is purer for them. Allah is conversant with what they do.

The alleged indiscretion by Aisha is also, in my estimation, responsible for God placing severe restrictions on believing women's freedom of movement; for instance, telling them what they could wear and how they must wear it, leaving instructions on the company a woman could keep, and justifying why they should cover up "their private parts" and not stamp their feet.

24:31 And tell the believing women to cast down their eyes and guard their private parts and not show their finery, except the outward part of it. And let them drape their bosoms with their veils and not show their finery, except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their

sons, the sons of their husbands, their brothers, the sons of their brothers, the sons of their sisters, their women, their maid-servants, the men-followers who have no sexual desire, or infants who have no knowledge of women's sexual parts yet. Let them, also, not stamp their feet, so that what they have concealed of their finery might be known. Repent to Allah, all of you, O believers, that perchance you may prosper.

God also has a few instructions that apply specifically to Muhammad's wives. In a book for the ages this seems out of place, but the Prophet's wives are in a class by themselves. As befitting their exalted status, if they make a fool of His Messenger again, they will suffer double the punishment of an ordinary wife—Revelation 33:30—and He will see to this personally.

33:28 O Prophet, say to your wives: "If you desire the present life and its finery, so come along that I might provide for you and set you free kindly.

33:29 "But if you desire Allah, His Messenger and the life to come, surely Allah has prepared for the beneficent among you a great wage."

33:30 O wives of the Prophet, whomever of you commits a flagrant foul act, her punishment will be doubled; and that for Allah is an easy matter.

If the fear of double the punishment for putting His Messenger in an embarrassing situation is not enough, God is not beneath offering a monetary incentive.

33:31 Whoever of you obeys Allah and His Messenger and does the righteous deed, We shall pay her wage twice over, and we have prepared for her a generous provision.

Being the wife of God's Messenger may not have been all that fulfilling for some of the women and girls confined to the Prophet's household for God to admonish them to "not be abject in speech," e.g., express hopelessness, when talking about their lives with the greatest of them all. They may have even expressed a wish that their husband give them their freedom, which would explain why Allah revealed that "he in whose heart is a sickness may covet you."

Hope springs eternal. The "sickness" alluded to by God may simply have been young men expressing the desire that, because a wife

of the Prophet expressed a wish to be free of her husband, they might one day get a share of Muhammad's bounty of beautiful women and girls.

33:32 O wives of the Prophet, you are not like any other women. If you are God-fearing, do not be abject in speech, so that he in whose heart is a sickness may covet you, but speak in an honourable way.

Some may have done what young women do when they are desperate for the attention that a busy older man may not have been able to provide, and that is, look for validation of their attractiveness in a young man's eyes. This would explain God's demand that they stay inside and out of sight so as not to expose their "finery," and keep busy with prayers and giving "the alms." As to how they could do so without being allowed to leave the house was problematic. In any event, the extreme restrictions Allah imposed on His Messenger's wives, effectively making them invisible to the outside world, was not to cause them hardship—which it obviously did—but to purify them 'fully'.

33:33 Stay in your homes and do not display your finery as the pagans of old did: perform the prayer, give the alms and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah only wishes to turn away abomination from you and purify you fully. O People of the House.

33:34 And remember what is recited in your homes of Allah's Signs and of wisdom. Indeed, Allah is Subtle, Well-Informed.

33:35 Men and women who have submitted, believed, obeyed, are truthful, steadfast, reverend, giving in charity, fasting, guarding their private parts and remembering Allah often, Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward.

Because of the beautiful young Aisha's alleged sexual indiscretion and God's concern over His Messenger being ridiculed for not being able to control his young brood, women everywhere in the conservative Muslim world are forced into seclusion to this day. Allah admonished His Messenger's wives to stay at home, and conservative Muslim men have been enjoining their wives and daughters to do the same ever since.

70 Women and the Koran

God relaxed his severe dress code for women past child-bearing age who had no chance of marriage.

24:60 Those women who are past child-bearing and have no hope of marriage are not at fault if they take off their outer garments, not exhibiting any finery; but to refrain is better for them. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

He also made an exception allowing women to display their "finery" during hostilities.

33:59 O Prophet, tell your wives and daughters and the wives of the believers, to draw their outer garments closer. That is more conducive to them being known and not being injured. Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful.

Muhammad's wives, according to Fakhry, are not at fault if they appear unveiled to members of their close family and female slaves. If you are female and Muslim and believe this verse only applied to the wives of the Prophet, you will not feel compelled to cover your face in public, otherwise you have no choice if you want to avoid God finding fault with you.

33:55 They (the wives of the Prophet, if they appear unveiled) are not at fault regarding their fathers, their sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons' or their wives and what their right hands possess; so fear Allah. Surely, Allah is Witness of everything.

Stoning

Those who believe in Allah and only Allah and repentant murderers, but perhaps not adulterers, Revelation 25:68, will be given a shot at Paradise.

25:68 And those who do not call upon any other god than Allah, and do not kill the soul which Allah forbade, except justly; and they do not commit adultery. He who does that shall meet with retribution.

25:69 Punishment shall be doubled for him on the Day of Resurrection (Judgement Day) and he will dwell forever in it down-trodden;

25:70 Except for him who repents, believes and does the righteous deed. Those Allah will change their evil deeds into good deeds. Allah is ever All-Forgiving, Merciful.

Murder and adultery in the same revelation should give you an idea of how seriously Allah takes infidelity. Still, there are no revelations about an adulteress being put to death in the entire *official* Koran. This, however, does not mean that adulteresses, and sometimes adulterers, get off lightly. In Revelation 4:15, God recommends the harsh punishment of confining the adulteress to her home until she dies.

4:15 As for those of your women who commit adultery, call four witnesses from your own against them; and if they testify then detain them in the houses till death overtakes them or Allah opens another way for them.

If two men were found guilty of adultery, the punishment was typically less severe with a slow, lingering death unlikely.

4:16 If two [men] of you commit it, punish them both. If they repent and mend their ways, then leave them alone. Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Merciful.

Why two men? Fakhry does not provide any explanation for his additional text. Men were to be forgiven their adulterous

transgressions but not women. Perhaps realising the unfairness of it all, God changed his mind. Verse 4:15 was abrogated (annulled) and replaced by another where the woman's punishment was greatly reduced and men were now also susceptible to being found guilty of adultery and suffering the same reduced punishment as the woman in an adulteress affair.

**In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful**

24:1 A Surah that We have sent down and stipulated, and We have sent down in it clear revelations, that perchance you might remember.

24:2 The adulteress and the adulterer, whip each one of them a hundred lashes; and let no pity move you in Allah's religion, regarding them; if you believe in Allah and the Hereafter. And let a group of believers witness their punishment.

Adulterers can only marry each other or an unbeliever.

24:3 The adulterer shall marry none but an adulteress or an idolatress; and the adulteress none shall marry her but an adulterer or idolater. That has been forbidden the believers.

The punishment for uncorroborated accusation of sexual impropriety against an unmarried woman was only slightly less painful than being found guilty of adultery.

24:4 Those who accuse chaste women, then cannot bring four witnesses, whip them eighty lashes, and do not ever accept their testimony. For those are the wicked sinners.

24:5 Except for those who repent afterwards and mend their ways. For Allah is surely All-Forgiving, Merciful.

A wife accused of adultery by her husband could avoid the public whipping altogether by calling her husband a liar.

24:6 And those who accuse their wives and have no witnesses except themselves, the testimony of one of them shall be to swear by Allah four times that he is truthful.

24:7 The fifth time shall be Allah's Curse on him if he is a liar.

24:8 And her swearing four times by Allah that he is a liar will ward off punishment from her.

24:9 And the fifth time will be that Allah's Wrath be upon her, if he (her husband) is truthful.

A Lost Verse Remembered

If God says a public whipping is the punishment for adultery and a wife can avoid even the punishment by calling her husband a liar, why are women accused of adultery still susceptible to being stoned to death in countries where the Koran is law? Why do some of these countries favour the execution of alleged adulteresses and girls, such as sixteen-year-old Atefah Sahaaleh who was hanged in a public square in the Iranian city of Neka in 2004 for having premarital sex? Is it because Muhammad was in favour of stoning women for adultery?

Malik related to me from Yaqub ibn Zayd ibn Talha from his father Zayd ibn Talha that Abdullah ibn Abi Mulayka informed him that a woman came to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and informed him that she had committed adultery and was pregnant.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said to her, "Go away until you give birth."

When she had given birth, she came to him. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said to her, "Go away until you have suckled and weaned the baby."

When she had weaned the baby, she came to him.

He said, "Go and entrust the baby to someone."

She entrusted the baby to someone and then came to him.

He gave the order and she was stoned.

Malik's Muwatta 41.1.5

Muhammad was quick to sentence a woman to be stoned, but not a man.

Narrated Zaid bin Khalid and Abu Huraira:

The Prophet said, "O Unais! Go to the wife of this (man) and if she confesses (that she has committed illegal sexual intercourse), then stone her to death."

Bukhari 38.508

In the another account of the stoning of a man from Aslam, Muhammad conducts an extensive, explicit interrogation in which he tries to save the man from himself. The chagrin God's Messenger experiences in sentencing a man to be stoned to death is evident in his command that those who said he was "stoned like a dog" must eat from the decaying corpse of an ass.

Narrated AbuHurayrah:

A man of the tribe of Aslam came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and testified four times against himself that he had had illicit intercourse with a woman, while all the time the Prophet (peace be upon him) was turning away from him. Then when he confessed a fifth time, he turned round and asked: Did you have intercourse with her?

He replied: Yes.

He asked: Have you done it so that your sexual organ penetrated hers?

He replied: Yes.

He asked: Have you done it like a collyrium stick when enclosed in its case and a rope in a well?

He replied: Yes.

He asked: Do you know what fornication is?

He replied: Yes. I have done with her unlawfully what a man may lawfully do with his wife.

He then asked: What do you want from what you have said?

He said: I want you to purify me.

So he gave orders regarding him and he was stoned to death. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) heard one of his companions saying to another: Look at this man whose fault was concealed by Allah but who would not leave the matter alone, so that he was stoned like a dog.

He said nothing to them but walked on for a time till he came to the corpse of an ass with its legs in the air. He asked: Where are so and so?

They said: Here we are, Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him)!

He said: Go down and eat some of this ass's corpse.

They replied: Apostle of Allah! Who can eat any of this?

He said: The dishonour you have just shown to your brother is more serious than eating some of it. By Him in Whose hand my soul is, he is now among the rivers of Paradise and plunging into them.

Abu Dawud 38.4414

The act of stoning does not purify a woman who has committed adultery, but it seems to have that effect on a man found guilty of the same offence. She is going to Hell, he is going to Paradise.

Syed Shahabuddin writing in the *Milli Gazette*, Indian Muslim's leading English newspaper, reminds us that that flogging is the punishment for adultery, not stoning, and the Koran is the final authority; even the Prophet could not substitute his own opinion. So why does Islamic Law, in some jurisdictions, give precedence to the example of God's Messenger instead of the Koran?

According to Shahabuddin, this is because "some [Islamic] scholars support 'Rajm' (stoning) by attributing a statement to the second Caliph Umar (second successor to the Prophet Muhammad) that a revelation on the subject had been received but had been lost."

Narrated Ibn Abbas:

Umar said, "I am afraid that after a long time has passed, people may say, "We do not find the Verses of the Rajam (stoning to death) in the Holy Book," and consequently they may go astray by leaving an obligation that Allah has revealed. Lo! I confirm that the penalty of Rajam be inflicted on him who commits illegal sexual intercourse, if he is already married and the crime is proved by witnesses or pregnancy or confession."

Sufyan added, "I have memorized this narration in this way."

Umar added, "Surely Allah's Apostle carried out the penalty of Rajam, and so did we after him."

Bukhari 82.816

In a hadith collected by the famous Sunni scholar Ibn Hanbal, the verse was eaten by a goat.

[Narrated 'Aisha] "The verse of the stoning and of suckling an adult ten times were revealed, and they were (written) on a paper and kept under my bed. When the messenger of Allah expired and we were preoccupied with his death, a goat entered and ate away the paper."²⁰

So there you have it. When you hear of a woman being stoned or murdered for committing adultery or having pre-marital relations in conservative Muslim jurisdictions such as Iran, Nigeria or Saudi Arabia, the justification just might be this lost verse of the Koran, if not the example of Muhammad²¹. Shahabuddin, always helpful, also explains why it is always women who get stoned even though the punishment is supposed to apply equally to both sexes.

Apart from the brutality of the 'Rajm' (stoning), repugnant to conscience, here is an element of gender injustice in the operation of the traditional law which allows the male partner to get off scot-free, even if he has coerced and raped the female.

If the woman lodges a complaint, her complaint is taken as a testimony against herself and, therefore, amounts to admission and requires no further evidence while it is necessary to get 4 witnesses against the man.

Also the woman may bear a child, as in Amina's case (Amina Lawal was sentenced to death by stoning by a Nigerian Islamic Sharia Court. Amina had an 8-month-old daughter), which is admitted as evidence of zena (guilt) against the woman. Man suffers from no such disability.

The Stoning Ritual

Amina would have been placed in a cloth sack, with her hands tied behind her back, and buried in the ground up to her shoulders. She would not be buried up to her neck, allegedly to allow her to wriggle

²⁰ Ali, during the discussions concerning Aisha's suspected adulterous one-night stand told his father-in-law that "Allah has not placed any limits on the choices of a wife. They are plentiful." This has led to speculation that Aisha deliberately got rid of the revelation pertaining to stoning a wife for adultery to avoid being stoned should Ali become caliph and do what her husband would not do while he was alive.

²¹ Narrated Ash-Sha'bi, from Ali when the latter stoned a lady to death on a Friday:

Ali said, "I have stoned her according to the tradition of Al-lah's Apostle."

Bukhari 82.803

free and prove her innocence before a missile hits its mark, and not to make the event more sporting for the men hurling stones at her head while chanting "Allah hu Akbar" (God is great).

Instructions as to how stones should be thrown:

Narrated Abdullah bin Mughaffal Al-Muzani:

The Prophet forbade the throwing of stones (with the thumb and the index or middle finger), and said "It neither hunts a game nor kills (or hurts) an enemy, but it gouges out an eye or breaks a tooth."

Bukhari 73.239

The Satanic Verses

Pre-Islamic Arabs worshipped three goddesses: al-Lat, al-Uzza, and Manat, whom they believed to be the daughters of the moon god "al-Ilah" (Allah). Pre-Islamic Arabs had no problems with a spiritual existence that included gods and goddesses. Muhammad's tribe, the Quraysh, used to chant, as they circumambulated the Ka'ba:

Al-Lat, and al-Uzza and Manat, the third, the other; indeed these are exalted gharaniq (cranes); let us hope for their intercession.

F. E. Peters, The Hajj, p 3-41

The Meccans, when the Prophet showed up with his army, gave up without a fight after he assured them that God, in two revelations, had informed him that He had no objections to the Meccans continuing to worship al-Lat, al-Uzza, and Manat after they became Muslims. These revelations are what are known as the *Satanic Verses*.

These are the exalted cranes (al-Lat, al-Uzza, and Manat)

Whose intercession [with Allah] is to be hoped for.

The next day, after he had complete control of their city, the Prophet told the Meccans that it was all the devil's doing; that Satan had intruded on his conversations with God the previous night, and in the morning Allah had set him straight; al-Lat, al-Uzza, and Manat were history and the verses Muhammad had received the previous night were stricken from the Koran.

22:52 We have not sent a Messenger or Prophet before you but when he recited the Devil would intrude into his recitation. Yet Allah annuls what the Devil had cast. Then Allah establishes His Revelations. Allah is All-Knowing and Wise.

How could the Devil do that? Because God let him, for His usual, somewhat convoluted reasons!

22:53: So as to make what Satan casts a temptation to those in whose hearts there is a sickness, and to those whose hearts are hard. The wrongdoers are indeed in profound discord!

22:54 And so that those who have been given the knowledge might understand that it is the truth from your Lord and so believe in it. Then their hearts will submit to it. Allah will certainly guide the believers to a straight path.

Even if it was His doing, i.e., God allowed the devil to intrude on His conversations, Allah is incensed that anyone would associate Him with females whether they be goddesses, daughters, even angels.

53:19 Have you, then, seen al-Lat and al-'Uzza?

53:20 And Manat, the third one, the other?

53:21 Do you have the male and He has the female?

53:22 That indeed is an unjust division.

53:23 These are mere names you (*Meccan unbelievers*) and your fathers have named, for which Allah did not send down any authority. They only follow conjecture and what the souls desire; yet Guidance (*the Qur'an*) has come to them from their Lord.

53:24 Or will man have whatever he wishes?

16:57 And they ascribe to Allah daughters [glory be to Him!], but to themselves what they desire (sons).

16:58 And if the birth of a daughter is announced to any of them, his face turns black, and he is enraged.

16:59 He hides from the people on account of the evil news broken to him; should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Evil is what they judge!

16:60 As for those who do not believe in the Hereafter, theirs is the evil exemplar; but Allah's is the sublime exemplar. He is the Almighty, the Wise.

16:61 Were Allah to take mankind to task for their wrongdoing, He would not leave upon it (the earth) a single creature; but He reprieves them until an appointed term.

Then, when their term comes, they will not delay nor advance it a single hour.

16:62 And they ascribe to Allah what they themselves dislike (daughters). Their tongues utter the lie that theirs will be the best reward. There is no doubt that the Fire awaits them, and that they will be left [there].

Verse 17:40, which follows, is doubly confusing since angels *have no gender*, although they do take the male form, minus any genitalia, to facilitate communications with humans.

17:40 Has your Lord, then, favoured you with sons and taken to Himself females from among the angels? Surely, you are uttering a monstrous thing.

If you do not believe in the Hereafter you are an unbeliever; only an unbeliever would give angels female names, according to Revelation 53:27, knowing God's low opinion of the fair sex and His high regard for His angels.

53:25 For to Allah belongs the last and the first life.

53:26 How many an angel is there in heavens whose intercession avails nothing, except after Allah gives leave to whoever He wishes and is well-pleased with.

53:27 Those who do not believe in the Hereafter will surely give the angels the names of females.

53:28 Yet, they have no knowledge thereof. They only follow conjecture, but conjecture avails nothing regarding truth.

53:29 So turn away from him who has given up Our Reminder (*the Qur'an*) and only desire the present life.

53:30 That is their attainment in knowledge. Your Lord indeed knows better than those who have strayed from His Path, and He knows better those who are well-guided.

For one brief, shining moment, because of the alleged intervention by Satan, God had female partners. Just imagine what Islam would have been like if Allah had acknowledged needing the company of females, whether they be goddesses or mortals. With females for company would Allah have been such a vengeful god, so easily irritated, so quick to kill and terrorize? I don't think so.

Had God acknowledged that daughters were just as valuable as sons, instead of being insulted that some would attribute themselves sons and to Him females, would women in countries where the Koran is the law be so harshly treated? Probably not. The denial of the existence of al-Lat, al-Uzza, and Manat marked the end of the Arab civilization of which historian Robert Montagne wrote (Author's translation), "I am not aware in the entire history of civilisation of a more gracious, more loving, more vibrant society than that of the Arabs before Islam."

An Androcentric Universe

A Western reader of the Koran and the sayings of the Prophet may be struck by the male-centric universe that Allah and His Messenger expound and praise, and the low esteem in which both hold females, especially Muhammad.

Narrated Aisha:

The things which annul the prayers were mentioned before me. They said, "Prayer is annulled by a dog, a donkey and a woman (if they pass in front of the praying people)..."

Bukhari 9.490

Aisha said [to Muhammad]: "You have made us equal to the dogs and the asses."

Sahih Muslim 4:1039

Treat women well, for they are like domestic animals (awan) with you and do not possess anything for themselves.

Tabari vol.9 p.113

Narrated Abu Said Al-Khudri:

The Prophet said, "Isn't the witness of a woman equal half that of a man?"

The women said, "Yes."

He said: "This is because of the deficiency of the woman's mind."

Bukhari 48.286

Narrated Ibn Abbas:

The Prophet said: "I was shown the Hell-fire and that the majority of its dwellers were women who were ungrateful."

It was asked, "Do they disbelieve in Allah?" (or are they ungrateful to Allah?)

He replied, "They are ungrateful to their husbands and are ungrateful for the favors and the good (charitable deeds) done to them.

Bukhari 2.28

Narrated Abdullah bin Abbas:

The people say, "O Allah's Apostle! We saw you taking something from your place and then we saw you retreating."

The Prophet replied, "I saw Paradise and stretched my hands towards a bunch (of its fruits) and had I taken it, you would have eaten from it as long as the world remains. I also saw the Hell-fire and I had never seen such a horrible sight. I saw that most of the inhabitants were women."

The people asked, "O Allah's Apostle! Why is it so?"

The Prophet replied, "Because of their ungratefulness."

Bukhari 62.125

Another reason why so few females will enter Paradise is that, should their husband be one of the few males whom Allah sentences to an eternity on fire²², they will join him in Hell by default.

37:22 Gather together those who were wrongdoers, their spouses and what they used to worship;

37:23 Apart from Allah, and lead them to the path of Hell.

The most pathetic example of a double standard is the wife of Abu Lahab, who, tethered like a dog, feeds the fire that is burning her husband.

**In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful**

111:1 Perish the hands of Abu Lahab, and may he perish too;

111:2 Neither his wealth nor what he has earned will avail him anything.

111:3 He will roast in a flaming fire,

111:4 And his wife will be a carrier of fire-wood,

²² 4:56 Those who have disbelieved Our Signs, We shall surely cast them into the Fire; every time their skins are burnt, We will replace them by other skins, so that they might taste the punishment. Allah indeed is Mighty and Wise!

111:5 She shall have a rope of fibre around her neck.

Allah has very much a sadist's understanding of empathy, i.e., feeling someone else's pain: that it can be used to add to the suffering you wish to inflict, and that will be particularly true for the wives of the men to whom He refuses Paradise. Many a wife's suffering will be greater than that of her husband, for she will agree with God: if her husband is burning in Hell, it's all her fault.

This paucity of females in Paradise made the manufacturing of female facsimiles, the infamous houris, a necessity if God was to keep His promise of rewarding the loyalty of His favourite gender with an overabundance of sex.

56:15 Upon beds interwoven with gold;

56:16 Reclining upon them, facing each other.

56:17 While immortal youths go around them,

56:18 With goblets, pitchers and a cup of limpid drink.

56:19 Their heads do not ache from it and they do not become intoxicated.

56:20 And with such fruit as they care to choose;

56:21 And such flesh of fowl as they desire;

56:22 And wide-eyed houris,

56:23 Like hidden pearls;

56:24 As a reward for what they used to do.

A Prophet and a Prude

Muhammad's young wives in particular were a handful for the old man and may be the cause of much of the invectiveness against women, particularly when it came to a lack of gratitude. God's Messenger was a prudish man, his lust for young women notwithstanding. Prudish men are known to be both attracted and repelled by the sex act, a trait often shared with misogynous males. For both stereotypes, a woman is both an object of desire and of contempt. That contempt is clearly evident in the hadiths.

Could this prudish, middle-aged man's struggle between contempt and desire for the dozens of mostly young females he secluded within his household be responsible for the double standards in Islamic law and the disdain for females evident in many of Allah's

revelations concerning the fair sex? Did contempt win out, relegating believing women to a class by themselves, the lowest class?

According to Islamic law and tradition, there were three groups of people who did not benefit from the general Muslim principals of legal and religious equality – unbelievers, slaves and women. The woman was obviously in one significant respect the worst-placed of the three. The slave could be freed by his master; the unbeliever could at any time become a believer by his own choice, and thus end his inferiority. Only the woman was doomed forever to remain what she was.

Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong, Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*

The Cult of Masculinity

Misogyny (a hatred of or hostility toward women) is perhaps too strong a term, yet a prejudicial view of women is perhaps not strong enough when describing Allah's attitude toward women, one largely shared by His Messenger.

The vehemence that God demonstrates towards women may just be an extreme manifestation of the cult of masculinity. The ultimate expression of this male adoration cult was everywhere evident in pagan Arabia, where sons were cherished and daughters barely tolerated until a male heir was produced. The whole Arab patronymic naming nomenclature (whereby a part of a personal name is based on the name of one's father) rests on a father's ability to trace his ancestry through his father's name (it is expressly forbidden to do so using a mother or daughter's name). That is why today, as it was then, Arab names often contain the conjunctions *ibn/ben* meaning *son of*, or *Abu* meaning *father of*.

Allah's extreme reaction to being associated with females may also have had something to do with His Messenger not fathering any sons that survived beyond infancy²³. For this failure the Prophet was often taunted and ridiculed by his enemies, who would openly wonder why

²³ In the surah *Abundance*, Allah makes an indirect reference to His Messenger's son who died in infancy.

108:1 We have surely given you abundance;

108: 2 So pray to your Lord and offer in sacrifice.

108:3 Indeed, your chief hater is the real childless (the reference is to Al-'Aas Ibn Wa'il who chided Muhammad upon the death of his son)

God had not favoured His greatest Messenger with sons. Both the Prophet and his Benefactor may have seen this inability to father healthy sons as just another of women's many failings, and both may not have wished to associate themselves too closely with such obviously flawed creatures.

Women and What It Means To Be Civilized

The clash we are witnessing around the world is not a clash of religions or a clash of civilization. It is a clash between civilization and backwardness, between the civilized and the primitive, between rationality and barbarity. It is a clash between freedom and oppression, between democracy and dictatorship. It is a clash between human rights, on one hand, and the violation of these rights on the other. It is a clash between those who treat women like beasts, and those who treat them like human beings.

Wafa Sultan, outspoken Syrian-American woman during a debate broadcast on Al-jazeera.

Women of Islam

If women are being treated less than equitably in societies and households around the world by those who live by what is written in a book in Paradise—the contents of which were revealed by a man who claimed to be an intimate of the Author—then which of the two sexes is most responsible for women being treated like beasts? It is those treated like beasts, with women like Wafa Sultan being the exception in a crowd of opposition from her own gender, that have made forward-looking Muslim women's struggle for equality so difficult.

This opposition takes two forms. In the West, it is the believing women who traverse public spaces in attire that is a testament to an ingrained loathing for their gender, not excessive piety, and who seek, by whatever means at their disposal, to shield both the message and the messenger from any criticism. In households dominated by the Koran, it is the mothers who keep faith. As explained by Bernard Lewis in his book *What Went Wrong*, published just after the attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York: “It is these downtrodden, mainly illiterate mothers that are entrusted with the crucial early years of the upbringing of the other half.”

It is mothers tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that daughters are accepting of their inferior, near slave-like status as being

the natural order of things as prescribed in the Koran. Like other neat little god-made constructs of Islam, this is to be admired if only for the ingenuous way it maneuvers believing women into becoming an enemy of their sex.

There is a very common ceremony practiced throughout most of the Muslim world called Khatmi-Qur'an. It is the ceremony to recognize and celebrate a child's first full reading of the Koranic text in Arabic under the not always benevolent tutelage of their mother.

Life in jail for son's murder over Koran studies

A mother who beat her seven-year-old son to death when he failed to memorise passages from the Koran has been jailed for life, for a minimum of 17 years. The judge said she had beaten him for three months leading up to his death, adding: "The cause of the beating was your unreasonable view that he wasn't learning passages quickly enough."

BBC, January 7, 2013

Most children complete the first full reading of the Koran between the age of four and seven.

While the poor, "downtrodden, mainly illiterate mothers" found in societies where the Koran rules may be excused for their role in ensuring that their daughters will always be inferior to men, what is the excuse of Muslim women in the West who know better, or who should know better?

Whether they do so out of conviction or have been pressed into service by their father, husband or brother, it is Western women in general, and in Canada in particular, who have become the voice and face of so-called moderate, modern Islam. This view still maintains that the Koran is the literal Word of God, and that Allah's and His Messenger's questionable decrees, from counselling husbands to beat their wives to murdering those who would leave the faith, are not subject to discussion.

33:36 It is not up to any believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have passed a judgement, to have any choice in their affairs. Whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger have gone astray in a manifest manner.

An early manifestation of this bizarre phenomenon in Canada of women defending a religion that displays contempt for their own sex occurred during the so-called "cartoon protest." Traditionally dressed

Muslim women, complete with hijab, acted as spokespersons for the Canadian Islamic community, appearing on television with stern Muslim men looking on demanding that those who dared to publish mostly innocent caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad be prosecuted. It is women such as these who perpetuate the myth of Muhammad as the personification of the perfect human being, a man whose every saying represents God-inspired wisdom and whose every action, for those who believe in his example, are to be emulated as closely as possible so that they, too, may come as close to being perfect as the personification of perfection itself.

This newfound public role for believing women in the West is in sharp contrast to the other public affirmation of Koranic values: the now regular television broadcast. You will not find many women here; only in extraordinary circumstances are women allowed to preach to the faithful, for example, when the audience is exclusively female and a male cannot be found.

Muslim women in the West who simply parrot Allah's and Muhammad's male-centered, misogynist point of view have abrogated their responsibility to elevate the debate in favour of gender equality. They are selling out their sisters in Afghanistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Somalia, and on, promoting—from their stance in a society that considers them equal—a prejudiced view of women which, if widely accepted, would reduce their status to that of their sisters living in obscurity in male-dominated societies where the Koran reigns supreme.

It is also believing women who are largely responsible not only for the intellectual but the physical mutilation of their daughters. The intellectual mutilation begins with the force-feeding by mothers of the Koran and Allah's prejudiced opinion that males are inherently superior and more valuable. This cerebral mutilation is done mainly to please their God; the physical mutilation comes out of fear of displeasing the men in their family, clan or tribe, who, like Allah and His Messenger, are obsessed with virgins²⁴.

It is mainly the mother's responsibility to ensure that her daughters remain virgins until her husband can arrange an advantageous marriage to a cousin or another close relative. For a daughter to lose her virginity before marriage is to bring disgrace and dishonour to the entire family, reducing her net worth to next to

²⁴ We find this obsession with virgins in the practice where the bride in an Islamic marriage must submit to total body epilation except for her eyebrows, which are only thinned, and the hair on her head.

nothing. The fear of disgracing their families drives many mothers in traditional Islamic societies, mainly in Africa where the practice originated, to have their daughters undergo a procedure called female circumcision. Unlike male circumcision, female circumcision is much more brutal and without the hygienic consideration as it is for males. As explained by Ayaan Hirsi Ali, whose grand-mother arranged for her to suffer the procedure:

Islam demands that you enter marriage as a virgin. The virgin dogma is safeguarded by locking girls up in their homes and sewing their outer labia together. Female circumcision serves two purposes: the clitoris is removed in order to reduce the woman's sexuality, and the labia are sewn up in order to guarantee her virginity.

Hirsi Ali, The Caged Virgin, p.76.

Women of Sumer

The *Epic of Gilgamesh* predates the Hebrew Bible by at least 2000 years, the Koran by an additional 1500 years, more or less. It was carved into clay tablets at the dawn of Western written history in ancient Sumeria (Sumer). In it you will find a story about the great flood and the Garden of Eden. How would Islam, which contains variations of the same stories as can be found in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and later in the Bible, reconcile the two?

The Koran contains references to twenty-five prophets who came before the Prophet Muhammad and it is clear that there are many more. In one *tradition of the Prophet*, more than 124,000 prophets were sent by God before He got fed up with His Message being badly transmitted or misunderstood and decided to send His last and greatest Messenger, the Prophet Muhammad.

Believers would maintain that the author of *Gilgamesh* was probably a prophet who was misquoted or who misunderstood Allah's Message. For instance, how could someone possibly write that it was a woman who gave birth to humanity, not a man; or that it is a woman, as described in the following excerpt (translation by Stephanie Dalley) from that heroic poem, to whom we are indebted for the wisdom with which she endowed man and which allowed civilization to blossom?

Shambat loosened her undergarments, opened her legs and
he took in her attractions.

She did not pull away. She took wind of him.

Spread open her garments and he lay upon her.

She did for him, the primitive man, as women do.
His love-making he lavished upon her.
For six days and seven nights Enkidu was aroused and
 poured himself into Shambat.
When he was sated with her charms,
He set his face towards the open country of his cattle.
The gazelles saw Enkidu and scattered.
The cattle of open country kept away from his body.
For Enkidu had become smooth; his body was too clean.
His legs, which used to keep pace with his cattle, were at a
 standstill.
Enkidu had been diminished, he could not run as before.
Yet he had acquired judgement, had become wiser.

For the Sumerians it was the goddess Aruru, the mother goddess, who created Enkidu from clay—the Bible and the Koran would give that role to a man. For the Sumerians, women were a civilizing influence; for the illiterate desert tribesmen who would usurp her role in the creation accounts, she became the seductress, the harlot who caused mankind to be expelled from Paradise.

For the men and women of Sumer, their cities were Paradise. For the people of Sumer it was also women as life givers, homemakers and lovers who made this sedentary, civilized lifestyle possible, desirable and enjoyable. For the tribesmen of the desert, trapped and fighting for survival beneath a monotonous, unchanging blue sky and a blaring scorching sun on a sea of dust and sand, the cities of Sumer would also have been seen as Paradise. Allah's description of Paradise, as an oasis with buildings and women as pleasure providers, almost fits the description of Sumerian cities and their female inhabitants, with the exception that in Sumer, *women were not second-class citizens*.

Why would desert tribesmen, who would adapt, if not pervert, many of the events described in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*—including the story of the meeting between Shambat and Enkidu—blame women for mankind's exile from Paradise? The seduction of Enkidu by Shambat was seen as a good thing by the people of Sumer; a wild, roving man is civilized by being intimate with a woman.

For the people of Sumer, being "civilized" meant acquiring wisdom; becoming capable of exercising judgement, of assessing situations or circumstances shrewdly and logically and drawing your own reasonable conclusions. For the illiterate, fatalistic tribesmen of the deserts of the Middle East whose very existence was constantly being tested by elements over which they had no control, which they

believed was God's way of trying their faith, this had to seem like blasphemy. Paradise was to be denied mankind because a woman was foolish enough to endow a man with god-like qualities. For their jealous, vengeful god this had to be unacceptable.

The Koran, with its meticulous instructions as to what a believer may or may not do, what a believer may think or say, was perhaps the primitive tribesman's way of using the invention of writing to establish eternal, unchanging limits on mankind's imagination and free will in the hope of convincing God to let man back into Sumer, back into Paradise.

Writing as Allah revealed in verses from Surah 96, *The Clot* made man arrogant, thinking himself self-sufficient. This was not why He taught man how to write. He taught man how to write not to make him more self-sufficient, but less, by having man write down His unchanging instructions as to how He expected man to behave and how He was to be worshipped. Instructions which He then expected to be followed to the literal letter or man would have to answer to Him Whom all of mankind must eventually return.

96:3 Read by your Most Generous Lord,

96:4 Who taught by the pen.

96:5 He thought man what he did not know.

96:6 Yet, man will, indeed wax arrogant;

96:7 For he thinks himself self-sufficient.

96:8 Surely, unto your Lord is the ultimate return.

It was the Sumerians who, more than five millennia ago, first carved the written word on clay tablets. According to Thomas Cahill, the period before the invention of writing saw an "explosion of technological creativity on a scale that would not be matched until the nineteenth and twentieth century of our era." Writing may have been a result of mankind's need to record this leap of knowledge, upon which memory could no longer be counted to chronicle or manage. Civilization could not progress any further without the means of recording civilization's accomplishments for future generations to build upon.

The society that invented writing worshipped many goddesses. The greatest goddess of all, Ishtar, goddess of love and war, was worshipped by the people of the city of Uruk, perhaps the earliest settlement to deserve the name of city. It was in this ancient

Mesopotamian city, on the shore of the Euphrates River that the first words written five thousand years ago on clay tablets were found. If it was not a woman who imagined those first words then it was her civilizing influence which allowed the written word to be imagined in the first place.

Civilization in the Balance

Women have been deciding the fate of civilizations since the dawn of written history and probably long before that, and they will continue to be largely responsible for the fate of humanity. The women of Sumer rocked the cradle of Western Civilization and nurtured it through its formative years until the Greeks and Romans of antiquity came along and put into words and deeds what it meant to be a *Western civilization*. For the Greeks of antiquity, in particular, to be civilized meant subscribing to democratic ideals; appreciating that liberty is humanity's most precious possession; accepting that ethics and morality can come from within and that the search for the truth is a never-ending quest and a noble calling in and of itself.

Following in the footsteps of the Greeks and Romans came the philosophical movement of the 18th century, *The Enlightenment*, which emphasized the use of reason to question accepted doctrines and traditions; and before that, *The Renaissance* which marked the end of the Catholic Church's dominance in Europe, allowing for a flowering of the arts and sciences. Today, competing with these ideas of what it means to be civilized is a child-like view of the world that begins and ends with the Koran. The Koran is not so much a philosophy as a set of rules formulated by a child-like mind, rules that embody a child's certainty in having absolute knowledge of the world around him and a child's intolerance of others who won't play the game by his rules.

To accept this child-like perception of the world is to deny Western civilization and all its accomplishments. This child-like undeveloped understanding of the world around it saw writing as a way of limiting what people could imagine. This child-like view now competes with the grown-up view of the people of Sumer who invented writing as a means to expand the capabilities of the human mind, not to restrict them; who invented writing so as to allow future generations to build upon, to progress beyond, to question the limits of what their ancestors had ever imagined.

The women of Sumer gave birth to Western civilization. The women of Islam, a child's first acquaintance with the Koran and the narrow limits it places on the imagination, may bring it to an end. The

Koran, taken literally, kills the imagination allowing insanity to settle in. Will these mainly “illiterate and downtrodden mothers” entrusted with the crucial early years of a child’s upbringing—invisible to the outside world courtesy of a prudish, insecure, misogynistic God—even be aware of what they have done?

Afterword

Ali Hussain Sibat hosted a popular show broadcast in Arabic from Beirut. In 2008, while on pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia, he was arrested by the religious police, charged and convicted of sorcery, and sentenced to be beheaded. On his show, Sibat gave advice to married women that was not always in keeping with Allah's decrees and speculated on the future of their relationships. For the enforcers of Sharia law, this was tantamount to practicing the black arts, i.e., witchcraft, a crime that is punishable by death under Sharia law.

In Muhammad's time, witches were thought to blow into knots to cast spells; another superstition from the Dark Ages that found its way into the Koran. The penultimate surah of the Koran implores Allah to protect the supplicant from the evil God admits to creating, including "those who blow into knotted reeds."

THE DAYBREAK

113 Al-Falaq

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful*

113:1 Say: "I seek refuge with the Lord of the Daybreak,

113:2 "From the evil of what He has created,

113:3 "And the evil of the darkness when it gathers,

113:4 "And the evil of those who blow into knotted reeds
(witches or sorceresses),

113:5 "And from the evil of the envious when he envies."

The last two chapters of the Koran, 113 and 114, are known as the Muawidhatan (also spelled Mu'awwidhatayn), the *Verses of Refuge*. When he feared his time had come, Muhammad repeated these two short surahs over and over.

Narrated Aisha:

Whenever Allah's Apostle became ill, he used to recite the

Muawidhatan and blow his breath over himself (after their recitation) and rubbed his hands over his body. So when he was afflicted with his fatal illness. I started reciting the Muawidhatan and blowing my breath over him as he used to blow and made the hand of the Prophet pass over his body.

Bukhari 59.723

It may be telling that Muhammad, when he feared breathing his last, would ask God to protect him from women. After what he did to them, I wouldn't blame him.

APPENDICES

The Reward of the Female Martyr

A question was posed on the Hamas website by a prospective female suicide bomber as to what are the “rewards for a female martyr.” Would she get the equivalent of the male suicide bombers who are promised a “fairly extensive harem of women in return for martyrdom”?

[Question] I wanted to ask: what is the reward of a female martyr who performs a martyrdom operation; does she marry 72 of the houris?

[Answer] The female martyr gains the same rewards as does the male, with the exception of this one aspect [the *houris*], so that the female martyr will be with the same husband with whom she dies. “And those who have believed and their progeny, followed them in belief. We shall join their progeny to them. We shall not deprive them of any of their work; every man shall be bound by what he has earned” [52:21]. The one who is martyred and has no husband will be married to one of the people of Paradise.

David Cook, Understanding Jihad, p.146

Except for a husband for a spinster who blows herself up on Allah’s behalf, the reward is the same as what a stay-at-home housewife could expect from God: reclining on a couch in the shade with a husband who may be too busy enjoying his houris to pay much attention to her.

36:55 Today the Companions of Paradise are busy enjoying themselves;

36:56 Together with their spouses they are reclining on couches in the shade.

Would-Be Dressers

Men, no matter what their marital status, must refuse the offer of a maid-servant, slave or pre-pubescent girl (one who has yet to begin menstruating, what most of us would call a child) to help them get dressed for prayers at least three times. If, after being denied three times, they still want to give you a hand getting dressed, you may “approach each other.”

24:58 O believers, let those your right hands possess (slaves and maid-servants) and those who have not reached the age of puberty ask your leave three times: (to attend to you or approach you) before the dawn prayer, when you put off your clothes at noon and after the evening prayer. These are three occasions of nudity for you; after which you are or they are not at fault, if you approach each other. That is how Allah makes clear His signs to you. Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

Your children who have reached the age of puberty should also ask your permission to come into your presence in the three occasions described in 24:58.

24:59 And when your children reach puberty, let them ask leave, as those who came before them asked leave. That is how Allah makes clear His Signs to you. Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

A man could be naked in front of his slave-girls, maids or pre-pubescent girls if the cause of his nakedness was because he was getting ready for prayer. What about around the house? Yes, but only in the presence of his wives and slave-girls, as per Revelation 23:6.

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

23:1 The believers have prospered;

23:2 Those who are submissive in their prayers,

23:3 And those who turn away from idle talk,

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23:4 And those who give the alms.

23:5 And those who guard their private parts,

23:6 Except from their wives and what their right hands possess (slave-girls). [For these] they are not blameworthy.

23:7 Whoever seeks anything beyond that - those are the transgressors.

Marital Rape India and Foreign Objects

It is not only countries with a legal system based on or influenced by the Sharia, as in Egypt, that marital rape is not a crime or a crime not prosecuted.

In India, growing clamour to criminalise rape within marriage *by Geeta Pandey, BBC News, Delhi, September 30, 2021 (excerpt)*

In India, a society rooted in patriarchal traditions, marriages are sacrosanct and it is not a crime for a man to rape his wife.

But in recent weeks, courts have given conflicting rulings on marital rape, leading to renewed calls from campaigners to criminalise rape within marriage.

On Thursday, Justice NK Chandravanshi of the Chhattisgarh high court ruled that "sexual intercourse or any sexual act by a husband with his wife cannot be rape even if it was by force or against her wish."

The woman had accused her husband of "unnatural sex" and raping her with objects.

The judge said the man could be tried for unnatural sex, but cleared him of the much more serious offence of rape since Indian law does not recognise marital rape...

The law that Justice Chandravanshi invoked is Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code.

The British colonial-era law, which has been in existence in India since 1860, mentions several "exemptions" - situations in which sex is not rape - and one of them is "by a man with his own wife" who's not a minor.

The idea is rooted in the belief that consent for sex is "implied" in marriage and that a wife cannot retract it later.

But despite a long and sustained campaign to criminalise it, India remains among 36 countries where the law remains in

the statue book, leaving millions of women trapped in violent marriages.

According to a government survey, 31% of married women - almost one in three - have faced physical, sexual and emotional violence from their husbands.

In an earlier version of this article, the complainant said that some of the objects her husband inserted were quite large. This statement had no impact on the judge's ruling even though it is evident that the complainant was worried about physical injury. The Sharia, by limiting what can be inserted in a woman's vagina during foreplay to a husband's appendages may actually mitigate the risk of injury, if not discomfort.

As far as the methods of mutual stimulation in foreplay... no foreign object should be used. The restriction on the use of foreign objects is based on the following hadith:

Ubaydullah bin Zurarah says that he had an old neighbor who owned a young slave-girl. Because of his old age, he could not fully satisfy the young slave-girl during sexual intercourse. She would therefore ask him to place his fingers in her vagina as she liked it.

The old man complied with her wishes even though he did not like this idea. So he requested 'Ubaydullah to ask Imam 'Ali ar-Reza (A.S.) about it.

When 'Ubaydullah asked the Imam (A.S.) about it, the Imam (A.S.) said, "There is no problem as long as he uses any part of his own body upon her, but he should not use anything other than his body on her."

Sayyid Athar Husayn S.H. Rizvi, Islamic Marriage Handbook

What Aisha Saw

The following hadith is from The Book of Prayers (Kitab Al-Salat) of Sahih Muslim. It begins with a typical introduction with the narrator identifying himself, followed by some atypical comments from his audience (no quotation marks were in the original translation and I have chosen not to add any).

Muhammad b. Qais said (to the people):

Should I not narrate to you (a hadith of the Holy Prophet) on my authority and on the authority of my mother?

We thought that he meant the mother who had given him birth. He (Muhammad b. Qais) then reported that it was Aisha who had narrated this: Should I not narrate to you about myself and about the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him)?

We said: Yes.

From Aisha, we learn that it all started when she joined her husband for an intimate moment, after which, thinking she is asleep he leaves her side.

She said: When it was my turn for Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) to spend the night with me, he turned his side, put on his mantle and took off his shoes and placed them near his feet, and spread the corner of his shawl on his bed and then lay down till he thought that I had gone to sleep. He took hold of his mantle slowly and put on the shoes slowly, and opened the door and went out and then closed it lightly.

Aisha is not asleep and decides to follow her husband outside where she observes him doing hand gestures, after which they both return to the house, Aisha rushing ahead and hopping into bed hoping her spouse is none the wiser.

I covered my head, put on my veil and tightened my waist wrapper, and then went out following his steps till he reached Baqi. He stood there and he stood for a long time. He then lifted his hands three times, and then returned and I also returned. He hastened his steps and I also hastened my steps. He ran and I too ran. He came (to the house) and I also came (to the house). I, however, preceded him and I entered (the house), and as I lay down in the bed, he (the Holy Prophet) entered the (house), and said:

The Prophet is no fool, he notices she is out of breath and asks the obvious question; and she better tell him the truth because if she does not, Allah will tell on her.

Why is it, O Aisha, that you are out of breath?

I said: There is nothing. He said: Tell me or the Subtle and the Aware would inform me.

Aisha tells whatever she tells her husband, swearing it is the truth, and this is when he strikes her.

I said: Messenger of Allah, may my father and mother be ransom for you, and then I told him (the whole story).

He said: Was it the darkness (of your shadow) that I saw in front of me?

I said: Yes.

He struck me on the chest which caused me pain, and then said: Did you think that Allah and His Apostle would deal unjustly with you?

She said: Whatsoever the people conceal, Allah will know it.

At this point, Muhammad feels compelled to explain to an obviously skeptical young woman why she did not observe him and the angel Gabriel in animated conversation; one of the reasons being that she was not appropriately dressed.

He said: Gabriel came to me when you saw me. He called me and he concealed it from you. I responded to his call, but I too concealed it from you (for he did not come to you), as you were not fully dressed. I thought that you had gone to sleep, and I did not like to awaken you, fearing that you may be frightened.

The hadith ends with Muhammad, on Gabriel's order, instructing his wife to go to a graveyard, where he will join her later, and pray for the dead as penance for having spied on him.

He (Gabriel) said: Your Lord has commanded you to go to the inhabitants of Baqi (to those lying in the graves) and beg pardon for them.

I said: Messenger of Allah, how should I pray for them (How should I beg forgiveness for them)?

He said: Say, Peace be upon the inhabitants of this city (graveyard) from among the Believers and the Muslims, and may Allah have mercy on those who have gone ahead of us, and those who come later on, and we shall, God willing, join you.

Sahih Muslim 4.2127

SPECIAL

What Every Prospective Jihadi Bride Should Know

What Every Prospective Jihadi Bride Should Know is for adolescents girls enamored with the idea of becoming the bride of a holy warrior believing they will find fulfillment and purpose in the bed of the ultimate bad boy. Some may be offended by the following, and you should be. If you have daughters who might be susceptible to Islamist propaganda, be grateful, for it is meant to take the romanticism out of joining the ranks of those who are more interested in killing and violence than love and tenderness.

1) Except for the hair on their head, brides are expected to be, on their wedding night, as hairless as a baby.

Before leaving to join ISIS or a similar organization, get a Brazilian, not forgetting your armpits. Getting rid of your pubic and armpit hair under battlefield conditions will definitely be more unpleasant than a wax treatment at a salon, and the often brutal ripping of pubic hairs, even if done by another woman, can cause genital deformities.

2) Women are expected not to wear any fragrances when going out in public, only men. Under no circumstances, before meeting with your welcoming committee, should you apply perfume or mask any body odour with aromatic deodorants or wash your hair with a scented shampoo. Your hair must not only be hidden beneath a veil, they also must not smell it!

The Prophet of Islam stated: "Any woman who perfumes herself and leaves the house, is deprived from the blessings of the Almighty Allah until she returns home."

Bihar al-Anwar

God will not accept the prayers of any woman who puts on perfume for a man other than her husband until she bathes from her (having applied) perfume just as she bathes after intercourse.

Makarim al-Akhlaq

Muhammad held that perfume worn by a woman was an incitement to lust and we certainly would not want that.

3) *Virgins are the most sought-after prize among holy warriors. If you have never had sex and can prove it, it is unlikely you will be asked to do the dishes or volunteer for a suicide mission. Expect to be taken by a commander or given as a reward to a holy warrior who has killed the most of Allah's assumed enemies, i.e., the most violent and pitiless.*

Don't expect to join your Prince Charming on any unbeliever-slaughtering adventure. You might be a distraction from the job at hand, and we also would not want that. For the Prophet and his out-of-this-world Patron, the sight of a single strand of a woman's hair, the outline of a breast or swaying hips – what Allah refers to as a woman's finery – can cause a man to experience a Pavlovian-like reaction, an uncontrollable urge to hump the owner of such "finery" then and there, which is why He imposed such a severe, uncompromising dress code on women.

24:31 And tell the believing women to cast down their eyes and guard their private parts and not show their finery, except the outward part of it. And let them drape their bosoms with their veils and not show their finery, except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, the sons of their husbands, their brothers, the sons of their brothers, the sons of their sisters, their women, their maid-servants, the men-followers who have no sexual desire, or infants who have no knowledge of women's sexual parts yet. Let them, also, not stamp their feet, so that what they have concealed of their finery might be known. Repent to Allah, all of you, O believers, that perchance you may prosper.

4) *In Islam, young men are not expected to learn about sex by forming relationships with the opposite sex outside of marriage. This can lead to unrealistic expectations, such as that your virgin-bride will be as skilled as a veteran whore on your wedding night.*

Anticipate a severe beating or violent raping, or both, if you don't live up to a holy warrior's ideal of the perfect bride.

5) *Expect to be treated in accordance with your status as a dim-wit in the eyes of Allah and His spokesman.*

2:282 And call to witness two witnesses of your men; if not two men, then one man and two women from such witnesses you approve of, so that if one of them (the two women) fails to remember, the other will remind her.

Narrated Abu Said Al-Khudri:

The Prophet said, 'Isn't the witness of a woman equal half that of a man?'

The women said, 'Yes.'

He said, 'This is because of the deficiency of the woman's mind.'

Bukhari 6.301

6) *Expect your first of many pregnancies within a matter of months or less, as all forms of birth control are forbidden, including coitus interruptus which Muhammad frowned upon. One of a handful of hadiths to that effect:*

Narrated Ibn Muhairiz:

I entered the Mosque and saw Abu Said Al-Khudri and sat beside him and asked him about Al-AzI (i.e. coitus interruptus).

Abu Said said, "We went out with Allah's Apostle for the Ghazwa of Banu Al-Mustaliq and we received cap-tives from among the Arab captives and we desired women and celibacy became hard on us and we loved to do coitus interruptus.

So when we intended to do coitus interruptus, we said, 'How can we do coitus interruptus before asking Allah's Apostle who is present among us?'"

We asked (him) about it and he said, 'It is better for you not to do so, for if any soul (till the Day of Resurrection) is predestined to exist, it will exist.'

Bukhari 59.459

7) *If your hymen is no longer intact, no holy warrior may want you. You may only be asked to cook and wash behind a partition ("If you ask them for an*

object, ask them from behind a curtain. That is purer for your hearts and theirs" 33:53) for those doing the killing.

You can always volunteer to be a suicide bomber; terrorist groups never have enough of those. The upside: Allah will wed you to that husband you may have been looking for when you joined a terrorist army and you can thumb your nose at the women in Paradise who preferred dying at home.

4:95 Those of the believers who stay at home while suffering from no injury are not equal to those who fight for the Cause of Allah with their possessions and persons. Allah has raised those who fight with their possessions and persons one degree over those who stay at home; and to each Allah has promised the fairest good. Yet Allah has granted a great reward to those who fight and not to those who stay behind.

The downside: you will have to compete for your new husband's attention with up to 72 houris, irresistible female facsimiles who know more about pleasing a man than *Cosmopolitan* magazine.

8) In the here-and-now, the wife of a holy warrior, especially a successful one, will have to compete with up to three other wives and as many slave-girls as he has been given from his share of the war booty.

Narrated Abu Huraira:

I heard Allah's Apostle saying, "The example of a Mujahid (Muslim fighter) in Allah's Cause—and Allah knows better who really strives in His Cause—is like a person who fasts and prays continuously. Allah guarantees that He will admit the Mujahid in His Cause into Paradise if he is killed, otherwise He will return him to his home safely with rewards and war booty."

Bukhari 52.46

4:3 If you fear that you cannot deal justly with the orphans, then marry such of the women as appeal to you, two, three or four; but if you fear that you cannot be equitable, then only one, or what your right hands own (captives of war or slave-girls). This is more likely to enable you to avoid unfairness.

9) It's not considered rape (but you will know better), and there is nothing you can do to stop him having his way with you, with or without your consent whenever and wherever he pleases. It is his God-given right.

2:223 Your women are a tillage for you. So get to your tillage whenever you like. Do good for yourselves, fear Allah and know that you shall meet Him. And give good news to the believers.

You will be expected to sign a marriage contract in which you relinquish all control over what Allah considers your “private parts” to the holy warrior you are about to marry.

Narrated Uqba:

The Prophet said: "The stipulations most entitled to be abided by are those with which you are given the right to enjoy the (women's) private parts (i.e. the stipulations of the marriage contract)."

Bukhari 62.81

10) Expect to be beaten unless you do exactly as you are told or in anticipation that you might “rebel” after discovering that the bed of a holy warrior is not a bed of roses.

4:34 Men are in charge of women, because Allah has made some of them excel the others, and because they spend some of their wealth. Hence righteous women are obedient, guarding the unseen (their sex) which Allah has guarded. And those of them that you fear might rebel, admonish them and abandon them in their beds and beat them. Should they obey you, do not seek ways of harming them; for Allah is Sublime and Great.

If he beats you like he would his camel, it may be small comfort to know that he can't have his way with you immediately afterward.

Narrated 'Abdullah bin Zam'a:

The Prophet forbade laughing at a person who passes wind, and said, "How does anyone of you beat his wife as he beats the stallion camel and then he may embrace (sleep with) her?"

Bukhari 73.68

11) A husband sodomizing his spouse, even with her consent, is frowned upon, unless as a form of punishment or to enforce discipline.

It's not the means that matters when it comes to using pain to discipline a wife, but the part of her body a husband chooses upon

which to inflict that hurt. A man will not be held to account for the punishment he inflicts, so long as he spares his beloved's face.

Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet said, "If somebody fights (or beats some-body) then he should avoid the face."

Bukhari 46.734

Narrated Umar ibn al-Khattab:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: A man will not be asked as to why he beat his wife.

Abu Dawud 11.2142

12) *You will be largely confined in the home of your husband for the rest of your life as if you were an incurable disease.*

Narrated Usama bin Zaid:

The Prophet said, "After me I have not left any affliction more harmful to men than women."

Bukhari 62.33

A lifelong quarantine during which you will only be allowed out dressed in a full-body covering means you will be deprived of sunlight, therefore you are likely to die before your time from diseases associated with lack of vitamin D, but not before experiencing significant weight gain, headaches, bladder issues, constipation, diarrhea, etc.

13) *The difference between a blushing bride and a discarded spouse is three short words: "I divorce you!"*

2:229 Divorce may be pronounced twice. Then they (women) are to be retained in a rightful manner or released with kindness. And it is unlawful for you [men] to take back anything of what you have given them, unless both parties fear that they cannot comply with Allah's Bounds (by obeying His commands). If you fear that they cannot do that, then it is no offence if the woman ransoms herself (pays money to be set free). Those are the bounds set by Allah. Do not transgress them. Those who transgress the bounds set by Allah are the wrongdoers.

Don't let "release with kindness" fool you, or God's admonition to the husband not "to take back anything of what you have given them"; that is not the way of someone who fights for sex and possessions. Expect him to make your life even more miserable until you agree to give him back everything, including your dowry, before he divorces you; this is the meaning of 'ransoms herself'.

14) You want Paradise even with the limited pleasures it has to offer women, then above all, be grateful to your husband no matter what, for the worst may be yet to come!

Narrated Ibn Abbas:

The Prophet said: "I was shown the Hell-fire and that the majority of its dwellers were women who were ungrateful."

It was asked, "Do they disbelieve in Allah?" (or are they ungrateful to Allah?)"

He replied, "They are ungrateful to their husbands and are ungrateful for the favors and the good (charitable deeds) done to them."

Bukhari 2.28

15) Finally, be steadfast in your support of your husband's pathological hatred of unbelievers and heretics, for, should this hatred ever diminish to the extent that he starts questioning what Allah expects of him, he is going to Hell and so are you. Like Eve so long ago, you will be blamed for your husband's failings.

37:22 Gather together those who were wrongdoers, their spouses and what they used to worship;

37:23 Apart from Allah, and lead them to the path of Hell.