# The Duties of the Guardian of the Family

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**The Guardian of the Family**

Man and woman are the two basic pillars of a family, but since men are endowed with special qualities by the order of creation, and because their power of logic is stronger than women's, they are regarded as the guardians of their families.

The Almighty Allah regards men as the guardians of their families and states in the Holy Qur'an that:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ

*Men are the maintainers of women, because Allah has made some of them to excel others...”" (4:34).*

Therefore, men have a greater and more difficult responsibility in supporting their families. It is the man who can, through his wisdom, support his family and prepare the grounds for their happiness and it is he who can turn the house into a paradise and his wife to act as an angel.

"The Prophet of Allah (S) stated: 'Man is the guardian of his family and every guardian has responsibilities towards those under his guardianship'."1

A man, who is supporting his family, should know that a woman is also a human being like a man. She also has desires and the rights of freedom and life. Marrying a woman is not hiring a servant, but it is a selection of a partner and a friend who would be able to live with for the rest of one's life. Man has to care for her and her desires. Man is not the owner of his wife and in fact a woman has certain rights upon her husband.

Allah states in the Holy Qur'an:

وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ

*And women have rights similar to the rights of men in a just manner, and the men have a ..." .(degree (of advantage) over them..." (2:228*

Taking Care of your Wife

The secret to a family's prosperity is the way in which one takes care of one's wife, and this is,

like the duty of a woman towards her husband which is regarded to be at the same level as Jihad, is also regarded as a man's best and most valuable act. But a married man must learn how to treat his wife in a way that she turns into an angel-like character.

For this, a man must find out about his wife'sbehaviour and her desires. He must program his life according to her wishes and righteous requests. He can, through his own manners and attitude, influence her in a way that interests her in both him and his house.

This is a subject which needs more explanation and detailed discussion will be presented later .in this book

**Be Loving towards Her**

A woman is a center of kindness and a being who is completely emotional. Her existence depends on compassion and affection. She longs to be loved by others and the more the better. She sacrifices herself a great deal in order to seek popularity. This character is so strong in her that if she realizes nobody loves her, then she regards herself as a failure. She becomes disappointed in herself and feels dejected. Therefore, certainly one can claim that the secret of a successful man in a happy marital life is his expression of love towards his wife.

Dear Sir! Your wife before marrying you was enjoying her parents' love and kindness. Now that she has entered into marriage agreement with you and now that she has chosen to live with you for the rest of her life, she expects you to fulfill her desires for love and affection. She expects you to show more love to her than she received from her parents and friends. She has trusted you extremely and that is why she has entrusted you with her existence.

The secret to a happy marriage is the expression of your affection to your wife.

If you want to conquer her heart, if you want to make her obedient with regard to your demands, if you want to strengthen your marriage, make her love you and remain faithful to you, or..., then you must always show your affection to her and express your love.

If you deprive your wife of kindness, then she would lose interest in her house, children and, above all, in you. Your house would always be in a messy condition. She would not be prepared to make efforts for a person who does not love her.

A house, in which there is no affection, resembles a burning hell, even though it may be very tidy and full of luxurious goods.

Your wife may become ill or have a nervous breakdown. She may seek popularity with others if she is not satisfied with you. She may grow so cold towards you and the house that she may even seek for a divorce.

You are responsible for all this because you have failed to keep her content. It is certainly true that some divorce procedures take place as a result ofunkindliness .

Your attention is drawn to the following statistics. The psychological requirement of affection, the carelessness of husbands with regard to their wives' wishes and the overlooking of the importance of the mental status of women, have been responsible for many divorce cases. "In the year 1969, out of a total of 10372 separations, 1203 women expressed the reason for their divorce as losing heart in life, feeling worthless, and the lack of care of their husband with regard to their wives' desires and emotional feelings."2

"A woman said in court that 'She was prepared to abandon her dowry and even pay her husband a sum of money to make him agree to a divorce. She said her husband was more interested in his parrots and that was why she did not want to live with him any longer."3

Family love and friendship is more precious than anything else and that is why Allah has regarded it as one of the signs of power and a great blessing which mankind has been endowed with, Holy Qur'an says:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

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

"Imam as-Sadiq (a.s ) stated: 'Whoever is our friend, expresses his kindness to his spouse more'."4

"The Prophet of Allah (S) stated: 'The more one becomes faithful the more one expresses kindness to his spouse'."5

"Imam as-Sadiq (a.s ) stated: 'One of the characteristics of the prophets of Allah is that they are all kind towards their wives',"6

"The Prophet of Allah (S) stated: 'The words of a man who tells his wife, 'I love you truly', should never leave her heart'."7

Love and affection must of course be genuine to appeal to another's heart, but even so loving for someone is not enough, as it is vital to express one's affection. By showing your feelings through your words and actions, the love you have shown will be returned to you and your hearts will strengthen their bonds of love.

Be frank and do not be discrete in expressing your love towards your wife. In her absence or presence, you should make compliments for her. Write to her while traveling and inform her that you miss her. Occasionally buy something for her. Phone her when you are at work and

ask how she is.

One of the important things on a woman's mind is these kinds of expressions of love. "Mrs ... while shedding tears of grief said: 'I married my husband on an autumn night. We lived together in peace for a while. I regarded myself as the luckiest woman in this world. I lived in his little house for six years. I felt a hundred times happier when I found out that I was pregnant. When I informed my husband he wept tears of joy while embracing me in his arms. He cried so much that he nearly lost control over himself. He then went out and bought me a diamond necklace with his savings. He gave the necklace and said: 'I am giving this to the best woman that I have ever seen in the world'. But it was not long before he was killed in a driving accident'."8

**Respect Your Wife**

A woman is proud of herself just the same as a man would be. She likes to be respected by others. She would get hurt if she were to be insulted or belittled. She feels good when respected and would hate those who try to degrade her.

Dear Sir! your wife surely expects you to respect her more than others. She has every right to expect her life partner and best friend to care for her.

She works for you and your children's comfort and thus expects you to value her efforts and to respect her.Honouring her would not belittle you but it would indeed go to prove your love and affection towards her. Therefore, respect her more than others and talk to her politely. Do not interrupt her or shout at her. Call her by respectful and virtuous names. Show your respect when she wants to sit down. When you enter the house, if she forgets to say 'Salam' (greetings), then you should say 'Salam' to her.

Say 'Good-bye' when leaving your house. Do not lose contact with her when travelling or away from home. Write to her.

Show your respect for her when in gatherings. Seriously avoid all insults and humiliation. Do not abuse or even jokingly tease her. Do not think that because you are close to her she would not mind you making fun of her. On the contrary she will dislike such an attitude but may not express it.

"A dignified woman, around 35 years of age, says about her divorce request: 'It is twelve years that I have been married. My husband is a good man and there are many characteristics of a good and amiable person in him. But he has never wanted to realize that I am his wife and the mother of both his children. He thinks he is a fitting personfor get togethers , but he performs his show by teasing and humiliating me. You cannot believe how much I have been hurt. My nerves have been affected so much that I have to go to a psychiatrist for treatment. I have

talked to my husband about it many times. I have begged him not to treat me in this way. I have reminded him of my position as 'his wife' and my age and that it is not proper for him to joke with me in front of others so that they have a laugh or a good time. I feel embarrassed in front of everybody and because I have not ever been a witty person, I cannot compete with him. Since my demands are not being met by my husband, I prefer to separate from him. I know I will not be happy on my own, but I cannot live with a man who constantly degrades me'."[9]

All women expect their husbands to respect them and all of them hate insults If some women keep silent before their husbands' humiliations, it is not the proof of their satisfaction.

If you respect your wife, she will do the same to you and thus your relationship will grow stronger. You would also earn more respect from others. If you maltreat her and she retaliates, it is again your fault and not hers.

Dear Sir! Marrying is not equal to getting a slave. You cannot treat a free person as a slave. Your wife has married you in order to live with you and to share her life with a man whom she loves. She expects the same things from you as you do from her. Therefore treat her in a manner in which you would like to be treated.

"Imam as-Sadiq (a.s ), quoting his father, stated: 'Whoever marries, must respect his wife'."[10]

"The Prophet of Allah (S) stated: 'Whoever respects a Muslim, Allah would pay him his own respect'."[11]

"The Prophet of Allah (S) also stated: 'None would respect women except the magnanimous ones, and none would insult them except the ignoble ones.' In addition, the Prophet of Allah (S) stated: 'Whoever insults his family, would lose happiness in his life'."[12]

**Be Well-mannered**

The world takes its path according to a regular pattern. Events happen and show themselves one after another. Our small existence in this vast universe is like a small particle which moves and impinges on other particles at every instant of time. The running of this world is not in our hands and the events of this world do not occur according to our will. From the moment that one sets foot outside his house in the morning until the time he returns home in the evening, one may be confronted with hundreds of unpleasant circumstances.

One comes across a great many difficulties in the arena of life. You might be insulted by someone, have an unfriendly colleague, have to wait for the bus too long, have been accused of something at work, have lost some money, have been robbed, or have come across anyone of a number of similar events that could happen to anybody anywhere.

You might be so frustrated with the usual everyday events of your life that you resemble a time

bomb which could explode any time.

Well you may think that you cannot blame other people or the world for your mishaps, so when you come home, you try to vent your anger out on your wife and children. You enter your house and it is as if 'Izrail (the angel of death) has arrived. The children disperse like little mice in front of you. God forbid that you should find something to pick up fault. With! The food may be salty or salt less, your cup of tea may not be ready, the house may be untidy, or the children make a noise. And it gives you a good excuse to blow your top in your own house.

You then become furious and shout at every body, abuse them, hit the children, and so on. You will have then turned a house of affection and friendship into a burning hell in which you and the rest of your family would have to suffer.

If the children are able to run away from home into the streets, they would do so, and if they cannot do that, then they count the seconds until you leave the house.

It is patently obvious what an apathetic and horrific atmosphere is dominant in families of this kind. There are always rows and arguments. Their house is always in a mess. The wife hates to see her husband's face.

**How can a woman live happily with a grim and bad- tempered man?**

Worse than all is the fate of children who are to grow up in such an environment. The parents' quarrels would certainly leave a scar on their sensitive souls and hearts. Children, who experience this kind of hardship, tend to become furious, aggressive, depressed, and pessimistic type of people in their adulthood. They become disheartened in their family and go astray. They might fall into the traps of corrupt people and turn to crimes of different kinds. They might even become socomplexed and mentally disturbed that they might even endanger other lives and commit murder or even suicide.

The reader is recommended to conduct research into the backgrounds of criminals. Statistics and the daily news of criminal events all reflect this fact.

Responsibilities of all these lie with the guardian of the family who has not been able to control his temper and who has mistreated his family. Such a person can never find peace in this world and would be punished in the next.

Dear Sir! We are not in a position and cannot control the affairs of this world. Mishaps, hardships, and sorrowful events are all inseparable parts of this life. Everybody experiences difficulties at different times. As a matter of fact, one can reach maturity through hardship. One must confront them with strength and must try to find solutions to them.

Human beings have the ability to meet with hundreds of small and large difficulties and not to give in under the strain of misfortune.

Worldly events are not the only reason for our being upset, but rather it is our nervous system which becomes affected by such events and causes us to experience discomfort. Therefore, if one could control himself when faced with the unhappy events of life, one would not become annoyed or angry.

Suppose that you have experienced an unpleasant event. This event is either an inseparable part of daily events with which we cannot interfere or that we cannot help. Or it might be an event in which we can thrust our own decision.

It is obvious that in the former case, our annoyance would not help in anyway. We would be wrong to become angry or bad-tempered. We must remember that we were not responsible for its occurrence and even try to welcome it with a smiling face. But if our bad experience is of the latter type, then we can seek a suitable solution for it.

If we do not lose heart when faced with hardships and try to control ourselves, we can, through prudence, overcome our difficulties. In this way we would not resort to anger which may itself add to our problems. Therefore, a wise person is the one who is not affected by hardships.

We have the ability to overcome all difficulties through patience and wisdom. Is it not a pity that we lose control over matters resulting from inevitable events of life?

Moreover, why should you blame your wife and children for your misfortunes?

Your wife is performing her share of duty. She has to take care of the house and the children. She has to do the washing, cooking, ironing, cleaning, etc. You should encourage her in the way you treat her.

Your children are also doing their own work. They too wait for their father to make themselves happy. Teach them the right things and encourage them in their studies.

Is it fair that you confront your family with a grim and angry face?

They expect you to fulfill their righteous desires. They expect kindness from you and want you to talk to them gently and behave pleasantly.

They would hate you for ignoring their feelings and for turning the house into a dark place in which there is not a glimpse of happiness.

Do you know how much they could suffer from your unpleasant and harsh manners?

Even if you do not take your family very seriously, at least have mercy upon yourself. You can be sure that you would damage your own health by being bad-tempered.

How can you continue to work and how can you achieve anything successfully? Why should you turn your house into a hell?

Is it not better for you to always be happy and confront your problems with prudence and not anger?

Would you not prefer to believe that anger would not solve your problems, but rather it would add to them? Would you not agree that, while being at home, you should rest and regain your strength in order to find a suitable solution to your problem with a clear mind? You should meet your family with a smile on your face. You should joke with them in a nice manner and try to create a happy atmosphere at home. You should eat and drink with them and take rest. In this way you and your family would enjoy life and you would overcome your problems easily.

That is why the holy religion of Islam regards goodbehaviour as a part of religion and a sign of the utmost level of faith.

"The Prophet of Allah (S) stated: 'Whoever is more well-behaved is more complete in his faith. The best among you (the people) is one who does good to his family'."[13]

"The Prophet (S) also stated: 'There is no deed better than good behaviour'."[14]

"Imam as-Sadiq (a.s ) stated: 'Doing good to the people and behaving properly with them makes the cities populous and increases the age (of the citizens)'."[15]

"Imam as-Sadiq (a.s ) also stated: ' An immoral person remains involved in torture and anguish'."[16]

"WiseLuqman stated: ' A sagacious man must act like a child when with his family, and leave his manlybehaviour for when out of his house'."[17]

The Prophet of Allah (S) stated: 'There is no joy better than goodbehaviour '."[18]

"The Prophet (S) also stated: 'Goodbehaviour is half the religion (of Islam)'."[19]

"It has been reported that whenSa'ad ibn Ma'adh , one of the great companions of the Holy Prophet (S) died, the Holy Prophet (S) took part in his funeral with bare feet, as if he had lost someone from among his own family.

The Prophet (S) placed the dead body in the grave with his pious hands and then covered it. The mother ofSa'ad who was observing the Holy Prophet's (SA) respect for her son, addressedSa'ad and said: 'OSa'ad ! enjoy Paradise.' The Prophet of Allah (S) told her: 'O mother ofSa'ad , do not say that, becauseSa'ad has just experiencedDaghtat al-Qabr20 (torment by way of compression in the grave etc). Later, when the Prophet (S) was asked about the reason forSa'ad's Daghat al-Qabr, the Prophet (S) replied: 'it was because he (Sa'ad ) was maltreating his family'.[21]

## Complaining Unnecessarily

The problems of life are many. There is not anyone who is completely happy with his situation. But some people are more patient with their hardships than others, they try to record them in their memories and do not mention them except when there is reason or revealing them. On the other hand, there are people who are so weak that they cannot keep any problem to

themselves.

They are so used to making complaints that upon meeting others, they start complaining. Wherever they, go and whenever they are in a gathering, they moan about the everyday events which haveeffected their lives it is as if theyhaven sent on a mission by Satan himself, to spoil the happiness of others. That is why most friends and relatives do not want to be bothered with these and try to keep away from them as much as possible.

But one must feel sorry for their wives and children who have to cope with them. Because no one else is prepared to listen to their moaning, these men vent their problems before their families.

They sometimes complain about their expenses, the taxis, their friends, and sometimes they moan about their colleagues, their businesses, diseases, doctors, and so on.

These men are very pessimistic and, do not see any good in this world. They suffer themselves as well as make and especially their families, suffer too.

Dear Sir! What is the point of making complaints all the time? What do you achieve by moaning? Why should your family suffer if you are angry with the taxi driver? Why do you blame your wife if your business is not brisk?

Do not forget that your attitude would repel your family from you. They will become disappointed in you and disheartened with the house. They might even run away from home and might fall into the trap of corruption and crime. The least is that it leaves a mental scar on them.

Is it not better not to spoil your family's happiness?

When returning home, try to forget your problems. Be happy with your family. Eat with them. Have a laugh and enjoy their company.

Islam has also regarded patience and refusing to make complaints as goodbehaviour and has even allocated a reward for it.

"Imam Ali (a.s .) stated: 'When hardship falls upon a Muslim, he should not make complaints about Allah to other people, but that he should take the problems to Allah who possesses the key to all problems'."22

"Imam Ali (a.s ) also stated: 'It is written in theTawrah : whoever makes a complaint about a hardship which has befallen him, is in fact complaining about Allah'."23

"The Prophet (S) of Islam stated: 'Whoever experiences hardship with his health and does not make complaints (about it) to people, then it is incumbent on Allah to forgive all his sins'."24

**Picking up Quarrels**

Some men are constantly seeking excuses to pick up fault with everything. They moan at every

trivial matter: "Why is this table dirty? Why is the lunch not ready? Why is that vase here? Have I not said before that ashtrays should not be on the floor?" etc...

Some men take this attitude so far that it causes rows and quarrels within their family, and sometimes a family break- down as a result of theirbehaviour .

Of course we are not saying that men do not have the right to tell their wives what to do and what not to do. In the first part of this book, women were recommended to acknowledge this right. There we stated that women should not show stubbornness towards their husbands' suggestions regarding household affairs. However, men should keep their logic and wisdom. They are their families' guardians and as such they should act properly.

If a man wants to successfully participate in the affairs of the house then he should do so in a calculated manner.

As a matter of fact, since a man does not have enough time to participate in all the matters regarding his house and because he lacks the necessary expertise in this connection, then it is to his advantage to leave the housework to his wife. A man should leave his wife at liberty with regard to running the house.

Men can, however, under the pretext of consultation, not forcefully, remind their wives about certain points. Once a wise woman finds out her husband's wishes about any matter, she would try to conform with them. Therefore, a man and a woman who care for each other and their family, can through talking together in a kind manner, reach many agreements on all matters. In this way, most women are prepared to conform with their husbands' occasional demands.

But if his participation takes the form of picking up fault and constant moaning, then the housewife gets used to them and consequently this attitude becomes a usual affair from which nothing useful would result.

A woman with a moaning husband would not take him seriously. She may even ignore his proper and important points of concern. She would reason for herself "Why should I waste my energy, if my husband is not ever satisfied with my work?"

Not only would she ignore her husband's criticism, but might even take retaliatory measures. This is when their house turns into a battlefield. Constant criticism of each other would then prepare the ground for separation and thus a family unit breaks down. In this scenario the woman is not to be blamed because even a wise and patient wife would run out of patience as a result of continuously humiliating attitude of her husband.

"A man called the police station and claimed that his wife had left his house two months ago and that she was living with her parents. After further enquiries, this man's wife said:

'My husband does not like my style of housekeeping. He constantly criticizes me on my cooking and running the affairs of house. Therefore, I have left him to find peace somewhere else'."25

Men should remember that housework is an area for their wives to perform their duties. It is wrong to deprive them of their rights or to turn them into puppets. It is wiser to leave them to run the house the way they like.

As a result, your wife does her job enthusiastically, you would remain happy and your house .would be a home for a happy family

### Appease Her and Sympathize with Her

A woman also, similar to a man, undergoes emotional changes. She experiences happiness, anger, sorrow, etc. She becomes tired from housework and may become annoyed with the children. Others may upset her by their criticisms. She might become involved in competing with others. In short, a woman confronts many problems of which some may affect her so much so that she might become desperate to such an extent so as to react unkindly towards trivial matters.

This is especially the case for women, because they are very sensitive and would react more critically towards unpleasant events as compared to men.

Women, who experience hardship, need appeasing. Men must comfort them because they are their partners and the ones who are trusted by their wives.

Dear Sir! When you find your wife in a state of distress and anger, then try to understand her situation. If you enter your house and she does not salute you, you say 'salam ' to her. This would not belittle you. Talk to her with a smiling face. Avoid-grimness. Help her in the housework. Be careful not to offend her in any way. Do not tease her. If she is not in a mood to talk, then leave her alone. Do not say: 'What is wrong with you?'

If she feels like talking, listen to her and sympathize with her. Pretend you are more concerned with her problem than herself. Let her reveal her grievances for you. Then like a kind father or a sympathetic husband try to help her find a solution to her problem. Encourage her to be patient. Through wisdom and logic make her regard her problems as trivial. Strengthen her character and assist her in overcoming the cause of her annoyance.

Be patient and treat her according to your logic. She would certainly find your help useful and life will soon get back to normal for both of you.

On the contrary, your wrong approach would cause more distress for her. You would also .suffer and it might even turn into a major row from which, both of you would suffer

## Do not pick up Faults

There is no one in this world who has all the qualities and free from all the faults. Some people may be too fat or too thin. Their mouth may be too big, have large noses or big teeth. Others may be dirty, impolite, shy, cheeky, depressed, bad-tempered, jealous, lazy or selfish. Some women may not be good cooks or talented hostesses. Some people may eat too much or spend lavishly. In brief, everyone is imperfect and no one in this world can be regarded as a perfect being.

Men usually, before marriage, imagine their ideal woman to be devoid of all faults. They ignore this fact that there is no angel-like figure in our universe. These men, once married, find their ideal wives not to be perfect and thus start to point out their faults. They might even regard their marriages as failures and call themselves 'unlucky'.

These men are always moaning and do not even spare the trivial faults of their wives. Some men exaggerate the faults so much that they always appear before them like high mountains. They occasionally mention these faults to their wives and humiliate them. They might even mention them before friends and relatives.

As a result, the foundation of their marital life starts trembling. The woman becomes depressed and loses interest in her husband and family. She would think it illogical to work in the house of someone who criticizes her. She might even take retaliatory measures.

The man says to his wife: "What a big and ugly nose you have!?" And the woman replies: "It is not as bad as your ugly face and deformed figure!" The man would then say: "Your feet smell foul!" And the woman replies: "Shut up your big mouth!" etc.

A continuation of this conversation opens the door for criticisms and turns the house into a battlefield in which the couple insults and degrades each other.

If they live like this, they would not enjoy their lives ever again, because a house devoid of family love and sincerity, is not a place of comfort.

Moreover, a man who regards himself as unlucky and his marriage as a failure, and a woman who is constantly being humiliated, are both prone to mental disorders and other illnesses.

If the magnitude of their row becomes larger then there is always the danger of divorce and separation. A divorce is not very helpful to either party especially if there are children in the family.

Society does not have much respect for a divorcee. Moreover, a divorce would inflict economic losses on a man, which are not easily repairable. This is especially true if he wants to re-marry, since he would also have to spend money on his second marriage. Furthermore, it is not at all clear that a divorcee is able to find another woman who would live up to his expectations.

Re-marriage would not be easy for him because of his past record. Even if he finds another woman, she would definitely possess certain faults also. She may even turn out to be worse than his first wife. He would then have to cope with her. This is because some men are too proud to confess their shortcomings. It is rare to find a man who is fully satisfied with his second marriage. It has even been seen that some men return to their first wives.

Dear Sir! Why should you look at your wife with a view of finding her faults and why do you place so much importance on her trivial defects? Why do you magnify her deficiencies so much so that it causes suffering for you and your family? Have you ever seen a perfect woman? Are you perfect yourself? What are trivial deficiencies worth that you endanger your marriage for their sake?

Be certain that if you look at your wife with a logical and fair view, you would see many good points about her. You look and see that her merits would outweigh her deficiencies.

Islam regards this attitude as harmful and distasteful and thus forbids all from finding other people's faults.

"The Prophet of Allah (S) stated: 'O you who express to be Muslims by tongue only but faith has not entered your hearts! Do not speak ill of Muslims and do not set out to find their faults (because) whoever picks up fault with others, would be criticized by Allah and even if such a person is at his house, he would be disgraced'."26

### Do not Pay Attention to Slanderous Talk of the Critics

Some people are in the habit of uttering slander about others. This distastefulbehaviour creates enmity among friends and relatives and can break families. It has even been responsible for murder. There are various reasons for suchbehaviour , like jealousy, anger, vengeance and hostility.

Some people resort to defamatory words in order to satisfy their own ego, to attract others' attention towards themselves, or to pretend to be sympathetic with someone else. But it is rarely a case that slanderous statements are based on good intentions.

Therefore, a wise and clever man should ignore such statements. He must always analyze the statements of the speaker in order not to be deceived or influenced by his evil insinuations.

One of the points for men to remember is that generally their mothers, sisters and brothers, despite their apparent friendship, do not enjoy a good relationship with their wives.

The reason is that a man, before marriage, spends years with his parents where he does not have much independence. His parents, who have worked hard to bring him up, expect him to be helpful to them in their old age.

Even after they marry their son off and apparently give him independence, they expect him to

conform to their own will and wishes. They like their son to pay more attention to them than to his wife. But the reality is that when a man starts a marital life, he makes a great deal of effort for his new family, wife, and independence. He directs his love towards his wife and works hard in this connection. The more he steps in this direction, the farther he goes away from his parents.

Thus his mother and sister(s) specifically feel offended. They regard their new bride as a threat who would be taking their young boy away from them. They might even blame their bride for separating their boy from his family.

Mothers may sometimes think that the best way of confronting this danger is by implementing ways of lessening their sons' affection towards their wives. A mother of this kind would then start to point out her daughter-in-law's deficiencies, spread lies about her, speak defamatory words about her, conspire against her, etc.

If a man is simple or naive, he might even be influenced by his mother's defamatory statements. He would then become a tool in the hands of his family after which he would lose interest in his wife. Under his parents' influence, the man would start to moan and pick up faults with his wife. He would criticize her on any possible occasion.

As a result, the family house could turn into a cold and dull place.

Instigations of men by their mothers and sisters could lead to rows and even fights between a man and his wife. A wife in this condition might resort to drastic measures such as committing suicide.

"A newly married woman swallowed pins at the end of her first week of marriage. After an operation on her to remove the pins from her stomach, she said in the hospital: 'About a week ago, I was married. The day I entered the house of my husband, I felt as lucky as other married women. But after only a few days, my husband and his sister started criticizing me. Their attitude made life very difficult for me. Finally I decided to kill myself and swallowed a few pins'."27

"A woman who was frustrated with the criticisms of her husband's brothers, set fire on herself and died of severe burns."28

"A newly married woman became so frustrated with the bad attitude of her mother-in-law that she burnt herself to death."29

Therefore, criticisms, bad attitudes, and defamatory words of mothers, sisters and brothers-in-law can be very harmful and thus a man must be aware of their nuisance. Of course it is not possible to stop people from talking but it is possible to neutralize their talks.

A man must be aware that criticisms about his wife by his mother, sister, etc are not meant to

be sympathetic and out of good intentions, but the main reasons are jealousy, enmity, selfishness, etc.

He must remember that because his wife draws much of his attention towards herself, his family envies her and regards her as a usurper of their young man. Therefore, they resort to ways of preventing their love to grow.

Dear Sirs! In brief, mothers, sisters, and brothers of this kind are not bothered with your happiness, but rather they are concerned with their own interests. If they were concerned with your happiness, they would have done something different.

It is very strange that parents make a great deal of compliments of a woman who wants to marry their son, but once their son marries that woman, the parents turn completely the opposite way.

Dear Sir! Do not be deceived. Those deficiencies that your family set forth for your wife are not relevant; and even if they are not trivial, then remember that nobody is perfect.

Anyway, are your sister, mother or others who criticize your wife, themselves perfect beings? Paying attention to their slanderous statements would only adversely affect your family life. You might even end up with a divorce as a result of which you would suffer mentally and economically.

A re-marriage would not be easy. Even if you find another woman to marry, it is not at all obvious that she is any better than your former wife. How do you make sure that your family would not treat her as badly as they did with your former wife?

So it is better for you to tell your mother, sister and others right now that your wife suits you and that you love her. You must declare to them that they should stop criticizing your wife or else your wife or else you would cut off your relationship with them. Once they feel your firm attitude, they would stop their instigative attitude and you may find peace with your wife.

But unfortunately, some mothers and sisters do not give up easily and resort to malicious accusations such as adultery. The problem becomes so serious that a man might, based on his mother's statements, divorce his wife or even kill her.

"A young couple took their divorce application to a court in Tabriz. The man said in the court: 'My wife writes love-letters to my brother who lives in Isfahan. I found a few of her letters last night'. His wife while crying, said: 'My mother and sister-in-law do not like me and constantly disturb me. But now that their mischievous deeds have not affected my husband, they have forged some love-letters and have placed them in my wardrobe in order to instigate him to divorce me'. The court reconciled the couple with each other and advised the man to tell his mother and sister to stop their malicious acts towards their bride."30

"A thirty-four year old woman emptied a can of kerosene on herself and set herself on fire.Neighbours soon put the fire out and took her to the hospital. She said in the hospital: 'I live with my husband and his mother. She constantly picks up fault with me. She raises excuses and is very furious in nature. She does not miss an opportunity to create a row between me and my husband. Yesterday I went for shopping and accidentally met one of my old school friends. We talked a while and then I returned home. My mother-in-law started questioning me as to why I was late? I explained but she was not satisfied. She said that I was lying and that I was having an affair with the butcher in our street. I got furious and felt so frustrated that I decided to kill myself."31

Therefore, a man should always be aware of such allegations which could have disastrous ends. He should make enquiries about them patiently and not jump to conclusions blindly. Of course one's parents work hard and suffer a great deal in bringing up their children and thus make them become the centre of all their hopes. They expect him to be a helping hand for them in their old age and their expectations are just that. So it is not fair that when one gains independency, he should forget about his duties towards his parents. He should attend to their rightful wishes even after he is married. He must maintain their respect and be humble before them. He is duty-bound to help them money wise if they ever needed it. He should not cut off his relationship with them and must invite them to his house. He must demand his wife and children to show their respect for them. He must make his wife understand that if she would respect his parents, they would not feel the necessity of annoying her and would even be proud of her and support her.

Finally women are reminded that they have no right to expect their husbands to abandon their parents. This expectation is neither possible nor fair. A wise woman can treat her in-laws in such a way that they would regard her as an important member of their own family. This is only possible if she respects them, seeks advice from them, helps them, etc.

This discussion was presented in detail in the first part to which you can refer to for more information.

### Overlook Her Mistakes

Other than the Infallible ones (whom Allah has vowed to keep away from sins), no human being is perfect and all of us make many mistakes. Of course this is true for both men and women. In the case of women, she may make mistakes by being impolite to her husband, do something against his wish, be harsh to him, or inflict an economic loss on him by being careless, etc. Of course it is true that a couple should keep each other satisfied and should seriously avoid annoying each other; however, it rarely happens that one or both parties do not deviate from

this line.

Some men think that they should be strict about their wives' mistakes as they believe this to be the way to prevent the repetition of the same mistake again.

However, experience often shows exactly the reverse to be the case. A woman, whose husband is strict with her, may be able to cope with his strictness for a while, but would eventually decide to react against it as a result of frustration. She gradually gets used to his attitude until she becomes indifferent towards it.

A husband who would not practice forgiveness with regard to his wife's mistakes, is practically encouraging her to become impudent and disobedient. He might wish to continue this attitude where he will surely have many rows with his wife. They both would have to live in a state of bitterness for the rest of their lives.

Or he might choose to leave his wife alone and not concern himself with her as much. In this case his wife, who feels she has won a fight, becomes indifferent to her husband's will and wishes. It might reach a point that even when she commits major mistakes deliberately, he keeps silent. Their marriage then loses its warmth and they might resort to divorce.

Remember that a divorce is harmful to both parties because starting a new life is not so easy. Happiness cannot be guaranteed after divorce. Therefore, strictness is not always useful and often results in undesired events which one can read about in the media. The best way is to remain moderate and to act logically. Forgive all the trivial and non-deliberate mistakes of your wife. There is no need to shout at someone for a mistake which has happened erroneously. Of course, one can always advise others in order to help them not to repeat their mistakes.

People make many mistakes out of ignorance, so it is better to advise them patiently to correct their incorrect deeds or opinions.

Therefore, your wife cannot be forced into correcting her mistakes, but instead you should explain her mistake and its harmful effects logically so that she could choose herself not to repeat that action again. Thus not only your mutual respect remains as before, but it would also prevent the repetition of the same mistakes.

It is wise for a man to logically stop his wife from making mistakes, but if she persistently makes errors, then again he should forgive and overlook them. It is wrong for him to set about punishing her or trying to prove her guilt in order to make her apologetic. This is because women are stubborn by nature, and improper strictness makes them react more severely than before. This might be followed by unpleasant or even horrific events, such as divorce or murder.

Islam has recognized this sensitive point where men have been made responsible for their

women.

"Imam Ali (a.s ) stated: 'Cope with women under all circumstances and speak to them well; (and by doing so) it may make their actions correct'."32

"ImamSajjad (a.s ) stated: 'It is a right of (your) wife that you treat her kindly, because she is under your surety, and you should feed and dress her, and forgive her ignorant deeds'."33

"Imam as-Sadiq (a.s ) was asked: 'What rights a woman has on her husband, for which, if he acted accordingly, would be regarded as a good-doer?' The Imam replied: 'He must provide her with food and clothes and he should forgive her mistakes committed unknowingly'."34

"Imam as-Sadiq (a.s ) also stated: 'Whoever punishes those who are subordinate to him, should not expect to behonoured or to attain high ranks'."35

One of the causes of rows among men and women is because men mothers-in-law butt into their family affairs.

A mother, before marrying her daughter off to a man, imagines her son-in-law to be perfect and approves for her daughter one who could make her happy. She would respect him and would treat him kindly in the hope of being able to correct his trivial faults at a later stage. Sometimes she finds her son-in-law conforms to her expectation, and sometimes he does not. In the latter case, she intends to shape him until he can be accepted by her and for this she uses every possible means such as her own and others' experiences, and starts to plan her approach.

She sometimes pretends to be sympathetic and sometimes strict. She might act as a guide and a supervisor, or might complain. However, the best option is to achieve her goal by influencing her daughter by making her not conform to her husband.

She uses her daughter and thus orders her to act differently at various times. Consequently, the man finds his wife to be critical of him one day and begging him to do something the next day. An inexperienced woman would think that her mother would be sympathetic to her marriage and would conform to her advice!

Thus if her husband still does not conform to his mother- in-law's ideal man, rows may break out between the couple which could result in divorce and even murder. That is why most men are not on good terms with their mothers-in-law. They blame them for their wives' disobedience and believe that their mothers put words in their daughters' mouths.

It would not be a bad idea if one learns about complaints of a few sons-in-law.

"Mr. M.Javad writes: 'My mother-in-law is a demon, a dragon, a two-headed serpent. May God save the wolves from her. She has made my life so bitter that I am going crazy and feel like running away to the mountains and deserts... It is not only me who is fed up with this situation.

This is a general case and I think ninety-five percent of men are affected by them and the other five percent probably do not have a mother-in-law'.

Mr. F. Muhammad writes: 'My mother-in-law is always butting into my life. She causes our annoyance for no good reason. She is always speaking defamatory words about my family. Whenever I buy anything for my wife, she (the mother-in-law) starts picking up fault with it. She criticizes itscolour , or model and tries to prove it worthless to mywife.'Mr . KParviz writes: 'My mother-in-law has treated me in such a way that I have almost divorced my wife three times. She stings like a scorpion. She teaches my wife to be rude to me, to leave the housework, or to expect the impossible from me. Whenever she comes to us, our house turns into hell. I truly hate the sight of her'."36

Most men try to counter their mothers-in-law's influences on their wives by restricting their relationship with them. They stop their wives from going to their parents' houses. In brief, men do not get along with their mothers-in- law and show their dislike for them by all possible means.

However, this approach, although usual, is not logical and wise. This is because a mother daughter relationship is very strong and is a natural bond which cannot be broken easily. How can a man expect his wife to abandon her parents who have spent years trying to bring her up?

This expectation is not practical and even if it happens, it would not be permanent, as any unnatural act is temporary.

Besides if a woman feels that her husband is against her parents, she might take up a similar stance with regard to his family. She may become disobedient, disrespectful, etc. Moreover, this attitude of the man gives an excuse to his mother-in-law to interfere more severely in their marriage. In brief this approach could have a negative result and might lead to divorce.

Anyway why should a man, who can benefit from associating with his in-laws, resort to such measures which could harm him and his family?

"Indian police authorities reported that in the year 1971, the main reason for a total of 146 cases of suicide in New Delhi was due to an unfavorable relationship between men and their mothers-in-law."37

"A man, who was frustrated with his mother-in-law because of her obtrusions, threw her out of a taxi."38

"A man broke his mother-in-law's skull with a hammer. His brother-in-law then became furious with him and after wounding him with a knife, escaped."39

"Mr ..., who was angry with his mother-in-law, poured the contents of a hot stew over her head. She screamed and fainted on the floor. She was taken to hospital and after recovery said her daughter had informed her husband that she wanted a divorce and could not live with him any longer."40

"A man who was fed up with his mother-in-law committed suicide."41

**Here it is perhaps worth mentioning two points:**

(a) Obviously a mother-in-law, not only is not an enemy to her son-in-law, but it is natural for her to like him as is evident at the beginning of a marriage. Besides she finds herself close to him because of the interest that she has in her daughter's happiness. Therefore, when a mother-in-law interferes in her daughter's life, it cannot be meant to be anything but with good intentions.

She means to be sympathetic, but sometimes out of ignorance, she takes the wrong steps or makes harmful suggestions. Thus one should not be too critical of such women.

(b) A mother and child relationship is a natural bond which cannot be easily broken, and whoever makes efforts in this direction. Would surely fail. Such effort is contrary to the laws of nature and cannot be justified in any way.

Just as a man is interested in his parents, so is a woman. Consequently it is best to have a kind of relationship with one's in-laws that is beneficial to both parties. This is only possible if one exercises respect and kindness. A man can, through wisdom, respect, obedience, etc have a good relationship with his mother-and father-in-law.

He should show his love for their daughter. He should not criticize her in front of them. He should seek advice and spiritual help from them. In the event of their suggesting or doing something wrong. He should kindly and logically point out to them that they are not right. He should not speak harshly to them.

A married man should regard a good relationship with his in-laws, as his duty and a secret to a successful marriage. As a result many family problems are prevented while many more can be resolved.

In brief, it is not always the mother-in-law who is guilty but men should be wise enough to be friend them.

There are many men who enjoy a good relationship with their mothers-in-law.

"Mr.Manuchehr writes: 'My mother-in-law is an angel or even better. I love her more than my own mother, because she is kind and understanding. She always helps us with our problems. Her existence is a guarantee of my family's happiness and prosperity'."42

Even if a man has a mother-in-law who is stubborn, ignorant and impossible to reconcile with,

he should not treat her harshly. This kind of women may make one's life difficult, but it is always better to react softly towards their improperbehaviour . This is because, by treating them kindly, one could minimize the danger to one's marriage.

Meanwhile, the man should get closer to his wife and should make her trust him. He must discuss her mother's wrong deeds with her, and logically prove to her, their undesirable consequences.

If a man is able to create a deep understanding with his wife, then many problems, including the one with his mother- in-law would be solved.

So do not forget good manners, be wise and treat your family kindly in order to have a successful marriage.

"Imam Ali (a.s ) stated: 'Developing friendship is half of wisdom'."43

"Imam 'Ali (a.s ) also stated: 'Associating with people and treating them with good manners would prevent one from committing bad deeds and mischievous acts'."44

"Imam Ali (a.s .) stated: 'Associate with each other and do good. Keep away from sulking and separation'."45

**Be Attentive**

Woman is an emotional being whose emotions are dominant over her logic. She is more naive and sensitive than a man. She can be deceived more easily and has less control over her emotional desires. She cannot decide wisely once she is upset. She can be amused or made upset with little effort. Thus if the man has supervision over thebehaviour and actions of his wife, most of the possible risks would be averted.

This is why the holy religion of Islam appoints men to act as guardians of their families and makes them responsible for their family affairs. Allah states in the Holy Qur'an:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ

*Men are the maintainers of women because Allah has made some of them to excel others and" because they spend out of their property; the good women are therefore obedient, guarding the unseen as Allah has guarded." (4:34)*

Therefore a man, who is regarded as the protector of his family, should notpractise carelessness with regard to his wife's deeds, He must always supervise her affairs and monitor her actions, He must see to it that she does not deviate or associate with the wrong kind of

people. He must logically explain to her the harms of keeping bad company. He must not allow her to leave the house with indecent clothing or which arouse sexual feelings, He must not permit her to participate in corrupt activities or to attend unworthy gatherings,

It is a fact that if a woman is left alone in her deeds and associations, she would possibly fall into the traps of evil- minded people who live in a corrupt life.

Men are recommended to take a look at the number of women who, as a result of their husbands' negligence, have fallen prey to corruption; there are many women who have been deceived at night parties. Many families have broken down and many children have lost their families as a result of such get-togethers.

A man who allows his wife to leave the house with indecent clothes, permits her to befriend all kinds of people, and does not stop her from attending corrupt gatherings, is in fact committing the greatest perfidious act to himself, his wife, and children.

This attitude would lead his wife towards hundreds of danger zones from which she cannot easily escape. Petrol is inflammable and fire can burn it, thus it is foolish to think that leaving petrol next to fire would not set it ablaze.

How ignorant and simple minded are those men who allow their wives or daughters, by being indecently dressed, to expose themselves in the streets, while at the same time disliking the attention or notice given to them by the youth.

Wrong freedoms of this kind have grave consequences. If a woman is successful in taming her husband with regard to her unlawful desires, she would then increase the extension of her wishes up to a level where she would act independently of her husband altogether. This will result in mischievous events in the family.

"That is why the Prophet (S) of Islam stated: 'A man is the guardian of his family and any guardian is responsible to his subordinates to take care of their needs '."46

"The Prophet (S) also stated: 'Order women to do good deeds before they make you commit wrong ones'."47

"In addition the Prophet (S) stated: 'Whoever obeys his wife, Allah would cast him into the fire on his face'."

"The Prophet (S) was asked: 'What sort of obedience is meant here'? The Prophet of Allah (S) replied: 'It is when the husband permits a woman who asks her husband to allow her to go to the public bath, weddings, celebrations, and condolence gatherings while wearing delicate and thin clothes'."48

"Imam as-Sadiq (a.s ) stated: 'The bliss of a man is that he becomes supervisor and guardian of his family'."49

"The Prophet (S) of Islam stated: ' Any man who permits his wife, who has adorned herself, to leave the house, is a mean-spirited person, and whoever calls him as such, would not have committed any sin. And any woman whose husband permits her to leave the house adorned and perfumed, with each step that she takes, Allah would build a house for her husband in hell'."50

Finally, I remind you of two points:

(a) It is correct that a man should be watchful of his wife but this should be done carefully and wisely. He must not resort to anger or violence. He must not make his wife feel that she is being ordered about or else she would react unpleasantly.

The best way is, for the man, to be kind and understanding. He must act like a sympathetic partner and explain to his wife about the harms of wrong deeds. She must be made to choose the right path herself with enthusiasm and eagerness.

(b) A man should be moderate, that is, he should neither be too strict and fussy, nor should be care-free.

A woman, like a man, needs freedom and should be at liberty in her rightful associations. She must be free to communicate with her parents, brothers, and sisters and must be allowed to keep the appropriate type of company.

In brief, there are exceptional cases where a woman should be deprived of her desires. But even in such cases one should not step beyond the limits and become too strict. Too much strictness is harmful. It destroys a friendly atmosphere and causes annoyance. A woman might react severely as a result of her husband's strictness. She might even ask for a divorce.

"A young woman,Mrs ... said to the reporter in the court: 'I got married withMr ...five years ago. We have a son and a daughter now. At times my husband has been treating everybody in a cynical manner. He does not allow me to associate with anybody. He even locks the doors for us when he leaves the house. We are prisoners in his house. I can't even go to my parents any more. My family-members do not come to us either, because of him. I do not know what to do! On the one hand I cannot live with him, and on the other, I am worried about my children's future. So, I decided to take my case to this court; perhaps they can pass some judgment'."51

Men such as this woman's husband are, unfortunately, so strict and abnormal that their wives, despite their wish to live together, apply for divorce. Their wives become so annoyed with them that, despite having children, they are prepared to separate from them.

Why should a man forbid his wife from associating with her near-relatives? Does he not know that too much strictness prepares the grounds for some women to deviate from modesty? Has he not heard of or seen any shattered families as a result of suchbehaviour ?

Even if one's wife copes with one's strictness, there would be a lack of warm family atmosphere in the house. How can one expect an imprisoned housewife to be kind to her ?husband and children or to eagerly pursue the housework

**The Disciplinary Rights of the Husband**

Although a husband and wife, who form a joint family life, share and cooperate in running the affairs of their house, they may have different opinions over certain matters. A man might feel that it should be he who should decide about family affairs, with his wife's indisputable agreement. At the same time his wife may object to her role as the obedient party. Arguments and rows may then start because both parties attempt to establish their authority over the other. The best solution to such a problem is that both should try to refrain from acting as superior to the other, and try to resolve their problems through dialogue and deep understanding. This would only be feasible if both of them stop being stubborn.

Some men order their wives to do many things and if are confronted with resistance, they think it right to become annoyed, to punish or even to physically hurt their wives. This approach is not correct at all. The men of the 'Age of Ignorance', who lacked humanity, used to hurt and beat their wives.

"The revered Prophet (S) banned the beating of women, unless in special circumstances when punishment becomeswajib (obligatory)'."52

"The Prophet (S) also stated: 'I am astonished at a man who beats his wife, whereas it is he himself, more than his wife, who deserves a beating. O people, do not beat your women with sticks because such an act hasQisas (reprisal)'."53

Oppressing a woman who has wishfully married her husband, who seeks comfort and tranquility with him, and who expects her husband to share with her problems, is not right. In fact Allah entrusts a woman to her husband through marriage and a man's mistreatment with his wife would be unfaithfulness towards Allah's trust in him.

"Imam Ali (a.s .) stated: 'Women are entrusted to men, and as such are not owners of their fortunes and misfortunes. They are with you like a trust of Allah; so do not hurt them and do not make (the life) difficult for them'."54

A man who hits his wife, inflicts such damage on her soul that she might suffer from a complex; and the family love and warmth would almost definitely fade away. How can a man maintain a sound marital relationship with his battered and degraded wife? This is really shameful.

"The Prophet of Allah (S) stated: 'O you (men)! How can any of you beat his wife and there-after embrace her'?"55

A man, unless having a particular right over his wife, similar to those to be mentioned in this chapter is not lawfully permitted to force his wife into doing anything or to resort to physical punishment upon her disobedience. For instance a woman, lawfully is not duty-bound to carry out housework such as cleaning, cooking, washing up, childcare, knitting, sewing, etc. Although the majority of women do carry out these works of a housewife on their own, these are not mandatory. Men should be grateful to their wives for their work in the house. Therefore, no man has the right to question or punish his wife when faced with her refusal to carry out the house- keeping chores.

Islam recommends physical punishment of one's wife only in two cases where his rights are violated:

Case 1: A man isIslamically and lawfully allowed to seek sexual satisfaction and pleasure from his wife and to derive all sorts of enjoyment from this relationship. His wife is lawfully duty-bound to yield to her husband's sexual desires. If a woman refuses to satisfy her husband, the husband should initially persuade her in an orderly manner. However, if a man feels that his wife is trying to be malicious to him, and if he cannot tolerate the situation, then by observing the prescribed stages can punish her.

Allah states in the Holy Qur'an:

وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيًّا كَبِيرًا

*And (as to} those on whose part you fear desertion admonish them. and leave them alone in..." the sleeping places and beat them; then if they obey you do not seek a way against them; surely Allah is High Great (4:34)."*

Therefore, the Qur’an allows beating one's wife as the final stage of punishment, in the event of unreasonablebehaviour of a woman with regard to the sexual desires of her husband. The first stage is giving advice. Secondly, the man should avoid sharing her bed or turn his back towards her, and in this way he should show his anger. If nothing positive happens at the end of the second stage and still the woman continues to refuse her husband, he is permitted to beat her (lightly).

A man, however, is not permitted to surpass the prescribed limit and resort to oppression. Men are reminded of the following:

(a) The aim of physical punishment of one's wife should be a way of education and not that of taking revenge.

(b) Hitting should be done by hand or by using a thin and light wooden stick.
(c) Hitting to the extent that results in changing the color of the skin (to blue or red) is not permitted and is punishable by the payment of aDiyah (fine).
(d) Hitting of sensitive parts of the body such as the eyes, head, stomach, etc is not permitted.
(e) Physical punishment should not be so hard as to create hatred and ill-feeling between the couple, or to drive the wife towards more disobedience.
(f) A man (who intends to punish his wife in this manner) should remember that he is to live with his wife and that the family love should not be destroyed.
(g) A man is not allowed to hit his wife if there are legitimate reasons for her non-compliance with his wishes. For instance, if she is in the state of menstruation, fasting in the month of Ramadan being in ihram (garb for Hajj pilgrimage), or if she is sick. These are acceptable reasons and a man cannot punish his wife for not complying with his wishes on these occasions.
Case 2: A woman can go out of the house only after obtaining her husband's permission. Going out without permission is lawfully not allowed and committing it is a sin.
A tradition has been reported that the Prophet (S) did not allow any woman to go out of her house without her husband's permission. "He stated: 'Any woman who goes out of her house without her husband's permission, would be subjected to the curse of all the angels in the heavens and all those who see her, be they jinn or human, until the time she returns (to her home)'."56
This is the right of any husband which must be observed by their wives.
But men should not be too strict with their wives on this account. It is better for them to allow their wives to go out whenever possible.
This right of men is not meant to be a show of strength or an attempt at putting pressure on their wives, but a means of preventing women from going to undesirable and unsuitable places.
Being too strict, not only is not useful, but may affect the family relationship, or even drive a woman towards disobedience and corruption.
A man must stop his wife from going to corrupt and unsuitable places and gatherings. It is a religious obligation for women to obey their husbands. A disobedient woman can be punished by her husband. Here again the punishment should be carried out in stages.
A woman, however, can go out of the house on specific occasions without her husband's permission and men are not permitted to hurt their wives in such cases:
(a) Going out of the house for learning the necessary commandments of religion.

(b) Going out of the house for Hajj when she possesses the necessary financial means and ability to perform Hajj.

(c) Going out of the house to repay a debt provided it is not possible to repay without going out of the house.

## Suspicious Men

It is rightful for men to be watchful of their wives but not to an extent of suspicion and distrust. Some men are suspicious and doubt their wives' faithfulness. This is dangerous and makes life very difficult for all the family.

A man who is suffering, from this behavior, constantly picks up fault with his wife. He monitors her closely and follows her everywhere. He finds supporting evidence for his cause of suspicion fromevery thing . If he sees his wife talking to a man, or finds a photograph of a man among her belongings, or finds a letter written to her by a man, or finds a man looking at her, he would reach certainty with respect to her unfaithfulness. If his wife hides a letter from him, he would think that it is a love letter. If she expresses her love less than before, he would doubt her sincerity.

He might even think that since his daughter does not look like him, his wife must have committed adultery.

All such examples can be regarded as a firm proof of a woman's infidelity by the suspicious husband. The situation becomes worse if a relative or friend agrees with his suspicion.

Families, who are affected by this illness, suffer a great deal. The man would act like a detective around the house, and his wife would feel as if she was being kept in custody. They would both suffer mentally and their marriage would become endangered. They might even resort to divorce or murder.

There are many cases of homicide and suicide which have occurred as a result of suspicion. Under these conditions a man and his wife should be aware of the possible grave consequences and, through wisdom and understanding, repel any danger which could threaten their marriage or even their lives. They only need to bea ware of the potential danger and be able to think clearly in order to overcome their problems.

A man should give up his fanaticism and extreme jealousy. He must act logically. He must be aware that convicting his wife of adultery is not a trivial matter, and that such an allegation needs definite proof.

Allah states in the Holy Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ

*O you who believe! avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin..." " (49:12)*

"The Prophet of Allah (S) stated: 'Whoever, falsely, accuses his wife of committing adultery would lose all the benefits from his good deeds just as a snake sheds its skin. And for each hair on his body, one thousand sins would be written down in his record (for the Day of Judgment)'."57

"The Prophet of Allah (S) also stated: 'Whoever falsely accuses a faithful man or woman, Allah would, on the Day of Judgment, hold him on a heap of fire so that he receives the punishment for his sin'."58

As long as a woman's unfaithfulness is not proved through firm evidence, a man does not have any right to accuse her, otherwise he would be committing a sin for which, as per Islam, he is to be punished with eighty lashes.

Evidence based on purely imaginative grounds are not indicative ofany thing . Old letters, pictures, etc do not proveany thing .

Keeping such things is not right, but this is a mistake that most young people commit and it is not a thing to be seriously concerned with.

If a woman is seen conversing with a stranger, although she is not right in doing so, this isolated event cannot be held against her as a proof of her unfaithfulness. This is because she might have thought it rude not to pay heed to that man, or he might have not been a stranger but a friend of her father or brother.

If a woman makes a compliment to a man, although she should not, it may be out of simplicity and therefore cannot be indicative of her unfaithfulness.

If a woman tells a lie about a relationship, or hides her letters, it may be that there is a good reason for it or she may fear her husband's groundless accusations.

If a woman has grown cold towards her husband, it may be that she is upset with him, that she may be ill, or may have other problems.

In brief, for all situations which may indicate symptoms of unfaithfulness, one can find tens of good reasons which render the possibility of any wrong doing as void.

Dear Sir! For the sake of Allah stop being suspicious. Consider yourself a fair judge and view the problem with logic. Measure the degree of the possibility of your wife's unfaithfulness and find out whether it is definite, just a suspicion, or even feasible?

I am not saying that you should be indifferent or careless but that you should act upon the amount of evidence you possess and not more. Why should you exaggerate the problem with

baseless suspicion and make life difficult for yourself and your family? How would you feel if anybody accused you in a similar manner? Why do you think in an unfair manner? Why should you disgrace yourself and your wife? Why can you not have mercy upon your wife? Have you ever thought that she might eventually deviate from the right path through your mistrust and false accusations?

"Imam Ali (a.s .) stated to his son, ImamHasan (a.s .): 'Be careful not to act possessively when you should not. Because this would incline the right people towards corruption and the chaste people towards committing sin'."59

If you are suspicious of your wife, do not discuss it with just anyone whom you see, because they might approve of your suspicion out of enmity, simplicity or carelessness. They might approve of your suspicion out of enmity, simplicity or carelessness. They might even strengthen your suspicion and cause you unhappiness in this world and the life after. You should not, specifically inform your mother or sister because they would naturally be in agreement with you and thus increase your suspicion. You must seek advice from wise and experienced friends or relatives.

The best approach, however, is for you to talk to your wife and ask her for an explanation. But you should not seek to prove her guilt. Listen to what she has to tell you and decide like a fair judge who is free from any prejudice.

At least try to believe her and imagine your brother-in-law is presenting you with evidence of your sister's unfaithfulness. Why should you act mercilessly and regard her as a proven criminal'?

Be wise and patient, lest you divorce her on baseless grounds. Suppose you endure the sufferings of a divorce, but how certain are you about the next wife? You would still be suspicious. What is their fault if it is you that is suffering with this illness? Be wise and try to understand your own problem.

Be careful not to resort to commit suicide or murder your wife. Because you would destroy your life here in this world and the Almighty Allah would punish you in the life Hereafter.

You must know that spilling blood would one day be revealed and then you would either be executed or would spend your life in prison.

If you do not agree with this point, then just take a look at the statistics of convicts.

Wives of suspicious men also have a great responsibility with respect to their families. These women must sacrifice and prove their ability in such difficult situations.

Dear Madam! First of all your husband is infected with a dangerous illness where he, unwillingly, takes the wrong steps which would endanger your family.

You must express your love for him as much as possible. He must be certain that he is the only man in your life. Be patient with him, do not shout at him, do not refuse to talk to him and do not be stubborn with him.

If you feel that he is monitoring your letters or controlling your comings and goings, do not protest. Tell himevery thing , tell the truth. A void lies or denials of the events which have happened. If he ever finds out that you have been lying about anything, he would regard it as a proof of your infidelity, the damage of which cannot easily be repaired.

If your suspicious husband ever asks you not to associate with a certain person or wants you to do a certain task, then accept his word, otherwise the cause of his doubt in you would strengthen. In brief, avoid all deeds which could make him suspicious of you.

"Imam Ali (a.s .) stated: 'Whoever exposes himself to accusation, must not blame those who become suspicious of him'."60

If your husband shows animosity towards any one, then you should break your contact with that person altogether.

Dear Madam! It is better for you to keep your family together than keeping your friendship with others. Do not think that you are a slave in the chains of your husband, but realize that you are an ill man's wife.

Remember when you made a marital covenant with your husband; you undertook to share all the happy and the sad occasions of life. Is it now fair for you to mistreat your husband who is suffering from an illness? Put away immature thoughts and be provident. By Allah, however much your sacrifice for your family, it is worth it. A good woman is one who can cope with in difficult situations.

"Imam as-Sadiq (a.s ) stated: 'Jihad of woman is in her patience towards her husband's malicious acts and fervour'."61

Do not do anything which would make your husband suspicious. Do not look at other men.

"The Prophet of Allah (S) stated: ' Allah would be greatly angry with a married woman who fills her eyes with the looks of strangers'."62

Do not associate with strange men. Do not leave the house without your husband's permission. Do not get in strangers' cars. Only your chastity is not enough: but you should seriously avoid anything which would arouse your husband's suspicion. He might become suspicious of the most trivial points of yourbehaviour .

"A 27-year old woman said in the court: 'It was the winter of 1963, when on a snowy day, I got in a car which belonged to my friend's uncle. She offered that her uncle would give me a lift home. I accepted and got in his car.

When we reached home, my husband was standing by the door of the house and since I did not want him to see me in another man's car, I asked my friend's uncle to drive on, which he did. Later, my husband who had seen me in that car, asked about it, but I denied everything. He became more suspicious and it reached a stage where he did not even believe my friend's witness. Now it is eight years that he has neither lived with me nor divorced me. I do not know what to do'."63

Who do you think is to blame in this story?

I would say that the woman is more guilty than her husband. It is she who, out of carelessness and simplicity, had placed herself and her husband in this situation.

First of all she should not have accepted a lift from a stranger as this is not a correct thing to do for any woman. It is not proper and it may be dangerous.

Secondly, she should not have acted the way she did when she saw her husband. She should have stopped the car and should have explained to her husband.

Thirdly, one of her mistakes was to tell the driver to drive on.

Fourthly, she should not have denied it later. She could have explainedevery thing even at this late stage and it could have helped to solve the problem.

Of course the man is not right either. He must not regard this event as a conclusive evidence of his wife's guilt. He must consider the possibility that his wife might have carelessly got in a stranger's car and then she might have, fearfully, asked the driver not to stop and naturally denied the whole affair.

He must investigate the matter and once he is certain that she is not guilty, he must be forgiving.

**Notes**

1.Mustadrak ,vol 2, p 550.

2.Ittela'at , 15thAzar , 1350 SolarHijri .

3. Ibid, 6thBahman , 1350 SolarHijri .

4. Bihar al-Anwar,vol 103, p 227.

5. Ibid, p 228.

6. Ibid, p 236

7.Shafı ,vol 2, p 138.

8.Ittela'at , 6thBahman , 1348 SolarHijri

9. Ibid, 8thEsfand , 1350 SolarHijri

10. Bihar al-Anwar,vol 103, p 224.

11. Ibid,vol 74, p 303.

12.Mawa iz al-Adadiyyah , p 151

13. Bihar al-Anwar,vol 103, p 226.

14.Shafi ,vol 1, p 166.

15. Ibid

16. Ibid, p 176.

17.Mahajjat al-Bayda ,vol 2, p 54

18. Bihar al-Anwar,vol 71, p 389.

19. Ibid, p 385.

20.Daghtat al-Qabr : 'Compression in the grave' which is a kind of torment for the deceased person against his sins.

21. Ibid,vol 73, p 298

22. Bihar al-Anwar,vol 72, p 326

23. Ibid, p196.

24.Majm'a al-Zawaid ,vol 3, p 331.

25.Ittela'at , 16thUrdibahisht , 1351 SolarHijri

26.Shafi ,vol 1, p 206

27.Ittela'at , 25thAban , 1348 SolarHijri

28. Ibid, 14thMurdad , 1349 SolarHijri

29. Ibid, 13thUrdibahisht , 1349 SolarHijri .

30. Ibid, 3rdEsfand , 1350 SolarHijri .

31.Kayhan , 25thFarvardin , 1352 SolarHijri .

32. Bihar al-Anwar,vol 103, p 223.

33. Ibid,vol 74, p 5.

34.Shafi ,vol 2. p 139

35. Bihar al-Anwar,vol 75, p 272

36.Ittela'at , Weekly. no 1646

37.Kayhan , 15thFarvardin , 1352 SolarHijri .

38.Ittela'at , 13thUrdibahisht , 1349 SolarHijri

39.Kayhan , 4thEsfand , 1350 SolarHijri

40.Ittela'at , 14thEsfand , 1350 SolarHijri .

41. Ibid, 12thUrdibahisht , 1349 SolarHijri

42. Ibid, Weekly, no 1646.

43. Bihar al-Anwar,vol 74, p 168.

44. Ibid.
45. Ibid, p 400
46.Mustadrak ,vol 2, p 550
47. Bihar al-Anwar,vol 103, p 227
48. Ibid, p 228.
49. Wasa.il al-Shi'ah ,vol 15, p 251
50. Bihar al-Anwar,vol 103, p 249.
51.Ittela'at , 14thFarvardin , 1351 SolarHijri
52.Mustadrak ,vol 2, p 550.
53. Bihar al-Anwar,vol 103, p 249
54.Mustadrak ,vol 2, p 551.
55. Wasa.il al-Shi'ah ,vol 14, p 119.
56. Ibid, p 154
57. Bihar al-Anw'ar ,vol 103, p 248.
58. Ibid,vol 75, p 194.
59. Ibid,vol 103, p 252.
60. Ibid,vol 74, p 187.
61.Wasa'il al-Shiah ,vol 14, p III
62. Bihar al-Anwar,vol 104, p 39
. 63.Ittela'at , 23rdEsfand , 1350 SolarHijri