

The Guardianship (Qiwamah) of Men is Not Domination, And Obedience to The Husband is Not Subservience

(Translated)

Calls to freedom of women and their equality with men have increased these days, in which they defame the rulings of Islam related to social order, including the guardianship (*qiwamah*) that they portray as imprisonment and restrictions imposed on women and girls, and they must be freed from it by any means!

Allah (swt) says: ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا﴾ **“O mankind! Fear your Lord Who created you from a single being and out of it created its mate;”** [An-Nisaa:1] and “sakan” means tranquility, i.e. that the spouses may dwell in tranquility with each other, and each is inclined towards the other and not alienated from him/her, so the basic principle in marriage is tranquility, and the basic principle in marital life is tranquility, and so that this companionship between the spouses is a blissful and tranquil companion. Allah (swt) outlined the rights of each of the spouses towards each other, explicitly shown in Ahadeeth and Ayaat of the Qur’an. Allah (swt) says: ﴿وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ﴾ **“And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable;”** [Al-Baqarah:228], i.e. women have marital rights like the rights men have against them, and in explanation of the verse, Ibn Abbas (ra) said: **“The daraja mentioned by Allah Most High here is the exemption, on the man's part, of some his wife's obligations towards him and his indulgence towards her, while he is fully obligated to fulfill all his obligations towards her.”**

But because issues may erupt in marital life that could disturb its peace, Allah (swt) has made the leadership of the house for the man, and every verse mentioned about women in the Qur’an is a testament to her dignity, so it is either an order to preserve her dignity, or a prohibition against what violates her dignity. This indicates that under Islam, women enjoy a high position of respect and appreciation.

And guardianship is not limited to the man and his wife, but is general and comprehensive. The father is the guardian over his daughters, the brother over his sisters, and every man is responsible for those under his care. The man is commanded to meet their needs. So why is guardianship (*qiwamah*) taken as suppressing and derogating? Why is it not taken as a pursuit of the interests of women?! And the reader of Allah’s (swt) saying: ﴿إِنَّمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ﴾ **“because Allah has made one of them excel over the other”** [An-Nisa’:34], will see that the aspect of preference depends on the task entrusted to each of them; the man has to work hard and travel and strive for a living so that he guarantees the ways of life in which the woman can settle and rest, and so she is not forced to go out to work, but rather remains honored in the comfort of her home.

It is the same reason that made the male's right to the type of inheritance such as the right of two females, as we said that the man is the head of the family; he is the guardian over it and he is commanded with spending on it, while Islam did not command the woman even with spending on herself; thus, it is fair that the man’s share of inheritance is greater than the share of the woman so that it supports him with carrying out these heavy costs that Islam placed on his shoulders, and exempted women from these expenses as a mercy and care for her and to guarantee the happiness of the family. Indeed, Islam has given full justice in its care for women by giving her half the share of her male counterpart in inheritance while relieving her of the burdens of livelihood, and throwing it all on the shoulders of the man.

But the meaning of man’s guardianship over women and his leadership of the household does not mean that he is authoritative over it or the ruler to whom no matter is returned, but rather, it means taking care of and managing its affairs. Therefore, the woman has the right to rebuke her husband’s opinions, discuss with him, and reconsider what he says, because they are companions and not a master and a servant; they are rather two companions, with leadership given to one of them in terms of managing their home and taking care of its affairs. The Messenger of Allah (saw) was also a companion of his wives in his house, and not a ruler who ruled over them, despite being a head of state and despite being a prophet as Umar ibn al-

Khattab narrated on his own behalf, saying: “By Allah, in the Jahiliyyah, we did not give women any regard, until Allah (swt) revealed regarding them what was revealed, and He divided for them what He divided.”

Guardianship is a comprehensive responsibility and permanent care. This is the true meaning of guardianship that the enemies of Islam and those with ill intentions try to distort.

And since the father is the head of the family, and he is its leader and caretaker, he must have guardianship over it, so he is the guardian of his children, young and old who are irresponsible, male and female, in terms of their soul and money, even if the children were in the custody of the mother or her relatives.

But observing the reality of the West today, we see it trying to brainwash women that Islam oppressed them and made all rights to men while their rights are oppressed, and they established many associations and feminist centers that claim to bring justice to women and give them the rights that they should demand, and the only justification for what the West is doing is that they want to draw the attention of Muslims away from their main issues, and they also want to brainwash our women that the capitalist ideology is more valid than Islam in giving her justice, and the idea that women are oppressed by a man’s guardianship over them was among the rest of the poisoned ideas that they persistently put in the minds of our women.

During the days of the true application of Islam, when life was upon the natural instinct (fitra), the woman knew herself well and acknowledged her role, and women acknowledged the value of their husbands and respected them, but today many of them see in the husband's obedience an insult, and the good treatment of him as humiliation, and in giving him his status as a detraction from her worth, and that in her recognition of his gratitude will encourage him to act in superiority, arrogance and domineering, even though thanking her husband and respecting him does not diminish her worth, but on the contrary, it increases her worth in his eyes, and of course, in return, and as we mentioned above, the husband must observe Allah (swt) in his dealings with his wife and keep away from what harms her, for women have the same rights against their men as men have against them.

More so, women in Islam have the right to own property, and no one whatsoever can take away this right from her. So she owns by trade, gift, inheritance, or any other form of ownership, and her husband is not allowed to take from her money except with her permission, because as a woman she has no obligation to spend on or support anyone, unlike what the West does where the woman is responsible for herself, even in alimony, where no one spends on her financially, whether it is her husband, father or others who are obligated by Islam to spend. This is indeed another advantage for her as a woman, that even if she inherits millions, her husband (if he is present) is entitled to spend on her, as Islam obliged inheritance upon her and waived alimony.

And also to complete his duty towards her as her guardian, Allah (swt) commanded him not to let her travel a day and one night, unless he is with her to protect her from the dangers of travel, and this is not a restriction of her comfort, rather it is a company of care and protection for her, for the nature of women that Allah (swt) created makes her unable to do some things, such as pushing away a bandit, for example, or provision of necessary supplies and so on. However, these are not rational reasons for Allah’s (swt) obligation for the presence of a mahram during a specific travel, but are extracted benefits that are all in the interest of women.

We ask Allah (swt) to bless us with the love of Iman and its legislations, to adorn Iman in our hearts and expand our chests for it, and to make disbelief, immorality and disobedience hateful to us, and make us of those who guided to the right way.

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