

# MUHAMMAD<sup>SAW</sup>: THE RESTORER OF FAMILY VALUES

Khaula Shah

**“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” (Matthew 7:3)**

“Until I went away to college, no one in Plains had ever been divorced;” President Jimmy Carter writes, “divorce was considered to be a sin against God committed only in Hollywood and among some of the more irresponsible New Yorkers. The oath given during the marriage ceremony was regarded as inviolable, based on the words of Christ himself, who, when questioned about marriage, referred to the first binding of Adam and Eve, concluding with ‘Therefore what God has joined together, let no man put asunder.’ For some reason, this commandment was considered to have priority over the one against adultery. One of the most notable cases involved two white families who lived in a fairly remote area near Archery. In what was obviously a totally harmonious arrangement, the two husbands simply swapped wives and a total of nine children. Perhaps to minimize false rumors, one of the husbands came over to our house and described their decision to my father. Other children were born to the new couples, and the resulting common-law marriages remained intact thereafter, but the parents stopped going to church.”<sup>1</sup>

This incident very precisely and succinctly defines Christianity's position on divorce until recently, and shows the kind of problems the lack of flexibility on divorce issue creates. This was perhaps based on the literal interpretation of the verses of the Bible. Marriage was instituted by God as a lifelong commitment (Genesis 2:18-24, Matthew 19:3-61, 1 Timothy 4:1-5). Islam had always discouraged divorce but, nevertheless, allowed it and thirteen centuries later Christianity is following suit. The Church and the Western society have gradually been borrowing from the Islamic teachings without acknowledging the source. Islam was the first religion to grant women the status never known before. The Holy Quran contains hundreds of teachings that apply to men and women alike. The moral, spiritual and economic equality of men and women, as propagated by Islam, is unquestionable. Islam gave women rights that non-Islamic world has given to women only in the last 200 years. In the United Kingdom, it was only in the late 1882 that the first Married Women's Property Act was passed by Parliament, and before that, a woman could not hold property on her own, independently of her husband, and in Italy as late as 1919. Misconduct was accepted in English law as cause for divorce only in 1923. Abandonment was accepted as cause for divorce in New Zealand only in 1912. Divorce was allowed for various forms of mistreatment in Norway in 1909, Switzerland in 1912, Portugal in 1915, Mexico in 1917 and finally in Sweden in 1920.

It was only in the last century that Western men were telling women they should not use anesthetics in childbirth because God had decreed that pain was Eve's punishment for sin.<sup>2</sup>

As American Justice Pierre Craibites had rightly observed, "Muhammad may peace be upon him, 1300 years ago assured to the mothers, wives, and daughters of Islam a rank and dignity not yet generally assured to women by the laws of the West."<sup>3</sup> The Prophet Muhammad gave women the right to own, keep, and manage their own property, the right to ask and get a divorce in case of ill treatment or abandonment from the husband, the right to remarry, the right to obtain an education. The responsibility for the maintenance of the wife and children was placed on the husband. Only recently have child support laws been made and enforced in our country in USA.

### ***GENDER EQUALITY IN ISLAM***

According to the Holy Quran all human beings are created pure and both men and women are capable of acquiring the highest degree of moral and spiritual development.

Karen Armstrong writes in her recent book published in 2006 titled *Muhammad: A Prophet for our times*, and she bases her argument on a detailed verse of the Holy Quran:

"Men and women who have surrendered,  
Believing men and believing women  
Obedient men and obedient women  
Truthful men and truthful women  
Enduring men and enduring women  
Men and women who give in charity  
Men who fast and women who fast,  
Men and women who guard their private parts  
Men and women who remember God often  
For them God has prepared forgiveness  
And a mighty wage. (Al Quran 33:36)

In other words, there was to be complete sexual equality in Islam; both men and women had the same duties and responsibilities. When the women heard these verses, they were determined to make this vision a concrete reality in their daily lives."<sup>4</sup>

She continues her argument:

"God seemed to be on their side. Shortly afterwards, a whole *surah* was dedicated to women. Women were no longer to be bequeathed to male heirs as though they were camels or date palms. They could themselves inherit and compete with men for a share in an estate. No orphan girl should be married to

her guardian against her will, as though she were simply moveable property. As had been customary during the pre-Islamic period, women retained the power to initiate divorce proceedings, though the husband could refuse to comply. In Arabia, the groom traditionally presented a dowry to his bride, but in practice this gift had belonged to her family. Now the dowry was to be given directly to the woman as her inalienable property, and in the event of divorce, a man could not reclaim it, so her security was assured. Qur'anic legislation insisted that the individual was free and sovereign-and that also applied to women."<sup>5</sup>

Holy Quran says:

“Whoever does good whether male or female, and is a believer, shall enter Paradise and they shall not be wronged a whit.” (Al Quran 4:125)

Men and women are provided equal protection in Islam. Holy Quran says:

“Those who malign believing men and believing women for that which they have not done shall bear the guilt of calumny and manifest sin.”(Al Quran 33:59)

“Those who persecute believing men and believing women, and then do not repent, will surely suffer the chastisement of hell, and chastisement of burning.” (Al Quran 85:1)

Women being more vulnerable than men are provided special protection: Allah says in the Holy Quran:

“Those who calumniate chaste, unwary, believing women are cursed in this world and the hereafter, and for them is the grievous chastisement, on the day when their hands, tongues and feet shall bear witness against them as to that which they do” (Al Quran 24:24-5)

The Islamic teaching of human equality both in terms of gender and different races is beautifully summarized in the final address that the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup> delivered at the time of his last Hajj. It is immortalized in Muslim history like the Gettysburg address in the USA history. He said:

“Even as the fingers of the two hands are equal, so are human beings equal to one another. No one has any rights, any superiority to claim over another. You are as brothers. O men, your God is One and your ancestor is one. An Arab holds no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a White over a Black person, nor vice-versa, but only to the extent to which he discharges his responsibility to God and man. Only the God-fearing people merit a preference with God.”

### ***A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE***

“It is generally accepted that incestuous marriages,” according to Wikipedia, “were widespread at least during the Graeco-Roman period of Egyptian history.

Numerous papyri and the Roman census declarations attest to many husbands and wives being brother and sister (Lewis, 1983; Bagnall and Frier, 1994; Shaw, 1993). In Hopkins (1980) this is conclusively demonstrated, and more recent scholars in the field have not questioned it. Some of these incestuous relationships were in the royal family, especially the Ptolemies (see the biography of Cleopatra VII, who married more than one of her brothers).<sup>6</sup> These types of relationships were also common in the Roman Empire. The names that come up, in several history books in this regard are Roman Emperor Claudius, Roman Emperor Caligula, Roman Emperor Nero and Queen Agrippina who was mother of Nero. Edward Gibbon has dedicated a chapter to the Emperor of Byzantine, Heraclius who was a cotemporary of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him, in his book *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. He writes about Heraclius, trying to explain his delay to Persian incursions, "It was the duty of the Byzantine historians to have revealed the causes of his slumber and vigilance. At this distance we can only conjecture that he was endowed with more personal courage than political resolution; that he was detained by the charms, and perhaps the arts, of his niece Martina, with whom, after the death of Eudocia, he contracted an incestuous marriage."<sup>7</sup>

Claudius married his niece Agrippina, an act contrary to Roman law, which he therefore changed. To satisfy Agrippina's lust for power, Claudius had to adopt her son Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus (later the emperor Nero), to the disadvantage of his own son Britannicus.<sup>8</sup>

Encyclopedia Britannica says the following about the Emperor Nero:

"Nero the fifth Roman emperor (ad 54–68), stepson and heir of the emperor Claudius. He became infamous for his personal debaucheries and extravagances and, on doubtful evidence, for his burning of Rome and persecutions of Christians.

...

Nero's father, Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus, died in about ad 40, and Nero was brought up by his mother, Agrippina the Younger, a great-granddaughter of the emperor Augustus. After poisoning her second husband, Agrippina incestuously became the wife of her uncle, the emperor Claudius, and persuaded him to favor Nero for the succession, over the rightful claim of his own son, Britannicus, and to marry his daughter, Octavia, to Nero. Having already helped to bring about the murder of Valeria Messalina, her predecessor as the wife of Claudius, in 48, and ceaselessly pursuing her intrigues to bring Nero to power, Agrippina eliminated her opponents among Claudius' palace advisers, probably had Claudius himself poisoned in 54, and completed her work with the poisoning of Britannicus in 55. Upon the death of Claudius she at once had Nero proclaimed emperor by the Praetorian Guard, whose prefect, Sextus Afranius Burrus, was her partisan; the Senate thus had to accept a fait accompli. For the first time absolute power in the Roman Empire was vested in a mere boy, who was not yet 17."<sup>9</sup>

The Holy Quran laid down very clear rules about what relations humans were never to marry. "Forbidden to you are your mothers, and your daughters, and your sisters, and your fathers' sisters, and your mothers' sisters, and brother's daughters, and sister's daughters, and your foster-mothers that have given you suck, and your foster-sisters, and the mothers of your wives, and your stepdaughters, who are your wards by your wives unto whom you have gone in — but if you have not gone in unto them, there shall be no sin upon you — and the wives of your sons that are from your loins; and it is forbidden to you to have two sisters together in marriage, except what has already passed; surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful." (Al Quran 4:24)

In this article the intent is not to detail the teachings of Islam about family values, as those are covered extensively else where, but to show the negative consequences of not following the values of Islam. The purpose of this article is to highlight the pressing need for family values, and what the Western civilization may be missing. For the details of Islamic teachings different books and articles can be reviewed on Alislam.org. Especially worthwhile in this regard will be a booklet by Sir Zafrulla Khan, *Woman in Islam*<sup>10</sup>, recent articles, *Chastity – Essential for Preservation of the Institution of Marriage*<sup>11</sup> and *Islamic veil*.<sup>12</sup>

Jesus Christ gave a golden criterion to distinguish right from wrong. He has given us a yard stick to judge different teachings. It is a general criterion and has a fairly wide application. Jesus Christ had said:

"By their fruits you will recognize them. Never do people gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles, do they? Likewise every good tree bears fine fruit, but every rotten tree produces worthless fruit; a good tree cannot bear worthless fruit, neither can a rotten tree produce fine fruit." (Matthew 7: 16-18)



The tree of Western civilization bears many fruits. Some of those are sweet and some of them are bitter. This article is a discussion on the bitter fruits arising from free intermixing of sexes and so called emancipation of women, in the Western culture. These values have led to what has been labeled as marriage melt down. For the proper upbringing of happy and well balanced children a concerted effort by both the parents is necessary. So this marriage melt down has created havoc with the society.

## **MARRIAGE MELT DOWN IN THE WEST**

In America for the first time, a majority of American women are living without a spouse. The New York Times, which based its report on an analysis of census results, said 51 percent of women in 2005 reported living without a spouse, up from 35 percent in 1950 and 49 percent in 2000. It said that several factors are behind the shift including women marrying at a later age and living with partners for more often and for longer periods. Women are also living longer as widows and once divorced, often opt to stay single, the report said.

## **FATHERLESS AMERICA**

In USA, now only 25% of children are living in conventional families with both biological parents. Children suffer the greatest damage from broken homes. All stories are not tragic but when you look at the information as aggregate the case is over whelming. The number of fatherless children is constantly on a rise. In 1960 17.5% of children were living without their fathers. Despite the increase in medical technology and life expectancy, in 1990, 36.3% of children were living away from their fathers. David Blankenhorn calls this trend “Fatherless America” and “Fatherless society”. What is the cause of this growing trend which is predicted to rise to 50% in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? David Blankenhorn in his book *Fatherless America*<sup>13</sup> traces the origins of youth violence, domestic violence against women, child sexual abuse, teenage pregnancy and many of the psychiatric problems in adolescents to broken families and fatherlessness. In my opinion, the phenomenon of broken families and fatherlessness is closely related to loss of value of chastity in the society.

Let us examine some other consequences of broken family system. Nathaniel Branden quotes, Robert Reasoner, former superintendent of a school district in California, in his book, *Six pillars of self-esteem*.

“Over 50 percent of students have already seen a family change—a separation, a divorce, or a remarriage; in many districts, by high school 68 percent are not living with their two original parents. Twenty-four percent are born out of wedlock and have never known a father. Twenty-four percent are born bearing the residual effects of their mother's abuse of drugs. In California, 25 percent will be either sexually or physically abused before they finish high school. ... Whereas in 1890, 90 percent of the children had grandparents living in the home, and in 1950 40 percent living in the home, today the figure is down to 7 percent; so there is far less of a support system. As to the emotional life of young people, consider these figures. Thirty to 50 percent will contemplate suicide. Fifteen percent will make a serious attempt to kill themselves. Forty-one percent drink heavily every two-three weeks. Ten percent of girls will become pregnant before they finish high school. Thirty percent of boys and girls will drop out of school by the age of eighteen.”<sup>14</sup>

## **TEEN PREGNANCY**

Another negative consequence of not valuing chastity is teen pregnancy. About 39 percent of undergraduate women use oral contraceptives, according to an estimate by the American College Health Association based on survey data. Despite that some get pregnant. The prevalence of teen pregnancy is on a rise. Each year in USA 350,000 teen age girls have babies out of wedlock. In 1994 the birth rate for unmarried teens was 46.4 per thousand girls as compared to 16.7 in 1965.<sup>15</sup> It is common knowledge that teen pregnancy implies a life of deprivation both for the child and the mother. Better contraception has improved the statistics more recently. Since 2002, almost 750,000 teenage women aged 15–19 become pregnant which is a 36% reduction since its peak in 1990.<sup>16</sup>

## **SINGLE PARENTING**

Adult men who grew up in single-parent households are twice as likely as other men to have been sexually abused during childhood, a U.S. study found in 2007. That's because parental absences in single-parent homes provide more opportunities for sexual predators to abuse children, the researchers found. Dr. William C. Holmes, an assistant professor of medicine and epidemiology at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, published the findings in the March 13 issue of the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*.

"Children being raised by one parent are at a greater risk for many things as they grow up, including health risks such as poorly controlled diabetes and asthma. We now must add childhood sexual abuse to part of this risk picture," study author said in a prepared statement.

Holmes noted that parental absence is common in single-parent homes because the single mother or father has to work to provide for the family. As a result, children may seek an adult with whom to share experiences and bond. "Predators are pretty good at finding and grooming these sorts of kids. They set children up over time, earn their trust, act as parent-substitutes by giving them attention and sometimes gifts," Holmes said.

## **SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES**

Next, we are going to examine some of the terrifying facts about different sexually transmitted diseases. Most of the statistics quoted are from USA unless specified otherwise. These have been mostly obtained from Center of Disease Control report from year 2005 or from The American Social Health Association (ASHA) website.<sup>17 18</sup>

CDC estimated in 2005 that at least 19 million US residents acquire an STD each year which was a dramatic increase from the prior estimate a few year back of 12 million..<sup>19,20</sup> Each year, one in four teens contracts an STD.

Authorities believe that half or more of all Americans acquire an STD by age 35. Another way of saying the same fact is that one in two sexually active persons

will contact an STD by age 25. The estimated total number of people living in the US with a viral STD is over 65 million. More than \$8 billion is spent each year to diagnose and treat STDs/STIs and their complications. This figure does not include HIV.

One out of 20 people in the United States will get infected with hepatitis B (HBV) some time during their lives. Hepatitis B is 100 times more infectious than HIV. Approximately half of HBV infections are transmitted sexually. HBV is linked to chronic liver disease, including cirrhosis and liver cancer.

According to the latest facts and figures published by the American Health Department, 20-30% of the American population is suffering from herpes type II. Patient with herpes get painful eruptions in their genitalia every time their immunity is at low ebb. For most of these patients it continues to occur repeatedly as a painful reminder of the short comings of the past. With more than 50 million adults in the US with genital herpes and up to 1.6 million new infections each year, some estimates suggest that by 2025 up to 40% of all men and half of all women could be infected.

Over 6 million people acquire HPV each year, and by age 50, at least 80 percent of women will have acquired genital HPV infection. Most people with HPV do not develop symptoms. Some researchers believe that HPV infections may self-resolve and may not be lifelong like herpes. Cervical cancer in women, while preventable through regular Pap smears, is linked to high-risk types of HPV.

Each year, there are almost 3 million new cases of chlamydia, many of which are in adolescents and young adults. The CDC recommends that sexually active females 25 and under should be screened at least once a year for chlamydia, even if no symptoms are present.

The statistics of HIV infection are even more worrisome. South Africa's HIV prevalence (20.1%), particularly in Gauteng Province (29.8%), is among the highest in the world. The US Public health service estimates that there are approximately 1 million HIV infected people in USA. Approximately 6000 infected mothers give rise to children resulting in 2000 infected newborns each year. WHO estimates that world wide 1 million HIV infected children have been born since the start of the epidemic and more than half of these have developed AIDS and have died. In addition, approximately 2 million uninfected children are currently or will become AIDS orphans. In Thailand where infection rates are among the highest in the world, 10% of young males are infected presently. According to WHO estimates more than 40 million have been infected till date with this deadly virus worldwide. Other estimates are even higher ranging from 60-120 million. It is clear that the global impact of HIV infection in the 21st century will be immense.<sup>21</sup> Zia H Shah has examined in an article, *Atheism: Nietzsche and Dawkins* published in Muslim sunrise, how HIV prevalence is much lower in Muslim majority countries in Africa compared to countries with Christian majority or other religions. This was published in winter volume of 2007 (<http://www.muslimsunrise.com/>).



The following table is borrowed from that article and examines the prevalence of HIV in different African countries and their religious affiliations. The countries are arranged in decreasing order of HIV prevalence. The HIV data is gathered from US Doctors for Africa website, USDFA.org.<sup>22</sup> The religious affiliations are obtained from the following sources:

<http://www.globalintegrity.org/reports/2006>

<http://www.24-7prayer.com/ow/index.php>

Countries	HIV prevalence	Muslims	Christians	Others
<b>Botswana</b>	<b>38.80%</b>	<b>0.20%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>29.80%</b>
<b>Swaziland</b>	<b>33.40%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	<b>33.70%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Lesotho</b>	<b>31.00%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Namibia</b>	<b>22.50%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Zambia</b>	<b>21.50%</b>	<b>1.40%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>13.60%</b>
<b>South Africa</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>1.50%</b>	<b>79.50%</b>	<b>19%</b>
Kenya	15.00%	10%	80%	10%
Mozambique	13%	18%	41%	41%
Central African Republic	13%	16%	70%	14%
Cameroon	11.90%	25%	69%	6%
Côte d'Ivoire	9.70%	38%	32%	30%
Liberia	9.00%	20%	40%	40%
Gabon	9.00%	7%	78%	15%
Rwanda	9.00%	11%	81%	8%
Burundi	8.00%	3%	90%	7%
Tanzania	8%	35%	30%	35%
Republic of Congo	7.20%	1%	91%	8%
Sierra Leone	7.00%	60%	10%	30%
Ethiopia	6%	50%	0%	50%
Burkina Faso	6%	50%	18%	32%
Togo	6%	24%	51%	25%
Angola	5.50%	0%	94%	6%
Nigeria	5.80%	50%	40%	10%
Uganda	5%	16%	66%	18%
Democratic Rep of Congo	4.90%	10%	70%	20%
Niger	4.00%	98%	0%	2%
Chad	3.60%	55%	28%	17%
Benin	3.60%	20%	30%	50%
Ghana	3.00%	16%	63%	21%
Eritrea	2.80%	48%	47%	5%

Sudan	2.60%	70%	5%	25%
Mali	1.70%	87%	2%	11%
Muritania	1.80%	100%	0%	0%
Guinea	1.54%	85%	0%	15%
<b>Somalia</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Senegal</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Egypt</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Libya</b>	<b>0.20%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Morocco</b>	<b>0.10%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Algeria</b>	<b>0.10%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Tunisia</b>	<b>0.10%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

In the U.S., between 3 and 5 billion dollars are spent annually on medical expenses related to domestic violence. One in three teenagers has experienced violence in a dating relationship.<sup>23</sup> Fifteen percent of teen girls and boys have reported being victims of severe dating violence (defined as being hit, thrown down, or attacked with a weapon).<sup>24</sup>

In Mexico, between 1999 and 2005 it is believed that more than 6,000 women and girls were murdered. That is an average of 1,000 every year, three murders a day. Put most graphically, a girl or a woman is murdered every eight hours, the overwhelming majority of the deaths the result of violence in the household.<sup>25</sup>

### **SEXUAL ABUSE AND RAPE**

Child sexual abuse is common; According to Center for Disease Control (CDC) 42% of U.S. adult women report sexual victimization by an adult or older minor during childhood. One in four girls is sexually abused before the age of 18. One in six boys is sexually abused before the age of 18. One in five children are solicited sexually while on the internet.

Every two and a half minutes, somewhere in America, someone is sexually assaulted. In 2004-2005, there were an average annual 200,780 victims of rape, attempted rape or sexual assault. About 44% of rape victims are under age 18, and 80% are under age 30.<sup>26</sup>

An estimated 39 million survivors of childhood sexual abuse exist in America today. Even within the walls of their own homes, children are at risk for sexual abuse. Thirty to forty percent of victims are abused by a family member. Another 50% are abused by someone outside of the family whom they know and trust. Approximately 40% are abused by older or larger children whom they know. Therefore, only 10% are abused by strangers.<sup>27</sup>

Without Allah there cannot be any family values. Take Allah out of the equation and human thinking becomes hedonistic, chaotic and blind. There is no light left to show the way. There is pitch darkness!! If "God is dead" so is humanity.

## **OBSESSION WITH MONOGAMY AND AGE OF MARRIAGE**

Sir William Muir wrote in *Life of Mahomet*, in the chapter, *Arrival at Medina, Building of Mosque*, "By uniting himself to a second wife Mahomet made a serious movement away from Christianity, by the tenets and practice of which he must have known that polygamy was forbidden." This he puts under the heading, "Polygamy creates irreconcilable divergence from Christianity." This highlights the obsession of the West with the so called monogamy. Over the centuries the wave of permissiveness has engulfed every family value but the obsession with what can be used against Islam in their fancy has continued.

Today in the West a person may have as many premarital and extramarital affairs as he or she pleases. But when it comes to marriage there is an absolute and almost militant insistence on monogamy and an obsession with the age of marriage, a reflection of the prejudices of the times of crusades. What an amazing paradox! The same is reflected in the recent novel by Sherry Jones, *the Jewel of Medina*, through out its pages. Need we say any more?

## **EPILOGUE**

'Family values,' historically have been established on the planet earth through religion and revelation. The values pertaining to the relationship between the sexes have gone through various ups and downs in the history of mankind. In Arabia before the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup> the social situation had degenerated to the point where men will marry the wives of their deceased fathers. The situations in the Roman Empire or the Persian Empire were not much different. The Holy Quran established the sacredness of different relationships and with additional measures established family and social values in the Arab society. The rising tide lifted all boats all over the world.

A few centuries earlier St. Augustine, around the turn of the 4th century, presented Christianity as God's answer to the fall of the Roman Empire, which the sin of humans was affecting.<sup>28</sup> What he preached about morality still remains true except that the dogmas of Christianity have lost their foundation<sup>29 30</sup> and its teachings have lost its influence on the hearts and minds of the people. It has pursued the course of relativism so often in the last century that it has lost its moral compass! Moreover, the teachings of Bible were neither universal nor for all times to come. Levirate marriage was practiced in Old Testament times. If a man died leaving no male heir, his brother was required to marry his widow and produce children (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). This and other forms of polygamy were acceptable in Old Testament times, although only wealthy men could afford multiple wives. According to the Bible, King Solomon was the most notable polygamist with his 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:3).

Today, women have been degraded into a mere instrument of sexual indulgence? Society has taught them from early childhood that their physical looks are their main asset. They are sexually harassed at work places. A society where teenage pregnancies are on rise; rape, youth suicides and

runaways are on a rise. Adultery, divorce and broken homes are very common. Every so often we hear of husbands killing their wives so that they do not have to pay alimonies. Islam provided the only logical and sensible answer to all these problems almost 1400 years ago. Islam's approach is positive and proactive, not waiting for problems to occur and then trying to find solutions, but to stop them from happening. Islam's approach is systematic. It addresses change in the entire society, not just in the individual. Islam gives a system for producing and maintaining a social climate in a society that is conducive to allowing human beings to achieve the real goal of their creation which is the worship of God. The Holy Quran has a vision to create a society, where men and women respect one another and help one another achieve nearness to God; where a woman does not need to compromise her dignity, her integrity and her self esteem at any time.

The Quranic teachings of modesty, chastity and other 'family values' will save the family structure of the human race. Islam gives well balanced rights to women that are conducive to their modesty and ability to raise families, while providing for their other needs and endeavors, at the same time. The false emancipation of women in the Western society has played havoc with the family structure in the west and most Western societies are unable to maintain their populations without immigration. That perhaps is the reason for the Catholic Church's obsession with the prohibition of contraception. But such artificial measures can go so far and will fall on deaf ears. The real solution lies in following the 'family values' of Islam that are visible in many successful Muslim families in the West. Why Divine Law is necessary to establish family values in human society and to see some of the details of such laws see the commentary of chapter 24, Al Nur of the Holy Quran at the following link:

<http://www.alislam.org/quran/tafseer/guide.htm?region=E1>

Strict insistence on monogamy and obsession with the age of marriage are not the panacea to prop up the crumbling family structure in the West. The solutions lie in the 'family values' of Islam.

---

<sup>1</sup> President Jimmy Carter. *A Remarkable Mother*. Simon and Schuster, 2008. Pages 62-63.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Michael Ruse introducing a book of Bertrand Russell. In *Introduction to Religion and Science* by Bertrand Russell, reprinted by Oxford University Press in 1997. Page xv.

<sup>3</sup> John Davenport, Mohammad Amin. *Mohammad and Teachings of Quran*. Published by Sh. M. Ashraf, 1945. Original from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Digitized by Google in Sep 27, 2007. Page 114.

<sup>4</sup> Karen Armstrong. *Muhammad: A Prophet for our times*. Harper Collins, 2006. Pages 155-156.

<sup>5</sup> Karen Armstrong. *Muhammad: A Prophet for our times*. Harper Collins, 2006. Pages 155-156.

<sup>6</sup> Wikipedia under the heading 'incest.'

<sup>7</sup> Edward Gibbon. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Edited and abridged with an introduction and appreciation by Hugh Trevor-Roper. The Phoenix paperback, 2005. Page 419.

<sup>8</sup> "Claudius." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2009. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. 07 Jan. 2009 <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/120493/Claudius>>.

<sup>9</sup> "Nero." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2009. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. 07 Jan. 2009 <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/409505/Nero>>.

- 
- <sup>10</sup> <http://www.alislam.org/library/WOMANINISLAM.pdf>.
- <sup>11</sup> <http://www.alislam.org/topics/marriage/chastity.pdf>.
- <sup>12</sup> <http://www.alislam.org/library/links/00000133.html>.
- <sup>13</sup> David Blankenhorn. *Fatherless America*. Basic books a division of Harper Collins Publisher. 1995.
- <sup>14</sup> Nathaniel Branden. *Six pillars of self-esteem*. Bantam. 1994. Page 205.
- <sup>15</sup> Suzame Chazin. *Teen Pregnancy: Let us get real*. Reader's Digest, September, 1996. Page 49.
- <sup>16</sup> <http://www.gutmacher.org/pubs/2006/09/12/USTPstats.pdf>
- <sup>17</sup> [http://www.ashastd.org/learn/learn\\_statistics.cfm](http://www.ashastd.org/learn/learn_statistics.cfm)
- <sup>18</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats/05pdf/trends-2005.pdf>
- <sup>19</sup> Holmes KK, Handsfield HH. Sexually transmitted diseases. *Harrison's principles of Internal Medicine*. 13th edition. McGraw-Hill, Inc. Pages 534-542.
- <sup>20</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats/05pdf/trends-2005.pdf>
- <sup>21</sup> Fauci AS, Lane HC. Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) disease. *AIDS and related disorders*. *Harrison's principles of Internal Medicine*. 13th edition. McGraw-Hill, Inc. Pages 1566-1618.
- <sup>22</sup> <http://www.usdfa.org/images/map.swf>
- <sup>23</sup> <http://www.ncvc.org/ncvc/main.aspx?dbName=DocumentViewer&DocumentID=37939#3>
- <sup>24</sup> <http://www.ncvc.org/ncvc/main.aspx?dbName=DocumentViewer&DocumentID=37939#3>
- <sup>25</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/6470955.stm>
- <sup>26</sup> <http://www.rainn.org/statistics/index.html?gclid=CN7BjZ2p1IoCFSHmgAodJTUWRg>
- <sup>27</sup> [http://www.darkness2light.org/KnowAbout/statistics\\_2.asp](http://www.darkness2light.org/KnowAbout/statistics_2.asp)
- <sup>28</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apologetics#Notable\\_apologists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apologetics#Notable_apologists)
- <sup>29</sup> [http://www.alislam.org/library/books/christianity\\_facts\\_to\\_fiction/index.html](http://www.alislam.org/library/books/christianity_facts_to_fiction/index.html)
- <sup>30</sup> <http://www.alislam.org/egazette/eGazette-Nov2008.pdf>