

## The Rights of the Wife

Almighty Allah has prescribed certain rights of the husband towards their wives. The Holy Quraan says: "The women have almost the same rights over men as men have certain rights over the women in kindness."

Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) has said: "Best among you are those who behave well with the women." (\*1).

The Prophet of Allah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) has also said: "I make a Wasiyyat to you about the women, so obey my will." (\*2).

In another Hadith, the Beloved Habeeb (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) is reported to have said: "No believing man should have enmity and hatred against a believing woman. If he dislikes certain habits of that woman, there would certainly be some virtues in her too." (\*3).

The Hadith means that the woman must be having both good and bad habits. Man should not always point out her bad habits only. He should also appreciate her good habits.

There are certain obligations that men owe to the women and these obligations should be fully appreciated.

Every husband has the obligation to provide for the sustenance of his wife. She should be provided with adequate food, a comfortable home, suitable clothes and other basic amenities of life. He should always bear in mind that this woman has disassociated herself from her parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends and has joined him to share all the ups and downs of life. Hence, it has become his duty to look after her basic needs and comforts.

It should be remembered that husbands, who never bother for the sustenance of their wives, commit a severe crime of depriving Allah's creatures of their rights. Such people would be dealt with severely in the Court of Allah. The Holy Quraan says: "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means." (4:34)

The husband should satisfy his wife's physical needs. The Sharee'ah has not prescribed any limit for this. But, he has to ensure that woman's minimum sexual requirements are met so that she may not commit a sin by eyeing other men in order to quench her thirst. There are certain men who, after marriage, do not take care of the sexual needs of their wives. Such people are great sinners and will

be severely convicted in the Court of Allah. Almighty Allah has granted women the right to conjugal relations with their husbands. The importance of this right can be well understood by the following example of Ameerul Mohmineen Sayyiduna Omar al-Farouk (radi Allahu anhu): It is reported that he was on his routine inspection round at night in Madinatul Munawwara when he heard an old lady moaning and reciting melancholic couplets. The Caliph stopped there and listened to the wailing lady. He investigated the matter and came to know that the husband of the woman had gone for Jihad long time ago and this woman has been remembering her husband with these sad couplets. The Ameer was deeply moved and immediately issued an official Decree to all chiefs of his army that no married man should be away from his wife for more than four months. (\*4).

The husband should not beat up his wife without her committing a most severe crime. The Messenger of Allah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) has said: "Nobody should beat up his wife as he does beat up his slave. He should make love with her later some time." (\*5).

However, if the woman commits a bigger crime, the husband can beat her not in vengeance but with the intention of reforming her and as a warning. While beating, he should take care that she should not be hurt seriously. The Books of Fiqhah have mentioned that the husband can punish his wife for four things:

If the husband orders his wife to decorate herself with ornaments and legitimate make-up but she disobeys and remains dirty.

If the husband invites her to bed and she refuses without any legitimate reason.

If she does not take bath to purify herself after menses.

If she abstain from performing Salaah without a legitimate reason

In the above circumstances, the husband should first persuade the wife. If she does not agree to comply with his requests, he may threaten her. If she still does not obey him, he can beat her barring her face. He should not beat her so severely to the extent of a fracture or a severe wound.

In order to bring peace and prosperity in the married life, both the wife and the husband should take care of each others sentiments and emotions. The anger of husband brings to the wife nothing but tension, depression and confusion. Similarly, the anger of the wife brings to the husband nothing but disappointment, mental torture, frustration and bitterness. It is, therefore, advisable to both husband and wife to be patient and compassionate in their dealings.

The husband should never appreciate the beauty and other merits of strange woman in front of his wife. This may lead to create jealousy and suspicion in the mind of his wife. She would think that her husband has some illicit relations with that woman. This thought is a poison that kills matrimonial relations. If a man cannot tolerate that his wife should wrongly be associated with another man, the wife also cannot tolerate another woman to share her husband. The woman cannot listen to praise

and admiration of another woman through the lips of her husband even if that another woman happens to be his mother or sister or some other close relative.

Man is, undoubtedly, made a ruler over the woman but it does not mean that he should ask her to do a work, which is beyond her capacity, or a work which she would not like to do. If the husband still insists his wife to do the work against her will, she would accomplish that job unwillingly and this would create a sort of disgust against her husband, which would ultimately mar their matrimonial life.

The husband should from time to time censure the life style of his wife - sometimes in a harsh tone, sometimes with love and affection and sometimes with persuasion. There are husbands who always keep a rod hanging with their moustaches and never treat their wives in a good manner other than rebuking and beating them. Such wives get frustrated and start hating their husbands. There are other hen-pecked husbands who over-pamper their wives even after they commit severe blunders. Their wives become stubborn and outspoken.

The husband should implement this couplet of Sa'di of Shiraz in their life. He says: "Strictness and pampering are very good things but at appropriate times". For example, the surgeon cuts open the wound but at the same time apply soothing ointment. Likewise, the husband should not be very strict nor very soft. A middle path always brings good results.

The husband, while setting out on a tour, should go to his wife and informally seek her consent in a loving manner and as a matter of goodwill. He may ask her to invoke the Almighty Allah that the journey may prove safe and beneficial for him. Similarly, while returning from the tour he should bring some exclusive gifts for her. This gesture would encourage the wife to think with satisfaction that my husband loves me to the extent that even if he was away engaged in his business activities, he remembered me. Thus, a simple initiative on the part of the husband will win over the heart of his wife.

If the woman brings anything from her father's house or prepares herself and presents it to the husband, he should express gratitude and appreciate it. This will please her. The husband should never reject or discard or criticize any gift offered by his wife.

If the wife falls sick, the husband should dedicatedly look after her. He should take extra pain in her nursing, feeding, etc. This little service will win over the heart of the wife and she will be very grateful to the husband.

The husband should express his full confidence and trust in his wife and, to prove this, he should hand over the domain of the house to her so that she may feel dignified and involved. The Holy Prophet of Islam (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) has said that the woman is the guardian and caretaker of her husband's house and Almighty Allah will take an account from her in this regard on the Day of Judgment.

The very benefit of relying on the wife would be that she would feel herself responsible for a vital department in the set up of the household. This will give the husband an opportunity to freely think of other things regarding the promotion and progress of his business.

The husband should never share the secrets of her wife with others. Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) has said: "Worst is the person in the sight of Allah who goes to his wife and then discloses her secrets and lowers her status in the eyes of others." (\*6).

The husband should be neat and clean as he expects the same from his wife. He should look smart, dynamic and a loveable person.

The husband should provide her with the paraphernalia of personal hygiene such as soap, hair oil, comb, Mehndi, perfumes, etc. so that the wife may keep herself neat and clean and in better looks.

The husband should not level charges of corrupt practices against his wife without going into the depth of the matter. The relationship between a husband and a wife is based purely on mutual understanding. They have to trust each other. Any baseless suspicion against each other would mar the relations of the husband and wife. A Hadith says: "One Bedouin came to the court of the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) and said, "O Allah's Apostle (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam), my wife has delivered a child who is dark complexioned and does not resemble me. I am sure it is not my child. The Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said, "Do you have some camels? He said, Yes, I have many camels. The Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) asked, What is the color of those camels? He said, They are brown. The Prophet of Islam (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) asked, Are there some grey camels among them? He said, Yes, a few of them are grey. The Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said, Tell me how those brown camels gave birth to these grey camels? He said, Some camel among the ancestors of my brown camels would have been of grey color and these grey camels might have taken their origin from that particular camel. The Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said, Similarly, it is possible that anyone among your ancestors would have been of black complexion and your child might have inherited his genetic influence. (\*7).

If there is some difference of opinion between the husband and wife, the husband should not make a hurry to pronounce divorce to her. He should exercise restraint. After his anger subsides, he should ponder over the entire matter with a cool mind. He may seek the advice of his elders in this matter and decide whether or not there is a chance of reconciliation and settlement. If a point of understanding and reconciliation emerges, he should act accordingly and refrain from breaking the wedlock. The Beloved Habeeb (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) has said that the divorce is the most disliked things among the permissible things in the sight of Almighty Allah. (\*8).

If both husband and wife feel that there is no way out except the separation, the husband should pronounce one Talaq after the woman clears her menses. There will be a temporary separation between them. This period will give them enough time to review their decision of separation. If they think that reconciliation is in their interest, the husband should take his wife back in his arms and forget what had happened between them. But if they think that they can no more live together, the husband should pronounce the second Talaq after she clears her menses. The second pronouncement separates both of them. They have still a time to think of reconciliation. If they decide to live together, they have to perform the Nikah afresh after the period of Iddat is over. If they do not go for any reconciliation till the completion of the Iddat period, the third Talaq will automatically come into force bringing a permanent separation between them. They cannot enter wedlock unless they go for Halalah. Halalah means that the woman should marry another man and have physical intercourse with him. The husband number two should divorce her. After the completion of the period of Iddat, she can marry the husband number one again.

There are some ignorant persons who play with the word Talaq. They pronounce the divorce over minor clashes with their wives. After the pronouncement of divorce they repent and rush to the theologians and Muftis and force them to give a verdict in their favor. Some persons, while approaching the theologians, tell a lie that they had pronounced only one Talaq. The Mufti has to allow them to retain their wives according to the Law of Sharee'ah. Thus, these ignorant people get themselves involved in establishing relations with a woman who is otherwise not to be taken as wife without Halalah.

If a man possesses more than one wife, it is obligatory on him to do justice with them. There should be equal treatment among wives in respect of sustenance, living conditions and personal attention. He has to spend equal time with every one of them. The Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) has said that if a man has two wives and does not treat them equally, he would be raised on the Day of Judgment with half his body paralyzed. (\*9).

If the husband faces some trouble because of the misbehavior of his wife, he should try to avoid her and keep patience. Woman's arrogance and foolishness is a natural phenomenon. The Glorious Prophet of Islam (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) has said: "Woman has been created from the bent rib of Adam. If somebody tries to make the bent bone straight, it will rather break instead of becoming straight. Similarly, if someone tries to set his wife right, there will be more a chance of separation instead of improvement in her nature.

The husband should not behave as a miser in meeting the materialistic requirements of his wife nor should he go for extravagance in her maintenance. He should define his expenditure as per his capacity.

The husband should not confine his wife within the four walls of his house. She should be taken to her parents and relatives from time to time provided these visits do not bring any trouble to the peace of his house.

[1] Mishkat Shareef, Vol. 2, pg. 280

[2] Mishkat Shareef, Vol. 2, pg. 280

[3] Mishkat Shareef, Vol. 2, pg. 280

[4] Tareekhul Khulafa, page 95

[5] Mishkat Shareef, Vol. 2, pg. 280

[6] Muslim Shareef, Vol. 1, page 464

[7] Bukhari, Vol. 2, pg. 799

[8] Abu Da'ood, Vol. 1, pg. 303

[9] Tirmidhi, Vol. 1, pg. 136