

Khutbah : The Understanding of Misconceptions in Islam –
The Mistreatment of Women in Islam
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‘You are the best of ummah raised up for mankind, you enjoin what is right and forbid what is evil and believe in Allah...’ (Qur’an, surah Ali Imran, verse 110)

We have been awarded & recognized by Allah as being the best of nations raised for mankind. This great ummah will enjoin the right, forbid the wrong and believe in Allah, and thereby, is responsible for making a difference in our communities & in our nation. This is the faith that is translated into action. We need to all self reflect and make strides to fit this description.

Unfortunately, we have not been living up to this expectation of ‘Khaira Ummatin ukhrijaat linnaaas’, b/c if we had done so, the word Islam or Muslim would not have been so misrepresented and misconstrued.

In a study by CAIR, one-fourth of Americans agree with one or more of the following extremely negative statements:

- “Muslims teach their children to hate unbelievers.”
- “Muslims value life less than other people.”
- “The Muslim religion teaches violence and hatred.”

So, what do we do about it and what *CAN* we do about it? Are we replying and educating others about Islam. How much do we have the answers to clear up the misconceptions? Today’s khutbah will be a sequel to last Spring’s khutbah on misconceptions.

In last spring’s khutbah we covered two major misconceptions of Islam: Islam - an intolerant religion and Islam - a terrorist religion (e.g. Prophet Muhammad forbade killing the innocent during warfare– women, children, elderly,....., *‘Let there be no compulsion in religion, for truth stands clear from error.’ Qur’an (2:256)...*

“If they incline towards peace, you incline towards peace and place your trust in God” (Qur’an, Chapter 8 (surah Anfal), verse 61) & ‘...That if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or to spread mischief in the land – it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind...(Qur’an, Surah Maidah, verse 32))

Today, I will address the misconception of the mistreatment of women in Islam. The goal is to share information regarding how Islam honors women so that we not only can present it to others as we give da’wah about Islam, but also to implement it in our lives by giving women their due respect and honor.

THE MISTREATMENT OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

Today, people think that women are liberated in the West due to the Women’s liberation movement in the 20th century. However, the real women’s liberation was granted to women through Islam over fourteen hundred years ago, by the one Who created us and Who alone knows what rights are best for the female nature.

EQUAL PARTNERS

Dear brothers and sisters, please note that women are equal partner to man in the procreation of mankind, in bearing personal & common responsibilities, rewarded for her deeds.

The same duties are incumbent on men and women as regards their faith:

For Muslim men and women - for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in God's praise - for them has God prepared forgiveness and great reward. (Qur'an 33:35)

Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has faith, verily to him will We give a new life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions.

(Qur'an 16:97)

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN are provided in Islam

Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an:

"O You who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will, and you should not treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the Mahr (bridal-money given by the husband to his wife at time of marriage) you have given them, unless they commit open lewdness. And live with them honorably. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings through it a great deal of good." (Qur'an, An-Nisa 4:19)

A memo to the men, to the youth who may be tying the knot in a few years, and to the boys, to know that women are not be treated with harshness! Reminder to those who yell, raise their voices to their wives, or even beat...Stop that!

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'O Allah, I declare inviolable the rights of two weak ones: the orphans and women.'

ISLAM RECOGNIZES WOMEN AS INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIFIC RIGHTS.

There are ECONOMIC RIGHTS

The right to earn money, the right to own and dispose of property, to enter into legal contracts, and to manage all of her assets in any way she pleases. She can run her own business and no one has any claim on her earnings, including her husband. Women have the right to inherit. The right to a final will.

There are CIVIL RIGHTS

Women have the right to maintain her maiden name after marriage. Here, only as recent as the women's liberation movement in the late 60's and early 70's, women were beginning to keep their maiden names after marriage.

Women have the right to seek divorce. Even, a divorcee, has to be treated with due kindness. ***For divorced women maintenance (should be provided) on a reasonable (scale). This is a duty on the righteous. (Qur'an, Surah Bakara, verse 241):*** Islam has even addressed taking care of the widows.

Allah even condemns those who slander chaste women and warns of such misbehavior in surah Nur: ***Those who slander chaste women, indiscreet but believing are cursed in this life and in the Hereafter: for them is a grievous Penalty (Surah Nur, verse 22)***

There are also POLITICAL RIGHTS for women.

They have the right to vote. (Women's suffrage, or the right to vote for women, was only granted in the US via the 19th amendment in 1919). Women have the right to participate fully in public life and have their voices heard by those in power. One example is narrated in the Qur'an (60:12): Muhammad (sw) is told that, when the believing woman comes to him and swear her allegiance to Islam, he must accept her oath.

There are SOCIAL RIGHTS for women.

The right to learn:

Prophet Muhammad (SAW):

"To seek knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim."

Muslim here meaning male and female Muslims

The right to a marriage gift from the husband (mahr)

The right to choose a husband

AS A WIFE

Dear brothers & sisters, Islam has portrayed women in a respectful manner as a wife:

'And among His signs is that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may live in tranquility with them; and He has brought between you love and mercy. Truly, in this are signs for those who reflect' Quran, surah Rum, verse 21.

Prophet Muhammad (sw) said, "It is the generous (in character) who is good to women, and it is the wicked who insults them."

Prophet Muhammad (sw) said, "The most perfect believers are the best in conduct and best of you are those who are best to their wives."

Prophet Muhammad (sw) said, "Treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers."

'They are your garments and you are their garments' (Surah Bakarah, verse 187)

Clothing provides physical protection and covers the beauty and faults of the body. Likewise, a spouse is viewed this way. Each protects the other and hides the faults and compliments the characteristics of the spouse.

AS A MOTHER

Mothers hold a special place of honor and respect in Islam.

Abu Huraira told that a man said, 'Messenger of Allah, who is most deserving of all mankind of kind treatment and good companionship from me?' He replied, "Your mother." He asked who came next and he replied, "Your mother." He asked who came next and he replied, "Your mother." He asked who came next and he replied, "Your father."

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'Paradise lies beneath the feet of the mothers.'

***'And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful and good to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship, and his weaning is in two years – give thanks to Me and to your parents. Unto Me is the final destination.'* (Qur'an, Surah Luqman, verse 14.)**

Islam has given honor to women even AS DAUGHTERS

During the jahilliya (ignorance) period, the birth of a daughter in a family was not an occasion for rejoicing, but was regarded with humiliation. The practice of killing female children was uncontrolled.

With the advent of Islam came the verse from the Quran condemning those who practiced female infanticide:

***"And when the news of (the birth of) a female (child) is brought to any of them, his face becomes dark, and he is filled with inward grief! He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that whereof he has been informed. Shall he keep her with dishonor or bury her in the earth? Certainly, evil is their decision."* (Qur'an, An-Nahl, 58-59)**

Prophet (sw) said, 'If anyone has 3 daughters and gave proper education and took care in a proper way, he will get jannat.' Ayesha asked if he has 2 daughters and he said yes.

THE FALL

Islam does not blame Eve alone for the First Sin, unlike the other Abraham faiths. The Quran makes it very clear that both Adam and Eve were tempted, that they both sinned and were both forgiven after their repentance. Allah (SWT) says in the Quran, in surah Araf. ***'So he mislead them with deception. Then when they tasted of the tree...'*** Allah uses the dual form...

PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE

It is forbidden to oppress anyone, let alone women! Allah enjoins good conduct toward women from birth to death. Verbal, psychological, emotional, sexual and physical violence are forbidden, as are false allegations against women's chastity and honor. Men are further reminded: ***'Do not annoy women as to make their lives miserable. (65:6)***

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'only an honorable man treats women with honor and integrity. And only a mean, deceitful and dishonest man humiliates and insults women.' Referring to physical abuse, he added: *'never hit your wives, they are your partners and sincere helpers.'* He exemplified this by never, ever, hitting a woman or child. *The Prophet (sw) guaranteed protection of the life, honor and property of women.*

Islam protects women even through their dress code.

O prophet! tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested: and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Qur'an, Surah Ahzab, verse 59)

Even the dress code of the women is something that prevents her from being abused, and a woman becomes known by her honor and not by her beauty.

FINAL SERMON

O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.

Just from all these ayats and hadith, we can feel the beauty of this religion like nothing else that treats women with such respect, dignity and honor!

Dear Brothers & Sister, just as a reminder, whatever oppression and disrespect exists towards Muslim women is not due to the religion but rather cultural practices of due ignorance. No different than what we may observe in a so called Muslim country or right here where we reside, where women are being killed and assaulted. In the US, everyday 4 women are being killed due to domestic violence, let alone about 1/2 a million are reported to have been battered, while almost 132,000 each year report that they have been raped or attempted to be raped. Again, this has nothing to do with the religion but with the sick mindedness of sick people. (according to NOW – National Organization of Women).

But as we showed, Islam safeguards and protects the rights of women. With all said today and how women are honored, today, let's make sure to go home to our wives, our mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, cousins, and the sisters of our community, and show extra honor, respect and compassion.

2nd Khutbah – Diversity in Islam and the need to harness it

As we know today, the grim reality is, there is a huge misunderstanding & misinformation of Islam and Muslims which does not reflect the truth. It is our responsibility to make sure that Islam is represented in its truest form through dissemination and practice.

Share Islam with others. Begin with the basics: our belief. Clear up the misconceptions. Be the best ambassador of Islam. Live as Muslims and exemplify good character. While at school or at work, be honest, truthful and dedicated. At the same token, when the time for prayer or Jumu'a comes, be prompt in attending to the prayers. Open Houses - we have one scheduled in two weeks on cultural diversity and Hajj.

One of the ways we can share Islam is through visibility as individuals and as a group. There are many good programs out there such as the Habitat for humanity, 2nd Harvest Food Bank, Soup Kitchens, Walk as One, Neighborhood Fall Cleanup (MSA sisters), Mayor's 1st Day, etc., all of

the programs we have participated as a masjid over the last 5 months, around 1 event a month. Partake in all these events. Let them learn about Islam first handed by their encounter with you. When it comes to good work, we should be at the forefront. When it comes to charitable acts, we should be inviting towards charity, etc. We should be known by our good (khair).

Dear brothers & sisters, we should accept diversity and embrace it as something that makes our religion so beautiful. We come from all walks of life, with differences in our languages, colors, nationalities. Still, we are able to stand next to one another worshipping our Creator.

Allah mentions in the Holy Qur'an, ***'O mankind, We created you from a male and female and made you into nations and tribes so that you get to know each other.'*** (Surah Hujurat)

A'arafu...to get to know each other.

Our community has close to 40 nations from all over the world, here in Nashville. How much do we know of each other?

Have we really taken the time to get to know each other? When we come to the masjid, do we ignore each other if we are not from the same country?

If we got to talk to each other, we would find out that we really share more similarities than differences! How much our families, lifestyles, struggles and happiness are alike? The similar problems that each face as individuals and as nations, such as the misrepresentation of Islam that exists.

Insha Allah, the Open House next month will be on Diversity in Islam and we would like to have 40 nations represented. Last January, we had 32 nations and the program went well. These are great opportunities to showcase the beauty of Islam, to dispel the misconceptions of Islam, to give da'wah and to get to learn more about each other. If you would like to participate again, please sign up....We also want to present a slideshow from every country. If you have any pictures or websites you recommend, please email us at icn@muslimeen.org, or get in touch with Br. Zohair. Invite others to come!

As we mentioned about diversity (which would need an entire khutbah to dedicate for), the beauty of Islam is the way we are all interconnected. If a Muslim from one part of the globe is feeling pain, we all feel the pain. The brotherhood in Islam is like nowhere else. Unlike, I have heard from one of my co-workers who described how Sundays racism is most prevalent, i.e., because the churches are so segregated. On the contrary, on Fridays, we are the most integrated of society, displaying true brotherhood. Likewise, we have a tragedy at the moment where Muslims are suffering all over the world. Recently, there has been a cyclone which hit the s.w. part of Bangladesh killing thousands and effecting over a million people. We would like to collect donations for the victims today. Please donate generously and remember those suffering in your du'a.

May Allah instill in our hearts for us to practice the proper rights for the women in our community and to be kind to our women and honor them. Also, may Allah allow the diversity in our Muslim community be a source of strength for us.