

Questions & Answers

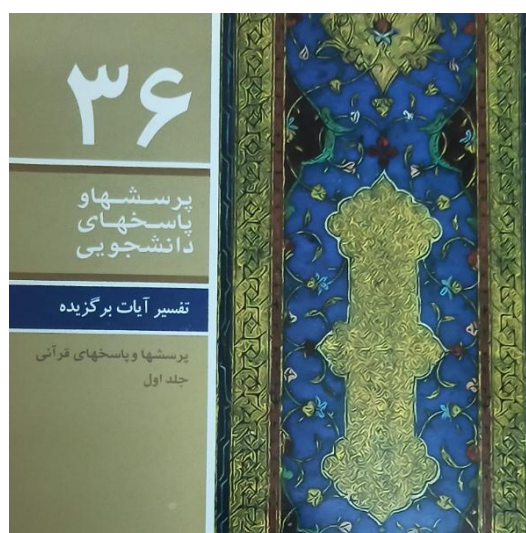
on Pressing Matters in the Qur'an

Compiled by
Naseem Meghjee



Questions and Answers On Pressing matters in the Quran (with a focus on women)

Selected sections taken from the book: 'Questions and Answers for Students' – Exegesis of Selected Verses (Volume 1) by Ali Reza Mustashari



Compiled, translated and edited by Naseem Meghjee

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Please note.

This is a very brief and concise compilation made after studying the book under Ustad Sayyed Hussain Sadeqi at Al-Siddiqah Al-Zahra Semiary. It addresses briefly some of the pressing questions that arise related to women and slavery. This is simply a compilation of the class notes as well as a translation of sections of the book

Islam and Slavery

Questions.

- 1) What is Islam's view on slavery?
- 2) Does Islam accept slavery or not?
- 3) Is placing a price tag and trading slaves compatible with the honour worthy of a human being?
- 4) Is accepting slavery, even to such a small extent, compatible with the honour of a human life?
- 5) Is it acceptable for a master to have relations with a slave-woman without the need for a marriage contract to be recited?
- 6) How is it possible that a master has the authority to nullify the marriage of a woman who becomes a slave girl and can then have relations with her?
- 7) Why did the Holy Prophet and the Imams have slaves?

What is Islam's view on slavery?

The practice of slavery has been mentioned a number of times in the Quran. 'Abd' is the term used for a male slave and 'Ammah' for a female slave. For example, the Quran in verse 89 of Surah Maidah mentions 3 things: 1) feeding the poor 2) clothing the poor 3) freeing a slave. We also have many traditions regarding the atonement of sins by freeing of slaves.

The first area of discussion is to understand the history and origin of slavery. Secondly, what was Islam's view on slavery, and thirdly, do the rules of slavery still apply today?

The history of slavery goes back to the ancient times way before the advent of Islam. At the time of war prisoners were not kept in POW (prisoner of war) camps like they are currently, rather they were taken as slaves and were sold and bought in the market.

Slavery was also commonly practiced by the other religions such as Christianity and Judaism. Apart from war, there were also other ways in which slaves would be captured and traded. One common way was through compulsion which would often occur via ransacking and raids where the captured slaves would then be sold on. The most well-known example of this is the Atlantic slave trade, where millions of Africans were captured and traded as slaves. Some scholars have argued that slavery still exists today albeit in a slightly different form, e.g. rich people buy a number of people from the 3rd world countries

and sell them on or use them for hard labour work. Whilst they call these workers ‘maids’ or ‘helpers’ there are many features to this which resemble slavery.

Does Islam accept slavery or not?

There are some aspects of slavery which Islam accepts such as slavery through the means of (legitimate) war, and there are other aspects of slavery which Islam strongly rejects, such as slavery through compulsion. This is rejected because it hinders and meddles with the honourability of man, for example being taken by force from your living conditions for no reason and then being sold on to others. This has been forbidden in Islam because mankind is created to be free regardless of the colour of their skin or the place they reside.

Islam intended to abolish slavery altogether but due to the circumstances of the time and society it was unable to abruptly abolish slavery. This was because the practice had become part and parcel of the society and had deeply infiltrated into their way of life and embedded into their culture. Islam therefore aimed to gradually lift slavery and prepare the groundwork to rid the society of the type of slavery they practiced. One of the ways Islam sought to slowly remove slavery was through constant encouragement of freeing slaves (such as making it incumbent upon people to free a slave for the atonement of their sins).

In light of this, there is a type of slavery that was accepted by Islam, and still exists in jurisprudence today, which was gaining slaves through (legitimate) war with the disbelievers who initiate offensive war against Muslims. As a consequence of their aggression anyone captured are taken as slaves, however it is forbidden to kill prisoners of war or to humiliate them, so they are taken to Muslim households to work for them.

This is not seen as a humiliation or degradation for them as they contribute to the household through helping them as well as being a help for the wider society. This scenario is much more preferable than for them to be staying in a POW camp. In addition to this, whilst they live under a Muslim family, they become more familiar with the Muslim lifestyle and are exposed more to Islam and the beauty of the religion. This often leads to them becoming Muslims themselves and due to the way they were treated by the family they often prefer to stay and continue living alongside the family. Many of the slaves in the household of the Prophet were such.

In Islam there are rights that the slave has and the Master must adhere to these rights, such

as the slave must not be tortured, the slave must be provided with a place to stay and provided with clothing as well as food.

Now the following question arises: **If Islam was not in favour of certain forms of slavery then why did Islam allow the practise to continue?**

The answer to this stems from the historical context and situation of that time. In those days it was common that the enemies would take the Muslims as slaves if they became victorious in war. If Islam had prohibited the Muslims from having the same practise it would have demoralised and weakened them knowing that if they were to lose the war then their family would be taken as slaves however if they won they were not allowed to practise the same. This would have made the enemies more audacious so in order to maintain the tactic of war, Islam kept and allowed this practise as a deterrent.

Throughout history taking prisoners of war from the enemy camp was a very established practise. For most of human history victors would enslave the prisoners of war e.g. the Roman Empire practised enslavement or slaughtering of prisoners of war. During the middle ages, the Christian authorities also deemed it permissible to take prisoners of war during their religious wars. Feudal Japan also kept the tradition of taking their victims as prisoners of war. The Mongol empire also was known for slaying prisoners of war more than enslaving. The Aztecs were known for giving live prisoners as sacrifice. During the Modern times too, in Europe prisoners of war were taken as private property of the captor. During the American civil war, taking prisoners of war was still a practise although a system of exchange of prisoners was established.

This therefore gives a small glimpse of how taking prisoners of war was part and parcel of human civilisation for centuries. It was only in the early 20th century that rights for prisoners of war was established through the third Geneva convention which included that prisoners must be treated with respect, provided with food and clothing etc. This is something that Islam had already established in the 7th century. From this we can conclude that Islam sought the reformation of slavery from early on but due to the practise being so strongly embedded into human society it was difficult to eradicate altogether.

Islam therefore wasn't able to eradicate slavery altogether due to opponents having cruel methods of slaying and enslaving prisoners of war. Islam allowed prisoners of war to be

taken as slaves but prohibited their killing. According to the times and situation, the Muslim leader is able to make wise decisions on whether taking prisoners of war is acceptable especially if in today's day and age this practise is no longer in action. Islam thus, only kept slavery as a practise to replicate the actions of enemy and a deterrent as it would be unjust for the enemy to allow enslavement and slaying of Muslims yet Muslims were unable to have the same rule in order to deter the enemy.

Is accepting slavery, even to such a small extent, compatible with the honour of a human life?

Every human life is valuable and honourable however, many humans commit crimes and perform bad actions that have negative consequences for them e.g. are put into prison. When a war is waged against Islam, if the enemies have lost the war the prisoners of war are taken as slaves. In those days, it would be better to be taken as a slave rather than being killed or placed in make shift prisons with terrible conditions. History shows how prisoners were treated in the most inhumane way by empires that ruled in the past. It is therefore be justified to see that Islam in the 7th century came with a better solution for prisoners of war which was instead of killing them or imprisoning them, the Muslims would take them as servants to help and aid in their households and in return the master ought to take care of their food, clothing and shelter.

This was more honourable than being killed or imprisoned in unbearable conditions. In addition to this, each person was given value according to their skills e.g. if the individual had skills of tailoring, or was literate or was a builder and was able to give back back to society he/she was given its due value. Just like in today's society, each individual is paid differently according to their skills as well as how much they give back to back to society. Through this method of slavery, the person is not set free without any consequences and must pay for their actions. Through service and living alongside a Muslim family it is hoped that the slave will become aware of the religion of Islam and the the Muslim way of life therefore will be more inclined to the religion.

Is it acceptable for a master to have relations with a slave-woman without the need for a marriage contract to be recited?

In Islam when you have become someone's possession i.e. a slave-girl becomes the possession of the Master/owner, then it is permissible for the master to have relations with with her since she is now in his possession. This is due to the consequence of the war

therefore not needing any contract to be recited. The reason behind this is so that the woman can bear him a child and as a result of this she will become a free woman and not to be sold on, thus also increasing her status in society. It must not be forgotten that this slave should not be treated as a sexual slave nor is her master allowed to pass her on to others to be abused. These relationships have very strict rules and criteria in Islam.

How is it possible that a woman who becomes a slave girl can have her marriage nullified by her master and he is allowed to have relations with her?

The whole idea of the master being able to have relations with her is so that she can become ‘umme walad’, which means to bear him a child, and therefore ensuring her own status to go up and no longer to be considered a slave. It is not permissible to sell or buy a woman who has been able to bear a child for her master. This was to render her free.

Islam considers freeing a slave as a very important type of worship which indicates that Islam sought to eventually and gradually remove slavery from the system. One of the ways was through this, the woman becomes a mother to the master’s child and therefore renders her freedom. Other ways would be allowing skilful slaves to put their skills into practise and become free e.g. those who could read and write would teach the Muslims to read and write and therefore attain freedom.

The whole concept behind slavery was not to degrade or dishonour, rather in a society where enslavement was so deeply rooted and they were either killed or dishonoured through imprisoning, it was necessary to change their ways. Islam proposed a solution that that would allow openings for uplifting slaves and providing them opportunity for freedom whilst also introducing them to the religion of Islam and the Muslim’s way of life.

There are examples in history of individuals who were slaves but after encountering the Prophet became close companions of him and were then given a high position in society. One of these examples is Bilal, the Ethiopian slave who later became a Governor of Madinah. Another example is Zaid who became free too and was one of the scribes of the Quran and Hadith as well as having a son whose name was Usama who later became an important commander of Muslim army.

Why did the Holy Prophet and the Imams have slaves?

The reason behind this was purely to spread the message of Islam. The Holy personalities would teach, educate and nurture their slaves and facilitate their spiritual growth. Later they would free them. The Holy personalities would treat them in such a way that the majority of the slaves would insist on staying with them after being set free.

Failure to abolish slavery completely

Islam considers all of humanity as equal to one another and if that's so then why didn't Islam completely abolish slavery?

Abolishing slavery altogether at that time was not possible due to the reasons below:

- 1) Economic order in those days would have been disrupted as the society's economy was dependent on slave trade. Instead of abolishing it altogether and all of sudden Islam slowly attempted to change people's behaviour towards slavery by implementing certain rules and doing so without disrupting the economic order of the society.
- 2) Some thinkers considered the sudden abolition of slavery, and that too all in one go to be too dangerous as it might have disrupted the structure of society without the correct grounding in place since it was a practise that had been going on for centuries before the arrival of Islam
- 3) Since slaves lived under poverty and were dependent on their master they were inexperienced and unprepared to live an independent life. If Islam would have stopped and eradicated slavery at once it could have been the case that it would have been to their disadvantage as they didn't have the ability to live an independent lifestyle. They were imbedded into the system as slaves and didn't know anything other than simply being slaves. Islam therefore took into consideration these aspects and initiated a more complete solution for eradication of slavery slowly as opposed to all at once.
- 4) In order to maintain the safety of the lives of the prisoners of war as well as preventing the women from being raped, Islam allowed them to be taken as slaves into Muslim households with rules and regulations and gradually give them the rights equal to those given to the Muslim citizens
- 5) During wars between Muslims and Non-Muslims, the opposition/enemy would take the Muslim prisoners of war as slaves and therefore from this perspective Islam had

no choice but to implement the same in order to be used as a deterrent and a tactic of war. If Islam wanted to act differently, this would have caused weakness in the army and would have allowed the enemy to have an upper hand in psychological warfare.

The philosophy behind the permissibility of having multiple wives in Islam

Questions

- 1) What is the philosophy behind the permissibility of having multiple wives in Islam?
- 2) If having more than one wife is good and recommended, then why did the Holy Prophet and Imam Ali not take second wives during the lifetime of Bibi Khadija and Bibi Fatimah
- 3) Is the permissibility of having multiple wives in Islam against the nature/feelings of a woman?

In order to address the above questions, one of the core concepts that need to be understood is that ‘marriage’ in Islam is a protection against sin and aiding the society in general to stay away from moral corruption.

What is then, the philosophy behind the permissibility of multiple wives in Islam?

Islam is a wholesome religion which provides a solution/practise for all areas of life. The idea behind multiple wives is again available for those who could use it and see a greater benefit for it. Islam has rules and solutions for many different aspects of life and it is a wholesome system that caters for all sorts of needs, however that doesn’t mean that every person should misuse the ruling and apply it to their lives unless there is an actual need for this.

Some of the reasons why multiple wives was allowed in Islam are the following:

1. In societies where the number of women are a lot more than men and the need for a man having more than one is necessary for the society (in order to stop corruption, in order to aid women).
2. In a situation where there has been war and many of the men are killed in war. The women who lose their husbands end up having no caretaker or protector for themselves. In this situation the permissibility of being a second wife to another man can help meet her needs as well as prevent corruption in society and provide stability,

3. God also wants to provide opportunities for women in societies who are unable to get married due to many other reasons. In order to facilitate for these women too, God allowed for them to be a second wife so to not be prevented from the benefits of marriage. So this in essence becomes a benefit for a woman and provides her an option for stability where it seemed scarce.

A few important points.

It is very important to understand that in the Quran, God explicitly allows the man to marry more than one but on the condition that he is able to uphold justice between the wives. If the man is unable to do this, God in the Quran then commands that they should only marry one. This point is very important as it shows a few things:

1) Only marry a second when there is a need and you have the ability to be fair and just between the two (since this is extremely difficult it only leaves it open for those few who actually marry more than one for specific and needed reasons)

2) Polygamy is permissible but not obligatory! Just like we have many things in Islam that are allowed for certain situations but only for those specific situations, that doesn't mean we must act upon it. So the main idea is: Only if there is a need it can be pursued but it shouldn't be for personal whims and desires as one has to go back to the idea of being just to all otherwise it is not encouraged.

3) Common view ('urf) of the society that the man lives in must also be considered. There are many societies in which having more than one wife is very normal and acceptable whereas in other societies it is totally abhorred. Therefore in this situation, if marrying more than one is causing more harm than benefit it should most certainly be avoided.

If having more than one wife is good and recommended, then why did the Holy Prophet and Imam Ali not take second wives during the lifetime of Bibi Khadija and Bibi Fatimah?

This links to the above points of applying this in your life only where there is a need to do so. We see in history that the Holy Prophet and Imam Ali only stuck to their one wife because there was no need to have a second in the lifetime of Bibi Khadija and Bibi Fatimah. We clearly see in history that the Holy prophet only had multiple wives after Bibi Khadija and almost all of his marriages had a political or social need behind it in order to benefit the woman. We see that Imam Ali also only married again after the death of Bibi Fatimah and not during her lifetime.

Is the permissibility of having multiple wives in Islam against the nature/feelings of a woman?

This idea that all women, even those in different countries, societies and cultures are against the idea of multiple wives is not necessarily a correct view. We see that in many cultures having more than one wife or being a second, third or fourth wife is a completely normal phenomenon and is totally accepted. From this we can also see today that many women are very happy to be accepted as a second wife in some cultures and societies and no problem is seen with this at all.

This all goes back to the common view of the society that the person is from. If in that society having multiple wives is seen as something normal and accepted then Islam has allowed it due to the fact that it can have many benefits for women in providing them stability. However, in other societies and cultures where the idea of multiple wives is seen as detested it is advised to refrain from it in order not to cause more harm and bring forth unnecessary conflicts.

A number of our scholars have differing opinions regarding multiple wives and Ayatollah Khamenei is one who does not encourage the idea of pursuing more than one wife due to the culture and society in Iran which commonly sees this practise as objectionable and does not favour this concept at all. Shaheed Mutahhari, also another well-known scholar, only allows multiple wives with the condition of certain needs being fulfilled and having certain rules and regulations.

The value of a woman in Islam

Questions

- 1) What is the meaning behind the verse ‘Men are greater in power than women’?
Does it degrade the woman’s value? What is the philosophy behind the terms used in the Quran?
- 2) What is the value of a woman from the Quranic perspective?
- 3) If women are as valuable as men in Islam, then why do they have different rules on inheritance?

God has extensively mentioned women in his Holy word through the blessed Quran. There is a whole chapter dedicated to women in the Quran named ‘Nisaa’ which literally translates as ‘women’. In this chapter, God brings forward the rights and status of the woman and her position. One of the verses mentioned in this surah is verse 34 which translates as ‘men are greater in power than women’ or ‘men are the maintainers of women’. Other translations use ‘guardians of women’ or ‘protectors of women’.

Generally it comes across as men have the ‘upper hand’ or are being ‘favoured above women’ hence it is important to analyse and understand the meaning behind the verse and grasp whether this verse is compatible with the equal rights of men and women in the eyes of God.

What is the meaning behind the verse ‘Men are greater in power than women’?

Generally speaking, from a factual and scientific perspective the natural build of a man is bigger and stronger than a woman. There are some exceptions to the rule, however men usually have more strength than women as it is known that typically a man’s upper body muscle mass is 75% more than females as well as having 90% more strength than females. The Quran mentions exactly the same fact that ‘men are stronger than women’.

The Quran also continues to explain the meaning behind by adding in the continuation of the verse ‘because Allah has made some of them to excel others and because they spend out of their property’. Due to this some interpret the word used in the verse of ‘*qawamun*’ as being ‘maintainers, guardians, and protectors’ of women. This is because God clarifies the

ambiguity by explaining that ‘they spend out of their property’. In essence the word ‘*qawamun*’ refers to having greater strength which is also a scientific fact that men in general have more physical strength than women.

Does this degrade a woman’s value? What is the philosophy behind the terms used in the Quran?

The mention of this in the Quran is usually taken in a negative way and is often perceived as degrading for women, however there is no intent of lowering the status of a woman in this verse nor does it imply that man has a greater position in the eyes of God compared to a woman. It is rather a mere expression and description of physical qualities endowed upon women and men and points out the difference between the two. Additionally the Quran adds responsibility on the man’s shoulders since they possess this quality of strength, highlighting that it is not just a privilege given to men but rather it comes with its own responsibilities.

The main philosophy behind the term used in the Quran of ‘men having more strength’ is to address the idea that men are required to be caretakers of women. This is due to the abilities naturally endowed upon them e.g. strength to work in difficult labour positions (pre modern society and pre online working world). Men in the past were usually the main breadwinner of the household and women were unable to earn a living through harsh labour work due to lesser physical strengths and other barriers.

The idea of men being ‘maintainers’ of women again refers to the role a man plays in the family structure. Just like a house needs a pillar to stand upright and firm, a family structure also needs a pillar. In this case it is the man of the house, due to his strength and ability in providing for the family, who is able to uphold this and guard his family from any dangers as well as providing for them. Since men have physical qualities that allow them to fulfil this role in a more complete manner, this in no way insults a woman and her position nor does it degrade the women and their status.

As mentioned above, it is simply a difference of physical qualities which leads to having different roles due to the different physical qualities possessed by both genders. Due to possession of these qualities of strength, God has made incumbent upon man to face difficulties and earn a livelihood to provide for his family which is his role. So has Islam done a disservice to women by allowing the difficult tasks to be placed upon the shoulders of a man?

What is the value of a woman from the Quranic perspective?

It is often perceived that Islam values women differently to men and usually gives women a lower status. This however is far from the reality since the Quran addresses women in a very favourable and equal manner to men. In the chapter named 'women' verse 124, God mentions that whoever does an action be it male or female will be rewarded with heaven. The explicit mention of men and women in this verse is to outline the fact that for God, good deeds and actions are accepted and dear to God regardless of gender or who it is performed by. In God's eyes both are equal.

In respect to the verses of the Quran as well as traditions, it is seen that God considers men and women as complete equals of each other in these following instances:

- 1) Equality in humanity and human nature
- 2) Equality in choosing what is right and wrong and choosing faith or disbelief
- 3) They are equal in the responsibilities and duties assigned to them according to their role
- 4) Equality in social, political and religious independence
- 5) Economic independence (something that has only entered into the western society recently for women)
- 6) Mothers enjoy family rights as well as fathers however mothers have more rights with regard to her efforts and duties and responsibilities
- 7) Equality in the path of human perfection and attaining closeness to God through worship

There are many verses in the Quran that point to equality between men and women some of which are: chapter 3 verse 195 *'I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether it is male or female'*. Another verse is chapter 16 verse 98 which also has a similar message to the above. The verse says *'whoever does good whether male or female and he/she is a believer, we will most certainly make him live a happy life and we will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did'*

There are many more verses like these, to reference a few: Chapter 2 verse 183, chapter 60 verse 10 and 12. So from this it is evident that a woman, just like a man can attain high levels of perfection and proximity to God.

Additionally the position of the woman from the perspective of revelation is emphasised as God in chapter 30 verse 21 refers to the creation of women as 'a sign of God'. Through this we can understand that the woman is a sign of God's mercy, a sign of His beauty and a sign of His power. The woman is also seen as a manifestation of God's qualities of being a nourisher since she is the educator and nourisher of human life through motherhood. A woman is gentle in her nature and for this reason it is not required of her to perform tasks that are too heavy and rough upon her such as fighting in wars etc. and these duties have been lifted from her. In traditions, many times the birth of a girl is celebrated and referred to as a blessing and a mercy from God too which further points to the valuable position of a woman in the religion.

With regard to points mentioned above, it becomes clear that there is equality in the religion of Islam in reference to a woman and man flourishing and growing and reaching perfection altogether.

If women are as valuable as men in Islam, then why do they have different rules on inheritance?

As we can see there are some differences in jurisprudential rulings between men and women in some areas such as inheritance. This issue seems to be picked on frequently in an attempt to highlight the unfairness and inequalities between the genders in Islam. However this difference has not been understood fully, rather it has been taken on the surface level to plant doubts in minds without a detailed explanation.

It is important to note these rulings should be considered in the context of the difference in genders and different occupation/roles/responsibilities each take in the society. Once we keep this in mind we will understand that these rulings are quite just. It is worth noting that providing equality doesn't always mean that you are also being just. An example to explain this further is through considering this scenario: A person has 2 children, one is a 5 year old son and one is a 10 year old daughter, if both children are provided with the exact same amount of food it could be that an injustice is done upon the daughter (who is older and naturally requires more food than the younger son). On the other hand if both children are provided with the amount of food that is suitable for the 10 year old daughter then, the son will be provided with more than what he requires and this would result in food being wasted. Therefore in this situation, providing one in accordance to their needs is more just than providing for everyone equally.

In Islam, men have a higher inheritance because they require it due to the load of responsibilities placed upon their shoulders such as providing nafaqah (sustenance) for the family and his wife e.g. food, clothing, shelter. On the flip side the woman, Islamically speaking, has no requirements to provide financially for her family and children. For a man it is essential for him to receive a good amount of inheritance as he is not only spending it for himself, he is required to also spend for his wife and children.

When a woman however receives inheritance she is free to use it all for herself as it is not obligatory upon her to spend that money for her husband and children, that's the man's role. In this situation it is evident that the woman overall benefits more than the man since, she gets paid for and looked after by the husband and when she has her own money given to her, that is also used for herself. In addition to this, men are also required to pay dowry and women yet again are at the receiving end.

What about the women who are unmarried or divorced?

In Islam, if a woman is unmarried or she is divorced, her responsibility falls upon her father and he is required to provide for her till she reaches financial independence or gets married again. Islam has made sure to facilitate for a woman in such a way that the financial burden is lifted off her shoulders and there is always a supporter for her be it through the father or through the husband. This again is not due to the low position of a woman, nor to degrade her abilities, rather to make it easier for her since she also has certain difficult responsibilities e.g. bearing children, balancing being a mother amidst hundreds of other things required of her.

To summarise, the rules of inheritance on the apparent may seem quite unfair and unequal however when it is examined in more depth it is quite evident that even though the ruling is not equal for both genders, it is deemed just and fair due to the given circumstances.

Translator's Reflections

After studying and analysing the areas which raise many questions and issues in the modern world regarding women, their status, their roles and responsibilities I have been able to come to a sound understanding that majority of the above can still be compatible with the modern society . I understand that Islam has a wide scope in which it is able to facilitate for many different situations and scenarios but this can be taken very negatively in the modern age. Some examples of what my take is and how it can be understood in today's world is:

- 1) Slavery: This was common in the past and freely practised therefore Islam came to reduce the harms caused by slavery and divert it to an acceptable form but wasn't able to completely eradicate it. Today, if the enemy doesn't take slaves then it would be incorrect for the Muslims to take slaves as this concept in modern society is not accepted at all. The option however is still available in instances such as when the enemy takes slaves to defame and degrade Muslims, The Muslims then can also keep this option open to serve purely as a deterrent.
- 2) Multiple wives: In light of this and the modern world, there are still societies where this practise is acceptable and no issues are caused by this. Likewise there are societies where women outnumber men and the need of this practise is also required to facilitate for the women and provide stability. In western societies however, the concept of marriage in general is being devalued and having relations with multiple partners is on the rise. Islam has kept option of taking multiple wives open to allow honour and stability to be restored through this practise. Through marriage a man still has responsibility to take care and provide for his multiple partners as well as act with justice as opposed to not having any commitment like in western societies which in fact degrade and dishonour the women through this. In other cultures where having multiple wives is a very difficult pill to swallow for many women and it causes more harm than good, I feel in this situation a man must be considerate and understand the repercussions of his actions on a wider scale. In this situation this practise should not be upheld and must be avoided.

- 3) Value of a woman. I feel Islam understands and values the struggles of a woman and the hardship she has to go through in general and therefore has tried to facilitate for the woman in order to aid her and to lift hardships from her wherever necessary. It is important to note that some women may take this as an insult or may see it as demeaning that Islam has placed a man to be her caretaker rather than encouraging her to be independent herself. This is not the case as a woman has not been restricted to not work, earn a living and become independent at all in Islam. In fact a woman is encouraged to study, to give back to society and to also work if it doesn't hinder her family relations. On the flipside for women who don't see the need to work or find it difficult to juggle all the responsibilities, Islam is very favourable towards them too and graciously allows for there to be a supporter for her at every stage e.g. through the father figure or through the husband or older brother. This is purely to facilitate her with ease and comfort as it recognises her status and responsibility as hard already without the need of burdening her with further economic and financial responsibilities. This in my opinion does not lower her worth, rather it recognises the service she gives to society e.g. through raising humans who become the future society thus lifting other burdens from her shoulders. If a woman would like to work, earn a living and be independent then by all means she is able to and nowhere in the religion has it been prohibited for her and that is purely a choice she can make and is not obliged at all.