

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

TALK 8

ARAB GULF REGION

Men's Authority over Women in Islam

(Translated)

Husband's Authority is a Sharia Ruling, Not Customs or Traditions

We are addressing the topic of the husband's authority, as it is needed to differentiate between what Islam allowed through its rules inclusive its principles and basis for this ruling, and what some false concepts and oppressive practices are being implemented by some Muslims out of ignorance and tyranny against the ruling of the husband's authority. It is incumbent to clear any relationship between the false and baseless customs and traditions from the Islamic Sharia, as they are mere remnants from the old era of enslaving women regarded as a lowly creature at home and an ignored thought in the society. These thoughts paved the way for secularists to weave lies by using these corrupt customs and relating them to the Islamic Sharia in order to damage and distort it, thus making the Muslim women seeing herself being abducted by the hammering first wave of ignorance which chained her completely and oppressed her, and by the hammering of the recent wave of ignorance which claims to free her from every chain! Either the corrupt customs are lurking around her in order to enslave her under the pretext of "Islam and Sharia", or she expels such customs and revolts against them only to find those who are even more oppressive lurking around her under the pretext of "freedom and equality"!

The Islamic understanding of the term "husband's authority" is not just personal conclusions, inherited customs from the East, or a reaction to the plots of the West, it is actually an understanding abiding by the reasoning of the Sharia principles of what organizes the family institution, the relationship between the husband and wife, and the rights due to each of them.

Husband's Authority in Islam and its Legality from the Quran and Sunnah

The husband's authority is a right granted to the husband in order do what is needed with regards to his wife such as managing her affairs, spending on her, maintaining her, protecting her, doing what is best for her, abstaining her at home, and disciplining her in what is right as she's entrusted with him.

The basis for the husband's authority what Allah (swt) says: **﴿الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ﴾** **"Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth."** [An-Nisa: 34]

This blessed verse is the source of the husband's authority over the wife, and it is agreed upon by the majority of the Tafseer and Fiqh scholars:

❖ Ibn Kathir said about the interpretation of the verse: "Men are in charge of women"; which means: he is her person in charge, he is superior over her, he is her commander, and he is her disciplinarian in case she went astray."

❖ Al Qurtubi said: This means that they spend over their wives and protect them, and the word "authority" is used to exaggerate in exercising the ability to do something.

❖ Al Jassass said about the interpretation of the verse: “The husbands’ authority over their wives is through discipline, management, maintenance, and protection; as Allah granted the man over the woman with more intellect and judgment, and what Allah has commanded him to spend over her, so the verse showed several meanings; one of them is: preference of the man over the women in the level of authority and that he is the one managing and disciplining her, and this shows that he reserves the right to keep her at home, forbidding her from going out, and she has to obey him and accept his commands as long as they are not disobedience to Allah, and this verse showed the obligation to spend on her.”

❖ Ibn Al Arabi said about the interpretation of the verse: His word choice “authority” comes from the root verb “authorize” which means: he is entrusted with her; he manages her affairs, and he corrects her mistakes; that’s what Ibn Abbas said, and she has to obey him... and he must – the husband – pay for the dowry, spend on her, treat her properly, protect her, command her to obey Allah (swt), and aid her in loving to abide by the Islamic rituals, such as praying and fasting, and she must maintain his money, be good to his family, and accept his demands in acts of obedience.

Allah (swt) says: ﴿وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَىٰ نِسَائِهِمْ دَرَجَةٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ﴾ “**And due to the wives is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. But the men have a degree over them [in responsibility and authority]. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.**” [Al-Baqara: 228], and this is another piece of evidence, where Al Qurtubi said: “The sentence mentions the word “degree” which refers to preference, and you feel that the husband’s right over her is more rightful than her right over him.”

Al Jassass said: “Allah tells in this verse that each of the spouses has a right over the other, and that the husband reserves a specific right over her, which she doesn’t have, but this verse did not show what rights each of the husband and wife have in detail. Others have shown these rights and according to what the Rasuul (saw) said. Ibn Abbas said: The degree forced the men to treat their wives properly and be generous with their women in money and good traits, meaning that it is best for him to downplay his character.”

As for the Sharia texts which talk about the husband’s authority in the Prophetic Sunnah, our Rasuul (saw) ordered the woman to obey her husband according to what the Sharia allowed, and according to what her ability and capacity allows her, and the evidence for that are:

1. Reported by Abdul Rahman ibn Awf, who said: The Rasuul (saw) said: **«إِذَا صَلَّتِ الْمَرْأَةُ إِذَا صَلَّتِ الْمَرْأَةُ حَمْسَهَا وَصَامَتْ شَهْرَهَا وَحَفِظَتْ فَرْجَهَا وَأَطَاعَتْ زَوْجَهَا قِيلَ لَهَا ادْخُلِي الْجَنَّةَ مِنْ أَيِّ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ شِئْتَ»** “**If the women prayed all her five prayers, fasted her month (Ramadan), maintained her private parts, and obeyed her husband, it will be said to her to enter Jannah from any door she likes.**” (Narrated by Ahmad in his Musnad).

2. Reported by Abu Hurairah, who said: The Rasuul (saw) said: **«وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا مِنْ رَجُلٍ يَدْعُو امْرَأَتَهُ إِلَىٰ فِرَاشِهِ فَتَأْبَىٰ عَلَيْهِ، إِلَّا كَانَ الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاءِ سَاخِطًا عَلَيْهَا حَتَّىٰ يَرْضَىٰ عَنْهَا»** “**I swear by The One Who owns my soul, any man who invites his wife to his bed and she refuses to, except that Who is in the Heavens will be angry with her until he (her husband) will be pleased with her.**” (Narrated by Muslim, Sahih)

3. Reported by Abu Hurairah, who said, the Rasuul (saw) said: **«لَا يَحِلُّ لِلْمَرْأَةِ أَنْ تَصُومَ وَزَوْجُهَا لَا يَحِلُّ لِلرَّجُلِ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ بَيْتَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ وَلَا تَأْذَنَ فِي بَيْتِهِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ»** “**It is not rightful for the woman to fast and her husband is not except with his permission, and she is not allowed to welcome anyone to his house except with his permission**” (Narrated by Bukhari, Sahih)

4. Reported by Jabir, who said: the Rasuul (saw) said: **«فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ فِي النِّسَاءِ، فَإِنَّكُمْ أَحَدْتُمُوهُنَّ بِأَمَانٍ، وَاسْتَحْلَلْتُمْ فُرُوجَهُنَّ بِكَلِمَةِ اللَّهِ، وَلَكُمْ عَلَيْهِنَّ أَنْ لَا يُوطِئَنَّ فُرُشَكُمْ أَحَدًا تَكْرَهُوْنَهُ»** “**Fear Allah with the women,**

you took them in under Allah's safety, and their private parts became Halal for you via The Word of Allah, and you have upon them that no one else whom you hate to sleep in your bed." (Narrated by Muslim, Sahih)

What can be deducted from these Ahadith that the husband reserves the right over his wife with all the things mentioned above due to his authority over her through marriage.

The husband's authority is characterized by: taking care of the wife, granting her rights such as treating her well, spending on her, and giving her *mahr* (dowry), obeying the husband in goodwill as long as there's no disobedience to Allah, taking the permission of the husband in order to leave the house, taking the permission of the husband to take on a job, taking the permission of the husband to allow people to enter the house, disciplining the wife, and commanding her to obey according to the level mentioned in The Book of Allah.

The Secularists' Attack on the Husband's Authority

The topic of the men's authority over the women in Islam has been, and still is, under the vicious attack of the secularists and maybe the Muslims have gotten used to this kind of unfair secularist attack since the destruction of their State. It is especially targeting against the Muslim family, which is directly connected to known and exhausted controversial matters, such as polygyny, divorce, early marriages, inheritance, and the husband's authority. But these late two decades witnessed a new development in the attack on the status of the Muslim family, and this is an attempt to hit its Sharia-complied environment and bombarding it with articles and laws enforced by powerful international institutions. The feminist, national, and humane organizations became the primary axis of the international government in enforcing and implementing all the policies decided in the Conference of Women, Family, and Child, such as the Beijing Conference, the bill of eradicating domestic violence against women, the Genève Convention, and previously the Conference in Egypt. They want to escape the intellectual struggle towards a tyrannical state of policies which is conditioned upon international loans and external loans presented by the West to our governments, and our countries are being pawned in exchange of passing these policies.

The secularist attack began on the husband's authority by challenging this Sharia term and baffling it for purpose of falsifying and deforming it, so they labeled it as a patriarchal power and guardianship, so that the woman becomes repelled of following such Sharia rule and regard it as a tyrannical patriarchal dominance, and the women in return is a weak and oppressed person bearing the man's control where he enjoys the right to leave her and hit her if she dares to confront him! On this false and malicious basis, calls started to liberate her from this oppressive ruling power which insulted and demeaned her, and inhibited her abilities to education and work, and to be involved in the society under the pretext of equality, self-achievement, financial independence, and self-reliant. They view the husband's authority as the main obstacle for the woman's intellectual, behavioral, and financial development since seeking permission to enter, leave, travel, and work makes the woman lose her full rights, but even makes her behind in her generation, society, and the world she lives in!! Since this attack on the husband's authority in the Muslim countries is longstanding as we mentioned, but bringing it up every single time takes a new coating with more sensationalism and temptations. The Gulf region might be at this moment witnessing a drastic change process for the typical picture of the woman and her relationship with the man, and this position is what the United Nations has worked hard for and each of Britain and the United States paid for in order to call for the cancellation of the law of guardianship, while the Human Rights Watch organization called for the complete abolishment of the husband's authority due to the violations resulting from it! Based on this vicious international attack, campaigns were launched via social media in Saudi Arabia, and feminist and human rights

organizations rushed to state their demands to completely abolish the law of guardianship. Meanwhile, Ibn Salman announced that he supports this idea and his ambition for his country is to become part of the international culture, and this motivates him to achieve victories for the woman in the Kingdom as part of the “2030 Vision” which will be the big leap towards advancement and modernity in the manner of treating women.

The Western concepts in our societies and the absence of the Islamic Sharia from them lead to the absence of the husband’s authority and make it go astray from its original meaning

The Western concepts, intruding our societies, and its view on the woman, man, and family have deepened the gap between the Muslims and the correct Islamic understanding for the term “the husband’s authority”. So, either the issue is siding with the woman’s benefit by calling on her to be equal with the male species to fulfill her self-achievement far away from the male dictatorship, and putting her in the arena of clashing with her opponent “the man”, or the matter is siding with the man’s benefit by intriguing him to sharing the burden of the responsibilities and imagining the marital life as a collaboration of the roles rather than burdens or weights which he should bare its responsibilities just because he is a man!! This made the man be repelled from the idea of marriage and commitment out of fear of holding responsibility, falling for the trap of female exploitation which enforces him to carry out the rights of spending on and taking care of his wife, but at the same time he views the marital life as shared and cooperation in ensuring these rights and not exploitation of one side over the other!! Yes, these Western concepts made the marital life look like a reining company: money for money and body for body, without considering the abilities and qualifications each side has in this institution!! The widespread traditions in our societies helped in deepening these concepts, such as woman taking up jobs before marriage so that she helps her husband in building a family, viewing the homemakers with disgust and inferiority simply because she doesn’t contribute to the development of her family and society. The failure of the systems in our Muslim countries in taking care of its people, in building the correct concepts, in installing a just judicial system which eradicates tyranny and unjustness when lines have been crossed, in installing an advanced economical system which is capable of financially supporting the weak and needy and supports those who are well-off, in contributing in raising awareness in the people, men and woman alike, about their Sharia rights and responsibilities through the education system which builds the minds of the upcoming generations through the media outlets which aid in forming the public opinion and raising its awareness, or through the support of the scholars and Fouqaha’, providing public spheres, mass conferences, opening of mosques and educational institutions in order to educate the people about Islam and its just rules whom Allah and His Rauul (saw) safeguarded the castle of the family thus making it a strong fort for the society and maintains its coherence and strength!! All these intellectual, political, and economical weaknesses opened doors of the Ummah for the West wide open and made the Muslim family a clear target where they shoot it with their arrows in order to destroy it just like how they destroyed their families! We must realize very well that the ruling of the husband’s authority in our societies has been treated very unfairly because of the maltreatment of the husband towards his wife and due to abusing his authority. This made the woman blame the Sharia which allowed the man to manage her affairs and command her; thus, we hear deafening calls to cancel this obligation because it granted more power for the man on the expense of his wife; thus, he insulted and enslaved her! What we need to shed the light on is that the unjustness of the laws, the tyranny of the judicial system, and the corruption of the solutions that have intensified the scope of the problem which we’re witnessing in our societies and it’s not due to the husband’s authority!!

The horrible economic situation in our societies, the spreading of poverty and unemployment, and the decrease of incapable people rendered many men unable to bear the responsibility of spending, taking care of the family, and providing the basic needs for their families. This led many women to go out for work forcefully, not out of choice, and share the load of responsibility with their husbands, and exert their energy and effort on the expense of their children and their nature in order to provide life's necessities. So, should the husband's authority be blamed, or should the state be held accountable and the systems should be reprimanded for their failure in taking care of the people's affairs, pushing them into causing injustice to themselves, and falling back on allowing them to exercise their Sharia rights and responsibilities??

We need to reflect a lot on this matter so that we are not deluded by Shaytan by thinking that the Sharia rules are not suitable for every time and place. Rather, negligence of the Sharia rules pushes us into falling back in understanding our Sharia responsibilities regarding the individual, the group, and the state, so every person is given his due right, and those who fall short are held accountable whether they are individuals or the state itself!

Is the husband's authority an injustice to the woman or a mercy for her?

The revolution against the honorable Quranic meanings of the terms of "solemn covenant", affection, mercy, reassurance, assurance, and security, and sharing feelings with one another until each one of them becomes a clothing to one another made the husband's authority to look like it's only about financial support, expenditure, and point of preference. However, when one takes a closer look to this Islamic terminology, he will realize that the rules of Allah are all true, just, and fair for the servant. The husband's authority is not meant to delete the personality of the woman inside the home, or even within the society, it is rather to organize her role in sync with the man inside the family with what aligns with the physical, mental, and tolerance strength, thus qualifying the husband to the authority which obligates him to fulfill the rights of the support, protection, and physical, emotional and psychological maintenance. He is also obligated to spend his money starting with the dowry then onwards in securing the food, beverage, clothing, and house. Moreover, he is obliged to supervise the woman by enjoining the good and forbidding the evil in the best manner, promise her with education, good treatment, achieve justice and fairness, following the footsteps of the beloved Rasool (saw) in his treatment of his women: «خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِهِ وَأَنَا خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِي» **"The best of you is that who is best to his family"**. (Hadith Sahih)

If Allah (swt) has distinguished the man from the woman in physical characteristics, then this increases the scope of the responsibility and judgment by Allah (swt) and the scope of the accountability as much as the commitment. «فَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ فِي أَهْلِهِ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ» **"The man takes care of his family and he is responsible for his family"**. His responsibility involves taking care of his family, protecting it from fear, fulfilling its hunger, and leading it to safety so that it feels secure and sheltered. He should also maintain and protect his wife in her personality, her body, her decency, her sustenance, her religion, and her blood, so what greater honor for a woman is there with Allah honoring her, and what destiny is superior for her than what The Legislator gave to her, and what sustenance is better for her?? Is it better for her to go against her nature and disobey her Lord in order to live the falsehood of man-made equality and freedom, or for her to live an honorable life by following the rules of the Lord of all creation?? Isn't the husband's authority a mercy and goodness which Allah (swt) favored upon us which requires from us to always praise and thank Him, so what is wrong with the women amongst us wanting to replace this goodness with what is lower than that?

The man's complete supervision of the woman does not mean it deletes her rights or marginalizes or ignores her personality; it is rather to take her opinion and consult her on the

matters of her house which Allah (swt) made her responsible for. In addition, the husband's authority is not a dictatorship and tyranny since the Muslim woman reserves the right to discuss all the decisions with her husband to organize together the ways of managing the house, to plan with him how to spend the money, and to go against what he's suggesting if it's going against what Allah (swt) ordered. The marital life is all about giving and taking, and the good woman is one who supports her husband with consultation and advise, and the Rasuul (saw) was the best example as his wives were always sharing their opinions and consulting him except in matters which were mentioned in the Sharia text. The best example to give is Umm Salamah during the Houdaybiyah treaty where her blessed consultation was taken into consideration. However, the husband reserves the right of making the final decision when it comes to the family, and the Muslim woman must understand her powers during the point of argument, because with her understanding of her rights and powers she can control her behaviors and reactions, so she doesn't resort to stubbornness in order to enforce her pride, complicate the matters between her husband and herself, create problems, and give herself a status beyond the necessary just because she felt shattered and submissive! Most of the problems which are inflicted upon the marital life occur when each of the spouses crosses the line in their Sharia-given privileges so one side dominates the other. So, the husband's authority means the husband's responsibility in running the ship's deck, since the presence of several captains might lead to its sinking; thus, the last and final decision must be made only by the lead-captain and the person in charge.

Even so, the husband is not allowed to exploit this position in order to maltreat his wife, lowering her status and oppressing her. The woman can bring up the matter to her guardian such as her father, brother, relative, or to the judicial system if he has fallen short and fell behind in fulfilling her right so that her husband stops from doing that and be held accountable then he will be referred to Allah (swt) Who does not ignore any tiny particle of good or evil!

The husband's authority on his family does not fall with the dissolving of the marital covenant, so if he divorces his wife, he's still compelled to spend on his children, supporting them, following up with them in their education, intellect, and behavior, managing their affairs, and making decisions for them. The husband's authority in all that previously mentioned remains a standing obligation upon the man since it is a Sharia obligation. It is also expected from the pure and decent Muslim woman that even if she separates from her husband, she has to teach her children the meaning of obeying and responding to their father and to not damage the family bond just because she separated from him. Rather, she has to maintain these noble Sharia terms and instill in her children the Islamic understanding that is based on obeying Allah (swt) and the parents, being righteous with them, and befriending them in good, and knowing that the father is in charge of them and he has an opinion on them, and never teach the children to hatred, disobedience, and rebellion.

We are one Ummah, and we are in need of a cohesive family

Islam made sure to take care of the family because it is the nucleus of the society and the central piece of the Ummah. Therefore, the Sharia vowed to it many rules in order to achieve its cohesiveness, connection, and stability, and it made sure that the family relationships between all of its members (the father, mother and children) are strong and solid relationships based on fearing Allah (swt) and individually responding to His orders and steering away from His prohibitions. Thus, building the correct concepts which discipline the behaviors of the members requires effort, determination, persistence, patience, and sacrifices because the scope of the plot against the Muslim family did not cease yet until the Ummah forms a massive will to drastically change it and a force to stop and dispose it. This will not happen except through building a deep conviction and correct and clear concepts

about Islam, its thoughts, and its rules and dealing with it as the truth and justice and anything else is deviation! Therefore, it is the obligation of the Ummah in front of the family, woman, infants, and children to understand the Sharia rights, working upon them, and committing to them. The concept of the husband's authority, for example, must be deeply rooted in our societies and never be up for bargain or auction. It is rather a Sharia obligation which maintains the purity of the family, achieves the cohesiveness and connection between its members, organizes the roles within it, ensures the guardianship and protection, and achieves the meaning of unity which we look forward to within the family, then to the society and the Ummah. The marital relationship which is shaded the affection, assurance, and mercy transports automatically and naturally onto the children who find themselves in an appropriate environment for a correct intellectual and psychological upbringing loaded with love, respect, and good treatment. The father should not be a dictator on his wife and children, but he should rather be a guardian over their affairs and supportive of them. Also, the wife should not be rebellious on her family, but she should be serving them, taking care of them, and following up with them all the time. The natural end result for this atmosphere is that the children are raised on a correct Islamic upbringing in an atmosphere full with fear of Allah (swt), love, and mercy. Thus, righteousness, advising, and forgiveness become predominant amongst all the members. Our responsibility as women, wives, and mothers is to help our guardians to achieve this obligation and correctly implement it with obedience and patience. We should also busy ourselves in being the support system of this great concept, and the best way to do this is to commit ourselves to it so that it is characterized in our behavior, and translated into our stances so that it affects our children, offspring, and those who are around us, and it will be easier for our husbands to deal with us and ensure the best treatment in goodness.

The absence of the husband's authority or its misunderstanding and implementation pushes us to work for the resuming of the Islamic lifestyles and establishing a state that executes the Sharia rules, maintains them, and implements them properly on the people. If the husband's authority was just an individual rule, then what it is related to from the relationship with the wife and children, and what results from it such as financial and legal repercussions make us work hard to find an executive system from its same kind in order to endorse, protect, and present it in the way that Allah (swt) wanted for it and to achieve the goal which He (swt) willed for it. We are in dire need for an Islamic system which emanated from our Aqeedah which we believe in, which makes us more determined, strong, and resilient in entering an intellectual clash and political struggle, and to work for the revival of this Ummah, raising its banner, uniting its word, and implementing the Sharia of its Lord.

﴿أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّنَّهُمْ الْبَاسَاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَرُبُّوا حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَىٰ نَصُرُ اللَّهُ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ﴾ [البقرة: 214]

“Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while such [trial] has not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before you? They were touched by poverty and hardship and were shaken until [even their] messenger and those who believed with him said, "When is the help of Allah?" Unquestionably, the help of Allah is near.” [Al Baqara: 214]

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