

IZALATUL BID'AH WA IQAMATUS SUNNAH

IN OUR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY



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INTRODUCTION

One of the major problems of the *Ummah* today is marriage and family life. And the simple reason is that we have diverted from the *Sunnah*. Seeking the hands of a lady in marriage through her father/guardian is now regarded as old fashioned. Instead of considering piety of a husband-to-be, all we are interested in are, “who is his father?”, “where does he work?” Then follows the big hurdle; boxes. So many marriages are pending because the prospective grooms are not able to afford these. The result is that would-be brides get pregnant hence increasing to the number of illegitimate children in the society. The rich on the other hand provide their married children with houses, cars and bank accounts as a “security”, not knowing that there is a difference between material things and happy married life. The former does not guarantee the latter.

The root causes of all these problems have been highlighted in this book and obviously, the solution is to go back to the *Sunnah* of *Rasul* (SAW) in matters of marriage and family life since this constitute half of our faith, irrespective of our socio-economic status.

Narrated Abu Najih al-Arbad bin Sariyah (RLA): The Messenger of Allah (SAW) delivered an admonition that made our hearts fearful and our eyes tearful. We said, “O Messenger of Allah, it is as if this were a farewell sermon, so advice us.” He said, “I enjoin you to have *Taqwa* (fear) of Allah and that you listen and obey, even if a slave is made a ruler over you. He among you who lives long enough will see many differences. So for you is to observe my *Sunnah* and the *Sunnah* of the rightly-principled and rightly-guided successors, holding onto them with your molar teeth. Beware of newly introduced matters, for every innovation (*bid'ah*) is an error.” (Abu Dawud and At Tirmidhy collections)

Finally, this write up reveals essentially that polygamy in Islam is both an Invitation and a Challenge to the institutionalisation of Justice and Fairness in society, with its foundation rooted in the establishment of the family.

MUHAMMAD IMRAN MUHAMMAD

THE POSITION OF THE FAMILY

It is indisputable that no single individual has any possible standing in isolation of a family, as far as beginning to live in this world is concerned. This family can be restrictive to simply A WAY. This is why non married persons can be associated or referred to be involved in a family way. The absolute meaning is that two human beings are in an intimate relationship, that is short of recognized responsible rights and duties that the larger society accepts for General well being. This is the fundamental basis for homosexuals asking for statutory recognition. Before such unfortunate recognition, they are only worse than heterosexuals who are unmarried. Single parenting is only another shade of carelessness for the general well being.

As Muslims, what distinguishes us is that we have a defined standard upon which human beings, the family is to rest. It provides the security and basis for nurturing each and every individual and the collective whole. And in the context of humanity, this standard is what will provide leadership, security and prosperity for ALL, irrespective of any current status of variation or abuse of the standard. This is what will build the *Ummah*.

Any Community, any Society, any Nation and any Generation that Ignores, Underrates or pays little Attention to what becomes of the family, is surely on the course of self destruction. If the single human being that is a bundle of capacities, which can enable contradictory things, is not sufficiently cared and catered for, the larger number will unavoidably pay for the price. This may initially appear insignificant or negligible. But, the moment it becomes a matter of concern, it will take more cost to begin to recover.

THE PLATFORM FOR ESTABLISHING A FAMILY

In Islam, the first term is for a man and a woman that are outside prohibitive degrees to come together for the purpose of total living. This negates the recognition of gays and lesbians and bisexuals, on their own and their togetherness IF they are Muslims who sincerely believe. At this level, it is the challenge of *Ahlu SUNNAH* to focus and strategize on protecting and ensuring that NO Muslim is in abuse of this term. This *jihad* that is now ripening to a burst is ONE that we cannot ignore or underrate. The gravity of this problem is

measurable by the standard of NOT NEARING *ZINA*, by those who heed to the heterosexual term.

The standard for all *Jihad* is by authorized enforcement, by advice or distancing oneself from that which is wrong. Enforcement has been by law and those entrusted with maintaining what the laws express. This falls within the realms of those who make the laws and those who ensure that the laws are kept. But, we can all Advise, Remind and Warn those who have already or are about to breach the standard. We can do this directly to those involved and we can do this on general terms. Over and above these, we can Effectively avoid them in many ways. We can avoid their gestures for General well being and we can restrain from recognizing or commending them or what they do or involve them in.

There can be no doubting that this is a big challenge to our generation. This is because we are enveloped in the fear of poverty, of losing their seeming favours. But, that is what makes it a *Jihad*. In Islam, for the establishment of a family, the consent of both parties and preferably those of their sponsors are required, to be established. In our times, this term does not face the sufficient threat for a *Jihad*.

In Islam, responsible and willing witnesses are required in the joining of the two parties. Although this is fairly watered down, the level of response it requires is that of caution and sensitivity. The pointer to this is that MOST of the marriages that run into crises and often collapse are never referred to the witnesses that double as sponsors because, they are considered unfit or are not rated for that valuable role of knowledgeable resolution, when a serious disagreement arises. The unfortunate supporting practice is that A LOT of time, energy and resources are invested in WHO and HOW to invite witnesses. It is such a big issue that it often appears as if the more corporate this is realized, the better the marriage. This diversionary, embarrassing veil of deceit needs to be checked and highly redirected.

In Islam, an honourable gift is required to be given to the woman by the man. This has no prescribed limit, provided it is within the competence choice and convenience of the man. This particular term is one that poses a reviewing

challenge. The first is that unlike in the variant example of *Rasul* (SAW), our generation has slavishly reduced this honourable gift to one form – Naira. This has tempted the process of institutionalizing a minimum amount, to guard against what in our times may be considered as ridiculous. But that is like whitewashing the standard. The gift of what is lower is not prohibited and cannot render such marriage as null and void. The challenge in this respect can be attended to by recognizing and even encouraging honourable gifts Other than Naira. Like *Rasul* (SAW) admitted a ring and teaching of chapters of the Qur'an as honourable gifts, it is time to recognize and encourage variety of gifts. For example, in these times of religious ignorance the gift of especially Hadith books and the Teaching of these are of superior value to loads of Naira. This is most inviting, because the easier the gift, the more sincere, the more blessed, the more genuine. Unlike when it is money and the sum may not even be given to the woman or spent on the discretion of the woman, other gifts, when announced are more likely to totally go to the woman. This aspect of the *Jihad*, this aspect of *Iqamatus SUNNAH* rests on parents who have the responsibility of giving the hands of their daughters out, in marriage. While they have the right and duty of guiding their daughters, they must Restrain from the rule of Dictating the Form and Type or Level of honourable gift.

In Islam, the man is encouraged to share his joy with well wishers. *Rasul* (SAW) specifically mentioned the roasted thigh of a ram as an example. He also indicated the appropriateness of inviting people to come along with what they will eat/drink, if you cannot afford the feast. This continuum reveals the simplicity and convenience of realizing what is recommended. The structure of Bachelors' eve, Spinsters' eve, Mothers' day, Fathers' day, reception, lunch/luncheon or dinner are extravagant for Most people. Special dresses or codes are part of the niceties that have become hurdles to achieving the simple *SUNNAH* that seriously rates to half of our religion. The required *Jihad* in this respect must go far beyond changing the names or labels of the activities and separating the men from the women.

The above define the combination of those things that are both obligatory and commendable in the establishment of the institution of marriage and family. In practice, it will be appreciated that we have failed in sustaining the institution

by ignoring its modesty and indulgence in excesses. But our failures are worse and more serious than the carelessness and excesses relating to these terms that combine what are obligatory and those things recommended.

OUR CHOICES AGAINST EASY INSTITUTION OF OUR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

One practice we have institutionalized over and above the standard set out above, consists of a fairly standard list of ITEMS the parents of the woman, are required to provide. These are largely, Capital items. And it is expected to be shared between the parents. While the mother provides kitchen and cooking utensils along with some jewelleries and fancies/decorations, the father is required to provide bedroom and living room furniture items. The evaluators are those who have no primary responsibility for the marriage of the woman. And it is shamefully understood that the parents should meet up with the baseless expectations of these evaluators. Those who are comfortably able to oblige this self imposed but meaningless excesses do it with audacity and set the pace for the ignoramuses who mistake it to be part of the standard. While there is nothing intrinsically wrong in doing such, it ought to be the Private Choice of the parents, like buying underwear for the daughter. It must therefore be based on NEED and ability. And it cannot be modestly concluded without relating with the prospective husband.

The correction of this burdensome practice will begin by NOT INVOLVING OR INVITING ANYBODY FOR THE INSPECTION OF WHAT IS NOT THEIR PRIMARY BUSINESS. And in the transition, those who may deliberately or in error seek to interfere deserve to be educated.

Another burdensome imposition is the one on the husband to be. It is usually presented in the form of required boxes of personal wears. The content and quality of the requirements are made to appear reasonable and sensible by considering the status of the husband to be. Thus, some will present a box while others will present fifteen. The embarrassing value that is attached to this is revealed by the fact that, it can suspend or even inhibit marriage. Where the prospective husband strives to avoid such, it will always be at the price of Almost Regret. While in principle there is nothing intrinsically wrong in such, making it a condition or even expecting it, DISTORTS the modest standard for

establishing this critical institution. And as it is to be expected, the collection of the appointed and self appointed inspectors is more ignorant and ambitious than when the items are provided by the parents of the woman. Like the first one, this practice has turned into a hurdle in the *SUNNAH*.

The correction of this practice rests in being silent about it and having the husband to be, keep the materials at home until the woman arrives as his wife, where he Chooses to do such. It has no basis of becoming part of the marriage process.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THESE SELF IMPOSED EXCESSES ON OUR HISTORY

The very first price is the promotion of the culture of insuring marriage with material provisions. In a best scenario where a new couple is provided with a furnished house, a car, a bank account and house helps including guards, it is tacitly felt that NOTHING ELSE is a serious challenge, for the success of the marriage. Interestingly, most of them collapse shortly after the fan fare. And it is not limited to members of the wealthy families. For those who can be classified as belonging to the middle class, they mostly face a long period of managing frustration before the real marriage begins. For the lower class, it is often like the sweet taste of the marriage is Gone while the Real Suffering that marriage is, has commenced. For all the classes, a goodly proportion lives in the marriage as an ad hoc affair.

In summary, this insurance package that we have developed has done more harm to the institution of marriage and family, for us. It is a big shame and a disappointment that, with our hands, resources and before our eyes, we have the Guidance of the Qur'an and *SUNNAH* and are in this trap. It is disgraceful because it relates to half of the religion that we profess.

The second unfortunate price is the systematic waste of the life efforts of the parents and the husband to be, in preparing for the collections that will enable the marriage. At the end of the day, the insurance is more meaningless than useful. But this is not the most critical aspect of this second price. This same wasteful preparation goes along to delays the real development of the parents as a family and delays the commencement of real marriage life by the new couple. This is because the new couple will not begin to experience the

challenges of meeting the NEEDS that have already been provided UNTIL in later time. Indeed when the time gets ripe the circumstances would completely be different from IF the excesses were not the foundation. The only exception to this trap falling will be women who are lucky to be joining an existing family, as against starting one, on their own.

THE INEVITABLE REAPS THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE CRYING OVER

The first laughable concern is that of the popularity of *Zina* among and with believers. The one among believers covers those who are married and those who not married. The class of those defined as, with believers, consist of Muslim men in relation to non Muslim women and Muslim women to non Muslim men. Common sense and ordinary reason will question: How this is avoidable when marriage is both made difficult and without regard for the simple modest principles to be driven by knowledge. The truth is that we cannot sincerely be considering minimizing *zina* in a situation when SUNNAH is made more and more difficult.

The fruit of this failure is revealed in our reproduction outside wedlock. The rate and level is so high now that, it is growing less and less shameful. One form in which this expresses itself is by the number of marriages that are contracted with pregnancy. And this covers both the high and low. Indeed there is this notorious culture of reducing women to baby making machine. Such people even prefer pregnancy before the joining, as if in Islam, marriage is incomplete without the pleasure of Allah to bless the woman with child bearing or if before Allah a child bearer is superior to the other or if the bearer will not have it as a trial and a trust.

The ultimate taste of this evil production is in the fate of men under the leadership of such, who are Muslims. Men under them live under a curse. Deceit and Hypocrisy become the order of the day as majority languish in poverty and ignorance. Force, violence, threat and machinations become the safety guard for survival – in spite of religious activities and institutions that continue to expand. The picture becomes complete if such leader is bisexual. What is therefore frightening and a big challenge to the *Ummah* is in dealing with those already produced and is growing, over and above stemming the

process. WE MUST NOT PRETEND OR DECEIVE OURSELVES THAT WE ARE PROMOTING GODLINESS , WHEN WE ARE BUSY AND CARELESS ABOUT THE PRODUCTION OF THOSE TO PRAY IN MOSQUES AND UPHOLD THE *SUNNAH*.

It is therefore not surprising to find handy satanic help. It comes in the form of not tempering with the excesses that we have self imposed. It intervenes in the sexual laxity through concern for spread of transmissible diseases. This is what sheaths do. It is beneficial for both married and unmarried and it can help to promote another concern for over population. This web becomes a tight and effective trap for us who Allah has completed His favour on us.

Another helpful hand is the twisting or making the concept of the orphan fit into our new *SUNNAH*. We now have orphanage homes with children whose parents are unknown and may never be known. The operational principle of these homes is for the volunteer parents to face the future and forget about the past. A livelihood where the foundation does not matter. In all cases, when the volunteer parents later have their children, prospect of a burst of the truth and the answer to, who are the real parents of the adopted children is a challenge. And these often unwanted children that escaped abortion now occupy a place of artificial pride in our history. While it is neither their making nor their choice, the collapse of the marriage and family system or standard is responsible for it. The price on the society is therefore only logically, a deserving one. The *Ummah* as a result, has a challenge to deal with this.

THE DEEPER AND ULTIMATE DAMAGES RESULTING FROM OUR NEW *SUNNAH*

The very first is that family life gets characterized by elements that get the members more than fully occupied for the physical body and Less for spiritual well being. In extension of the culture of material collection to become fit for marriage, both the men and women continue to wait to collect enough. This is best expressed by finishing enough schooling (not education), secure a job and save for readiness. The principle of leadership in the family is gradually eroded by the misplacement that it is more honourable not to be dependent on the husband, from the perspective of the woman. Beyond this, the parents of the woman are tempted to see the daughter as an investment and expect returns, as a matter of responsibility. This is as far as struggling to get married and the

possible relationship with the parents of the wife goes, especially if they belong to the class of those poor in heart and faith, indulgent in Self, Ignorance and Tradition.

This over riding culture and orientation of collection is more powerfully replicated in the new family. It takes the form of particular family responsibility and effort to insure and ensure that the members and especially the children are TOTALLY AND FULLY PROVIDED FOR, FOR LIFE. And because success is so defined those who acquire good collections can go to adopt from the helpful orphanages after artificial insemination has failed. To collect is the purpose of life and getting an inheritor or inheritors is a task to complete meaningful life. In between, there is little time for parental upbringing for the products, especially as human beings. The easily available solution is to contract the responsibilities out, to Nannies, Day Care and Nurseries. Where the parents are themselves ignorant and uncultured, the children get worse off, even though a fine house, good cars and bank accounts compensate for these.

The ESSENTIAL DAMAGE in this process, this history, this arrangement is that the spiritual experience that will flow from the modest prescription for marriage and family life is twisted, suffocated, frustrated. It is therefore getting more and more common and normal to find in a family, daughters that are in chronological age, running mates of the mothers, like the sons are of the fathers. And from the perspective of Parents Teachers Association, it now is getting common to find the parents as near or retirees. This is certainly neither good, better nor the best, for generational development. The younger generation is there distanced from experiential reality. Consequently, they grow and live on far less exposure, which they deserve to make the future more human.

The second is a logical consequence of the life style. Indeed there has been the attempt to even rationalize this damaged standard as right, against the express straight statement of the Qur'an. I have shockingly heard and read that in Islam, Monogamy is the rule, while Polygyny is the exception. This is seen in the clear preference in the marriage of one wife, monogamy. It is only expected that marriage to another woman will be a burden and if children are to come from this additional marriage, it cuts down on the level of insurance to

be ensured and automatically raises the level of premium investment to enable the children escape the need to struggle in life. Those who are the best collectors will therefore make their children the best of the coming generation. It is this senseless and dangerous, like leadership by ascription. There is Nothing Islamic about this kind of messy situation. But the misfortune goes beyond this level. Muslim countries as governments popularize monogamy and non Muslim countries prohibit polygyny. However our difference is growingly getting clearer. The non Muslim countries are right to consider and even legalize same sex marriage. They are consistent while we are the ones that have improved on our completed favour. This singular orientation is a great shift from the enjoinder to marry Two Two, Three Three or Four Four. The last enjoinder is to marry one if you fear inability to be just and fair.

In practice, it will be observed that those who have collected much are those who fear attempting to try justice and fairness at home level by marrying more than one wife. Unfortunately for all of us, they are often those entrusted with our social, political, economic and even spiritual resources for management, justly and fairly. And we can neither deny nor run away from their more evident failure. A cursory reflection on Muslims that have been in leadership position and made impact will reveal that the monogamist is in rule, even when a polygynist is among them. The volcanic misfortune will be to have one, born out of wedlock, a monogamist, a bisexual and one that also has a wife that wags in public matters in the share giving us justice and fairness. Such is the greatest enemy of Muslims. To be sure, leadership in justice and fairness goes far beyond the arithmetic of things between a number of men. Thus because the world is ruled by the first world, driven by monogamy, the justice and fairness HUMANS are facing across the globe, permits humans to suffer starvation, fight avoidable wars, malnutrition against the Pets of these monogamist leaders, in the name of over population and corruption. The Pets, home or exotic, are more fed, more studied, more cared for, than the greater number of humans in the world. This leadership challenge and crises should not apply inhumanly to Muslims and where there are Muslims in leadership. But these are inevitable in a history, where Muslims that should be the answer have abandoned their simple and modest completed favour for goodly livelihood in this world and in the hereafter.

THE ANSWER BY REVERSION AND WITHDRAWAL OF OUR EXCESSES

The first necessary step for all of us is to make Marriage and the development of Family easy and modest, by simply reverting to the very basics set down and exemplified by *Rasul* (SAW). The subject of the mandatory honourable gift should be REALLY TO THE PROPOSED WOMAN. The level should consider that the stipulation of Naira minimum is only a guide, and a restrictive one for that matter. The form that the Gift takes must need to begin to broaden, rather than limiting it to money.

Parents have a right and can rewardingly continue to contribute to the well-being of their daughters on giving them out in marriage. While prospective husbands who wish to give more than the honourable gift are not prohibited from doing so, it must be left to be done after the marriage proper. The ceremonies or festivals that use marriage as an opportunity ought to be reduced to a very modest and responsible level, by brevity and cost. These do not add any value to the marriage. The number days, the dress codes, the scope of publicity and event structure are all not beneficial to the marriage life of the new couple.

INSPECTORS or assessors should be expressly educated on the harm and danger of tempering with the standard for marriage and the family set by *Rasul* (SAW), according to the dictate of the Qur'an. This is why dealing with their damaging role is *Jihad*. In addition, we must dissociate, isolate and possibly punish homosexuals and bisexuals in as many forms as permissible, within the laws. Also, those who tie the knots of marriage and the sponsors should feel fulfilled and encouraged to announce that the marriage requirements met, have been simple and modest. This will encourage those reluctant to remain within the limits of the *SUNNAH* to do away with the excesses that are now unfortunately matters of pride.

Next, marriage and family education should be emphasized and popularized to the youths, on marriage and after. This is principally because over seventy percent of what makes a marriage right and fulfilling are built in marriage, and NOT in its process. And education is critical as a foundation as well as in developing it.

Polygyny should be well admitted to spread the culture of justice and fairness. With more people conditioned by the necessary requirements for justice and fairness, superior and responsible social ties will develop. And they will of necessity go beyond larger family relations, because inter marriage and polygyny opens up marriage more, beyond language group and geographical location and even race. Indeed it is capable of crossing religious differences decently, because Muslim men can marry women who believe in the revealed books. Accordingly people will develop the understanding and culture of selflessness, beyond self, to others for the intrinsic good of it and the larger collectivity. This is the spirit that makes a foundation for nationalism, patriotism, racialism, internationalism. This will reduce the scope and need for dry justice and fairness that the collective system can offer.

In other words, formalism, institutionalism will become more serving and fulfilling because of its humanistic nature. Monogamy cannot generate this and the enormous proof is in the lifestyle and orientation of the so called developed societies. The present very negligible practice of friends, relations and well wishers making contributions to the proposed couple should be strengthened But directly and privately rather than on microphone or at a reception. It must not be a form of pay back.

MAY ALLAH BE WITH THOSE WHO RECOVER THE SIMPLICITY AND MODESTY OF MARRIAGE AND HELP IN THE BUILDING OF FAMILY LIFE WITHOUT PLACING ANY DAMAGING BURDEN ON THE *SUNNAH*.

CONCLUSION

This reminder is to encourage us to desist from wasting our time and effort in trying to deny the coming generation from the critical and responsible learning process, in the building of the Family and *Ummah*. So far our wasted efforts have only committed us to the wrong and fruitless orientation that, closeness to Allah can be achieved by some safety valve, for us and our children. But Allah has only promised TRIALS and the right overcoming of these as the ONLY PATH to Him.

Why should a traveller turn into a settler? How do we expect to establish eternal bliss or safety in this transient life? What is particularly WRONG with

this arrangement is its UNSOCIAL character. The fact that it is done at the expense of collective justice, fairness and convenience. It allows for squeezing the majority to get into a noble institution that provides the foundation for building half of our religion. In other words, each and every family is left to find its way in a setting of ignorance and pride sustained by general injustice in the distribution of wealth. Or have we seized to be here for worship, as a determinant of where and how we settle for eternity?

There is no orderliness in an arrangement where what is of Social need and Social benefit, access is made different and difficult for the majority. If there is a collective basis for this access, it will be admissible. For example, if there is a standard obligation of the collective that is responsible for sustaining the requirements for basic access, like Kano State and the Emirate Council do on ad hoc and publicity basis for matrons, it may be tolerated. As it is now, in my opinion, that is a most commendable effort with only the drawbacks of expensive publicity, dryness of the sponsors (given their purely formal nature), and that it is targeted to matrons instead of first entrants into the institution. This amendment, this revisit, this correction, this adjustment, this straightening in our entering into marriage and the building of the family unit, is the greatest challenge to the *Ummah*, for having a foundation upon which closeness to Allah can be built in its entirety. There is no comfort in building an *Ummah* after *Rasul* (SAW) and his successors by a CARELESS, EXPENSIVE, PAINFUL SELF IMPOSED EXCESSES.

And We created not the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, for mere play.

(Qur'an 44:38)

We created them not except for **JUST** ends, but most of them do not understand.

(Qur'an 44:39)

We created not the heavens and the earth and all that is between them but for **JUST** ends, and for a term appointed. But those who reject Faith turn away from that whereof they are warned.

(Qur'an 46:3)

And the earth We have spread out, and have placed therein firm mountains, and caused to grow therein all kinds of things in due proportion.

(Qur'an 15:19)

And We have provided therein means of living, for you and for those whom you provide not (leaving creatures, cattle, beasts and other animals).

(Qur'an 15:20)

And there is not a thing, but with Us are the stores thereof. And We send it not down except in a known measure.

(Qur'an 15:21)

To Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills. He bestows (female) offspring upon whom He wills and bestows male (offspring) upon whom He wills.

(Qur'an 42:49)

Or He bestows both males and females, and He renders barren whom He wills. Verily, He is the All-Knower and is Able to do all things.

(Qur'an 42:50)

It is not given to any human being that Allah should speak to him unless (it be) by Revelation, or from behind a veil, or that He sends a Messenger to reveal what He wills by His Leave. Verily, He is Most High, Most Wise.

(Qur'an 42:51)

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COMPASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

TEACHINGS FROM THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ISLAMIC

MARRIAGE

A reminder remarks by Muhammad Sa'idu Jimada at the marriage Walimat of Sulayman and Nafisat on Saturday 7th July, 2012 at Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT) Auditorium, Zaria.

Marriage in Islam is the legal platform upon which a believing man secures the companionship of a fellow believing woman. This belief extends to believers in the scriptures before the Qur'an, from Allah, in respect of the free women whose hand can be asked for and secured in marriage. A Muslim can therefore ask for the hand of a fellow Muslim woman or a woman from among the people of the Book (Christians and the Jews) for marriage. It is therefore unbecoming of a Muslim to oppose inter marriage between a Muslim man and a Christian or Jewish woman. It also means that they can retain their religion.

Islam directly contradicts any restricted marriage relationship within a Race, a Language, and a Locality. In other words there is no appropriate partner to be first identified by common race, language or locality. Islam promotes it on the superior ladder of *Iman*. While it does not prohibit such lines, that are easily the first openings, it is better understood and appreciated across such limitations. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was an Arab from the clan of *Quraish*. He was Islamically a Believer, the lead believer. The first standard for our identity for marriage is therefore defined by Belief in Allah, *Rasul* (SAW) and what they instruct. Accordingly, for the immediate, within our locality, our language and our race, Islam defines the Prohibitive degrees for marriage. All others are permissible. The scope of freedom is therefore as wide as the world community of believers expecting those within the prohibitive degrees.

The Challenge, the Opportunity and the Teaching from this is that a Muslim is one who strives to be a universal man or woman. Through marriage the community of believers, which transcends one locality, language and race will be reproduced with those limited colours forming a rainbow that is new and pleasant, better and stronger. This is the bird's view that is seen or experienced during *Hajj* or *Umrah*. A microscopic view of the world *Ummah* is

seen in the *Ka'aba*. All worshippers turn to the *Ka'aba* as the *Qibla*. It is the meeting point for those who live in the east, west, north or south to it. And the time of *Salat* is like the living clock hand of Allah, symbolized by believers.

This is the route to multiplying the *Ummah* to give *Rasul* (SAW) the largest follower-ship, Thus, Allah expressly alerts and warns us to take note that He has created us of different languages, localities and races, in order that we may easily and conveniently recognize one another. It is like the functional beauty in discriminating between words for meanings. Those who are opposed to cross marriages must therefore note that it is not the standard for purity. And it amounts to hypocrisy to believe in one part of Islam and hold reservations on the other. Islam is not an affair of any locality, language or race.

This is the basis for the caution by *Rasul* (SAW) to the believers that, it is not being an Arab or even a *Quraish* that qualifies for righteousness but your fear and love of Allah. It is the consistent basis upon which mere Traditionalists were warned by Allah in the Qur'an. The best example is the misplaced pride of the Jews, who consist of a race, a faith and a nation. It is therefore in this foot path that one will find himself, if and when you hang onto your larger family, your locality, your language group for marriage. Those who do this are ignorant, do not truly believe and are not assets to the *Ummah*.

Islam permits the practice of Polygyny, one man marrying two, three or four wives. The basis of this is a challenge to justice and fairness. Muslims are therefore invited to Leadership. To arbitration. To conflict resolution. To dispute settlement. To securing a balance from variations. When two or more people come to live by the same guide, differences, disagreements are inevitable. The resolution of this to common satisfactory level is the business known as justice. Islam provides a Standard. It is acquired by knowledge. And it applies to both the husband and the wives. The first has to do with NOT trespassing into the reserved jurisdiction of Allah. This is defined by things PROHIBITED and those things made COMPULSORY. Approaching the prohibited attracts sanction and omitting what is compulsory generates offense. Following this is the Secondary ladder of those things that are COMMENDABLE and attract rewards even though their omission do not attract sanction or blame. Then of course, all things that DO NOT contradict the first and are not

in the second. Livelihood by Muslims must first be defined and based on these. And the root of the *Ummah* is the family, brought into being by marriage. Common sense dictates that Justice to Self is a lower burden compared to Justice between two and that Justice which involves three is certainly superior. The level of this superiority is allowed for up to a husband and four wives. It serves as a fundamental basis for higher complexities characterized by non relations, different believers, seniors, juniors, equals, enemies, strangers, etc.

To be sure, marriage in Islam is not a system of sex machine and sex objects. Man has a variety of characteristics, attributes, potentials and whatever. Indeed the sexual potency of man varies from one person to another. And the windows of attraction between two people is NOT restricted to sex or even Firstly sexual. And the relationship between men and women is not solely sexual from Islamic perspective. It is this social, political, economic, spiritual platform that enables the Believers to be identified with encouraging the doing of the Good and restraining from the doing of the Wrong, to be the best and model among mankind. Thus for clarity the Qur'an rates Believing Men along with Women, Muslim Men along with Women, Sincere Men along with Women, Faithful Men along with Women, Patient Men along with Women. And that no One person shall be made to bear the burden of Another, parent of child, wife of husband, brother of sister, employer of employee, Prophet of follower, etc.

Thus, the FEAR or RESTRAINT from (polygyny) the foundation of justice must be admitted as a weakening of capacity of the *Ummah*. This popular run away is a Key root of pervasive injustice symbolized by SELFISHNESS, PRIVACY, and SECRECY etc. It is the culture of abandoning the basis for justice that has been replaced by the FEAR OF SHARING. When I hear people talk about limiting the number of wives or children to be recognized and it is hinged on economic factors, I wonder as to who came into this world with any asset and if we may not NEED the same law to equally provide offsprings for ALL couples irrespective of their blessedness, by Allah who provides, for whomsoever He pleases. Then we run into having societies that over feed against some that under feed, couples gambling for workshop babies through test tubes, awards for having male children. Our history gets stressed, a product of artificial

justice. The story of growing or over population is not impressive either. The assumption that the capacities of men and available natural resources are stagnant is inconsistent with common sense and knowledge. Do we not produce in quantum, quality and variety the needs, wants and fancies, good and evil, for our sustenance and destruction more than mankind had ever done in the past? Are there no more than we need want and fancy? The barrier is justice that has been abandoned. And justice is superior to arithmetic or mathematical solution. What remains constant is the absolute creation of all means of sustenance by Allah.

I am yet to understand how problems like too many men; too many women with no prospect for partners or popular sharing in the pools of widows, divorces will arise in a just arrangement. Indeed because sex is a common physiological need, the shades of harassments, escapades or improper modes of satisfying it has inevitable developed a dangerous culture. This is characterized by Orphanages with no transparent and responsible social foundation, dry child adoption practices, single parenting, pornography, etc.

In the realization of marriage, Islam provides for two believers to come together IN FAITH. This is characterized by transparency and shyness. Thus the permission of the parents or guardian is sought and the interaction between the two is not shrouded in secrecy. Kindness, Generosity and pleasantries symbolized by the dowry, witnesses and *Walimat* are shared. This admission into what is UNKNOWN believing that it will all be the best is the shade of *Iman*. The requirement to put in your best by striving, persevering and patiently too is captured by accepting that women are created bent. No effort should be wasted in trying to bend them more or to make them straight. That will lead to their break. In them we find a garment, a covering, a shield, a protection, a guard, a safety valve for comfort, compassion, consultation, and companionship. In our families we also can have our enemies, detractors, etc. With them, our giving is charity. Our restrains are fasting. These may be patience with wrongs, mistakes, pains in our livelihood, in our relationship, in our marital life. For example, the compulsory fasting comes on during the monthly flow after birth, on divorce or upon death. Thus believers are warned not to mis-think that they will qualify for paradise by merely believing in Allah,

in *Rasul* (SAW) and seeming compliance. The platform in reality is that of Trials, Tests, Temptations, etc with our Likes and Dislikes – THROUGH DISAGREEMENTS AND THE RESOLUTION OF THESE, THROUGH JUSTICE ARISING FROM RESPONSIBLE TOGETHERNESS.

Justice through Everyone for Himself first is escapist, deceitful and untrue. The Challenge in this micro social setting is hinged on the Leadership status and role of the husband. The Qur'an instructs that the men are placed a stage above women. These men are those who seek for, acquire and employ knowledge. Those who accordingly stick to the limits Allah has set. When they breast feed and want to complete the circle, they do not exceed two years. They do not place the burden of the child on the parent nor the other way round. They do not prefer boys to girls and do not lose faith and hope with Allah when they are tried with lacking or abundance. This is the basis for connecting the value and benefit of *Salat* to reduction in wrongdoings. *Zakkat* is made to support *Sadaqat*. And *Hajj* provides an opportunity to witness the Unity of Allah. It is the basis for the holistic prescription that We are not created for fun but to serve, for worship, in the conditions of toiling. Marriage and the Family in Islam is therefore half the religion. The remaining half is making the general society right, by goodness, compliance and justice IRRESPECTIVE of differences in the membership. For, there is no compulsion in the religion of Islam.

Dear Sulayman and Nafisat, mine is a reminder, Islam is not a safe prison for guilty inmates. It is the beginning and a window for freedom, development, justice, satisfaction, struggles.

MAY PEACE BE UPON US ALL AS WE KEEP OUR FAITH ALIVE AND TRUE.